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EXAMINING PATTERNS OF FEMINIST IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT, EMPOWERMENT AND MUTUALITY IN WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIPS

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STARLAIN E SALDANA
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EXAMINING PATTERNS OF FEMINIST IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT,
EMPOWERMENT AND MUTUALITY
IN WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIPS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

_____
Dr. Lisa Frey, Chair

_____
Dr. Denise Beesley

_____
Dr. Lara Mayeux

_____
Dr. Jody Newman

_____
Dr. Rockey Robbins

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of feminist identity development and level of personal empowerment on mutuality within same-sex friendships among adult women. Two hundred and twenty-six adult women participated in the study. These participants completed a demographic form, the Feminist Identity Composite (FIC), Personal Progress Scale-Revised (PPS-R), and the Mutual Psychological Developmental Questionnaire (MPDQ). A hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's method was first conducted on the FIC and revealed two clusters of women, *Traditional Female Values* and *Emerging Feminist Values*. The second stage of data analysis included running a hierarchical multiple regression with four steps. The regression revealed that the full model predicted significant variance in mutuality scores. More specifically, step one and step two of the regression model, which included the predictors of number of close, female friends and empowerment, emerged as statistically significant predictors of mutuality scores. In contrast, neither feminist identity cluster nor the interaction terms emerged as significant predictors was most salient in determining levels of mutuality in women's friendships with other women.

Chapter One

Introduction

Overview

It has long been argued that early theories of human development (e.g. Erikson, 1959; Levinson, 1978) were largely based on male development (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987). As a result, the hallmarks of healthy development have traditionally been seen as the process of differentiating oneself from others (Jordan, 1997; Miller, 1991) with emphases on autonomy, individuation, and self-sufficiency (Jordan, 1997). Eventually, psychologists began to realize that female development was often assumed to be equivalent to that of males, or at worst, completely ignored and overlooked (Jack, 1991; Jordan, 1997; Josselson; Miller, 1986; Miller, 1991). Gilligan stated that psychological theorists were traditionally, purposefully or not, trying to "fashion women out of a masculine cloth" (p. 6) because males were adopted as the norm. Brown and Gilligan went so far as to describe it as "inherently traumatic" (p. 216) when women's psychological development is placed within societal frameworks that view individualism and separation as the standards. When development is premised on separation, the development of women appears as a failure because of the centrality of relationships in many women's lives (Gilligan).

It has been recognized that traditional Western theories of development have often overlooked the reality that humans are interdependent beings (Jordan, 1997). Theorists (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986) began to question these traditional Western notions and, instead, began to emphasize the important role of relationships in humans' lives. These and others (e.g., Jack, 1991) began to see people as possessing a primary

need for connection with others, and believed that it is through making and maintaining relationships that one's sense of self becomes organized. Relational perspectives view relationships as central to human development and state that psychological growth stems from a process of elaboration in and movement toward relationships (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992; Jordan, 1991a). An outgrowth of this viewpoint led to a conceptualization of a "relational self" (Jordan, 1997, p. 9), which highlights the importance of the intersubjective, relational nature of human experience.

Women, in particular, may not be best guided toward a path of healthy identity development without the recognition of the importance of relationships (Miller, 1991) since women's sense of self is theorized to be organized around connection, mutuality, and relationships (Jack, 1999). In fact, women's development actually seems to point toward joining through connections, rather than separation (Gilligan, 1982; Miller). Gilligan described this process as one of "…the paradoxical truths of human experience – that we know ourselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others, and that we experience relationship only insofar as we differentiate other from self" (p. 63).

One such important relationship for women is that of friendship with other women. Women's friendships have been found to be a major source of emotional nurturance, intimacy, psychological growth, and self-revelation (Becker, 1987; Rubin, 1985; Schultz, 1991). They are also vital to one's well-being, and it has been shown that women perceive their same-sex friendships as therapeutic (Davidson & Packard, 1981). For women, friendship is a relationship that may allow each woman to engage in her own pursuits as well as engage with her friend's experiences, which can provide a framework

for each woman to become herself both personally and interpersonally (Becker). This reciprocity occurs, according to Becker, from exchanging thoughts, feelings, and experiences with friends, which Becker believes not only allows women to know and value their friends, but ultimately, know and value themselves. Becker further suggested that women are enabled to appreciate their own uniqueness when they are acknowledged, understood, and valued by other women.

A unique construct, mutuality, has been theorized to be an important aspect of positive relationships (Becker, 1987; Fehr, 1996; Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992; Jordan, 1991a; Jordan, 1997), including women's friendships. Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin noted that mutuality in dyadic relationships emerged as a topic of research with the rise in relational perspectives of psychological functioning. For instance, mutuality has been shown to be a positive predictor of quality of life and depression (Kayser, Sormanti, & Strainchamps, 1999), and higher levels of mutuality have been found in friendships when there is greater agreement on the positive features of the friendship (Bagwell et al., 2005).

Mutuality has been defined as a gradual intersection of people's lives where reliance on cultural norms is lessened, a unique style of interaction is developed, and both people are invested in maintaining and nurturing the relationship (Fehr, 1996). Mutuality may go beyond the reciprocal exchange of benefits and instead bring focus toward a shared sense of relationship (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). From a feminist perspective, mutual participation in relationships is vital to women's self-concept (Kayser et al., 1999); thus, self-concept involves both support given and support received (Kayser et al.).

Social identity, which can be based on affiliations with particular groups and/or movements, is also considered to be a source of self-concept (Ng, Dunne, & Cataldo, 1995). One movement that many women have been affected by, either positively or negatively, is that of the women's movement and feminism. Starting in the 1970s, women began to reject traditional gender roles as their own experiences and accomplishments challenged the "essentialism" (i.e., marriage, raising children, and not working outside the home; Reingold & Foust, 1998, p. 22) upon which traditional notions were based. Women also began to recognize the bias and oppression directed toward their gender (Yakushko, 2007) and the pervasive sexualization and devaluation that accompanied femininity (Jack, 1991).

The field of counseling psychology has attended specifically to women's development of identities regarding gender and feminist consciousness over the past two decades (Fischer & Good, 2004). In fact, consistent patterns in the literature point to links between women's feminist identity and psychological functioning (Fischer & Good, 1998). It has been found that feminist consciousness or the development of feminist identity decreases psychological distress (Saunders & Kashubeck-West, 2006) while facilitating women's well-being (Fischer & Good, 1998). In particular, women with low feminist consciousness have been shown to experience higher levels of negative psychological experiences whereas women with integrated feminist identities experienced benefits (Moradi & Subich, 2002b; Fischer et al., 2000). Feminist identity has also been empirically associated with stronger identity achievement (Fischer et al.), higher self-esteem (McNamara & Rickard, 1989), enhanced assertiveness and self-confidence (Saunders & Kashubeck-West), and increased perceptions of

experiencing sexist events (Moradi & Subich, 2002b).

One particular feminist identity model that emerged out of a belief that an accurate developmental model for women must acknowledge the discrimination and oppression that are part of women's life experiences was the feminist identity development model by Downing and Roush (1985). They believed that the recognition of discrimination and oppression of women is vital as these factors impact one's sense of self as a woman. The model was also formulated from Downing and Roush's own clinical and personal experiences, the scholarly literature, and developmental theories that addressed racial identity (i.e., Cross, 1971). The feminist identity model conceptualized by Downing and Roush is used as the framework for the present study.

The model of feminist identity development postulated by Downing and Roush (1985) has received criticism over the years regarding the lack of evidence that supports it as a true developmental model (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997; Hyde, 2002; Moradi & Subich, 2002a). For example, Hyde discussed the need for true developmental models to have distinct stages without the possibility of returning to earlier stages. However, Downing and Roush themselves stated in their original article that women may "recycle through these stages" (p. 702), noting that this can happen depending on level of life stress as well as the interpersonal and environmental context of women's lives. To address this concern, Yakushko (2007) employed a cluster analysis technique when examining feminist identity, explaining that using a cluster analytic approach allowed women to be at multiple stages of feminist identity development at any given moment (Worell & Etaugh, 1994; Yakushko). Additionally, the use of cluster analysis appears to compliment Downing and Roush's assertion that the model is not a sequential, clear-cut

process, but a “blueprint for women to transcend their passive identity and to integrate both personal and social identities into a coherent whole” (p. 704).

A salient construct that has arisen out of feminist perspectives on identity development is empowerment (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). Empowerment seems to be a common word used in the literature when specifically examining the lives of oppressed groups, such as women (Leung, 2005), and became a focus for women’s lives when it was noticed that women tended to score in normal ranges on symptom measures yet did not experience beneficial changes in affect, life satisfaction, and growth (Johnson, Worell, & Chandler, 2005). The concept of empowerment shares a foundation with feminist identity development in that it recognizes discrimination and oppression by encouraging women to identify and challenge the external conditions that devalue them (Worell, 2001). Additionally, empowerment assists women to identify both internal and external sources of distress and well-being while also helping individuals to distinguish between the two (Worell). For women, empowerment allows them to interpret their own situations (Leung) rather than allowing the interpretations to come from external sources.

Worell and Remer (1992) conceptualized empowerment as supporting women in developing a broad range of interpersonal and life skills. One way empowerment was believed to be beneficial for women was in its shift from identifying women as simply victims of oppression to constructing women in positive and powerful ways (Leung, 2005). Women’s sense of empowerment is believed to replace feelings of powerlessness with strength and pride (Worell & Remer). For example, empowerment has been found to positively impact performance in work settings (Chen, Kanfer, Kirkman, Allen, & Rosen, 2007). Worell described women with high levels of empowerment as strong, competent,

confident, connected to a supportive community, and resilient. Moreover, focusing on women's strengths and resources, as well as promoting mutual and authentic relationships, have been seen as unique aspects of an empowerment-based approach (Levine et al., 1993). Furthermore, Surrey (1991) posited that personal empowerment is simultaneously connected to relationships and connections. For instance, an empowering relational process results in increased zest, knowledge, self-worth, and a desire for more connection (Surrey). Each person feels empowered through creating and sustaining a relationship that leads to increased awareness and understanding.

Mutuality, empowerment, and feminist identity are constructs that possess potentially powerful ways of understanding women. Because women are believed to grow within relationship (Jordan, 1997; Josselson, 1987; Miller, 1986), it seems particularly salient and meaningful to attempt to understand aspects of relational processes, such as mutuality, in friendships between women and how these processes may be impacted by feminist identity development and one's sense of personal empowerment.

Statement of the Problem

Feminist identity development theory (Downing & Roush, 1985) postulates that women experience discrimination and oppression across a wide range of domains due to being female. Women are believed to move through phases in their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings as a result of these societal realities. Therefore, it seems likely that holding certain opinions and worldviews about the treatment of women in society impacts women's lived experiences, including women's same-sex friendships. However, to date there has not been research examining women's feminist identity and its relation to their

friendships. Yakushko (2007) noted that it is important to continue to expand the understanding of how women's relationships to feminism influence their lives because identification with the feminist movement, either positively or negatively, has been central to many women in the United States. Thus, this study hopes to contribute to the expansion of that understanding by examining feminist identity development in regard to relational processes in women's friendships.

As women change, their relationships also begin to change (GlenMaye, 1998). Jack (1991) posited that identity and intimacy coincide when one is able to grow and change within ongoing relationships; thus, intimacy facilitates the developing authentic self and the developing self deepens the possibility of intimacy. Extrapolating from this idea to feminist identity development points to the questions of whether feminist identity impacts the level of mutuality, a form of intimacy, in same-sex friendships among women, and, if so, in what ways. Mutuality has not been previously examined in relation to feminist identity development or empowerment.

Although empowerment emerges out of a theory based in feminist principles (Worell & Remer, 1992, 2003) and is believed to be directly connected to mutual relationships (GlenMaye, 1998; Negroni-Rodríguez & Bloom, 2004; Surrey, 1991; Worell & Remer, 1992), there has not been any research conducted that explores these relationships. Therefore, it would be helpful to better understand how women's sense of empowerment interconnects with feminist identity development and, in turn, impacts mutuality in their same-sex friendship relationships.

Finally, Hansen (2002) urged researchers to examine potential moderators that can further the understanding of the relationships between feminist identity and other

variables. Therefore, the present study explored the potential moderating role that feminist identity may play in the predictive relationship between empowerment and mutuality. In particular, the purpose of the study was twofold: first, to examine the cluster patterns of feminist identity development stages that are found in adult women of various ages and diverse identities and, second, to explore the influence of feminist identity stage clusters and empowerment on mutuality in women's same-sex friendships.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Women's Friendships and Mutuality

Historically, being female and being socialized into femininity implied a turning toward men, which resulted in women downplaying the value of solidarity among and relationships with women (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994). It has been suggested that women's friendships have taken a secondary status in a culture that believes women's relationships with their partners and children are supposed to be more conducive to women's happiness and well-being than any other relationship (Leung, 2005; O'Connor, 1992; Rubin, 1985). Moreover, Sieden and Bart (1975) stated, "Significant female friendships are either not portrayed at all, are interpreted as lesbian, or considerably depreciated in importance" (as cited in Johnson & Aries, 1983, p. 354). Because societal norms often suggest, implicitly or explicitly, that life's primary long-term relationships should be with immediate family, the importance of friendship in women's lives may be overshadowed (Rubin). Findings from a longitudinal study by Josselson (1987) supported this assertion as she found that most women "anchored" (p 177) in friendships only after other possibilities, such as a partner, children, or career, were found to be unattainable. Thus, friendships were considered secondary anchors even though the majority of women stated that friends were of utmost importance.

