

PREDICTING COMPENSATION AND RECIPROCITY OF BIDS FOR  
SEXUAL AND/OR ROMANTIC ESCALATION IN CROSS-SEX  
FRIENDSHIPS

by

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## ABSTRACT

With more opportunities available to men and women to interact, both professionally and personally (i.e., the workplace, educational setting, community), friendships with members of the opposite sex are becoming more common. Increasingly, researchers have noted that one facet that makes cross-sex friendships unique compared to other types of relationships (i.e. romantic love, same-sex friendships, familial relationships), is that there is the possibility and opportunity for a romantic or sexual relationship to manifest. Communication research has yet to investigate how one decides whether to begin a romantic or sexual relationship or choose to remain platonic with their cross-sex friend. Given that cross-sex friendships deal with a lot of ambiguity regarding the nature of the friendship, this researcher sought to uncover what factors determine whether parties reciprocate romantic or sexual interest or opt to remain platonic through the theoretical lens of interaction adaptation theory. Specifically, the researcher sought to determine what expectations and desires predict compensation or reciprocity of romantic or sexual desires. At a large Southeastern university, quantitative data were collected from 307 participants. The results indicated that of the variables, *Not Attracted*, *Incompatibility*, and *closeness* were significant predictors of romantic reciprocation. In the case of 'friends with benefit' relationships, the results indicated that of the variables, *Not Attracted*, *Sexual/Romantic Potential*, *sex*, and *sexual attitudes* were significant predictors of sexual reciprocity. Further explanations of results, limitations, and future directions for research are discussed.

To my wonderful husband, Mehmetcan and Emel Grace. Seni seviyorum.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Friendships play a significant role in individual's everyday lives. Although one's friendships can be seasonal or last a lifetime (Fehr, 2003), the benefits offered by such relationships include varying degrees of companionship, assistance, affection and intimacy (Dainton, Zelle, & Langan, 2003). Even though friendships are salient, the majority of communication research has focused primarily on same-sex friendships, while cross-sex friendships have received less attention. Additionally, the bulk of research on male-female relationships has primarily concentrated within the context of romantic love. One plausible explanation is that previously cross-sex friendships have been viewed as an anomaly by society (Booth & Hess, 1974; Muraco, 2005). And, therefore, the formation of cross-sex friendships has been rare. However, nowadays, with more opportunities available to men and women to interact, both professionally and personally (i.e., the workplace, educational setting, community), friendships with members of the opposite sex are becoming more common (Bleske & Buss, 2000; Messman, Canary, & Hause, 2000; Rawlins, 1982). Since cross-sex friendships are becoming more common in society, research regarding cross-sex friendships is worth studying.

Despite the increase in cross-sex friendships, communication research on male-female friendships is relatively new and limited compared to romantic relationships. Increasingly, researchers have noted that one facet that makes cross-sex friendships unique compared to other types of relationships (i.e. romantic love, same-sex friendships, familial relationships), is that there is the possibility and opportunity for a romantic or sexual relationship to manifest (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000, Messman et al., 2000, Kaplan & Keys, 1997). For this reason, often one or both friends experience some degree of relational uncertainty (Morry, 2007). Unlike same-sex friendships, there is always the possibility or opportunity of the cross-sex friendship to blossom



into a romantic relationship (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000; Messman et al., 2000). It is important to note that the assumption made by existing literature is that both parties are heterosexual. A study by Kaplan and Keys (1997) found that 66 percent of females and 77 percent of males reported wanting to be “more than just friends” with their opposite sex friend at one point during the course of the friendship (p. 199).

Additionally, scholars have recently begun to explore a new phenomenon among young adults known as the 'friends with benefits relationship' (FWBR). FWBRs are characterized by repeated encounters of sexual activity between friends without the desire for a romantic love relationship (Williams, Shaw, Mongeau, Knight, & Ramirez, 2007). A recent study by Puentes, Knox, and Zusman (2008) found that 51 percent of 1013 undergraduate students reported having engaged in FWBR. As a result of their prevalence, FWBRs have altered the landscape of cross-sex friendships making it more permissible to engage in a sexual relationship without the commitment and exclusivity found in romantic relationships (Hughes, Morrison, & Asada, 2005).

Given that studies like Kaplan and Keys (1997) and Puentes et al. (2008) have provided empirical evidence to suggest that many individuals in cross-sex friendships may desire a romantic relation or FWBR, further understanding regarding cross-sex friendships is warranted. There is always the possibility for cross-sex friendships to remain platonic, turn sexual or romantic, which can create challenges for both parties. Even though scholars have examined maintenance behaviors, sex, and attraction as functions in cross-sex friendships, to our knowledge no study has examined what factors determine which one of the three possible outcomes of cross-sex friendships will result. Given that cross-sex friendships deal with a lot of ambiguity regarding the nature of the friendship, this study will explore what factors determine

whether parties will reciprocate romantic or sexual interest or opt to remain platonic through the theoretical lens of interaction adaptation theory.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Cross-Sex Friendships

Research regarding cross-sex friendships is relatively new and limited compared to romantic relationships. Prior to 1986, male-female friendships were often examined under the context of romantic love relationships (Reeder, 2000). Although cross-sex friendships are now recognized as a relational category separate from romantic love relationships (Reeder, 2000), distinguishing between the two can be challenging since both overlap in regards to their relational characteristics (Rawlins, 1982). For example, both types of relationships are voluntary. Although environmental factors will highly influence their formation (Dainton et al. 20003; Feher, 2000), usually individuals select whom they wish to become friends with. Unlike family, one may choose their friends or romantic partner. Since friendship is voluntary, both parties must negotiate their relationship and exude large quantities of emotional energy in order for the friendship to survive and evolve (Messman et al., 2000; Rawlins, 1982). In addition, both romantic love and friendships are marked by some degree of affection, assistance, intimacy and companionship (Dainton et al., 2003).

Even though romantic love relationships and cross-sex friendships are similar in many respects, there are certain relational aspects that differentiate the two (Rawlins, 1982). First, exclusivity is valued and considered necessary for romantic love relationships (Rawlins, 1982). Possessiveness and jealousy is often present in such types of relationships, where as in friendships, the element of exclusivity is not required or expected (Rawlins, 1982). On the contrary, it is considered healthy and natural to form friendships with more than one person. Second, equality is vital and emphasized in friendships, where as in romantic love relationships there is less emphasis placed on equality (Rawlins, 1982). And third, many scholars have noted

that sex or a sexual element is often present in romantic love relationships. Whereas “a strong spiritual attraction” (Rawlins, 1982, p. 344) is emphasized in friendship relationships and sex or sexuality is de-emphasized and/or avoided (Fehr, 2000; Rawlins, 1982). Although the assumption by many scholars has been that sex is a function of romantic love and not friendship, recent studies have begun to note that sex (or sexual activity) is not mutually exclusive to romantic love relationships. On the contrary, it is becoming a more acceptable relational characteristic of cross-sex friendships known as FWBRs (Bissen & Levin, 2007; Puentes et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2007). Furthermore, unlike romantic love relationships, what makes cross-sex friendships unique is that both friends must simultaneously manage being a friend while recognizing the possibility of the relationship becoming romantic or sexual (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000).

Given that cross-sex friendships are becoming more common, individuals’ motives for beginning and maintaining a friendship with a member of the opposite sex vary. In some cases, desiring sexual access to one’s opposite sex friend may serve as a motive for beginning or maintaining the friendship. Seemingly, some individuals perceive sex as a potential benefit to the friendship (Bleske & Buss, 2000). A study by Bleske-Rechek and Buss (2001) found that men were more likely than women to report beginning and maintaining a cross-sex friendship in hopes that it would offer sexual access.

Another likely motive is the possibility of the relationship becoming romantic. According to Sprecher and Regan (2000), cross-sex friendships are “sometimes viewed as a stepping stone to a romantic relationship” (p. 466). As a result, one may begin or continue a friendship with an individual of the opposite sex in hopes that the friendship will result in a romance. A study by Kaplan and Keys (1997) found that 31 percent of women and 53 percent of men reported their

intentions for forming a cross-sex friendship was in hopes that it may result in a romantic love relationship. Although it may appear that men are more likely than women to be motivated by potential romance based on Kaplan and Keys (1997) findings, Bleske-Rechek and Buss (2001) findings suggested that both men and women equally view potential romance as a reason to be in a cross-sex friendship. Given that motives vary and existing research has suggested gender differences, the following hypothesis and research question were derived:

H1: Men will be more likely than women to reciprocate a FWBR.

RQ1: Do males and females differ regarding whether they will reciprocate a romantic relationship request from their cross-sex friend?

Regardless of the motives surrounding the formation of cross-sex friendships, there are two types of friendships that can result: close and casual (Hays, 1989; Schneider & Kenny, 2000). From a social exchange theory perspective, determining whether a friendship is close or casual depends on the ratio of perceived benefits versus cost. Close friendships are marked by more perceived benefits than cost compared to casual friendships (Schneider & Kenny, 2000). Examples of such benefits of friendship may include but are not limited to receiving respect, varying degrees of intimacy, and acceptance (Lenton & Webber, 2006). Likewise, perceived cost may include experiencing competition or jealousy in the friendship. A study by Hays (1985) found that those who reported having close friendships viewed those relationships as having more benefits than those in non-close friendships. According to Wright (1989), “virtually all close friendships involve shared interest and activities, various kinds of intimacy including self-disclosure and the sharing of confidences, emotional support, small talk, shop talk, and exchanges of tangible favors” (p. 370) regardless of whether the friendship is same or cross-sex.