It has been suggested that mutuality and reciprocity are the foundational structures of a close friendship (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992; Jordan, 1991a). In addition to Fehr's (1996) description of mutuality as an intersection of two people's lives where both are invested in the relationship, Genero, Miller, Surrey, and

Baldwin described mutuality as the "bidirectional movement of feelings, thoughts, and activity between persons in relationships" (p. 36), and noted it involves diverse modes of social interaction which facilitate growth through relationships. Furthermore, Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin theorized that mutuality contains six elements, including empathy, engagement, authenticity, zest, diversity, and empowerment. Empathy refers to attunement to and connection with the other's experience while engagement is characterized by shared attention, interest, and responsiveness (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin). Authenticity taps the process of recognizing the other for who one is while zest describes an energetic quality of the relationship (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin). Diversity characterizes the process of expressing and working through different perspectives and feelings, and empowerment, in this context, describes each person's impact on the other and the relationship (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin).

Mutuality involves a matching of intensity of involvement and interest and can bring a sense of meaning and purpose to people's lives (Jordan, 1991a). Jordan (1991b) portrayed mutual relationships as occurring when:

> One is both affecting the other and being affected by the other; one extends oneself out to the other and is also receptive to the impact of the other. There is openness to influence, emotional availability, and a constantly changing pattern of responding to and affecting the other's state. There is both receptivity and initiative toward the other. Both the wholeness and the subjectivity of the other person are appreciated and respected. One joins in the similarities with the other and also values the qualities that make that person different. When empathy and concern flow both ways, there is an intense affirmation of the self and

> paradoxically a transcendence of the self, a sense of the self as part of a larger relational unit. (p. 1)

Jordan (1997) suggested that if mutuality does prevail in relationship, one will not only be influenced and changed by the relational context but also will be participating in the other's development of the self. In a qualitative study by Becker (1987), she seemed to allude to this idea of mutuality when she wrote, "Friendship is richly present in the reciprocity of self and other. Neither friend possesses the friendship. However, both participate in creating it" (p. 65).

In contrast, an absence of mutuality may lead to shame, diminished self-esteem, a decreased ability to cope, and depression (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). Imbalances in mutuality, such as when one person begins to primarily accommodate and self-sacrifice, can also lead to devaluing oneself (Jordan, 1991a). In fact, an absence of mutuality and withholding of authentic experiences from another has been found to increase the likelihood of distrust in relationships among individuals with disordered eating (Wechsler, Riggs, Stabb, & Marshall, 2006).

Women's Identity Development

Freudian theory viewed intrapsychic development as the main area of importance in regard to identity development while seeing relationships with others as secondary to the satisfaction of primary drives (Jordan, 1997). Erikson (1959) began to incorporate psychosocial factors in the development of one's ego identity; however, the development of the self was still thought to occur by a person's successful or unsuccessful completion of crises in which one separated from others (Miller, 1991). Other theorists, such as Sullivan (1953) and Kohut (1985), recognized the importance of relationships in the

development of the self, yet these models continued to be based on primary drives. People were seen as objects that performed functions for a self that remained separate (Jordan, 1997).

A result of this traditional view of development is a failure of these theories to appreciate the relational nature of women's sense of self (Jack, 1991; Jordan, 1997). Miller (1986) wrote that the idea that people are essentially self-seeking and competitive "overlooks the fact that millions of people (most of them women) have spent millions of hours for hundreds of years giving their utmost to millions of others" (p. 70). In fact, the relational aspect of women's lives has historically been denigrated. For example, in her groundbreaking book that questioned the traditional notions of psychology's applicability to women, Miller (1986) pointed out that tasks involving caring for others have often been assigned to women. At the same time, however, women's activities and roles have often not been recognized, which created a double bind for women. Women have been labeled with such negative terms as deviant, dependent, and immature for making relationships central to their lives (Gilligan, 1982; Jack; Miller; Worell, 2001). At times, women have even concluded that they themselves are flawed for having this desire for connection (Miller). Furthermore, Miller noted that women have sacrificed parts of themselves in searching for and maintaining connections.

Josselson (1987) pointed out that a study of separation and individuation in women is a "disorientating task" (p. 187) since women tend to grow within rather than apart from relationships. Many women often seek fuller relationships with others combined with a simultaneous development of the self (Miller, 1986). Josselson illustrated this in a longitudinal study of women in their early 20's when she found that

women developed and grew through relational connections, and their development was based on an ongoing balance between self-in-world and self-in-relation. As such, a developmental theory of women must describe both autonomy and connectedness, as well as the link between them, since women's lives represent both separation and interrelatedness concurrently (Harper & Welsh, 2007; Josselson).

Feminist identity development. When considering identity development, one model that specifically applies to women is the feminist identity development model (Downing & Roush, 1985). Feminist identity development has been conceptualized as "the process by which women move from a denial of sexism and an unexamined acceptance of traditional gender stereotypes to an awareness of and a commitment to ending oppression" (Moradi, Subich, & Phillips, 2002, p. 7). The intent of the original model by Downing and Roush was not to only focus on the recognition and integration of the oppression of women, but also to capture women's personal identities as women (Hansen, 2002).

The feminist identity model as described by Downing and Roush (1985) consists of five stages. Stage 1, *passive acceptance*, describes women who are unaware of or deny the individual and cultural discrimination against them and who typically accept traditional gender-role stereotypes. Women in this stage may distrust their own perceptions, thus perpetuating subordinate statuses. The transition into the *revelation* stage, stage 2, is believed to be precipitated by undeniable "crises or contradictions" (Downing & Roush, p. 698) that occur in women's lives. Women in this stage are believed to experience feelings of anger due to newfound recognitions of being treated unfairly and may also experience feelings of guilt as they come to realize their own role

in the perpetuation of oppression. Extreme thinking is theorized to also be found in this stage, with women viewing men as mostly negative and women as all positive. Stage 3, known as *embeddedness-emanation*, has two aspects. Embeddedness is reflective of women developing close connections with other women who are similar to them and with whom they are able to process new ways of seeing the world. They also seek to connect with women who provide support for the development of one's feminist identity. The other phase of stage 3, emanation, is depicted by women starting to return to more balanced, relativistic perceptions versus the dualism likely found in the revelation stage. Women in the emanation stage also begin to be open to alternative viewpoints. During the *synthesis* stage, women value positive aspects of being female and integrate this into their self-concept. They transcend traditional gender roles and make choices that are, instead, based on personal values. Downing and Roush stated, "Women in this stage accept both oppression-related explanations for events and other causal factors and are able to make accurate attributions" (p. 702). In the final stage, *active commitment*, women begin to translate their consolidated feminist identity into action in order to effect social change. It is believed that few women evolve to this stage (Downing & Roush).

As mentioned previously, there have been criticisms of the model as outlined by Downing and Roush (1985). For instance, Hyde (2002) noted that one should not be able to coexist in two stages at one time unless for a fleeting transitional period. Hyde also argued that there has not been a longitudinal study conducted on the feminist identity development model that has captured development across time. Hyde cited this as a major limitation of the model since Downing and Roush (1985) initially proposed that feminist identity developed as women proceeded sequentially through a stage model.

However, Bargad and Hyde (1991) tested feminist identity development across time using a sample of undergraduate women who were enrolled in women's studies courses. Utilizing a repeated measures design, they found that the women's scores exhibited a movement away from the passive acceptance stage and toward the revelation and embeddedness-emanation stages by the end of the course. Even so, the status of the feminist identity development model remains somewhat unclear as there has not been a direct investigation exploring identity development over a substantial amount of time.

Another study that highlighted some of the limitations of the feminist identity development model found that it appeared to be a dimensional model rather than a sequential stage model in that women were located at different points at any one time (Worell & Etaugh, 1994). Furthermore, Moradi and Subich (2002a) raised questions about feminist identity development being linear and sequential based on their research findings that nonadjacent feminist identity stages were sometimes more highly related than adjacent stages. It is important to note that when Downing and Roush developed the model in 1985, they acknowledged the need for a better understanding of the process of recycling through stages, and called for additional research to substantiate the components of feminist identity development.

In response to the criticisms regarding the feminist identity development model as a stage model, Hansen (2002) suggested that a failure to find evidence of clearly delineated and sequential stages may have to do with the fact that three of the five stages are "clearly dynamic in their description" (p. 89). Specifically, in the revelation, embeddedness-emanation, and active commitment stages, women are proactive in their actions such as seeing the world differently and initiating social change. In contrast, the

passive acceptance and synthesis stages are more static and capture how women are in the world. Hansen acknowledged that feminist identity likely ebbs and flows in terms of salience for women throughout their lives, stating, “The process of incorporating a feminist identity is complex and dependent on a host of intrapersonal and contextual factors” (p. 89).

Since the emergence of feminism, there has been an interest in how women’s identification with feminism is related to psychological processes (Fischer et al., 2000). It is believed that identifying with feminist values may be one of the primary sources of women’s positive feelings about themselves as well as their feelings of empowerment (Yakushko, 2007). Using a sample of female graduate students, faculty, and staff, Saunders and Kashubeck-West (2006) examined the relationships between feminist identity development and psychological well-being. They found that feminist identity development uniquely contributed to variance in psychological well-being; specifically, lower scores on revelation and higher scores on active commitment predicted greater well-being. Because women at advanced stages of feminist identity reported higher levels of overall psychological well-being, Saunders and Kashubeck-West posited that it may be women at advanced stages who are able to differentiate between healthy behaviors and socially ingrained behaviors. This, then, could empower them to choose beneficial life alternatives for themselves, whereas women with less developed feminist identities might be prone to engage in socially approved behaviors resulting in negative impacts on mental health.

Women with higher levels of feminist identity may also experience solidarity with other women that can result in validation of their unique experiences (Saunders &

Kashubeck-West, 2006). Initial study results investigating this hypothesis revealed significant correlations between the synthesis and active commitment stages of feminist identity and a well-being subscale measuring positive relations with others (Saunders & Kashubeck-West). However, in a hierarchical regression these relationships disappeared after controlling for partnered status and other well-being variables. Thus, Saunders & Kashubeck-West called for more exploration between feminist identity development and specific behaviors that might affect psychological well-being.

Responding to criticisms of using narrowly defined samples (i.e., utilizing samples of women who are in college; Moradi et al., 2002) and of the nonlinearity of the theorized feminist identity stages (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997; Moradi & Subich, 2002a), Yakushko (2007) targeted women who were over 18 years old and used a cluster analysis technique in her study. The reliance on cluster analysis allowed for women to differ in their views of feminist identity as well as to be at multiple stages at a time. Yakushko reasoned that it could be more meaningful to explore patterns of how women relate to feminist identity rather than simply assigning them to stages. Specifically, the five stages of the feminist identity development model as measured by the Feminist Identity Composite (Fischer et al., 2000) were used as clustering variables.

The findings of the study conducted by Yakushko (2007) revealed three clusters of women. The first cluster was labeled *women with traditional values* (WTV) since it was found that the women in this cluster scored high on the Passive Acceptance subscale and low on the four other subscales. Cluster two consisted of women who scored close to the subscale means of all the women in the total sample and thus, this cluster was named *women with moderate values* (WMV). The final cluster, named *women with feminist*

values (WFV), included women who had higher scores on the Synthesis and Active Commitment subscales and low scores on the Passive Acceptance subscale. No significant age differences were found between clusters, indicating that women of all ages were found in every cluster.

Yakushko (2007) also found differences between clusters on a measure of well-being. More specifically, the WTV cluster had significantly lower total scores on well-being compared to WMV and WFV. Yakushko noted that this finding, in particular, was important in that it suggested that women who held traditional values experienced less well-being compared to women who ascribe to some or all of the beliefs of feminism. Interestingly, significant differences were not found between clusters in regard to the subscale measuring positive relations with others. Yakushko suggested that this may indicate that women across clusters may have a similar way of relating to others. However, the instrument used in the study measured a broad representation of one's overall relationships (Ryff, 1989) and, as such, may have neglected to take into account the uniqueness of specific kinds of relationships. It may be that tapping into specific relationships, such as women's same-sex friendships, could reveal more meaningful information.

Loss of voice and empowerment. In a qualitative study examining development in girls and women, Brown (1991) powerfully captured a theme that she repeatedly observed: "*Cover up,* girls are told as they reach adolescence, daily, in innumerable ways. Cover your body, cover your feelings, cover your relationships, cover your knowing, cover your voice…." (p. 22). An illustration of this is also found in a longitudinal study of adolescent girls by Brown and Gilligan (1992) where it was observed that female

adolescents were developing well according to standard measures of development, yet they simultaneously exhibited a loss of voice (i.e., sharing their ideas, opinions, and thoughts). Another observation made by Brown and Gilligan was that as women developed psychologically they spoke of themselves as living in connection with others yet described a paradox of giving up their voice and abandoning the self for sake of having and maintaining relationships. Jack (1991) claimed that for women, a familiar equation becomes, "…silence yourself to stay in relationship and be good, or speak your feelings, hurt someone, and lose the relationship" (p. 156). Women then silence themselves out of the conviction and fear that if they reveal their feelings and perceptions, they risk rejection and ultimately abandonment. Because loss of voice may coincide with loss of self (GlenMaye, 1998; Jack), relationships between women may be crucial for bringing women's voices fully into the world (Brown and Gilligan).

A loss of voice can hinder women's ability to be empowered through the creation of mutually empowering relationships (Surrey, 1991). To increase understanding of the impact of constructs such as voice in women's development and their relationships, Worell and Remer (1992, 2003) developed an empowerment model consisting of four broad principles that emerge out of feminist therapy. Principle I, *Personal and Social Identities are Interdependent*, recognizes the need to acknowledge the roles of both the larger culture and the smaller groups with which women self-identify in relation to their personal identity and development (Johnson et al., 2005). Goals relevant to the first principle include increasing awareness of "…social locations with respect to gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, etc…." (Johnson et al., p. 112) and learning to cope with the interdependence of these social identities. The *Personal is Political*

captures the essence of Principle II. This encompasses gender-role socialization and gender discrimination with social causes identified as potential sources of women's problems. GlenMaye (1998) noted that the link between the personal and political can remain hidden until women together begin to share common experiences. The goals related to this principle are focused on replacing oppressive gender-role beliefs with self-enhancing ones, developing a range of behaviors that are freely chosen and flexible, and developing a sense of personal power (Worell & Remer, 1992). Principle III is called *Relationships are Egalitarian*, and addresses the unequal power status between women and men as well as the inequality between majority and minority groups. Examples of goals include developing egalitarian and interdependent relationships. The final principle, *Women's Perspectives are Valued*, focuses on reconceptualizing and affirming those characteristics that are traditionally considered feminine traits, such as communal perspectives of caring, concern for others, and emotional expressiveness (Johnson et al.). In addition, this principle comes out of a recognition that women are often placed in a double bind (Worell & Remer, 1992) that often results in women feeling guilty and inadequate no matter what choice is made (GlenMaye, 1998). To combat this notion, Worell and Remer (1992) posited that women need to validate their female characteristics and define themselves based on trusting their own experiences.

Empowerment is based on the belief that women own their lives, can know what is right for them, and can positively influence what happens to them by working together (Levine et al., 1993). GlenMaye (1998) defined empowerment as "speaking the truth of one's life in one's voice, and working collectively to create that possibility for all" (p. 35). Furthermore, Surrey (1991) defined psychological empowerment as, "…the

motivation, freedom, and capacity to act purposefully, with the mobilization of the energies, resources, strengths, or powers of each person through a mutual, relational process" (p.164).

Learning to believe in oneself as a woman is key to women's empowerment (GlenMaye, 1998). Empowerment can allow for a belief in self-efficacy, a sense of control and legitimacy, and a reduction of self-blame (Gutiérrez, Parsons, & Cox, 1998). When women are able to develop these qualities, they then learn to value other women and their relationships with them. This increased bonding with women is seen as an important avenue for them to understand the shared social conditions that at times work against them (GlenMaye; Worell & Remer, 1992). For example, based on their study with Puerto Rican women, Negroni-Rodríguez and Bloom (2004) suggested that a sense of empowerment emerged as a direct result of connections with women, such as friendships. Similarly, GlenMaye also noted that empowerment can result from full, authentic relationships with other women. For the purposes of the proposed study, the empowerment model as conceptualized by Worell and Remer (1992, 2003) will be relied upon as a theoretical framework.

Mutuality, Feminist Identity Development, and Empowerment

Scholarship and research on the psychology of women have brought the developmental issues of women to the forefront (Worell & Remer, 1992). Since women have begun to give voice to and acknowledge their unique concerns (Miller, 1986), the recognition and vital importance of mutual and empowering interpersonal connections in regard to development has also begun to be acknowledged. Jack (1991) underscored that the focus on relationships in women's psychology has been transformed by emerging

perspectives on women's interpersonal orientations, female identity development, and gender norms. If the self is indeed relational as proposed by theorists, this compels an examination of how the interpersonal world is affected by gender norms (Jack). Recognizing that women may psychologically develop in unique ways becomes useful when it allows for new questions to be asked about women's particular circumstances and experiences (Worell & Remer, 1992). As discussed in the preceding sections, relationships are important in women's lives and there are many benefits that come from these relationships when they are perceived as mutual and empowering. The literature also emphasizes the impact of societal and gender norms on women and their relationships, and the feminist identity development model (Downing & Roush, 1985) considers the impact of these norms.

An important aspect of women's interpersonal relationships is that of friendships, namely same-sex friendships. It is a near unanimous assertion that friendship between women holds therapeutic value for the lives of women (e.g., Becker, 1987; Davidson & Packard, 1981; Gilligan, 1991). It has also been noted that mutual relationships that promote growth can facilitate the experience of empowerment (Surrey, 1991). Additionally, empowerment and feminist identity development both consider the role of oppression and its impact on women's lives. As depicted, mutuality, feminist identity, and empowerment are all constructs that are theoretically related yet have not been explored empirically, let alone examined in the context of the friendships between women. Thus, attempting to broaden the knowledge base of feminist identity, empowerment, and mutuality in relation to women's same-sex friendships is a natural extension of prior pieces of literature.

Based on the literature reviewed, the research questions for the current study were: (a) What are the specific cluster patterns of feminist identity development in a sample of adult women? (b) Do personal empowerment and feminist identity stage clusters predict significant variance in perceived mutuality in women's same-sex friendships? (c) Do the clusters of feminist identity development moderate empowerment and mutuality?

Chapter Three

Methods

Participants

There were 271 women who participated in the present study. However, the final analyses included 226 participants after removing outliers and participants with significant missing instrument data. Of these 226, the mean age was 38.16 years old (SD = 11.96) and participants ranged from 20 to 64 years old. The ethnicity of the women consisted of 88.5% European American (*n* = 200), 3.5% Hispanic or Latino/Latina (*n* = 8), 2.7% Biracial/Multiracial (*n* = 6), 2.2% African American (*n* = 5), 1.8% Native American or American Indian (*n* = 4), 0.4% Asian American (*n* = 1), and 0.4% Other (*n* = 1). There was one woman (0.4%) who did not respond. The participants identified their sexual orientation as 86.3% heterosexual (*n* = 195), 7.5% as gay or lesbian (*n* = 17), and 4.4% as bisexual (*n* = 10); four (1.8%) women did not identify their sexual orientation.

In regard to relationship status, 45.1% reported being married (*n* = 102), 20.8% as single (*n* = 47), 10.2% as being in a dating relationship for more than a year (*n* = 23), 6.6% as partnered (*n* = 15), 5.8% as divorced (*n* = 13), 5.3% as being in a dating relationship for less than one year (*n* = 12), and 5.3% selected “other” (*n* = 12). Again, one woman (0.4%) did not respond to this item. The majority of the women (68.6%; *n* = 155) reported having no children under 18 years of age in the home with 26.1% reporting having one to two children in the home (*n* = 59), 3.5% as having three or four children in the home (*n* = 8), and 0.4% as having five or more children in the home (*n* = 1). Three women (1.3%) did not respond.

Most of the women (66.4%; *n* = 150) indicated working full-time outside of the home while 20.4% worked part-time (*n* = 46), 12.8% did not work outside the home (*n* = 29), and 0.4% did not respond (*n* = 1). In regard to highest educational level of the participants, 36.7% reported having a Bachelor's degree (*n* = 83), 29.6% as having a Master's degree (*n* = 67), 15.9% as having some college education but no degree (*n* = 36), 5.8% as having an Associate's degree (*n* = 13), 5.3% as having a Doctoral degree (*n* = 12), 2.2% as having a professional degree (*n* = 5), 2.2% as having a high school diploma (*n* = 5), 1.8% as having vocational training (*n* = 4), and 0.4% did not respond (*n* = 1). Finally, the household income of the participants included 26.1% earning more than $95,000 (*n* = 59), 15.5% earning $36,000 to $45,000 (*n* = 35), 12.4% earning less than $25,000 (*n* = 28), 11.1% earning $25,000 to $35,000 (*n* = 25), 21.6% earning $46,000 to $75,000 (*n* = 49), 11% earning $76,000 to $95,000 (*n* = 25), and 2.2% did not report this information (*n* = 5).

When the participants were prompted to consider how many women were in their "close female circle" of friends, 44.2% reported four to six (*n* = 100), 26.7% reported one to three (*n* = 60), 20.8% reported seven to nine (*n* = 47), and 8% reported 10 or more (*n* = 18). One participant (0.4%) did not respond.

Instruments

Three instruments and a demographic information form (Appendix A) were administered for the purposes of this study. The instruments included The Personal Progress Scale-Revised (PPS-R; Johnson et al., 2005), Mutual Psychological Developmental Questionnaire (MPDQ; Genero, Miller, & Surrey, 1992), and Feminist Identity Composite (FIC; Fischer et al., 2000).

Feminist Identity Composite (FIC). Fischer et al. (2000) developed the 33-item FIC in response to calls for the use of improved empirical instruments when measuring women's feminist identity development. The FIC was made up of items from the Feminist Identity Scale (FIS; Rickard, 1987) and the Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS; Bargad & Hyde, 1991) in an attempt to merge the best items from each instrument into a single measure. As a result, Fischer et al. found that the FIC contained five homogeneous subscales, which corresponded to the theorized stages of the feminist identity development model (Downing & Roush, 1985). These subscales were termed Passive Acceptance (PA; seven items), Revelation (R; eight items), Embeddedness-Emanation (EE; four items), Synthesis (S; five items), and Active Commitment (AC; nine items). Participants are instructed to indicate their level of agreement on each item using a 5-point Likert scale from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree." Subscale scores are obtained by calculating mean scores across the items that compose each subscale with the highest obtained mean score used as the indicator of stage of feminist identity development. A total score can also be obtained by adding responses from all items, with a scoring range from 33 to 165; thus, higher scores indicate greater feminist identity development. For the purposes of this study, mean scores were computed for each of the five subscales of the FIC. The subscales were then used in the cluster analysis to place each participant into clusters.

The FIC has demonstrated adequate psychometrics. Internal consistency reliabilities of the five subscales of the FIC were an improvement over the FIS and FIDS. Specifically, Cronbach's alphas were reported to be.75, .80, .84, .68, and .77, which correspond with the subscales of PA, R, EE, S, and AC, respectively (Fischer et al.,

2000). Cronbach's alphas for the five subscales of the present sample of women were .78, .85, .84, .71, and .87. Sample items from each of the five subscales are:

PA: "I don't see much point in questioning the general expectation that men should be masculine and women should be feminine."

R: "I never realized until recently that I have experienced oppression and discrimination as a woman in this society."

EE: "I am very interested in women artists."

S: "I enjoy the pride and self-assurance that comes from being a strong female."

AC: "I care very deeply about men and women having equal opportunities in all respects."

In a validation study by Fischer et al. (2000) utilizing a sample of female college students and female community members, convergent validity was demonstrated by significant correlations between the FIC subscales and a measure of ego identity development. In particular, PA was significantly correlated with an ego identity stage in which people adopt commitments from others yet do not evaluate and shape them for personal fit. Moreover, AC was significantly correlated with an identity stage characterized by possession of a well-defined sense of self that emerges after active exploration of alternatives and options. Convergent validity was also supported by significant correlations among the FIC subscales and perceptions of sexist events (Fischer et al.; Moradi & Subich, 2002b) and involvement in women's organizations (Fischer et al.). In addition, there were weak to no correlations between FIC subscales and a social desirability measure (Fischer et al.; Moradi & Subich, 2002a), which demonstrated discriminant validity. Finally, a confirmatory factor analysis revealed excellent fit to the

data supporting a five factor solution that "clearly reflected" (Fischer et al., p. 27) the five stages of the model proposed by Downing and Roush (1985). Scholars (e.g., Hansen, 2002; Moradi & Subich, 2002a) have recommended the use of the FIC and noted that the FIC was an improvement over the FIS and the FIDS.

Personal Progress Scale-Revised (PPS-R). Johnson et al. (2005) developed a 28-item scale, the PPS-R, which is intended to measure empowerment in women. Items are weighted on a 7-point Likert scale (score range = 28 to 196) from *almost never* to *almost always,* with higher scores indicating a greater level of personal empowerment. Examples of items include, "It is difficult for me to be assertive with others when I need to be" and "I am determined to become a fully functioning person."

The PPS-R is meant to be an improvement over the original PPS by a greater inclusion of diversity issues (Johnson et al., 2005). To do this, items were altered to better represent the intersections of both social and personal identities. In addition, original items with low item-total correlations were either re-worded or removed. In a validation study with adult women aged 18 to 62, the PPS-R demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .88 (Johnson et al.). A more recent study reported a Cronbach's alpha of .85 (Moradi & Funderburk, 2006). Moreover, Johnson et al. did an exploratory factor analysis of the PPS-R in which seven factors emerged that were each determined to correspond to principles of the empowerment model (Worell & Remer, 2003). However, due to only a few items loading on each factor and high correlations between the factors, the authors concluded that the instrument best measures a unitary construct of empowerment. Therefore, Johnson et al. suggested utilizing the PPS-R for measurement of one's overall level of personal and social

empowerment. Cronbach's alpha of the total scale for the present sample was .85.