Although it is possible to assess whether a cross-sex friendship is close or casual based on the benefits versus the cost associated with the friendship, it is unclear whether the type of

friendship affects whether one would desire a romantic or sexual relationship with their friend. Studies have shown that if the benefits significantly outweigh the cost, then individuals are more likely to remain in the relationship (Argyle & Henderson, 1984). However, if one has the motive for the relationship to become romantic or sexual, it is unclear whether one would be willing to remain in a friendship even if the costs outweigh the benefits offered. For that reason, the following research questions were derived:

RQ2: Is there a relationship between friendship type (close vs. casual) and whether one (a) reciprocates romantic desires or (b) reciprocates sexual desires?

Aside from whether one's friendship is close or casual, Argyle and Henderson (1984) proposed that in order for a relationship to be identified as a friendship it is necessary for a certain set of rules to be followed. Of the 26 rules identified, six are salient to friendship in that it allows one to distinguish between high and low quality friendships. These six rules are as follows: "stand up for the other in his/her absence, share news of success with him/her, show emotional support, trust and confide in each other, volunteer help in time of need, strive to make him/her happy while in each other's company" (p. 231). Based on the six rules, high quality friendships apply the rules more frequently than low quality friendships.

Similar to friendship type, it is unclear whether quality of the friendship will affect whether one reciprocates romantic or sexual desires. According to Argyle and Henderson (1984), when a rule or rules are consistently broken by one or both friends it may ultimately lead to the dissolution of the friendship. However, if one wants a romantic relationship or FWBR, it is plausible that one might be willing to remain in a low quality friendship. For that reason, the following research question was proposed:

RQ3: Is there a relationship between friendship quality (high vs. low) and whether one reciprocates (a) romantic desires or (b) sex?

When examining friendships, the majority of attention by scholars has been on same-sex dyads. Despite the focus on same-sex friendships, in many ways cross-sex and same-sex friendships are similar. For example, both provide opportunities for individuals to engage in shared activities, seek support, and provide help to one another in times of need (Lenton & Weber, 2006). In addition to the similarities between same and cross-sex friendships, there are unique challenges or barriers that may hinder the development of cross-sex friendships. For that reason, we will turn our focus towards the challenges facing cross-sex friends.

### Challenges Facing Cross-Sex Friendships

The predominate ideology of American culture is that relationships involving men and women must be of a romantic nature; and therefore, it is unrealistic and/or inappropriate for a man and a woman to develop a platonic relationship void of sex or romantic intent (Muraco, 2005; Werking, 1997). As a result of cultural norms, the implication is that when both individuals are heterosexual, a romantic relationship should emerge opposed to a platonic one (Werking, 1997). Hence, cross-sex friendships are discouraged while romantic ones are encouraged (Felmlee, 1999; Kaplan & Key, 1997; Rawlins, 1982).

Despite cultural norms that discourage such friendships, it is plausible for a man and a woman to develop a platonic relationship. However, due to a lack of institutional guidelines (Rawlins, 1982) and cultural norms that encourage romance, uncertainty can be experienced making it difficult for either party to define the relationship (Guerrero & Chavez, 2005). One or both friends may wonder, "Is it a friendship or a prelude to a romantic relationship?" (Morry, 2007, p. 118). For that reason, one or both friends may experience ambiguity regarding the nature of the relationship. In order to deal with the uncertainty and maintain the friendship, both parties may choose to evade conversations that address the nature of the relationship (Afifi &

Burgoon, 1998; Guerrero & Chavez, 2005). The problem with avoiding discussing one's relationship is that it prevents both friends from reaching a mutual understanding or definition of the relationships (O'Meara, 1989). However, ambiguity and uncertainty can be avoided when both friends establish a mutual understanding of one another's romantic intent (Guerrero & Chavez, 2005).

Reaching a mutual definition regarding the relationship is problematic in itself since it is common for individuals to experience a combination of friendship and love (Rawlins, 1982). For this reason, Rawlins (1982, p. 344) suggests that there are five emotional bonds or love typologies possible for men and women to experience: *friendship* ("voluntary, mutual, personal, and affectionate relationship devoid of sexuality"), *platonic love* ("highly emotional commitment without sexual activity"), *friendship love* ("potentially unstable interplay between emotional and sexual expression of affection"), *physical love* ("high sexual involvement with little emotional commitment"), and *romantic love* ("exclusive sexual and emotional relationship"). Despite the typologies offered by Rawlins, distinguishing between the five can be difficult because there is the potential for one's emotional bond to change throughout the course of the relationship.

Regardless of the emotional bond experienced, one or both parties may feel obligated to justify their friendships with third parties (Rawlins, 1982). It can be difficult for third parties to comprehend or understand platonic friendships where both parties are heterosexual, especially since "cross-sex friendships are often viewed as containing a hidden sexual agenda" by on looking third parties (Kaplan & Keys, 1997, p. 192). Therefore, the constant need to justify one's relationship can further hinder the growth and/or development of cross-sex friendships (Rawlins, 1982). One possible explanation is that "individuals are not taught to think of the opposite sex as possible friends or as peers" (p. 348).



Nonetheless, when cross-sex friendships emerge, there are expectations present that are highly dependent on societal norms (Felmlee, 1999). According to McDougall and Hymel (2007), one's understanding of friendship is highly dependent on one's values, beliefs and expectations. The expectations of acceptable behavior differ based on whether the friendship is same or cross-sex (Muraco, 2005). For example, female same-sex friendships tend to exhibit higher levels of intimacy that allow for hugging and/or crying more so than men. Likewise, male same-sex friendships are "less demanding in their friendships with other men" than women causing less intimacy to occur (p. 589). As a result, cross-sex friendships expectations differ than those of same-sex in that less talking and intimacy may result for the female with more talking and intimacy resulting for the male (Morry, 2007).

It must be noted that although societal norms influence and guide expectations, no two friendships are like (Afifi & Metts, 1998). Therefore, one friendship's expectations may vary from another. Likewise, both parties within a friendship may have different expectations from one another. However, when exceptions are violated, there is the potential for tension to emerge or the dissolution of the friendship in its entirety (Felmlee, 1999). The affect of the violation on the friendship is dependent on the severity of the infraction (Afifi & Metts, 1998).

One expectation of male-female relationships that is bound by social norms is that sexuality should be a result (Werking, 1997). Thus, sexless relationships, such as friendships, between a man and a woman are seen as taboo. "In general, people can understand the notion of sex without friendship but the idea of a heterosexual friendship without sex is not as easily accepted" (Rawlins, 1982, p. 348). As a result, the issue of sex can be a challenge. Research has found that sexual attraction or tension is common in the cross-sex friendships (Bleske & Buss, 2000; Felmlee, 1999; Werking, 1997). According to Harry Burns (played by Billy Crystal) in the

famous movie *When Harry Met Sally*, "Men and women can't be friends because the sex part always gets in the way."

Consequently, sexual attraction or sexual tension can further the ambiguity regarding the relationship. An element of sexual tension or desire may be present in the friendship. It should be noted that not all cross-sex friendships struggle with the issue of sex (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000). However, one or both parties sometimes experience sexual attraction toward their friend (Bleske & Buss, 2000; Afifi & Faulkner, 2000). For this reason, the issue of sex or experiencing sexual attraction is not always moot in cross-sex friendships. As a result, friends must negotiate sexual boundaries or expectations of appropriate behavior (Bleske & Buss, 2000). For example, is it appropriate to flirt, hug, hold one another's hand, or even kiss? What may be deemed as appropriate for one friendship may not be for another. In addition, expectations of appropriate behavior can change over time.

In order to negotiate sexual boundaries, one's verbal communication must be matched with complementary non-verbal behaviors, otherwise tension and uncertainty can arise (Rawlins, 1982). According to Rawlins (1982), "cross-sex friends manage not only the presence or absence of sex in their relationship, but the meaning that sexuality holds for them" (p. 350). Therefore, one or both friends may do self-monitoring of their verbal and non-verbal communication in order to prevent misleading or misinterpretations although the sexual tension may still be present.

If the sexual feelings are acted on, the dynamic of the friendship may potentially change to either a romantic relationship or it may be the demise of the relationship completely (Werking, 1997). Likewise, there is potential for a 'friends with benefits relationship' (FWBR) to develop (Williams et al., 2007). FWBRs transpire when sex or sexual activity occurs between cross-sex

friends who "do not define their relationship as romantic" (p. 2). A 'no strings attached' mentality is adapted. Unlike romantic relationships, exclusivity is not required or expected (Hughes, Morrison, & Asada, 2005). The purpose of engaging in sex or sexual activity is not to aspire for a romantic relationship to emerge, but instead to blend the benefits offered by friendship and romantic love relationship without the commitment or responsibilities. Therefore, FWBRs "exist within a space that pushes the boundaries between cross-sex friendships and non-romantic sexual relationships" (p. 61).

Although communication scholars have just begun to examine FWBRs, existing literature has suggested that such relationships are becoming more common and an acceptable phenomenon among young adults, especially on American college campuses (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000; Bissen & Levine, 2007; Hughes et al., 2005). A study by Afifi and Faulkner (2000) found that of 324 college aged students, 51 percent reported having had engaged in sex or sexual activity with their cross-sex friends on at least one occasion without the intention of having the relationship become committed or romantically involved. Another recent study by Bissen and Levine (2007) found that 60 percent of 125 college aged students reported having current or past experience with a FWBR.

The benefits offered to participants of FWBRs differ from friendship to friendship. A study by Afifi and Faulkner (2000) found that over half of participants (67%) viewed sex or sexual activity within the friendship to increase the quality of the relationship. For these participants, sex or sexual activity did not alter the relational definition but was instead seen as an additional function of the friendship. Since a 'no strings attached' mentality is promoted in FWBRs, another advantage offered to participants is that it allows sex or sexual activity with a trusted individual without exclusivity or commitment (Bissen & Levine, 2007).

Even though FWBRs offer advantages, there are disadvantages as well. Sex in friendship can be complicated (Bissen & Levine, 2007). Theoretically, FWBRs provide sex without commitment, jealousy or the responsibilities associated with romantic love relationships (Williams et al., 2007). Since exclusivity is not expected, jealousy can result if one's friend begins a romantic or sexual relationship with another person. Likewise, what started out as 'just sex' can evolve into romantic feelings for one or both friends. Williams et al. (2007) found that it is common for one friend to experience romantic love and want it to evolve into a romantic relationship while the other wants to continue a FWBR. In this circumstance, feelings may be hurt (Bissen & Levin, 2007) and damage to the friendship can result (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000; Bissen & Levin, 2007).

Despite the perceived advantages and disadvantages of FWBRs, even if sexual desire or sexual attraction is present by one or both friends, not all friends will opt to start a sexual relationship. Seemingly, sex can be viewed as a threat to the friendship. Results from Messman's et al. (2000) study found that the number one reason for preferring to remain platonic with one's opposite sex friend was the desire to *safeguard* the friendship. Participants viewed this as a means to protect the friendship from the relational damage that may result.

Also, attraction may also influence one's decision whether to begin a romantic or sexual relationship. A recent study on the role of attraction in cross-sex friendships found that one reason individuals may choose to keep their cross-sex friendship platonic is because they were 'not attracted' to their friend (Messman et al., 2000). However, the study failed to take into consideration that attraction is multi-dimensional and more complex in that the type of attraction experienced by cross-sex friends is different than that of romantic partners (Reeder, 2000). Although the majority of communication research has focused primarily on sexual attraction in

respect to cross-sex friends, there are varying forms of attraction that can manifest (Reeder, 2000). Thus, Reeder (2000, p. 337) proposes that there are four possible types of attraction that can be experienced by cross-sex friends: *subjective physical/sexual* ("feeling physically or sexually attracted to the other"), *objective physical/sexual* ("thinking that the other is attractive in general, but not to oneself"), *romantic* ("wanting to turn the friendship into a romantic relationship"), and *friendship* ("feeling close and connected as friends"). Through the course of the friendship, one's attraction for their friend can remain constant or change. For example, one may enter the relationship with friendship attraction that develops into romantic attraction or remain the same. In addition, attraction types are not mutually exclusive. It is possible for one to experience one or multiple levels of attraction towards their friend, which further complicates cross-sex friendships.

Whether the attraction changes during the course of the friendship or friends experience one or multiple attraction types, it is possible for both friends to have identical attraction or different attraction for one another (Reeder, 2000). For example, one friend may experience romantic attraction while the other friend experiences objective physical/sexual attraction. In this case, the attraction would be considered asymmetrical. Similarly, both friends may experience friendship attraction, which would mean that the attraction was symmetrical. Either way, attraction in any degree can cause complications or tension in the friendship.

In addition to attraction, one's current dating/marital status may also serve as an obstacle to the development of the friendship (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000; Afifi & Guerrero, 1998). In American culture, it is more acceptable for those who are single or in a casual relationship to have cross-sex friends than those who are in committed relationships or are married (Booth & Hess, 1974; Rawlins, 1982). The traditional school of thought is that cross-sex friendships are

preludes to romantic involvement (Rawlins, 1982). Based on this mentality, it is viewed as being inappropriate for married individuals to develop cross-sex friendships. As a result, research has suggested that it is more likely for heterosexual, single individuals to have cross-sex friends than married individuals (Sprecher & Regan, 2000).

For example, Bleske-Rechek and Buss (2001) found that those who reported being single were more likely than those who reported being in a committed relationship to desire a romantic love relationship with their friend. Likewise, Werking (1997) found that if one friend was in a romantic love relationship, it prevented or was viewed as a barrier to the friendship turning romantic. Therefore, when one friend was involved romantically with another individual it helped resolve ambiguity regarding the nature of the friendship.

Although norms dictate that it is more socially acceptable for heterosexual singles to have cross-sex friendships than married individuals, there is an exception to the rule if one's spouse sanctions the friendship (Sprecher & Regan, 2000). In that circumstance, the development of a cross-sex friendship amongst married individuals is considered acceptable (Rawlins, 1982). However, it is still viewed as unacceptable by societal norms for those in committed relationships to begin a romantic or sexual relationship with their friend.

Not only does dating status affect whether one forms cross-sex friendships, it also influences whether a FWBR results. A study by Puentes et al. (2008) found statistical significance suggesting a relationship between dating or marital status and FWBR experience. For example, the majority of respondents (76.3%) who reported having experienced a FWBR classified themselves as casually dating other people. This finding further suggests that there is a social norm that sanctions sexual relations between those who are in committed relationships.

For these reasons, dating or marital status should have a main effect on whether romantic or FWBRs is reciprocated. And therefore, the following hypothesis was derived:

H2: Individuals who report being in non-committed will be more likely to reciprocate (a) romantic desires or (b) a FWBR than those who are in committed relationship.

RQ4: Does one's friend's dating status affect whether one reciprocates (a) a romantic or (b) FWBR relationship?

Overall, there are many challenges facing cross-sex friends. Ambiguity regarding the nature of the relationship (i.e. the possibility of romance or sex) can make it even more difficult for cross-sex friends to manage and maintain a friendship, especially when cultural norms recognize and encourage romantic relationships over friendships. Regardless of the challenges, ultimately friends must decide if they wish to remain platonic or begin a romantic or sexual relationship. But, what are the factors that influence whether one will reciprocate romantic or sexual desires or just remain platonic friends? As a means to answer this question, our research is guided by interaction adaptation theory, which is described below.

#### Interaction Adaptation Theory

When engaging in interaction, individuals often adapt or adjust their behaviors and communication styles to be congruent with their partners (Burgoon, Le Poire, & Rosenthal, 1995; Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). By performing similar or mimicking behaviors, reciprocity occurs (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). One's desire to reciprocate a behavior is a direct result of human's biological predisposition to "mesh their interaction patterns with others" (p. 261) as well as societal norms that promote reciprocation during dyadic interaction. For instance, most parents teach their children that a 'thank you' is followed by 'you're welcome'. By not doing so, one would violate social norms of politeness. Consequently, individuals are more inclined to engage in acts of reciprocity. To further illustrate this point, take into consideration

the act of self-disclosure. For example, when one individual self-discloses personal information about himself or herself, the other individual will often match the behavior by self-disclosing personal information about himself or herself.

Although individuals tend to be more inclined to engage in reciprocity, individuals can choose to react to the sender's behavior by compensating (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995; Burgoon, Le Poire, & Rosenthal, 1995; Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). Compensation is when one's actions are dissimilar or the opposite of the other individual initiating in the interaction (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). Choosing to compensate can be cognizant or unconscious. For example, one individual may raise their voice while the other responds in a whisper. The choice of the receiver to whisper in response to the sender may be intentional or unintentional. Either way, it is possible for "both reciprocity and compensation to occur" (p. 263) within an interaction. Whether one chooses to compensate or reciprocate, it is highly influenced by the other individual's behavior during the interaction (Burgoon, Le Poire, & Rosenthal, 1995).

According to interaction adaptation theory (IAT), "individuals enter interactions with *requirements, expectations, and desires* for the behavior present in the interaction" (Floyd, & Burgoon, 1999, p. 221). Requirements consist of one's basic biological needs (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995; Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). For example, if one is hearing impaired, then it would be necessary to achieve closer physical proximity during interaction. As such, requirements refer to one's needs during an interaction. Expectations are what one would anticipate occurring during an interaction (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995; Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). It is through social norms that expectations for behaviors manifest (Burgoon, Le Poire, & Rosenthal, 1995). Although expectations are predominately influenced by social norms, one's



expectations can be based on past communication interaction observations or experiences with the other individual (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999; Burgoon, Le Poire, & Rosenthal, 1995; Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). For example, one might expect their partner to reciprocate an "I love you."

Unlike requirements and expectations, desires are based on personal preferences (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995; Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). As such, desires are "person-specific" (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995, p. 266). One's desires are influenced by their personal likes or dislikes as well as their own goals for the interaction. For example, if one individual is an introvert they may desire to engage in interaction with an extravert. In addition, culture can influence one's desires (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). For example, if one's culture prefers minimal eye contact during interaction one may prefer to interact with others who prescribe to the same level of eye contact.

Requirements, expectations, and desires are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the three are interrelated (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995; Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). By combining requirements, expectations, and desires, one's *interaction position* (IP) is formed. "The IP represents a net assessment of what is needed, anticipated, and preferred as the dyadic interaction pattern in a situation" (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995, p. 266). Therefore, the IP can potentially influence one's initial behavior or one's response to the behavior of their partner in the interaction.

By contrasting one's IP to their partner's *actual* (A) behavior, the discrepancy between the two can be measured to predict whether reciprocity or compensation will occur (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). If one's requirements, expectations and desires (or IP) is met than there is no discrepancy between the IP and A, which means reciprocity should occur. However, a

discrepancy occurs between one's IP and A when one's requirements, expectations or desires are not met. Whether reciprocity or compensation results, is dependent on the valence resulting from the discrepancy between the IP and A. Small discrepancies may be ignored. However, when larger discrepancies occur, the valence will determine the adaptation. According to IAT, if the IP is more positively valenced than A, compensation will occur. On the contrary, if A is more positively valenced than IP, then reciprocation will result. Therefore, the magnitude of the discrepancy between IP and A, and the valence will ultimately affect the outcome of the adaptation that occurs in the interaction (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999).