Convergent validity for the PPS-R was demonstrated by significant, positive correlations between the PPS-R total score and measures of autonomy, self-acceptance, and overall well-being (Johnson et al., 2005). For discriminant validity, the PPS-R total scores were found to be negatively and significantly correlated with various subscales of a measure of psychological distress. Discriminant validity in a sample of abused women was also demonstrated by the PPS-R successfully discriminating, after controlling for general psychiatric symptoms, between women diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and women who did not meet PTSD criteria.

The Mutual Psychological Developmental Questionnaire (*MPDQ)*. Genero, Miller, and Surrey (1992) developed a 22-item self-report scale that measures perceived mutuality in close relationships. Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin (1992) pointed out that the MPDQ is a unique measure because it is based on a psychological model of connection with others and captures the bidirectional nature of relationships. This is accomplished by the first 11 items, which begin with "When we talk about things that matter to my friend, I am likely to…", capturing participants' self-reported responses. Examples of the responses are, "be receptive" and "avoid being honest." Then, participants are instructed to rate a friend on the last 11 items. These begin with, "When we talk about things that matter to me, my friend is likely to…". Examples of responses include "pick up on my feelings" and "respect my point of view." For the current study, items were rated on a 10-point Likert scale from "1= never" to "10 = all the time" with a scoring range of 22 to 220. Higher scores indicate greater levels of perceived mutuality in one's friendship.

Construct validity has been demonstrated showing significant positive correlations with measures of social support, relationship satisfaction, and cohesion (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). Additionally, results from the initial validation study with a sample of women and men aged 18 to 58 indicated high inter-item reliability coefficients ranging from .89 to .92 (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). Subsequent researchers reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .94 (Kayser et al., 1999). Cronbach's alpha for the current sample was .90.

Procedure

Data was collected utilizing a web-survey (i.e., Survey Monkey) developed and maintained by the University of Oklahoma Center for Educational Development and Research (CEDAR) under the direction of the researcher. A recruitment email with the study link was sent to women who met the inclusion criteria and who were known by the researcher. A snowball technique was utilized by asking women to forward the link to at least four other women. Additionally, postcards containing the study link were sent to professionals (e.g., a doctor and finance manager) who had access to women who fit the inclusion criteria. Participants were first taken to an online informed consent page, where they were given the opportunity to either opt in or out of the study. The women who chose to participate first completed a demographic form followed by the PPS-R, MPDQ, and FIC. Because the study was implemented entirely online, there was no way to counterbalance the instruments; however, careful consideration was given to the order of the instruments in an attempt to minimize order effects as much as possible.

At the completion of the study, those participants who completed the entire study were offered an opportunity to enter a raffle for a $50 gift card. Entrance into the raffle

required participants to enter a valid email address and/or mailing address, which was kept in a separate database and not connected to survey responses in order to maintain confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Hansen (2002) encouraged researchers to employ diverse methods as a way to extend the research on feminist identity. In an attempt to do so, the present study utilized a cluster analysis procedure. The primary reason for using cluster analysis is to find groups of similar entities in data samples (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). Cluster analysis uses a proximity matrix to locate and group participants who score most similarly on the variables of interest (Fischer & Good, 1998). In addition, cluster analysis has been used infrequently in counseling psychology research although scholars have noted that it can be a promising technique as it allows for the organization of heterogeneous groups and examinations of differences among people (Borgen &Weiss, 1971; Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999).

For the present study, a hierarchical cluster analysis using an agglomerative method was used to identify and label the cluster patterns of feminist identity development. Hierarchical agglomerative methods are the predominant clustering methods used in counseling psychology (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984; Borgen & Barnett, 1987). The agglomerative method involves each observation starting as its own cluster, which is then subsequently combined with other clusters based on similarity (Hair & Black, 2000). Ward's method, which was used in this study, is generally considered one of the best agglomerative methods within hierarchical cluster analysis and is designed to minimize the variance within clusters (Aldenderfer & Blashfield; Borgen

& Barnett).

The obtained feminist identity clusters, along with number of close female friends, empowerment, and an interaction term, were then used as predictor variables in a hierarchical multiple regression. More specifically, the number of close female friends was entered in the first step of the hierarchical multiple regression due to the variable being significantly correlated with the dependent variable, mutuality. In step two, PPS-R total scores were entered, followed by the clusters of feminist identity, which were effect coded, in step three, and an interaction term of PPS-R and feminist identity cluster for the final step. These variables were regressed onto MPDQ total scores. The order of entry of variables into the hierarchical multiple regression model was chosen to determine if feminist identity predicted mutuality in one's friendships over and beyond that explained by empowerment. Finally, the inclusion of the interaction of PPS-R and feminist identity cluster in the final step was to determine whether the predictive power of empowerment on mutuality differed dependent on feminist identity cluster.

Chapter Four

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Various preliminary analyses were conducted. First, correlations among the continuous demographic variables and the criterion variable, MPDQ scores, were examined (see Table 1). There was an absence of multicollinearity as the predictor variables were not highly correlated. Of note was that the number of women in one's close circle of friends was significantly correlated ($r = .22$, $p \leq .001$) with MPDQ, although the correlation was small to medium. Similarly, ANOVAs were performed with the categorical demographic variables to determine if there were significant differences on MPDQ scores. The only variable that emerged as statistically significant was the test of the main effect of the categories designating the number of close, female friends (i.e. 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10 or more) on MPDQ, $F(3, 221) = 3.82$, $p \leq .01$. Tukey's post hoc tests showed that women with seven or more female friends exhibited significantly higher mean scores on the MPDQ than those women with less than seven friends. As a result, the number of close, female friends was controlled for in the subsequent hierarchical regression analyses.

The data was also examined to ensure that assumptions of the analyses were met. All assumptions were met with one exception, which was the violation of normality. More specifically, there was a violation of normality for MPDQ scores, which were significantly and negatively skewed. As such, MPDQ scores were transformed via a reflect and square root transformation as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). The normality on MPDQ scores was assessed once again and indicated that the skewness

was corrected.

Cluster Analysis

The examination of patterns of feminist identity development was conducted through the use of a hierarchical cluster analysis. The five subscales of the Feminist Identity Composite were used as clustering variables in order to group participants who scored similarly. As noted previously, clusters were combined based on Ward's method, using a squared Euclidean distance measure, as is recommended for Ward's method of clustering (Hair & Black, 2000). Determining the number of clusters is somewhat subjective because "no standard, objective selection procedure exists" (Hair & Black, p. 184), thus it is recommended that researchers compute several cluster solutions and decide on the appropriate number of clusters based on a priori criteria, practical judgment, and theoretical foundations (Hair & Black). Based on these suggestions and on an examination of two types of linkage plots, the icicle plot (see Figure 1) and dendrogram (see Figure 2), it was determined that a two cluster solution best fit the data. Visual examination of both of these plots assisted in verifying that the two cluster solution was the best fit to the data.

The next step of the cluster analysis involved naming the clusters. To do so, the mean scores of the five subscales of the FIC (see Figure 3) were examined for distinct patterns for each cluster. Cluster One included women with higher scores on PA and lower scores on all other subscales compared to women in Cluster Two, who had lower scores on PA in relation to the other subscale scores. Thus, the patterns of scores within each cluster resulted in naming Cluster One as *Traditional Female Values* and Cluster Two as *Emerging Feminist Values*. The Traditional Female Values cluster consisted of

97 (43%) women while Emerging Feminist Values cluster consisted of 129 (57%).

Hierarchical Multiple Regression

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for all measured variables are shown in Table 1. As noted previously, there was a significant, positive correlation between number of close female friends and MPDQ scores. Additionally, there were significant, positive correlations between close female friends and PPS-R scores as well as between PPS-R scores and MPDQ scores. Moreover, it is important to note that the regression was performed with both the nontransformed and the transformed mutuality scores; however, the results did not differ significantly. Therefore, it was decided to report the results from the nontransformed mutuality scores for ease of interpretation.

Table 2 provides a summary of the final step of the hierarchical multiple regression model (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). The R^2 explained by the full hierarchical regression model with four steps was .15 (F[5,218] = 7.53, $p \leq$. 001; adjusted R^2 = .13). At the first step, the contribution of the Number of Close Female Friends to MPDQ explained significant variance, R^2 = .05 (adjusted R^2 = .04), F(1,222) = 10.92, $p \leq$. 001, accounting for 5% of the variance in MPDQ scores. PPS-R scores explained significant variance in the second step, ΔR^2 = .09, ΔF(2,221) = 23.64, $p \leq$. 001, with R^2 = .14 (adjusted R^2 = .13) and accounted for 9% of the variance in MPDQ scores. Both the third and fourth steps, which included the Traditional Female Values cluster and Emerging Feminist Values cluster and the interaction terms of Number of Close Female Friends and PPS-R with each cluster, did not emerge as significant predictors of MPDQ scores.

Chapter Six

Discussion

The current study explored the relationships among feminist identity development, empowerment, and mutuality within the context of women's friendships with other women. To date, a study has not explored the relationships among these variables together let alone how they might impact women's friendships. The present sample of women consisted of those outside the college setting and represented a wide range of ages.

The hierarchical cluster analysis approach to exploring feminist identity development, which was used to explore patterns in how this sample of women relate to feminism, has been used only once (i.e., Yakushko, 2007) prior to the present study. The cluster analysis of the five feminist identity subscales of the FIC for this study revealed two separate clusters. Based on participants' mean score patterns on the five feminist identity subscales of the FIC, the two clusters were named Traditional Female Values and Emerging Feminist Values. The Traditional Female Values cluster consisted of women who scored higher on the Passive Acceptance subscale and lower on the four other subscales of the Feminist Identity Composite when compared to the Emerging Feminist Values cluster of women. Women in the first cluster were more likely to possess an acceptance of traditional gender roles and belief that these traditional roles are advantageous. They were also less likely to move to a place of questioning these roles, which is believed to be an important factor in moving away from this stage (Downing & Roush, 1985) and toward higher levels of feminist identity development. In contrast, the Emerging Feminist Values cluster consisted of women who were more likely to reject

traditional gender roles as well as exhibit openness to questioning these roles. These women were also more likely to possess a readiness to change their traditional frame of reference, seek out and value connections with women, and have a positive feminist identity. It is important to note, however, that the difference between the mean subscale scores for each cluster were relatively small.

The results in the present study finding two FIC clusters differ from Yakushko's (2007) results finding three FIC clusters. In addition to the clusters representing traditional values and feminist values, Yakushko found a middle cluster that represented women with moderate values, which she described as women who scored near the sample mean on the FIC subscales. Although the characteristics of the sample of women in the present study were similar to those in the study by Yakushko, it is possible that a third cluster was found in her study due to the larger sample size, which possibly allowed for the cluster analysis procedure to pick up on smaller gradations between FIC subscale scores. Another possible explanation for this difference was that Yakushko targeted specific, diverse groups of women (e.g., related to religion, motherhood, parenting, women-focused organizations, and so on) via internet listservs. This method could have allowed for greater spread and variety in responses, which resulted in the three FIC clusters.

In response to the research question of whether feminist identity development and empowerment predicted significant variance in mutuality in women's friendships, the results of the hierarchical multiple regression revealed that only women's sense of personal empowerment contributed uniquely to the explanation of variance in mutuality. This finding supports the original principles of the empowerment model as

conceptualized by Worell and Remer (1992, 2003), particularly the principles of *Relationships are Egalitarian* and *Women's Perspectives are Valued*. Scholars who have written about empowerment (i.e., GlenMaye, 1998; Worell & Remer) have noted that one way women develop increased empowerment is through shared connections with other women. This result also suggests that, for a woman, the ability to possess a sense of personal power, believe in herself, speak her voice and have it heard by others, and have her feminine characteristics (e.g., connecting with others, emotional expressivity) validated and celebrated (Johnson et al., 2005) may allow for a woman to be more mutual in friendships. Furthermore, this result implies that women who have high levels of personal empowerment may also be able to perceive more mutuality within their friendships since the foundation for the construct of mutuality used in this study rests on a belief in the bidirectional nature of it (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). As mentioned previously, the bidirectional nature of mutuality is attained with the MPDQ tapping one's own self-concept and one's perception of her friend.

The lack of significant findings between feminist identity and mutuality over and beyond that of empowerment is curious given that the empowerment model consists of some feminist ideals (i.e., *Personal is Political*). In fact, the feminist identity and empowerment variables did not emerge as significantly correlated with one another even though they are presumed to be theoretically related (Worell & Remer, 1992, 2003; Yakushko, 2007). Yet the results in this study's sample suggest that these two constructs are distinct and separate. A possible explanation for this finding is that women tend to connect with others regardless of their level of feminist identity. For example, almost two-thirds (73%) of the women in the present sample reported having four or more

women in their close circle of friends, which indicates that women are connecting with one another regardless of feminist identity development. Furthermore, women engaging in deep, meaningful connections with other women is often perceived to be a feminine trait and appropriate gender role even though women's friendships have been historically denigrated (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994; Josselson, 1987; Rubin, 1985). Another possible explanation for the lack of relationship between empowerment and feminist identity development in the current study is that women may feel more comfortable considering themselves empowered and less comfortable aligning with feminist ideals (Williams & Wittig, 1997). Although these constructs are believed to be theoretically related, there is a difference between the models that may be explanatory. An important idea within the empowerment model is that women's perspectives and traditional feminine characteristics are valued and celebrated; in contrast, the feminist identity development model posits that women begin to question traditional gender roles and become dissatisfied with these in moving toward higher levels of feminist identity.