Even though the discrepancy between IP and A is highly dependent on the combination of one's requirements, expectations, and desires, according to IAT, requirements is considered to be more important than the other three factors on the IP (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). In some circumstances, requirements, expectations, and desire's importance can be equally distributed meaning that one factor does not have more of an influence on the IP than another. However, in most cases the three factors are incongruent. In other words, if requirements, expectations, and desires are not equally distributed in that one factor is more significant than another, it will affect the outcome of the interaction. Hierarchically speaking, requirements should take precedent over expectations and desires. For example, if one is hearing impaired (requirement) that need will typically take precedent over any expectations or desires that individuals have during an interaction. However, in most everyday routine interactions, requirements will be satisfied. For our purposes, we will focus on expectations and desires since there should be little to no discrepancy between IP and A when requirements are met. For that reason, based on the theoretical implications of IAT, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: Individuals will be more likely to reciprocate (a) romantic desires or (b) FWBR when their expectations and desires are positive.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Participants

At a large southeastern university, undergraduate students were recruited from lower and upper division communication courses. Approximately 350 students were recruited to complete an online questionnaire. Of the 350 students recruited, 319 began the questionnaire. Of the 319 that began, only 309 completed the survey. Two surveys were eliminated from this study because their answers to every question were the same. Of the sample, 94.5% reported being heterosexual, 2.6% were homosexual, 2.6% were bisexual and 0.3% preferred not to answer the question. When asked of the sexual orientation of the friend, respondents reported that 91.9% were heterosexual, 3.9% were homosexual, 3.6% were bisexual, and 0.7% preferred not to answer the question. Those who reported themselves or their cross-sex friend as being either “homosexual,” or “prefer not to answer” were excluded from this study. This is because the expectations and desires for a romantic or sexual relationship with a friend would be different in these cases, and we are interested in learning what factors related to the expectations and desires predict whether one will reciprocate romantic or sexual relationships.

The average age of the 307 respondents (male n=110, female n=197) was 19.67 (range: 18 - 57). The majority of respondents were freshman (40.7%), while 27.9% were sophomores, 17.4% were juniors, and 14.1% were seniors. Of the sample, 70% were Caucasian, 10.3% were Hispanic, 8.7% were African American, 5.2% were Asian, and 5.8% reported being “other.” The average length of the friendship reported by the respondents was 42 months (range: 2-234 months). At the time of the sample, 50.2% reported being single, 9.4% were casually dating, 37.8% were in a committed relationship, 1.6% were engaged, 0.7% were married, and 0.3% were divorced/widowed. In regards to their friend’s dating status, participants reported that 60.6%

were single, 19.2% were casually dating, 17.6% were in a committed relationship, 1% were engaged, 1.3% were married, and 0.3% were divorced/widowed.

### Procedures

As a means to recruit volunteers, the researcher visited various undergraduate communication classes, and explained that the study focuses on one's relationships with a member of the opposite sex that they spend time with but are not currently dating, and to whom they are not related. Participants were provided with an informed consent form that contained the link to the research questionnaire (see Appendix D). The survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey web site, and responses were kept confidential due to the extremely personal nature of the information. All participants were required to be at least 18 years of age or older to participate. The questionnaire consisted of self-report measures regarding dating status, friendship level, friendship quality, expectations and desires, and attitudes about premarital sex.

### Instrumentation

Respondents were supplied with the informed consent document at the beginning of the survey as well as the following instructions on the first page of the survey:

“This questionnaire involves thinking of a person of the opposite sex whom you spend time with, but do not currently date and whom you are not related. Please think of a person fitting this description and keep this person in mind as you answer *all* of the following questions.”

At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were asked how they went about selecting the target person for this study. Of the sample, 38.1% reported that they selected the person because it was “first person I thought of,” 18.1% stated that “The person I chose is the only person of the opposite sex I spend time with other than a romantic partner or family member,” 12.6% stated “I think about this person all the time,” 10.3% reported “No reason in particular,”

8.7% stated “This is the last person I talked to who met the qualifications for the study,” 8.4% stated “I like this person the best,” and 3.9% stated “other.”

### *Dating Status*

In the demographic section, participants were asked to report their dating status as well as their friend’s dating status. Options included “single,” “casually dating,” “in a committed relationship,” “engaged,” “married,” and “divorced/widowed”. For analysis purposes, the five category options were collapsed into two: “non-committed” and “committed relationship”. Those who report being “single,” “casually dating,” or “divorced/widowed” were included in the “non-committed” category. Those who reported being in a “committed relationship,” “engaged” or “married” were included in the “committed relationship” category.

### *Friendship Level*

To assess whether one’s friendship is close or casual, items from Hays (1989) and Lenton and Webber (2006) were adapted and combined to create a measure of the benefits and cost associated with friendship. Of the 20 items, 10 items measure benefits such as “I have fun and/or relax when I am with this person”. The remaining 10 items measure cost associated with the friendship such as “I feel bored with I am with this person” (1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Neither Agree or Disagree; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree). A score of 5 refers to close relationship; where as a score of 1 signifies a casual relationship. Using the 10 items, a scale was computed by computing the mean across items. The scale was labeled “friendship closeness,” and was found to meet conventional levels of scale reliability,  $\alpha = .91$ .

### *Friendship Quality*

To measure this variable, six items from Argyle and Henderson's (1984) rules of friendship scale were used. Respondents were asked to report how frequently they engage in each item as well as how often they perceive that their friend engages in each item (1=Never; 2=Rarely; 3=Sometimes; 4=Often; 5=Always). A score of five signifies a high quality friendship, while a score of 1 refers to a low quality friendship. By averaging all of the items, a new variable was computed labeled "friendship quality," which produced an alpha reliability score of .95.

### *Desires*

To assess expectations and desires, we created new items as well as adapting items from Messman, Canary, and Hause (2000), Reeder's (2000) four types of attraction, and Argyle and Henderson's (1984) rules of friendship. To assess desires, respondents were provided with a list of statements to which assessed their level of agreement. Such statements include, "I am not attracted to this person" and "I don't want to date anyone at this time" (1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Neither Agree or Disagree; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree). A principle factorial analysis with a varimax rotation was conducted. Based on the eigen values over 1 and interpretability, two subscales were derived. For the original 15 items for desire, 11 items were retained. The first desire subscale was labeled *Not Attracted*, which refers to not feeling physical or sexual attraction to the other person (See Table 1 for items and loadings). The second desire subscale was labeled as *Me Time*, which refers to not wanting any type of relationship at the present time. Both desire subscales meet conventional reliability standards (Not Attracted = .88; Me Time = .81).

### *Romantic Expectations*

Respondents were asked about their expectations if the relationship were to become romantic. Items include, “My friends would disapprove” and “We would have a lot of fun together” (1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Neither Agree or Disagree; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree). A principle factorial analysis with a varimax rotation was conducted resulting in three subscales. Based on eigen values over 1 and interpretability, of the original 12 items, 11 items were retained. The first expectation subscale for romantic relationship was labeled *Incompatibility*, which refers to feeling like one's and/or one's friend's social network would disapprove of the relationship. Likewise, in this category one believes that the sex would not be satisfying, or that both parties would not have “fun together.” The second subscale was labeled *Jealousy/Trust Issues*. Jealousy/Trust Issues refer to feeling like one cannot trust the other person, and/or feeling like oneself or their friend would become jealous. The third and final subscale was labeled *Negative Outcomes*, which refers to feeling like oneself and/or one's friend would eventually get hurt. There is also a fear of being disappointed or that the friendship would eventually come to an end. All three of the romantic expectation subscales meet conventional reliability standards (*Incompatibility* = .77; *Jealousy/Trust Issues* = .73; *Negative Outcomes* = .77). A list of all items and subscales primary loadings for romantic expectations can be found in Table 2.

### *Friends With Benefits Expectations*

Respondents were asked about their expectations if the relationship were to become sexual (i.e. FWBR). Items included, “The sex would be satisfying” and “I would be disappointed” (1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Neither Agree or Disagree; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree). A principle factor analysis with a varimax rotation was conducted resulting in

two subscales. Based on eigen values over 1 and interpretability, of the original 13 items, 10 items were retained. The first FWBR expectation was labeled *Sexual/Romantic Potential*, which refers to feeling like the engaging in a sexual relationship would be fun, and that the sex would be satisfying. Likewise, one believes that eventually it would turn into a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship. The second FWBR expectation was labeled *Threat To Friendship*. In this category there is a fear that beginning a sexual relationship would eventually cause one or both parties to become jealous or eventually get hurt. There is also a fear that it would lead to the loss of the friendship entirely. Both FWBR expectation subscales meet conventional reliability standards (Sexual/Romantic Potential = .76; Threat To Friendship = .78). A list of all items and subscales primary loadings for FWBR expectations can be found in Table 3.

#### *Attitudes About Premarital Sex*

Although it is not a variable in this study, one's attitudes about premarital sex were included as a means to control for extraneous sources of variance. This is due to the assumption that if one believes that sex is not okay before marriage, theoretically they should be more likely to compensate a friends with benefits relationship. A total of 13 items were used. For each item, participants were asked to assess their level of agreement with each statement using a five point Likert type scale (1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Neither Agree or Disagree; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree). Ten of the items were taken from Hendricks and Hendricks (1987) sexual attitudes scale, such as "Casual sex is acceptable" and "The best sex is no strings attached". In addition to Hendricks and Hendricks scale, three additional items were created, which included, "It is okay for non-married people to engage in oral sex or other sexual activities that do not include sexual intercourse," "Sex should be reserved for married people only," and "Non-marital



sex is always okay as long as both people consent.” All 13 items were averaged together to compute a new variable labeled “Sexual Attitudes,” which had an alpha reliability of .89.

### *Dependent Variable*

Since we are interested in what expectations and desires influence whether one will reciprocate a romantic or sexual (friends with benefits) relationship, we created two items: “If the person you have described in this survey said they wanted to have a romantic relationship with you, would you consider a romantic relationship with this person (i.e. exclusively dating this person)?” and “If the person you have described in this survey suggested that you have a sexual relationship without commitment, would you consider a sexual relationship with them (friends with benefits)?” (1=Never Would Consider; 2=Maybe Would Consider; 3= Absolutely Would Consider; 4= I prefer not to answer). Those who responded with “Prefer not to answer” were removed from the analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

### Omnibus Model Testing

Given that we were interested in predicating what factors determine whether one reciprocates a FWBR or a romantic love relationship, we conducted a multiple linear regression. The regression consisted of FWBR as the dependent measure and Not Attracted, Me Time, Threat To Friendship, Sexual/Romantic Potential, friendship closeness, friendship quality, sex, sexual attitudes, and dating status as the predictors. A significant model emerged, adjusted  $R^2 = .44$ ,  $F(11, 278) = 21.53$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Table 5).

The second regression consisted of romantic love relationship as the dependent measure and Not Attracted, Me Time, Incompatibility, Negative Outcomes, Jealousy/Trust Issues, friendship closeness, friendship quality, sex, sexual attitudes, and dating status as the predictors. A significant model emerged, adjusted  $R^2 = .59$ ,  $F(12, 280) = 35.85$ ,  $p < .001$  (See Table 6). Based on the multiple regressions for romantic love relationships and FWBR, the findings are as follows.

### Hypothesis One

Hypothesis 1 predicted that men would be more likely to reciprocate a FWBR than women. As indicated by the FWBR multiple regression results, the relationship between gender and FWBR was significant indicating that men are more likely than women to reciprocate a FWBR,  $\beta = -.21$ ,  $p < .001$ . These results support H1.

### Research Question One

Research question 1 asked whether one's gender was a predictor of reciprocating for romantic love relationships. According to the multiple regression, gender was a not significant predictor,  $\beta = -.05$ ,  $p = .29$ .

### Research Question Two

Research question 2 asked whether there is a relationship between friendship type (close vs. casual) and the reciprocation of a (a) romantic relationship or (b) a FWBR. In the case of romantic relationship, results suggest that friendship closeness reliably predicts,  $\beta = .16, p = .002$ . However, in the case of reciprocating a FWBR, the results indicate no significant relationship,  $\beta = -.03, p = .68$ .

### Research Question Three

Research question 3 asked whether a relationship exists between friendship quality (high vs. low) and whether one reciprocates (a) romantic relationship or (b) a FWBR. For both romantic relationships ( $\beta = .03, p = .55$ ) and FWBR ( $\beta = .03, p = .60$ ), results concluded that friendship quality does not predict reciprocation of either type of relationship.

### Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis 2 predicted that people who reported being in non-committed category would be more likely to reciprocate (a) romantic relationship or (b) a FWBR than those in a committed relationship. According to the multiple regression analysis, one's dating status does not predict whether one will reciprocate a romantic relationship ( $\beta = -.05, p = .26$ ) or FWBR ( $\beta = -.03, p = .51$ ). Therefore, H2 was not supported.

### Research Question Four

Research question 4 found no significant findings to indicate that one's friends dating status would affect whether one would reciprocate (a) romantic relationship or (b) a FWBR. In the case of romantic relationships, findings were as follows:  $\beta = -.03, p = .42$ . In addition, FWBR results from the regression analysis were as follow:  $\beta = .07, p = .16$ .

### Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis 3a predicted that individuals would be more likely to reciprocate a romantic relationship when their expectations and desires are positive. The results from the multiple regression analysis indicated that Not Attracted ( $\beta = -.63, p < .001$ ) and Incompatibility ( $\beta = -.12, p = .04$ ) are significant predictors of reciprocation. However, Me time ( $\beta = .06, p = .15$ ), Negative Outcomes ( $\beta = -.05, p = .28$ ), and Jealousy/Trust Issues ( $\beta = .02, p = .64$ ) were not significant predictors. Although not an expectation or desire, sexual attitudes was included in the study to control for extraneous variance. In the circumstance of romantic relationship, one's sexual attitudes ( $\beta = -.07, p = .10$ ) is not a significant predictor.

Hypothesis 3b predicted that individuals would be more likely to reciprocate a FWBR when their expectations and desires are positive. The results from the multiple regression analysis indicate that *Not Attracted* ( $\beta = -.30, p < .001$ ) and Sexual/Romantic Potential ( $\beta = .13, p = .03$ ) were predictors. However, Me Time ( $\beta = .02, p = .76$ ), and Threat To Friendship ( $\beta = -.03, p = .52$ ) were not significant predictors. Even though not an expectation or desire, sexual attitudes were included in the study to control for extraneous variance. In the circumstance of FWBR, one's sexual attitudes ( $\beta = .27, p < .001$ ) is a significant predictor.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Compared to other relational categories, such as same-sex friendships and romantic relationships, communication research regarding cross-sex friendships is relatively new and limited. This study sought to expand upon the current communication research regarding this unique relational category. One facet that makes cross-sex friendships unique is the potential for a romantic or FWBR to develop (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000, Messman et al., 2000, Kaplan & Keys, 1997). However, communication research has yet to investigate how people respond to requests for escalation to a romantic or sexual relationship from a friendship. For that reason, the primary purpose of this study was to examine what factors determine whether an individual will reciprocate a request for a romantic or FWBR.

In contrast to same-sex friendships, gender is the main component in heterosexual cross-sex friendships that propels the possibility of romance or sex amongst “friends.” Therefore, we began our discussion by focusing on gender as a predictor of reciprocation. H1 predicted that men would be more likely than women to reciprocate a FWBR with their cross-sex friend. Not surprisingly, the results supported H1 suggesting that there is a gender difference. This finding is congruent with Bleske-Rechek and Buss (2001) who found that men are more likely than women to be motivated to begin and/or maintain a cross-sex friendship in hopes of it resulting in a sexual relationship. If one already desires a sexual relationship with their “friend,” it seems only naturally that if presented with the opportunity one would act accordingly. Therefore, one possible explanation is that men are more sexually driven than their cross-sex counterpart; thereby making men more likely to reciprocate sexual advances. Likewise, given that sex is often associated with romantic love relationships than friendship relationships (Fehr, 2000; Rawlins, 1982), it may be that women are more likely to de-emphasize or avoid sex in their friendships

due to perceived social norms that suggest that women should not engage in sex or sexual activity with individuals who are not their romantic partner even if the desire is present. Men, in contrast, sometimes receive praise or other positive feedback from their social network for having numerous sexual partners.

In the case of reciprocating romantic desires, RQ1 sought to determine if gender was a predictor of reciprocation. In contrast to the findings regarding FWBR, data analysis suggests no relationship between participant sex and reciprocation of a request to escalate the relationship. Even though cross-sex friendships are often viewed as a potential precursor to a romantic relationship (Sprecher & Regan, 2000), the desire for a romantic relationship must be present by both parties in order for it to manifest. This finding is consistent with Bleske-Rechek and Buss (2001) who found that both men and women equally view potential romance as a reason to be in a cross-sex friendship. Although neither sex is more likely to agree to a romantic relationship, perhaps the reason why men are more inclined to begin a FWBR more often than a romantic relationship is because it allows for sexual access without commitment.

RQ2 asked whether there is a relationship between friendship type (close vs. casual) and whether one reciprocates (a) romantic relationship or (b) a FWBR. In regards to romantic relationships, the results suggest that individuals in close friendships are more likely to reciprocate a romantic relationship with their cross-sex friend than those in casual friendships. Given that close friendships are marked by more benefits than costs (Lenton & Webber, 2006; Schneider & Kenny, 2000) and that individuals are more likely to sustain relationships that offer significantly more benefits (Argyle & Henderson, 1984), perhaps going from a friendship to a romantic relationship makes for a natural progression offering greater benefits to participants. Already close friendships share intimacy, emotional support for one another, and allow a safe

haven for self-disclosure to occur (Wright, 1989), which are also characteristics that can be found in romantic love relationships. Individuals possibly use the benefits and costs they already experience in the friendship as a basis for predicting outcomes of a potential romantic relationship. As a result, participants' current relationship state may in turn make one more or less likely to reciprocate a romantic relationship with their cross-sex friend.

Unlike romantic relationships, the findings suggest that friendship type is not a significant predictor of FWBR reciprocation. It appears whether the friendship is close or casual has no significant bearing on whether one chooses to reciprocate a FWBR with their cross-sex friend. The potential advantages and disadvantages from escalating both casual and close friendships to a FWBR might help explain this finding. As noted earlier, close friendships provide many benefits (Lenton & Webber, 2006; Schneider & Kenny, 2000; Wright, 1989). As a result, having a FWBR with a close friend may be viewed as more comfortable since there is already a level of intimacy and affection established. On the other hand, sexual escalation could also potentially hurt the friendship by creating jealousy or because romantic feelings develop on the part of one friend but not the other. Likewise, potential advantages to having a FWBR with a casual friend also exist. One friend might feel less worried about hurting the friendship if the sexual relationship fails. On the other hand, a person might feel less comfortable engaging in sexual activity with a more casual friend given the lower level of affection and intimacy.