Also of note is that no interaction between the feminist identity clusters and empowerment in predicting mutuality was found. This suggests that women's sense of personal empowerment may be more salient to the development of mutuality than how much women identify with and subscribe to feminist values. To better understand this finding, it is helpful to consider another major difference between the foundations of the feminist identity development and the empowerment models. The feminist identity development model (Downing & Roush, 1985) is largely based on gender roles; that is, it focuses on identity as a woman and how that identity is impacted by a patriarchical society. Conversely, the empowerment model by Worell and Remer (1992, 2003)

considers multiple identities in addition to one's identity as a woman. The empowerment model is also broader in that it seeks to examine women's abilities to know and understand themselves, have a voice in the world, and feel independent and in control of their lives in general. It is possible that the lack of interaction between empowerment and feminist identity in the current study is due to the focus of mutuality being within women's friendships with other women where feminist identity levels may be less salient. This supports the suggestion by scholars (e.g., Negroni-Rodríguez & Bloom, 2004) that empowerment may increase for women as a direct result of connections with other women.

Limitations and Future Research

It should be noted that the current study has some limitations. One of those is that the sample consists largely of European American, heterosexual women, which decreases the generalizability of the results to women of other minority groups. It is possible that replicating this study with minority groups of women would produce varied results. For example, in a study by Samter and Burleson (2005), significant differences were found among ethnic groups in relation to what they deemed to be important variables in their same-sex friendships. They noted that the majority of current knowledge of same-sex friendship is limited to European Americans.

There is also a limitation related to an item in the demographic form that asked participants, "How many friends do you consider to be in your close female circle of friends?" It is important to acknowledge that there are likely vast differences in how one defines a "close" friend; for example, one participant may have only considered her most intimate best friends while another participant may have considered best friends as well

as those women to whom she feels moderately close. Additionally, the item did not specify a time frame for participants in that it was not clear whether participants may have thought of close friends who are currently in their lives or close friends throughout their lifetime.

Another limitation of the study is that it relied solely on the internet for data collection. However, a study by Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, and John (2004) that examined common perceptions related to using the internet for psychological research found that internet samples were as diverse as samples obtained from other means of data collection. The authors also found that the data is of similar quality as data obtained from traditional paper-and-pencil means in that data was not tainted by false or repeat responders and results were consistent with traditional methods. Even so, they suggested that it is helpful to collect data for research using mixed methods (e.g., collecting via both the internet and traditional paper-and-pencil forms).

A direction for future research would be to look more in depth at the double bind that women often face (Miller, 1986; Worell & Remer, 1992). One of the principles of the empowerment model used for this study is valuing women's perspectives and traditional feminine traits. However, in a patriarchical society such as in the United States, there are domains (e.g., career) in which women's perspectives and characteristics, such as emotional expression and nurturance, are not valued; in fact, they are often devalued. This double bind may result from women reporting that they feel empowered within certain areas of their lives (e.g., friendships with other women) yet they find they are devalued for some of these same qualities (i.e., traditional feminine traits) in other areas of their lives. Furthermore, although feminist identity did not emerge

as an important factor in determining levels of mutuality within women's friendships in the present study, it remains to be known whether or not women's level of feminist identity is related to mutuality within other relationships, such as romantic relationships or employee-employer relationships. In addition, because the findings of the current study revealed a small correlation between feminist identity and empowerment, it seems important to further investigate the relationship of these two variables given that they are theoretically related.

The belief that friendship rests on the discussion, management, and celebration of feelings, which may be a European American ideal (Samter & Burleson, 2005), leads to another important direction for future research. That is, it may be important to examine how feminist identity development, empowerment, and mutuality influence women's same-sex friendships in diverse groups of women (e.g., racial and ethnic women, lesbian and bisexual women, women of lower socioeconomic statuses). For future research to be particularly meaningful in this regard, it may be important to target a single minority group sample given that many studies that attempt to recruit representative samples generally consist of mostly majority members, which continues the cycle of findings being less generalizable to members of minority groups.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Number of Close Female Friends, Empowerment, Feminist Identity Cluster and Mutuality

Variable	***M***	***SD***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
Female Friends	--	--	---	.28*	-.09	.22*
Empowerment	144.65	17.67		---	.07	.35*
Feminist Identity Cluster[a]	--	--			---	.04
Mutuality	187.85	20.07				---

* $p \leq .01$.
[a] Point biserial correlation

Table 2

Summary of Final Step of the Four-Step Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Mutuality

Variable	***B***	***SE B***	***ß***	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.05***	
Female Friends	4.89	1.48	.22***		
Step 2				.14***	.09***
Empowerment	.36	.07	.32***		
Step 3				.14***	.0
Feminist Identity Cluster	.56	1.28	.03		
Step 4				.15	.01
Cluster x Empowerment	.11	.08	.76		
Cluster x Number of female friends	-.68	1.54	-.08		

*** $p \leq .001$.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Icicle plot of the hierarchical cluster analysis for the five subscales of Feminist Identity Composite.

Figure 2. Dendrogram of the hierarchical cluster analysis procedure of the five subscales of Feminist Identity Composite.

Figure 3. Mean scores on five subscales of Feminist Identity Composite by cluster.

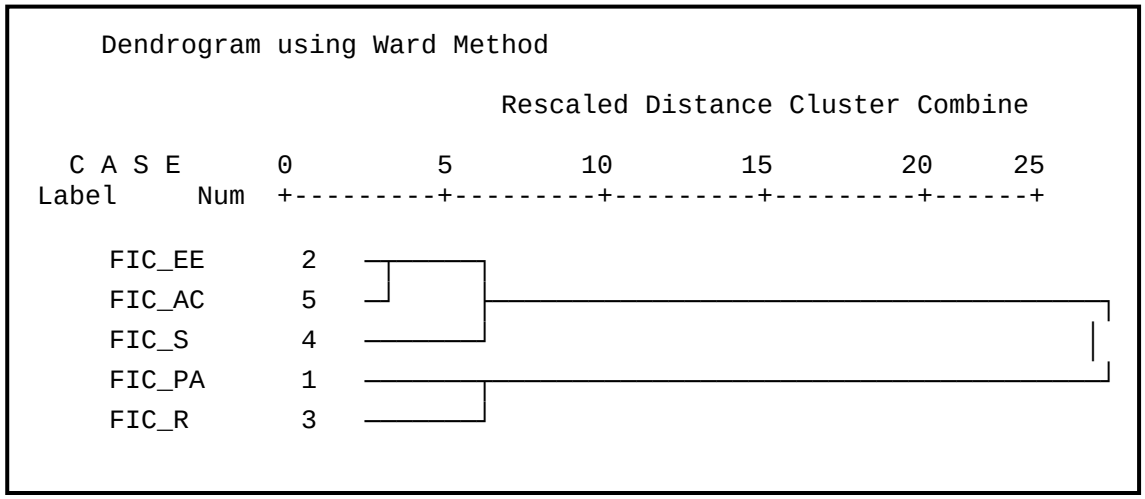
Figure 1.

Vertical Icicle

Number of clusters	Case								
	FIC_S		FIC_AC		FIC_EE		FIC_R		FIC_PA
1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
3	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
4	X		X	X	X		X		X

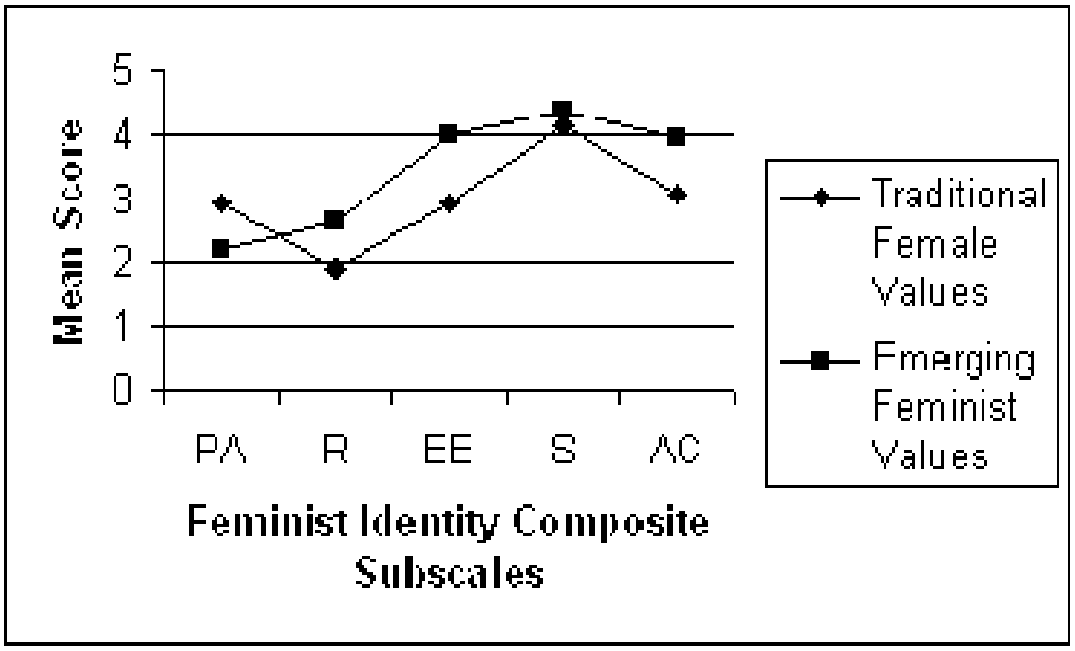
Note. FIC_PA = Passive Acceptance; FIC_R = Revelation; FIC_EE = Embeddedness-Emanation; FIC_S = Synthesis; FIC_AC = Active Commitment

Figure 2.



Note. FIC_PA = Passive Acceptance; FIC_R = Revelation; FIC_EE = Embeddedness-Emanation; FIC_S = Synthesis; FIC_AC = Active Commitment

Figure 3.



Note. PA = Passive Acceptance; R = Revelation;
EE = Embeddedness-Emanation; S = Synthesis; AC = Active Commitment

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 12114
Approval Date: May 08, 2008

May 08, 2008

Starlain Saldana
Dept. Educational Psychology
820 Van Hee Oval, ECH
Norman, Ok 73019

RE: Influences on Women's Friendships

Dear Ms Saldana:

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above referenced research study. This study meets the criteria for expedited approval category 7. It is my judgment as Chairperson of the IRB that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46 as amended; and that the research involves no more than minimal risk to participants.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described:

Survey Instrument Dated May 07, 2008 Revised - Demographics
Other Dated May 07, 2008 Revised - Introduction letter
Consent form - Other Dated: May 07, 2008 Revised - Information Sheet
Protocol Dated: May 07, 2008 Revised
IRB Application Dated: May 07, 2008 Revised
Survey Instrument Dated April 16, 2008 Feminist Identity Composite
Survey Instrument Dated April 16, 2008 Personal Progress Scale

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form. All study records, including copies of signed consent forms, must be retained for three (3) years after termination of the study.

The approval granted expires on May 07, 2009. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request an IRB Application for Continuing Review from you approximately two months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

E. Laurette Taylor

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Ut_Dbl_Res-r_Lr 660 Parrington Oval, Suite 316, Norman, Oklahoma 73019-3075 PHONE: (405) 325-8110 FAX: (405) 325-2373

Appendix B: Demographic Form

Demographics

In order to successfully complete this study, I would like to know more about you. The information you provide will not be used to identify you in any way.

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: a. Female b. Male c. Other _____

3. State in which you live: _____

4. Ethnicity:
   a. African or African-American
   b. American Indian/Native American
   c. Asian or Asian-American
   d. Biracial or Multiracial
   e. Caucasian
   f. Hispanic/Latina
   g. Other _____

5. How do you describe your sexual identity/orientation?
   a. Bisexual
   b. Heterosexual
   c. Lesbian or Gay
   d. Transgendered
   e. Other: _____

6. What is your current romantic relationship status?

   a. Involved in a dating relationship for less than 1 yr
   b. Involved in a dating relationship for more than 1 yr
   c. Civil union
   d. Divorced
   e. Married
   f. Partnered
   g. Single
   h. Other: _____

7. How many children under the age of 18 do you have in the home?

   a. None
   b. 1-2
   c. 3-4
   d. 5 or more

8. What is the highest level of educational you have completed?

a. High school
b. Some college
c. Vocational training
d. Associate's degree
e. Bachelor's degree
f. Master's degree
g. Doctorate degree
h. Professional degree
i. Other: _____

9. Do you currently work outside the home?

a. No
b. Yes, full-time
c. Yes, part-time

10. Household Income:

a. Less than $25,000	b. $25,000 – $35,000
c. $36,000 – $45,000	d. $46,000 – $55,000
e. $56,000 – $65,000	f. $66,000 – $75,000
g. $76,000 – $85,000	h. Over $85,000

Friendship Information

1. How many friends do you consider to be in your close female circle of friends?
   a. 1-3
   b. 4-6
   c. 7-9
   d. 10 or more

** When responding to the questionnaires that follow, you are asked to think of a close female friend.

2. How old is the friend you are thinking of?_____

3. How long have you been friends with her? (years and months) _____

Appendix C: Personal Progress Scale – Revised

The following statements identify feelings or experiences that some people use to describe themselves. Please answer each question in terms of any aspects of your personal identity that are important to you *as a woman*, such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, family background, etc. Circle the number that best corresponds to your answer, and keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers.