RQ3 asked whether a relationship between friendship quality (high vs. low) predicts whether one reciprocates (a) romantic relationship or (b) a FWBR. Results indicated that in both romantic relationships and FWBR, friendship quality is not a significant predictor of reciprocation. Although the zero-order correlation indicates that there is a relationship (see Table

5) when entered into the regression equation, the association disappears suggesting that friendship quality does not uniquely predict reciprocation of romantic or FWBR requests.

H2 predicted that participants who reported being within the non-committed category would be more likely to reciprocate (a) romantic relationship or (b) a FWBR than those in a committed relationship. To our surprise, H2 was not supported. While one's current dating status may serve as an obstacle in one's cross-sex friendship (Afifi & Faulkner, 2000; Afifi & Guerrero, 1998; Werking, 1997) and social norms discourage sex or romance outside an existing relationship, it appears that it does not affect one's decision regarding whether to reciprocate sexual or romantic advances. Although the findings are puzzling, it could be that dating status may be mediated by attraction such that being committed reduces the target's attractiveness (see Table 4). Although the correlation is smaller for FWB than romantic relationships, it is still there. Another possible explanation is that even though one is in a committed relationship, it may not be a serious or a satisfying relationship. Therefore, making one feel comfortable either cheating or ending one's current relationship in order to pursue a romantic or sexual relationship with their cross-sex friend.

Similar to H2, RQ4 findings suggest that one's friend's dating status does not affect whether one reciprocates a romantic relationship or a FWBR. Given that our findings from H2 indicate that one's own dating status does not affect one's decision to reciprocate, it makes logical sense that one's friend's dating should likewise have little to no affect. One possible explanation is that one's cross-sex friend's romantic partner may not be viewed as a friend. As a result, the fear of hurting a third party may not be present making one feel less worried about pursuing any sexual or romantic feelings.



H3 predicted that individuals would more likely reciprocate a (a) romantic relationship or (b) FWBR when one's expectations and desires are positive. The findings indicate that certain expectations and desires serve as predictors of reciprocity or compensation in both romantic and FWBRs. Specifically, Not Attracted is positively associated with both romantic and FWBR. This finding offers support for the interaction adaptation theory prediction that when there is a discrepancy between one's interaction position and the actual behavior of the partner, the person will usually compensate an increase in intimacy. Specifically, we find that when a friend is not attracted to an opposite sex friend, s/he will likely compensate an attempt to increase in intimacy in the relationship. On the other hand, when one is attracted to a friend, his/her interaction position is consistent with an attempt to increase intimacy resulting in reciprocation of a bid to escalate the relationship. Not only does this finding support the theoretical predications, it is also consistent with research by Messman et al. (2000) who found that when one is not attracted to one's opposite sex friend, it serves as a motive for remaining platonic.

In contrast to the desire variable of Not Attracted, Me Time is not a significant predictor of reciprocity or compensation of romantic desires. It may be that even though one may not necessarily desire a romantic relationship at the moment, when presented with the opportunity one may still choose to reciprocate. One reason for why an individual may choose to reciprocate is that one may feel lonely and need companionship, even if one is not looking for a lasting relationship. Another possible explanation for why one may reciprocate is out of fear of losing the friendship if one does not. It is also possible that an individual may genuinely have romantic feelings for their friend even though he or she does not feel ready to be romantically involved. Although one may reciprocate, compensation could result as well. As noted, one may have genuine romantic feelings, but still chooses to compensate because one is not ready for a

relationship presently. Another possible explanation is that one is not romantically interested and therefore, compensates.

Similarly, Me Time is not a significant predictor of reciprocity or compensation of FWBRs. The benefit to beginning a FWBR is that one's sexual needs can still be met without the exclusivity that is expected in a romantic relationship. As a result, one may decide to reciprocate for the sole purpose of fulfilling one's sexual needs, or because one is sexual attracted. However, by beginning a sexual relationship there is always the potential that one's friend may want the sexual relationship to evolve into a romantic relationship. As a result, it could potentially create problems if one is wishing to remain 'single' and therefore, one may choose to compensate as a means to avoid a messy situation. Likewise, compensation might occur because one is not sexually attracted to their friend.

With respect to romantic relationships expectations, the results indicated that Incompatibility serves as predictor of compensation or reciprocity, while Negative Outcomes and Jealousy/Trust Issues do not. The combination of IAT predications and the observed results suggest that when one feels incompatible, compensation is more likely to result because the discrepancy between the interaction position and the actual behavior would be negatively valenced. However, when one feels that social networks would approve of a romantic involvement, reciprocity is more likely to result because the discrepancy would be positively valenced. It seems intuitive that one would be highly influenced by one's friends' opinions. There may be a fear that other individual's friends would constantly speak poorly or negatively about oneself, thereby causing tension within the romantic relationship. Furthermore, the variable "incompatibility" also encompasses the belief that sex would not be satisfying. Given that sex or sexual activity is often viewed as an important component of romantic relationships

(Rawlins, 1982), it seems natural that if one's perceptions of the sexual element are negative there would be a profound effect on one's decision to reciprocate romantic desires.

Despite the potential for hurt feelings or possibility of losing the friendship, our results suggest that Negative Outcomes is not a significant predictor of reciprocity or compensation. This finding suggests that although one may experience hesitation due to the potential repercussions that could result if the romantic relationship were to turn sour, it does not necessarily influence one's decision. Some individuals may be willing to take the possible risk, rather than miss out on the opportunity for something that could result in a successful lasting relationship, while others may not. Similarly, our data shows that Jealousy/Trust Issues do not make one more or less likely to reciprocate romantic desire. While it is a part of human nature to have issues with jealousy and/or trust, some individuals may find that their fear prevents them from becoming romantically involved, while others may not.

In regards to FWBR, our results suggest that individuals who expect Sexual/Romantic Potential as a result of engaging in sexual activity are more likely to reciprocate sexual advances than those who do not. The appeal of a FWBR is that there is a 'no strings attached' mentality that creates an environment for 'harmless' sex or sexual activity to occur. Since sex or sexual activity is the main selling point to FWBR, it seems logical that one would have high expectations for the sex to be satisfying. Although the primary purpose is sex and not for a romantic relationship to evolve, it is possible for romantic feelings to emerge (Williams et al., 2007). Additionally, as noted earlier, it is possible for individuals to be motivated to pursue a cross-sex friendship in hopes of a romantic relationship developing (Bleske-Rechek & Buss, 2001). For that reason, it may be that individuals are driven subconsciously or consciously to reciprocate sexual advances due to their desire for romance with the other person. Another

explanation is that due to experiencing *subjective physical/sexual attraction* (Reeder, 2000), one may opt to have a sexual relationship regardless of whether or not *romantic attraction* is present.

Although one may expect that worrying about losing or harming one's friendship would be a predictor of reciprocity or compensation of FWBR, our results suggest that Threat To Friendship does not make one more or less likely to reciprocate. For those who choose to reciprocate, it may be that the appeal of sex without exclusivity or commitment outweighs the potential cost to one's friendship. On the other hand, those who compensate may still feel sexually attracted to their friend but opt to remain platonic because friendship is more important than sex.

Even though sexual attitudes was not included as a variable in this particular study, it was used as a means to control for extraneous sources of variance and therefore, is worth noting. In the case of romantic relationship, our assumption was that one's sexual attitudes would not have an effect on one's decision to reciprocate or compensate. Our results validated our assumption. It is possible for individuals to abstain from sexual activity and still be in a romantic relationship. Likewise, it is possible for one to engage in sexual activity and still be in a romantic relationship. In contrast to romantic relationships, our assumption was that if one believes that sex is not okay before marriage, than theoretically one should be more likely to compensate a request for a FWBR. Again, our results were validated. If one feels that sex or sexual activity is not okay before marriage, than one is more likely to compensate than an individual who believes sex before marriage is okay.

#### Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Although this study serves as a first step to understanding the complexity of one's decision-making process in terms of escalating a cross sex friendship, some limits to the study

should be discussed. The most obvious limitation to our study is that the results cannot be generalized to all ethnicities, age groups, and education levels because a convenience sample was used. Given that the sample comprised of college students, some of the results may be affected due to the age of the respondents in the sample. In our study, for example, the average age of participants was 19.67. It is very probable that expectations and desires vary based on one's age. Likewise, our age group may have affected the results of H2 and RQ4, which indicated that dating status is not a significant predictor. It is likely that the majority of the young participants experienced very few or no 'committed relationships' in their lifetime. It is possible that a wider range of age groups would yield different results. For that reason, future research should explore additional age groups in order to have a better understanding.

Even though this study explored expectations and desires, it is important to note that by no means are they intended to be exhaustive. Therefore, researchers would benefit by further investigating other potential categories. By doing so, it would offer scholars a richer scope of expectations and desires and their functions in one's decision to reciprocate or compensate bids of romantic or sexual escalation.

For our purposes, we choose to exclude any respondents who identified themselves or their cross-sex friend as homosexual. However, what happens if one of the friends is homosexual or transgender? What if the friendship is same-sex? By exploring the influence of sexual orientation and/or friendship composition (same vs. cross-sex), scholars would benefit by having a better understanding of what factors predict reciprocity or compensation.

In both FWBR and romantic relationships, our findings suggest that Not Attracted is a significant predictor. However, it is unclear whether the role of attraction operates similarly in the decision making process. Given that there are varying types of attraction (Reeder, 2000) (i.e.

*subjective physical/sexual, objective physical/sexual, romantic, friendship*), it is possible that attraction functions differently. Future research would profit by acknowledging the complexity of attraction and determine how and if attraction type affects reciprocity.

Our study used the term FWBR in the broadest of sense to encompass any sexual activity that occurs between two friends. However, a recent study by Williams et al. (2007) proposed that there are five types of FWBR: *just sex* (interact only for the purposes of having sex), *network opportunism* (interact in the same social circle with the understanding that if either party has not find another prospect by the end of the night, they will get together), *“true” friends with benefits* (engage in sexual activity, but have love and respect for one another), *transition in* (engage in sexual activity as a means to escalate the friendship into a romantic relationship), and *transition out* (ex-romantic partners who partake in sexual activity). Given that there are potential five options available, future research should compare and contrast those factors amongst the varying types that influence reciprocation or compensation. By doing so, it would allow scholars to have a better understanding regarding FWBR.

## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Notice of Expedited Initial Review and Approval

From : UCF Institutional Review Board  
FWA00000351, Exp. 10/8/11, IRB00001138

To : Valerie Akbulut

Date : December 02, 2008

IRB Number: SBE-08-05952

Study Title: Cross-Sex Friendships and Friends with Benefits Relationships

Dear Researcher:

Your research protocol noted above was approved by expedited review by the UCF IRB Vice-chair on 12/1/2008. **The expiration date is 11/30/2009.** Your study was determined to be minimal risk for human subjects and expeditable per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.110. The category for which this study qualifies as expeditable research is as follows:

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

A waiver of documentation of consent has been approved for all subjects. Participants do not have to sign a consent form, but the IRB requires that you give participants a copy of the IRB-approved consent form, letter, information sheet, or statement of voluntary consent at the top of the survey.

All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

To continue this research beyond the expiration date, a Continuing Review Form must be submitted 2 – 4 weeks prior to the expiration date. Advise the IRB if you receive a subpoena for the release of this information, or if a breach of confidentiality occurs. Also report any unanticipated problems or serious adverse events (within 5 working days). Do not make changes to the protocol methodology or consent form before obtaining IRB approval. Changes can be submitted for IRB review using the Addendum/Modification Request Form. An Addendum/Modification Request Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <http://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

**Failure to provide a continuing review report could lead to study suspension, a loss of funding and/or publication possibilities, or reporting of noncompliance to sponsors or funding agencies.** The IRB maintains the authority under 45 CFR 46.110(e) to observe or have a third party observe the consent process and the research.

On behalf of Tracy Dietz, Ph.D., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 12/02/2008 09:37:55 AM EST

IRB Coordinator



## APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVED CLASSROOM SCRIPT

Hi, my name is Valerie Akbulut and I am a Master's student here at University of Central Florida in the Nicholson School of Communication. My faculty advisor is Dr. Harry Weger. Currently, I am doing research that examines the communication patterns individuals' use in close relationships. To participate in the study, you must be at least 18 years of age or older.

The survey is an online survey, which will be completed outside of class. You may complete the survey anywhere that has an internet connection (i.e home, school, computer lab). The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. This questionnaire involves thinking of a person of the opposite sex whom you spend time with, but do not currently date and are not related to. Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

There are no known risks that are associated with participation in this study. There is no direct benefit for participating in the study and no penalty for not participating. Participants may receive educational benefit from participating in the study by learning firsthand how experiments in social science are conducted. Additionally, extra credit will be given for your participation if authorized by your instructor. (Information regarding how much and what type of extra credit will be explained. The researchers will know this information before entering the classroom. Also, the research will explain how extra credit will be assigned online and how the survey will still remain anonymous).

If extra credit is offered and you wish not to participate or do not meet the requirements, you may complete an alternative assignment. The alternative assignment will be of equal amount of extra credit, which you will complete outside of class and return to the Nicholson School of Communication office. (Information regarding the alternative assignment will be offered here). If you wish to participate in the survey, please raise your hand and I will provide you with a handout that contains the link to the survey. If you wish to complete the alternative assignment, please raise your hand and I will provide you the alternative assignment handout.

Are there any questions that I can answer at this time?

## APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVED INFORMED CONSENT

## *Informed Consent*

**Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.**

**Purpose of the research study:** The purpose of this study is to examine communication patterns in close relationships.

**What you will be asked to do in the study:** This questionnaire involves thinking of a person of the opposite sex whom you spend time with, but do not currently date and are not related to.

**Time required:** 20 minutes

**Benefits and risks:** There is no direct benefit from participating in the study and no penalty for not participating. Participants may receive educational benefit from participating in the study by learning firsthand how experiments in social science are conducted. In addition, if authorized by your instructor, you will be given extra credit for participation. If you are receiving extra credit, you have already been informed in your classroom about what type and how much extra credit you will receive for your participation. There are no known risks that are associated with participation in this study.

**Anonymity and voluntary participation:** Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. The included survey does not ask for any identifying information and the researchers do not need to know who completed which survey. At the conclusion of the survey, you will be directed to a new link, which will allow you to enter your information to receive extra credit. Your instructor will ONLY receive a list of those who participated in the study in order to assign extra credit. Your name will in no way be linked to your answers on the survey you just completed. Students who wish to receive extra credit, but who do not wish to participate in the study, will be given the opportunity to complete an alternative assignment of comparable time and effort.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:** Valerie Akbulut, Master's student, or Dr. Harry Weger, Assistant Professor, University of Central Florida, Nicholson School of Communication, (407)823-2859, or by email at [hweger@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu](mailto:hweger@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu).

**Whom to contact about your rights in the study:** Research at the University of Central Florida is conducted under the oversight of the UCF Institutional Review Board. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCF IRB office, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246. The telephone number is 407-823-2901.

**In completing this survey, I agree that I have read the procedures described above, am at least 18 years of age or older, and am choosing to voluntarily participate in this anonymous study.**

**If you are interested in participating in this study, please use the following link:**  
(*Link Goes Here*)

## APPENDIX D: APPROVED IRB SURVEY

**In completing this survey, I agree that I have read the procedures described above, am at least 18 years of age or older, and am choosing to voluntarily participate in this anonymous study.**

**For each of the following items, think of a person of the opposite sex whom you spend time with, but do not currently date and to whom you are not related. Mark the box of the word that best describes your agreement with the following statements.**

SD= Strongly disagree; D= disagree; N= Neither agree or disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

1. I have fun and/or relax when I am with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. I receive emotional support from this person when I am with him/her.	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. I feel irritated when I am with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. I feel intellectually stimulated when I am with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5. I feel like this person is envious of me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
6. I feel respected by this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. This person offers me emotional protection.	SD	D	N	A	SA
8. I feel bored when I am with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9. I feel disrespected when I am with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
10. I feel like this person will stand up for me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11. I get pleasure from spending time with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
12. I feel like I am wasting time when I am with this friend.	SD	D	N	A	SA
13. My friend is jealous of me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
14. I feel accepted by this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
15. It takes work to maintain the friendship.	SD	D	N	A	SA
16. I feel like I am competing with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
17. I feel understood by this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
18. I feel like this person is competing with me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
19. I feel like I can trust this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
20. The views of others affect our friendship.	SD	D	N	A	SA

**For each of the following questions, please keep the same person in mind and mark the box of the word that best represents how frequently you/your friend do each item.**

N= Never; R= Rarely; S=Sometimes; O=Often; A= Always

<b>How often do you...</b>					
1. Stand up for the other in his/her absence	N	R	S	O	A
2. Share news of success with him/her	N	R	S	O	A
3. Show emotional support	N	R	S	O	A
4. Trust and confide in each other	N	R	S	O	A
5. Volunteer help in time of need	N	R	S	O	A
6. Strive to make him/her happy while in each other's company	N	R	S	O	A
<b>How often does your friend...</b>					
1. Stand up for the other in his/her absence	N	R	S	O	A
2. Share news of success with him/her	N	R	S	O	A
3. Show emotional support	N	R	S	O	A
4. Trust and confide in each other	N	R	S	O	A
5. Volunteer help in time of need	N	R	S	O	A
6. Strive to make him/her happy while in each other's company	N	R	S	O	A

**To what extent would you consider the following changes to this relationship?  
Please select the extent to which you would consider the following.**

1. If the person you have described in this survey said they wanted to have a romantic relationship with you, would you consider a romantic relationship with this person (i.e. exclusively dating this person)?			
Definitely would NOT consider	MAYBE would consider	Definitely WOULD consider	I prefer Not to answer
2. If the person you have described in this survey suggested that you have a sexual relationship without commitment, would you consider a sexual relationship with them (friends with benefits)?			
Definitely would NOT consider	MAYBE would consider	Definitely WOULD consider	I prefer Not to answer

**For the following questions, please select either yes, no or I prefer not to answer.**

1. Have you ever had sex with this person?	Yes	No	I prefer not to answer
--	-----	----	------------------------

**Please read the following statements and answer them honestly about your relationship with the same person in this study. Select the box that best represents each statement.**

SD= Strongly disagree; D= disagree; N= Neither agree or disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

1. I am not attracted to this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. I am not ready at this time for a romantic relationship.	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. I simply have not thought about beginning a romantic relationship with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. I simply have not thought about beginning a friend's with benefits relationship with this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5. I want time out from any intimate relationship at this point in my life.	SD	D	N	A	SA