1. I have equal relationships with important others in my life.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

2. It is important to me to be financially independent.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

3. It is difficult for me to be assertive with others when I need to be.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

4. I can speak up for my needs instead of always taking care of other people's needs.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

5. I feel prepared to deal with the discrimination I experience in today's society.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

6. It is difficult for me to recognize when I am angry.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

7. I feel comfortable in confronting my instructor/counselor/supervisor when we see things differently.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

8. I now understand how my cultural heritage has shaped who I am today.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

9. I give in to others so as not to displease or anger them.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

10. I don’t feel good about myself as a woman.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

11. When others criticize me, I do not trust myself to decide if they are right or if I should ignore their comments.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

12. I realize that given my current situation, I am coping the best I can.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

13. I am feeling in control of my life.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

14. In defining for myself what it means to be attractive, I depend on the opinions of others.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

15. I can't seem to make good decisions about my life.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

16. I do not feel competent to handle the situations that arise in my everyday life.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

17. I am determined to become a fully functioning person.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

18. I do not believe there is anything I can do to make things better for women like me in today's society.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

19. I believe that a woman like me can succeed in any job or career that I choose.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

20. When making decisions about my life, I do not trust my own experience.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

21. It is difficult for me to tell others when I feel angry.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

22. I am able to satisfy my own sexual needs in a relationship.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

23. It is difficult for me to be good to myself.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

24. It is hard for me to ask for help or support from others when I need it.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

25. I want to help other women like me improve the quality of their lives.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

26. I feel uncomfortable in confronting important others in my life when we see things differently.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

27. I want to feel more appreciated for my cultural background.

Almost never Sometimes true Almost always

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

28. I am aware of my own strengths as a woman.

Almost never			Sometimes true			Almost always
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix D: Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire

Instructions: Using the scale below, please tell indicate best estimate of how often you and your friend experience each of the following:

When we talk about things that matter to my friend, I am likely to …….

Be receptive

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Get impatient

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Try to understand

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Get bored

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Feel moved

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Avoid being honest

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Be open-minded

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Get discouraged

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Get involved

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Have difficulty listening

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Feel energized by our conversation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

When we talk about things that matter to <u>me</u>, my friend is likely to…….

Pick up on my Feelings

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Feel like we're not getting anywhere

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Show an interest

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Get frustrated

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Share similar experiences

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Keep feelings inside

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Respect my point of view

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Change the subject

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

See the humor in things

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Feel down

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Express an opinion clearly

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never All of the time

Appendix E: Feminist Identity Composite

Instructions: The statements listed below describe attitudes you may have toward yourself as a woman. There are no right or wrong answers. Please express your feelings by indicating how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. I like being a traditional female.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. My female friends are like me in that we are all angry at men and the ways wehave been treated as women.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I am very interested in women artists.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I am very interested in women's studies.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. I never realized until recently that I have experienced oppression and discrimination as a woman in this society.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. I feel like I've been duped into believing society's perceptions of me as a woman.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. I feel angry when I think about the way I am treated by men and boys.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. Men receive many advantages in society and because of this are against equality for women.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. Gradually, I am beginning to see just how sexist society really is.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Regretfully, I can see ways in which I have perpetuated sexist attitudes in the past.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. I am very interested in women musicians.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. I am very interested in women writers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. I enjoy the pride and self-assurance that comes from being a strong female.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. I choose my “causes” carefully to work for greater equality for all people.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. I owe it not only to women but to all people to work for greater opportunity and equality for all.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. In my interactions with men, I am always looking for ways I may be discriminated against because I am female.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

17. As I have grown in my beliefs I have realized that it is more important to value women as individuals than as members of a larger group of women.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. I am proud to be a competent woman.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. I feel like I have blended my female attributes with my unique personal qualities.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

20. I have incorporated what is female and feminine into my own unique personality.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

21. I think it's lucky that women aren't expected to do some of the more dangerous jobs that men are expected to do, like construction work or race car driving.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

22. I care very deeply about men and women having equal opportunities in all respects.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

23. If I were married to a man and my husband was offered a job in another state, it would be my obligation to move in support of his career.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

24. I think that men and women had it better in the 1950s when married women were housewives and their husbands supported them.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

25. It is very satisfying to me to be able to use my talents and skills in my work in the women's movement.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

26. I am willing to make certain sacrifices to effect change in this society in order to create a nonsexist, peaceful place where all people have equal opportunities.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

27. One thing I especially like about being a woman is that men will offer me their seat on a crowded bus or open doors for me because I am a woman.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. On some level, my motivation for almost every activity I engage in is my desire for an egalitarian world.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

29. I don't see much point in questioning the general expectation that men should be masculine and women should be feminine.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

30. I feel that I am a very powerful and effective spokesperson for the women's issues I am concerned with right now.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

31. I think that most women will feel most fulfilled by being a wife and a mother.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

32. I want to work to improve women's status.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

33. I am very committed to a cause that I believe contributes to a more fair and just world for all people.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Appendix F: Prospectus

Examining Patterns of Feminist Identity Development and the Influence on Mutuality and Empowerment in Women's Friendships

Dissertation Prospectus

Star Saldana

University of Oklahoma

January 2008

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Chapter One

Introduction

Overview

It has long been argued that early theories of human development (e.g. Erikson, 1959; Levinson, 1978) were largely based on male development (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987). As a result, the hallmarks of healthy development have been seen as the process of differentiating oneself from others (Jordan, 1997; Miller, 1991) while emphasizing autonomy, individuation, and self-sufficiency (Jordan, 1997). Psychologists began to realize that female development was seen as equivalent to that of males, or at worst, completely ignored and overlooked (Jack, 1991; Jordan, 1997; Josselson; Miller, 1986; Miller, 1991). Gilligan stated that psychological theorists, whether implicitly or not, were trying to "fashion women out of a masculine cloth" (p. 6) because males were adopted as the norm. Brown and Gilligan went so far as to describe it as "inherently traumatic" (p. 216) when women's psychological development is placed within societal frameworks that view individualism and separation as the standards. When development is premised on separation, the development of women then appears as a failure because of the centrality of relationships in many women's lives (Gilligan).

It has been recognized that traditional Western theories of development have often overlooked the reality that humans are interdependent beings (Jordan, 1997). Relational theorists began to question these traditional notions and, instead, emphasized the important role of relationships in humans' lives. Humans are seen as possessing a primary need for connection with others, and it is through making and maintaining relationships that one's sense of self becomes organized (Downing & Roush, 1985; Jack,

1991; Jordan, 1997; Miller, 1986). Relational perspectives view relationships as central to human development and state that psychological growth stems from a process of elaboration in and movement toward relationships (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992; Jordan, 1991a). An outgrowth of this viewpoint led to a conceptualization of a "relational self" (Jordan, 1997, p. 9).

Women, in particular, may not be best guided toward a path of healthy identity development without the recognition of the importance of relationships (Miller, 1991) since women's sense of self is theorized to be organized around connection, mutuality, and relationships (Jack, 1999). In fact, women's development actually seems to point toward continuity and change, rather than separation (Gilligan, 1982; Miller). Gilligan described this process as one of "…the paradoxical truths of human experience – that we know ourselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others, and that we experience relationship only insofar as we differentiate other from self" (p. 63).

One such important relationship for women is that of friendship with other women. Women's friendships have been found to be a major source of emotional nurturance, intimacy, psychological growth, and self-revelation (Becker, 1987; Rubin, 1985; Schultz, 1991). They are also vital to one's well-being, and it has been shown that women perceive their same-sex friendships as therapeutic (Davidson & Packard, 1981). Gilligan's (1991) metaphor for describing women's friendships as the "T-cells of their psychological immune system" (p. 19) appears to encapsulate these findings. For women, friendship is a relationship that may allow each woman to engage in her own pursuits as well as engage with her friend's experiences, which in turn can provide a framework for each woman to become herself, both personally and interpersonally (Becker). Becker

further suggested that women are enabled to appreciate their own uniqueness when they are acknowledged, understood, and valued by other women.

Social exchange theories predict that people feel happy in relationships when rewards are greater than the costs, while theories based in equity models predict people to be most satisfied in relationships when perceived personal outcomes are comparable to those of the other member of the relationship (Fehr, 1996). However, a unique construct, mutuality, has also been theorized to be an important aspect of positive relationships (Becker, 1987; Fehr; Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992; Jordan, 1991a; Jordan, 1997), including women's friendships. Mutuality may go beyond the reciprocal exchange of benefits and instead bring focus toward a shared sense of relationship (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). Mutuality has been defined as a gradual intersection of people's lives where reliance on cultural norms is lessened, a unique style of interaction is developed, and both people are invested in maintaining and nurturing the relationship (Fehr). From a feminist perspective, mutual participation in relationship is vital to women's self-concept (Kayser, Sormanti, & Strainchamps, 1999); thus, self-concept involves both support given and support received (Kayser et al.). Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin (1992) noted that mutuality in dyadic relationships has emerged as a topic of research with the rise in relational perspectives of psychological functioning. For instance, mutuality has been shown to emerge as a positive predictor of quality of life and depression (Kayser et al.).

Social identity, which can be based on affiliations with particular groups and/or movements, is also considered to be a source of self-concept (Ng, Dunne, & Cataldo, 1995). One movement that many women have been affected by, either positively or

negatively, is that of the women's movement and feminism. Starting in the 1970s, women began to reject traditional gender roles as their own experiences and accomplishments challenged the "essentialism" (i.e., marriage, raising children, and not working outside the home; Reingold & Foust, 1998, p. 22) upon which traditional notions were based. Women also began to recognize the bias and oppression directed toward their gender (Yakushko, 2007) and the pervasive sexualization and devaluation that accompanied femininity (Jack, 1991).

The field of counseling psychology has attended specifically to women's development of identities regarding gender and feminist consciousness over the past two decades (Fischer & Good, 2004). Additionally, numerous and varied definitions and theories about feminism are abundant (Worell & Remer, 2003). An identity model that emerged out of a belief that an accurate developmental model for women must acknowledge the discrimination and oppression that are part of women's life experiences was the feminist identity development model by Downing and Roush (1985). They believed that the recognition of discrimination and oppression is vital as these factors impact one's sense of self as a woman. The model was also formulated from Downing and Roush's own clinical and personal experiences, the literature in the area at the time, and developmental theories that addressed racial identity (i.e., Cross, 1971). This particular identity model, as conceptualized by Downing and Roush, is used to operationalize feminist identity development for the purposes of the present study.

Consistent patterns in the literature point to links between women's feminist identity and psychological functioning (Fischer & Good, 1994).For instance, it has been found that feminist consciousness or the development of feminist identity decreases

psychological distress (Saunders & Kashubeck-West, 2006) while facilitating women's well-being (Fischer & Good). Additionally, four of the five feminist identity dimensions have been shown to have a modest link with psychological distress (Fischer & Good). Women with low feminist consciousness have been shown to experience higher levels of negative psychological experiences whereas women with integrated feminist identities experienced benefits (Moradi & Subich, 2002b; Fischer et al., 2000). Feminist identity has also been empirically associated with stronger identity achievement (Fischer et al.), higher self-esteem (McNamara & Rickard, 1989), enhanced assertiveness and self-confidence (Saunders & Kashubeck-West), and increased perceptions of experiencing sexist events (Moradi & Subich, 2002b).

The model of feminist identity development postulated by Downing and Roush (1985) has received criticism over the years regarding the lack of evidence that supports it as a true developmental model (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997; Hyde, 2002; Moradi & Subich, 2002a). For example, Hyde discussed the importance of true developmental models needing to have distinct stages without the possibility of returning to earlier stages. Hyde also noted that one should not be able to coexist in two stages at one time unless for a fleeting transitional period. Moradi and Subich (2002a) raised questions about feminist identity development being a linear and sequential process based on their finding that interrcorrelations of subscales that measure nonadjacent feminist identity stages were at times higher as compared to those stages that were adjacent to each other. Another study found that the feminist identity development model appeared to be dimensional rather than a sequential stage model in that women were located at different points at any one time (Worell & Etaugh, 1994). Taken together, the status of the feminist

identity development model remains unclear as there has not been a direct investigation of development over time.

Downing and Roush (1985) themselves stated in their original article that women may "recycle through these stages" (p. 702), noting that this can happen depending on level of life stress as well as the interpersonal and environmental context of women's lives. To address this criticism, Yakushko (2007) employed a cluster analysis technique when examining feminist identity, explaining that using a cluster analytic approach allowed women to be at multiple stages of feminist identity development at any given moment (Worell & Etaugh, 1994; Yakushko). This approach fits well with the acknowledgment by Hyde (2002) that empirical evidence has, in fact, supported feminist identity dimensions, but not necessarily stages per se. Additionally, the use of cluster analysis appears to compliment Downing and Roush's assertion that the model is not a clear cut process, but a "blueprint for women to transcend their passive identity and to integrate both personal and social identities into a coherent whole" (p. 704).