6. This person is not sexually attractive to me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. I don't know if I can trust this person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
8. I don't want to date anyone at this time.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9. I want to turn the friendship into a romantic relationship.	SD	D	N	A	SA
10. I feel close and connected to this person as a friend, but nothing more.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11. I feel physically or sexual attracted to my friend.	SD	D	A	SA	
12. I think my friend is attractive in general, but I don't feel the attraction myself.	SD	D	N	A	SA
13. Friends should not indulge in sexual activity with other person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
14. Men and women cannot ever be "just friends" because sex always gets in the way.	SD	D	N	A	SA
15. It is possible for a man and a woman to form a platonic friendship.	SD	D	N	A	SA

**If the relationship became sexual (i.e. friends with benefits), I would expect... For each item, please keep in mind the same person for this study. Select the box that best represents your agreement with each statement.**

SD= Strongly disagree; D= disagree; N= Neither agree or disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

1. My friends would disapprove.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. The other person's friends would disapprove.	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. The other person would eventually hurt me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. I would eventually hurt the other person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5. I would eventually lose this person as a friend.	SD	D	N	A	SA
6. I would be disappointed.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. We would have a lot of fun together.	SD	D	N	A	SA
8. The sex would be satisfying.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9. We could remain friends if one or both of us	SD	D	N	A	SA

started a serious relationship with someone else.					
10. A third person would be hurt.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11. This person will get jealous.	SD	D	N	A	SA
12. I will get jealous.	SD	D	N	A	SA
13. It would eventually turn into a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship.	SD	D	N	A	SA

**If the relationship became romantic (i.e. boyfriend/girlfriend), I would expect...**

**For each item, please keep in mind the same person. Select the box that best represents your agreement with each statement.**

SD= Strongly disagree; D= disagree; N= Neither agree or disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

1. My friends would disapprove.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. The other person's friends would disapprove.	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. The other person would eventually hurt me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. I would eventually hurt the other person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5. I would eventually lose this person as a friend.	SD	D	N	A	SA
6. I would be disappointed.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. We would have a lot of fun together.	SD	D	N	A	SA
8. The sex would be satisfying.	SD	D	N	A	SA
10. A third person would be hurt.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11. This person will get jealous.	SD	D	N	A	SA
12. I will get jealous.	SD	D	N	A	SA

**Please read the following statements and select the word that best represents your agreement with each statement.**

SD= Strongly disagree; D= disagree; N= Neither agree or disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

1. It is okay for non-married people to engage in oral sex or other sexual activities that do not include sexual intercourse.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. Sex should be reserved for married people only.	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. Non-marital sex is always okay as long as both people consent.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him/her.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5. Casual sex is acceptable.	SD	D	N	A	SA
6. One-night stands are sometimes enjoyable.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. It is okay to have ongoing sexual	SD	D	N	A	SA

relationships with more than one person at a time.					
8. Sex as a simple exchange of favors is okay if both people agree.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9. The best sex is no strings attached.	SD	D	N	A	SA
10. It is possible to enjoy sex with a person and not like that person very much.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11. Sex without love is meaningless.	SD	D	N	A	SA
12. People should be at least friends before they have sex together.	SD	D	N	A	SA
13. In order for sex to be good, it must also be meaningful.	SD	D	N	A	SA

**Please respond to the following questions.**

1. Sex:     Male     Female
  
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What year are you in school?
  - Freshman
  - Sophomore
  - Junior
  - Senior
  - Graduate student
  
4. Ethnicity:
  - Asian
  - African-American
  - Caucasian
  - Hispanic
  - Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Sexual orientation:
  - Heterosexual
  - Homosexual
  - Bisexual
  - I prefer not to answer this question.

6. Length of friendship:

\_\_\_\_\_ year(s) & \_\_\_\_\_ month(s)

7. Dating/ marital status:

- Single
- Casually dating
- Committed relationship
- Engaged
- Married
- Divorced/widowed

8. *Your friend's* sex:     Male     Female

9. *Your friend's* sexual orientation:

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- I prefer not to answer this question.

10. *Your friend's* dating/marital status:

- Single
- Casually dating
- Committed relationship
- Engaged
- Married
- Divorced/widowed

11. How would you describe your relationship with this person as it currently stands?

- Acquaintance
- Casual friend
- Close friend
- Best friend
- Friends with benefits

12. Please tell us how you went about selecting the person for this study.

- The person I chose is the only person of the opposite sex I spend time with other than a romantic partner or family member.
- No reason in particular
- This is the last person I talked to who met the qualifications for the study.
- First person I thought of
- I think about this person all the time
- I like this person the best
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Table 1: Primary Factor Loadings For Desires*

Subscales/Items	Primary Loadings	$\alpha$ Reliability
Not Attracted		.88
I am not attracted to this person.	.75	
I simply have not thought about beginning a romantic relationship with this person.	.77	
I simply have not thought about beginning a friend's with benefits relationship with this person.	.60	
This person is not sexually attractive to me.	.82	
I want to turn the friendship into a romantic relationship.*	.67	
I feel close and connected to this person as a friend, but nothing more.	.74	
I feel physically or sexual attracted to my friend.*	.84	
I think my friend is attractive in general, but I don't feel the attraction myself.	.62	
Me Time		.81
I am not ready at this time for a romantic relationship.	.80	
I want time out from any intimate relationship at this point in my life.	.85	
I don't want to date anyone at this time.	.86	

Note: 1 \* denotes survey items that were recoded for data analysis.

*Table 2: Primary Factor Loadings for Romantic Expectations*

Subscales/Items	Primary Loadings	$\alpha$ Reliability
Incompatibility		.77
My friends would disapprove.	.76	
The other person's friends would disapprove.	.67	
We would have a lot of fun together.*	.67	
The sex would be satisfying.*	.77	
Jealousy/Trust Issues		.73
A third person would be hurt.	.82	
This person will get jealous.	.78	
I will get jealous.	.60	
Negative Outcomes		.77
The other person would eventually hurt me.	.79	
I would eventually hurt the other person.	.74	
I would eventually lose this person as a friend.	.83	
I would be disappointed.	.69	

Note: 1 \* denotes survey items that were recoded for data analysis.

*Table 3: Primary Factor Loadings for FWBR Expectations*

Subscales/Items	Primary Loadings	$\alpha$ Reliability
Sexual or Romantic Potential		.76
We would have a lot of fun together.	.78	
The sex would be satisfying.	.84	
It would eventually turn into a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship.	.68	
Threat to Friendship		.78
The other person would eventually hurt me.	.63	
I would eventually hurt the other person.	.53	
I would eventually lose this person as a friend.	.67	
I would be disappointed.	.61	
A third person would be hurt.	.62	
This person will get jealous.	.66	
I will get jealous.	.66	



Table 4: Zero Order Correlations for All Variables in the Analysis

	Correlations														
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
1. Reciprocate Romantic	1.00	.429**	-.225**	.137*	.182**	-.302**	-.121*	-.731**	.081	-.169**	.562**	-.587**	-.356**	-.156**	.053
2. Reciprocate FWBR		1.000	-.443**	-.142*	-.035	-.211**	.061	-.505**	.114*	-.214**	.450**	-.338**	-.119*	-.071	.434**
3. Gender			1.000	.165**	.132*	.223**	-.105	.284**	-.110	.199**	-.234**	.180**	.069	.105	-.340**
4. Friendship Closeness				1.000	.578**	.070	-.052	.080	-.177**	-.195**	.095	-.227**	-.353**	-.218**	-.132*
5. Friendship Quality					1.000	-.004	-.058	-.043	.016	-.132*	.168**	-.254**	-.282**	-.122*	-.073
6. Dating Status						1.000	.226**	.318**	-.254**	.055	-.161**	.268**	.095	.126*	-.082
7. Friend's Dating Status							1.000	.074	-.002	.014	-.058	.163**	.057	.037	.047
8. Not Attracted								1.000	-.020	.189**	-.565**	.570**	.282**	.132*	-.144*
9. Me Time									1.000	.027	.107	-.102	.042	-.008	.108
10. Threat to Friendship										1.000	-.203**	.332**	.610**	.617**	-.258**
11. Sexual/Romantic Potential											1.000	-.685**	-.299**	-.047	.279**
12. Incompatibility												1.000	.545**	.265**	-.135*
13. Negative Outcomes													1.000	.428**	-.020
14. Jealousy/Trust Issues														1.000	-.092
15. Sexual Attitudes															1.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5: Multiple Regression Table for FWBR

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>P</i>
Sex	-.32	.08	-.21	<.001
Friendship Closeness	-.03	.08	-.03	.68
Friendship Quality	.03	.06	.03	.60
Dating Status	-.05	.08	-.03	.51
Friend's Dating Status	.12	.09	.07	.16
Not Attracted	-.23	.05	-.30	<.001
Me Time	.01	.04	.02	.76
Threat To Friendship	-.03	.05	-.03	.52
Sexual/Romantic Potential	.11	.05	.13	.03
Sexual Attitudes	.24	.05	.27	<.001

*Table 6: Multiple Regression Table for Romantic Love Relationships*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>P</i>
Sex	-.08	.07	-.05	.29
Friendship Closeness	.25	.08	.16	.002
Friendship Quality	.03	.05	.03	.55
Dating Status	-.08	.07	-.05	.26
Friend's Dating Status	-.07	.08	-.03	.42
Not Attracted	-.56	.05	-.63	<.001
Me Time	.05	.03	.06	.15
Incompatibility	-.11	.05	.12	.04
Negative Outcomes	-.05	.05	-.05	.28
Jealousy/Trust Issues	.02	.04	.02	.64
Sexual Attitudes	-.07	.04	-.07	.10

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