A salient construct that has arisen out of feminist perspectives on identity development is empowerment (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). Empowerment has been applied broadly to diverse fields, such as counseling, nursing, education, social work, and management (Gutiérrez, Parsons, & Cox, 1998). The area of leadership in work settings has also been interested in empowerment, particularly how it affects employees (Chen, Kanfer, Kirkman, Allen, & Rosen, 2007). Chen et al. described empowered employees as being motivated to perform well due to the belief in their capability to produce meaningful work. It has also been posited that empowerment can serve as a protection against stress (Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2006).

Empowerment seems to be a popular word in the literature that is often used when specifically examining the lives of oppressed groups, such as women (Leung, 2005). The concept of empowerment shares a foundation with feminist identity development in that it recognizes discrimination and oppression by encouraging women to identify and challenge the external conditions that devalue them (Worell, 2001). Hipolito-Delgado and Lee (2007) noted that people who feel disempowered may not fully understand societal injustices yet may long to develop an empowering identity that gives validity to their own existence. Additionally, empowerment assists women to identify both internal and external sources of distress and well-being while also helping individuals to distinguish between the two (Worell). Empowerment for women allows them to interpret their own situations (Leung) rather than allowing the interpretations to come from external sources.

Empowerment has become a focus for women's lives since it was noticed that they scored in normal ranges on symptom measures yet did not experience beneficial changes in affect, life satisfaction, and growth (Johnson, Worell, & Chandler, 2005). Worell (2001) developed an empowerment model of women's well-being and psychological health in which she posited ten "ingredients" (p. 340) that contribute to personal empowerment. These include one's self-evaluation, level of comfort and distress, gender and cultural awareness, self-nurturance, personal control, problem solving, flexibility, assertiveness, knowledge and use of resources, and social activism. Worell and Remer (1992) conceptualized empowerment as supporting women in developing a broad range of interpersonal and life skills. One way empowerment is beneficial for women is in its push for a shift from identifying women as simply victims of oppression to constructing women in positive and powerful ways (Leung, 2005).

Women's sense of empowerment is believed to replace feelings of powerlessness with strength and pride (Worell & Remer). Worell described women with high levels of empowerment as strong, competent, confident, connected to a supportive community, and resilient. Moreover, focusing on women's strengths and resources as well as promoting mutual and authentic relationships have been seen as unique aspects of an empowerment-based approach (Levine et al, 1993).

Empowerment is based on the belief that women own their lives, can know what is right for them, and can positively influence what happens to them by working together (Levine et al., 1993). GlenMaye (1998) defined empowerment as "speaking the truth of one's life in one's voice, and working collectively to create that possibility for all" (p. 35). Furthermore, Surrey (1991) defined psychological empowerment as, "…the motivation, freedom, and capacity to act purposefully, with the mobilization of the energies, resources, strengths, or powers of each person through a mutual, relational process" (p.164). Surrey posited that personal empowerment is simultaneously connected to relationships and connections. For instance, an empowering relational process results in increased zest, knowledge, self-worth, and a desire for more connection (Surrey). Each person feels empowered through creating and sustaining a relationship that leads to increased awareness and understanding.

Mutuality, empowerment, and feminist identity are constructs that possess potentially powerful ways of better understanding women. Because women are believed to grow within relationship (Jordan, 1997; Josselson, 1987; Miller, 1986), it seems particularly salient and meaningful to attempt to understand aspects of relational processes, such as mutuality, in friendships between women and how these processes

may be impacted by feminist identity development and one's sense of personal empowerment.

Statement of the Problem

Feminist identity development theory (Downing & Roush, 1985) postulates that women experience discrimination and oppression across a wide range of domains due to being female. In turn, women are believed to move through phases in regard to their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings in regard to these societal realities. Therefore, it seems likely that holding certain opinions and worldviews about the treatment of women in society impacts women's lived experiences, including women's same-sex friendships. However, to date there has not been research looking at women's feminist identity and its relation to their friendships. Yakushko (2007) noted that it is important to continue to expand the understanding of how women's relationships to feminism influence their lives since identification with the feminist movement, either positively or negatively, has been central to many women in the United States. Thus, this study will contribute to the expansion of that understanding by examining feminist identity development in regard to relational processes in women's friendships.

As women change themselves, their relationships also begin to change (GlenMaye, 1998). Jack (1991) posited that identity and intimacy coincide when one is able to grow and change within ongoing relationships; thus, intimacy facilitates the developing authentic self and the developing self deepens the possibility of intimacy. Extrapolating from this idea to feminist identity development specifically in relation to mutuality, a form of intimacy, points to the questions of whether feminist identity impacts the level of mutuality in same-sex friendships among women, and, if so, in what

ways. Mutuality has not been previously examined in relation to feminist identity development or empowerment.

The concept of empowerment for women is mostly discussed in the counseling literature as an outcome from the result of specific therapeutic interventions (Worell, 2001). Although empowerment emerges out of a theory based in feminist principles (Worell & Remer, 1992, 2003) and is believed to be directly connected to mutual relationships (GlenMaye, 1998; Negroni-Rodríguez & Bloom, 2004; Surrey, 1991; Worell & Remer, 1992), there has not been any research conducted that explores these relationships. Therefore, it would be helpful to better understand how women's sense of empowerment interconnects with feminist identity development and, in turn, impacts their relationships with others, specifically their same-sex friendships.

Hansen (2002) urged researchers to examine potential mediators and moderators that can further the understanding of the relationships between feminist identity and other variables. Therefore, the proposed study will also explore the potential moderating role that feminist identity may play in the predictive relationship between empowerment and mutuality. In particular, the purpose of the study is twofold: first, to examine the cluster patterns of feminist identity development stages that are found in adult women of various ages and diverse identities and, second, to explore the influence of feminist identity stage clusters and empowerment on mutuality in women's same-sex friendships.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Women's Friendships and Mutuality

Of all human relationships, friendship exhibits the weakest ties because it does not imply permanence (Johnson & Aries, 1983). The bonds of friendship usually rest on voluntary association and are secured by an emotional bond alone. In a study by Sias and Cahill (1998) that took a developmental perspective, the characteristics that did, indeed, distinguish friendships from other types of relationships were voluntariness, nature of affective ties, and nature of development. Rubin (1985) noted that friendship in American society seems to be a private affair with no public ceremonies to celebrate it. Accordingly, she suggested that friendship becomes the most neglected and fragile social relationship with no social compact or pledge of loyalty to hold it together. Moreover, Sieden and Bart (1975) stated, "Significant female friendships are either not portrayed at all, are interpreted as lesbian, or considerably depreciated in importance" (cited in Johnson & Aries, 1983, p. 354). Much like the origins of human development, aspects of women's lives are once again viewed as "less than."

Historically, being female and being socialized into femininity implied a turning toward men, which resulted in women downplaying the value of solidarity among and relationships with women (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994).It has been suggested that women's friendships have taken a secondary status in a culture that believes women's relationships with their husbands and children are supposed to be more conducive to women's happiness and well-being than any other relationship (Leung, 2005; O'Connor, 1992; Rubin, 1985). Because societal norms often suggest, implicitly or explicitly, that

life's primary long-term relationships should be with immediate family, the importance of friendship in women's lives may be overshadowed (Rubin). Findings from a longitudinal study by Josselson (1987) supported this assertion as she found that most women "anchored" (p 177) in friendships only after other possibilities, such as a partner, children, or career, were found to be unattainable. Thus, friendships were considered secondary anchors even though the majority of women stated that friends were of utmost importance.

People tend to form friendships with those who are similar to them in worldview and values (Fehr, 1996). Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) investigated men's and women's friendships across four stages of life: high school seniors, young newlyweds, middle-aged parents, and older people near retirement. Upon examination of the friendship descriptions given by participants, they found that those most often mentioned fell into the category of *similarity*, which represented shared experiences. The next theme that evolved fell into a category they called *reciprocity*. This category emphasized help, support, understanding, and acceptance. Perceptions of friendships were found to be similar across the life stages, suggesting that functions of friendships (i.e., aspects of friendships believed to be important, such as commonality and intimacy) may be established at an early age and maintained throughout life. In contrast, Gibbs, Troll, and Levy (1981) conducted a developmental exploration of friendship functions in women, hypothesizing that interactions between people may in fact change with development or as new life experiences occur. The sample of women was separated into six age groups. Of note regarding their findings, intimacy and assistance functions remained constant across all age groups whereas a power function, defined as having authority or influence

over another, lowered in each increasing age group.

Mendelson and Kay (2003) discussed the effect of perceived balance and imbalance on friendships in female-female and female-male relationships. More specifically, the authors were interested in investigating the link between the exchange of resources between friends and their subsequent feelings about the friendship and one another. The results revealed that a perceived imbalance in friendships tended to be characterized by lower levels of positive feelings when compared to those that consisted of a perceived balance. Specifically in regard to gender, Mendelson and Kay found that women reported that they contributed more to their friendships with other women than with men. Women also reported benefitting more from their friendships with women than men reported. Moreover, Bagwell et al. (2005) suggested that agreement on the positive features of a friendship may reflect a higher level of mutuality in the relationship.

It has been suggested that mutuality and reciprocity are the foundational structures of a close friendship (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992; Jordan, 1991a). In addition to Fehr's (1996) description of mutuality as an intersection of two people's lives where both are invested in the relationship, Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin described mutuality as the "bidirectional movement of feelings, thoughts, and activity between persons in relationships" (p. 36). Furthermore, Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin theorized that mutuality contained six elements, including empathy, engagement, authenticity, zest, diversity, and empowerment. Empathy refers to attunement to and connection with the other's experience while engagement is characterized by shared attention, interest, and responsiveness. Authenticity taps the process of recognizing the other for who she or he is and also being recognized for who

one is. Zest describes an energetic quality of the relationship whereas diversity characterizes the process of expressing and working through different perspectives and feelings. Last, empowerment, in this context, describes each person's impact on the other and the relationship.

Mutuality involves a matching of intensity of involvement and interest and can bring a sense of meaning and purpose to people's lives (Jordan, 1991a). Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin (1992) added that mutuality involves diverse modes of social interaction that facilitate growth through relationships. Jordan (1991b) portrayed mutual relationships as occurring when:

> One is both affecting the other and being affected by the other; one extends oneself out to the other and is also receptive to the impact of the other. There is openness to influence, emotional availability, and a constantly changing pattern of responding to and affecting the other's state. There is both receptivity and initiative toward the other. Both the wholeness and the subjectivity of the other person are appreciated and respected. One joins in the similarities with the other and also values the qualities that make that person different. When empathy and concern flow both ways, there is an intense affirmation of the self and paradoxically a transcendence of the self, a sense of the self as part of a larger relational unit. (p. 1)

In a qualitative study by Becker (1987), she seemed to allude to this idea of mutuality when she wrote, "Friendship is richly present in the reciprocity of self and other. Neither friend possesses the friendship. However, both participate in creating it" (p. 65).

Although more similarity in regard to demographics and personal constructs has

been found in reciprocal relationships than nonreciprocal relationships (Fehr, 1996), it has been posited that differences can also increase mutuality. For instance, conflict in a friendship has the potential to strengthen bonds if the friends are able to use these differences for growth and change (Woolsey & McBain, 1987). Differences can lead friends to know each other on deeper, rather than superficial, levels (Woolsey & McBain). Moreover, Josselson (1987) suggested that friends can play a role in refining and differentiating one's identity as they often bring different hobbies, ideas, and ideologies to the relationship. This view echoes the assumption by Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin (1992) that a key element to mutuality is diversity (i.e., expressing different perspectives and feelings).

Jordan (1997) suggested that if mutuality does prevail in relationship, one will not only be influenced and changed by the relational context but also will be participating in the other's development of the self. In contrast, an absence of mutuality may lead to shame, diminished self-esteem, a decreased ability to cope, and depression (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). Imbalances in mutuality, such as when one person begins to primarily accommodate and self-sacrifice, can also lead to devaluing oneself (Jordan, 1991a). In fact, an absence of mutuality and withholding of authentic experiences from another can result in psychopathology. An example of this is a study that examined mutuality in the context of disordered eating (Wechsler, Riggs, Stabb, & Marshall, 2006). The authors hypothesized that perceived mutuality in partnered relationships would be negatively correlated with disordered eating. Indeed, the results revealed a negative correlation between mutuality and a subscale of the disordered eating instrument that measured the tendency to avoid openness and intimacy in relationships.

The authors concluded from these results that the more women perceived mutuality within their relationships, the less likely they were to experience distrust in those relationships.

Women's Identity Development

Freudian theory viewed intrapsychic development as the main area of importance to focus on in regard to identity development while seeing relationships with others as secondary to the satisfaction of primary drives (Jordan, 1997). An important move beyond the Freudian model of development was Erikson's (1959) concept of ego identity, which he saw as an outcome of psychosocial development. In Erikson's view, however, the development of the self was still thought to occur by a person's successful or unsuccessful completion of crises in which one separates from others (Miller, 1991). For example, Erikson described autonomy as "the acceptance of the psychosocial fact of being, once and for all, a separate individual, who actually and figuratively must stand on *his* [italics added] own feet" (p. 142). This series of separations was believed to culminate in an individuated identity, which was thought to be a requirement before one could experience true intimacy (Jordan, 1997). Josselson (1987) added that most of Erikson's case examples, which emerged from his developmental theory, were male. Other theorists, such as Sullivan (1953) and Kohut (1985), recognized the importance of relationships on the development of the self, yet these models continued to be based on primary drives. People were seen as objects that performed functions for a self that remained separate (Jordan, 1997).

A result of the traditional view of development is a failure of these theories to appreciate the relational nature of women's sense of self (Jack, 1991; Jordan, 1997).

Miller (1986) wrote that the idea that people are essentially self-seeking and competitive "overlooks the fact that millions of people (most of them women) have spent millions of hours for hundreds of years giving their utmost to millions of others" (p. 70). In fact, the relational aspect of women's lives has historically been denigrated. For example, in her groundbreaking book that questioned the traditional notions of psychology's applicability to women, Miller (1986) pointed out that, historically, tasks involving caring for others were often assigned to women. However, this was at the same time when women's activities and roles were often not recognized, which created a double bind for women. Women have been labeled with such negative terms as deviant, dependent, and immature for making relationships central to their lives (Gilligan, 1982; Jack, 1991; Miller, 1986; Worell, 2001). At times, women have even concluded that they themselves are flawed for having this desire for connection (Miller). Furthermore, Miller noted that women have sacrificed parts of themselves in searching for and maintaining connections.

In an attempt to bring light to people's relational tendencies, Miller (1991) relied on object relations theory and described the ongoing interaction that occurs between an infant and caretaker. An infant is not only attended to by the caretaker but also responds to the caretaker's emotions; thus, the beginnings of the self are inseparable from dynamic interactions. Miller furthered her argument by drawing from Erikson's second stage of childhood development, autonomy vs. shame and doubt. She agreed that a child in this stage develops an increasing amount of mental and physical resources and abilities and, as a result, experiences a *type* of autonomy; however, instead of relying on these new abilities to aid in pulling away from relationships, she suggested that they lead to new understandings within relationships. In fact, one's views become more complex

throughout development, requiring a change in internal configurations of one's sense of self in relation to others (Miller); however, this does not necessarily equate to what is often believed to be separation. To illustrate this more clearly, Miller (1991) wrote:

> Thus girls are not seeking the *kind* of identity that has been prescribed for boys, but a different kind, one in which one is a "being-in-relation," which means developing all of one's self in increasingly complex ways, in increasingly complex relationships. (p. 21)

In a longitudinal study of women in their early 20's, Josselson (1987) found that women developed and grew through relational connections, and their development was based on an ongoing balance between self-in-world and self-in-relation. For example, women's identities were fundamentally intertwined with others to gain meaning yet, at the same time, their sense of self as uniquely individual was heightened from contrasting with others. For many women, success in relationship was itself an expression of needs for assertion and mastery.

Josselson (1987) pointed out that a study of separation and individuation in women is a "disorientating task" (p. 187) since women tend to grow within rather than apart from relationships. Moreover, Miller (1986) posited that the term *autonomy* should be revamped since it carries the implication that one should be able to give up relationships in order to become a self-directed person. This traditional idea of autonomy does not fit for many women since women often seek fuller relationships with others combined with a simultaneous development of the self (Miller). As an example of this, Josselson found that as women arrived at an achievement stage of development, they began to speak of feeling more whole and differentiated within themselves with an

increased desire to connect their more developed self with others. As such, a developmental theory of women must describe both autonomy and connectedness, as well as the link between them, since women's lives represent both separation and interrelatedness concurrently (Harper & Welsh, 2007; Josselson).

Feminist identity development. When considering identity development, one model that specifically applies to women is the feminist identity developmental model (Downing & Roush, 1985). Feminist identity development has been conceptualized as "the process by which women move from a denial of sexism and an unexamined acceptance of traditional gender stereotypes to an awareness of and a commitment to ending oppression" (Moradi, Subich, & Phillips, 2002, p. 7). The intent of the original model by Downing and Roush was not to solely focus on the recognition and integration of the oppression of women, but also to capture women's personal identities as women (Hansen, 2002).

The feminist identity model as described by Downing and Roush (1985) consists of five stages. Stage 1, *passive acceptance* (PA), describes women who are unaware of or deny the individual and cultural discrimination against them and who typically accept traditional gender-role stereotypes. Women in this stage may distrust their own perceptions, thus perpetuating subordinate statuses. The transition into the *revelation* (R) stage, stage 2, is believed to be precipitated by undeniable "crises or contradictions" (Downing & Roush, p. 698) that occur in women's lives. Women in this stage are believed to experience feelings of anger due to newfound recognitions of being treated unfairly and may also experience feelings of guilt as they come to realize their own role in the perpetuation of oppression. Extreme thinking is theorized to also be found in this

stage, with women viewing men as mostly negative and women as all positive. Stage 3, known as *embeddedness-emanation* (EE), has two aspects. Embeddedness is reflective of women developing close connections with other women who are similar to them and with whom they are able to process new ways of seeing the world. They also seek to connect with women who provide support for the development of one's feminist identity. The other phase of stage 3, emanation, is depicted by women starting to return to more balanced, relativistic perceptions versus the dualistic perceptions likely found in the revelation stage. Women in the emanation stage also begin to be open to alternative viewpoints. Next, during the *synthesis* (S) stage, women value positive aspects of being female and integrate this into their self-concept. Women transcend traditional gender roles and make choices that are, instead, based on personal values. Downing and Roush stated, "Women in this stage accept both oppression-related explanations for events and other causal factors and are able to make accurate attributions" (p. 702). In the final stage, *active commitment* (AC), women begin to translate their consolidated feminist identity into action in order to effect social change. It is believed that few women evolve to this stage (Downing & Roush).

Hyde (2002) argued that there has not been a longitudinal study conducted on the feminist identity development model that has captured development across time. Hyde cited this as a major limitation of the model since Downing and Roush (1985) initially proposed that feminist identity developed as women proceeded sequentially through a stage model. However, two researchers that have tested feminist identity development across time are Bargad and Hyde (1991). They examined a sample of undergraduate women who were enrolled in women's studies courses. When comparing data gathered at

the beginning of a semester, it was found that women in the targeted courses (i.e., those focused on women's issues) showed significant differences at pre-test compared to control groups in regard to feminist identity development. Then, utilizing a repeated measures design, the researchers found that women enrolled in courses that focused on women's issues also showed significant differences between their own pre-test and post-test scores. For example, women in two courses exhibited a movement away from the passive acceptance stage and agreed more strongly with the revelation and embeddedness-emanation stages at the end of the semester.

In response to the criticisms regarding the feminist identity development model being a stage model, Hansen (2002) suggested that a failure to find evidence of clearly delineated and sequential stages may have to do with the fact that three of the five stages are "clearly dynamic in their description" (p. 89). Specifically, in the revelation, embeddedness-emanation, and active commitment stages, women are doing things such as seeing the world differently and initiating social change. In contrast, the passive acceptance and synthesis stages are more static and capture how women are in the world. Hansen stated, "The process of incorporating a feminist identity is complex and dependent on a host of intrapersonal and contextual factors" (p. 89), and acknowledged that feminist identity most likely ebbs and flows in terms of salience for women throughout their lives. In 1985, Downing and Roush themselves acknowledged the need for a better understanding of the process of recycling through stages, and called for additional research to substantiate the components of feminist identity development.

In 1998, Reingold and Foust became interested in identifying the determinants of gender-related group consciousness, particularly feminist identity. They noted that

typically demographic variables were isolated as potential determinants; however, Reingold and Foust believed that some demographic variables, such as socioeconomic status, do not explain much variance in feminist consciousness. In support, the results of their study revealed that only marital status and education were significant predictors of feminist consciousness. Being a married or widowed woman was associated with less feminist consciousness, while the more education one had, the higher the feminist consciousness (Reingold & Foust). Beyond demographic variables, they found that four of eight ideological variables had significant independent effects on feminist consciousness: egalitarianism, attitudes on racial inequalities, political party affiliation, and liberal self-identification. Thus, Reingold and Foust concluded that women's feminist consciousness was largely a function of basic sociopolitical beliefs and values rather than life circumstances or socialization. This conclusion was in contrast to later findings where political beliefs were not found to be significant to feminist consciousness (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997). It is important to note that even though the study by Reingold and Foust did not highlight the importance of life circumstances or socialization, they still acknowledged that the development of feminist consciousness in women is most likely not a straightforward, uncomplicated process.

Henderson-King and Stewart (1997) contended that the model proposed by Downing and Roush (1985) went beyond a conception of feminist consciousness as a singular experience by recognizing qualitatively different experiences of feminism, which are depicted in the various stages of feminist identity. Thus, they sought to capture these different experiences through a quantitative research study. Henderson-King and Stewart examined 234 undergraduate females to find what it meant when a woman labeled herself

as a feminist. One of the expectations of the authors was that there would be different configurations of political beliefs, group evaluations, and phenomenological descriptions that predicted stages of feminist identity. These expectations were supported by the study's findings. Specifically, it was found that feelings about feminists negatively related to and significantly predicted the passive acceptance stage yet became a positive, significant predictor of the synthesis stage. Furthermore, feelings about feminists, power discontent, and sensitivity to sexism were significant predictors of the revelation stage.

Henderson-King and Stewart (1994) found that results of measuring group consciousness both as women and as feminists indicated that women who scored high on feminist identification were highly woman-identified; however, the reverse was not necessarily found. That is, highly identifying as a woman did not necessarily translate into strongly identifying as a feminist. Other findings revealed that women who strongly identified as women but not as feminists scored higher on passive acceptance and were less likely to report a common sense of fate with other women (Henderson-King & Stewart). Thus, it was concluded that the group *feminists*, rather than the more general group *women*, provides a more accurate picture of group consciousness.

Since the emergence of feminism, there has been an interest in how women's identification with feminism is related to psychological processes (Fischer et al., 2000). It is believed that identifying with feminist values may be one of the primary sources of women's positive feelings about themselves as well as their feelings of empowerment (Yakushko, 2007). Using a sample of female graduate students, faculty, and staff, Saunders and Kashubeck-West (2006) were interested in examining the relationships between feminist identity development and psychological well-being. They found that

feminist identity development uniquely contributed to variance in psychological well-being; specifically, lower scores on revelation and higher scores on active commitment predicted greater well-being. Because women at advanced stages of feminist identity reported higher levels of overall psychological well-being, Saunders and Kashubeck-West posited that it may be women at advanced stages who are able to differentiate between healthy behaviors and socially ingrained behaviors. This, then, could empower them to choose beneficial life alternatives for themselves, whereas women with less developed feminist identities might be prone to engage in socially approved behaviors resulting in negative impacts on mental health.

Women with higher levels of feminist identity may experience solidarity with other women that can result in validation of their unique experiences (Saunders & Kashubeck-West, 2006). Initial study results investigating this hypothesis revealed significant correlations between the synthesis and active commitment stages of feminist identity and the well-being subscale measuring positive relations with others (Saunders & Kashubeck-West). However, in a hierarchical regression these relationships disappeared after controlling for partnered status and other well-being variables. Thus, a direction for future research for more exploration between feminist identity development and specific behaviors that might affect psychological well-being was voiced (Saunders & Kashubeck-West).

Responding to criticisms of using narrowly defined samples (i.e., utilizing samples of women who are in college; Moradi et al., 2002) and of the nonlinearity of the theorized feminist identity stages (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997; Moradi & Subich, 2002a), Yakushko (2007) targeted women who were over 18 years old and used a cluster

analysis technique in her study. The reliance on cluster analysis was also to allow for women to differ in their views of feminist identity as well as to be at multiple stages at a time. Also, Yakushko reasoned that it could be more meaningful to explore patterns of how women relate to feminist identity rather than simply assigning them to stages. Specifically, the five stages of the feminist identity development model as measured by the Feminist Identity Composite (Fischer et al., 2000) were used as clustering variables.

The findings of the study conducted by Yakushko (2007) revealed three clusters of women. The first cluster was labeled *women with traditional values* (WTV) since it was found that the women in this cluster scored high on the PA subscale and low on the four other subscales. Cluster two consisted of women who scored close to the means of all the women in the sample and thus, this cluster was named *women with moderate values* (WMV). The final cluster, named *women with feminist values* (WFV), included women who had higher scores on the S and AC subscales and low scores on the PA subscale. The labeling of the clusters by Yakushko was consistent with Hyde's (2002) contention that the stages appear to be "statements of values" (p. 108) rather than true stages. No significant age differences were found between clusters, indicating that women of all ages were found in every cluster. Thus, a woman's chronological age was not necessarily a determinant of her level of identity development.

In the second step of her study, Yakushko (2007) used the clusters as independent variables to investigate possible differences on a measure of well-being. Results showed that there were, as hypothesized, differences among aspects of well-being among women in the three clusters of feminist identity development. More specifically, the WTV cluster

had significantly lower total scores on well-being compared to WMV and WFV. Yakushko noted that this finding, in particular, is important in that it suggested that women who hold traditional values may experience less well-being compared to women who ascribe to some or all of the beliefs of feminism. The fact that one does not have to ascribe to all of the tenets of feminism to experience benefits is encouraging, especially given that it has been found that some women are not willing to identify as feminists even though they still hold some of the beliefs (Williams & Wittig, 1997). Additionally, the WFV cluster scored significantly higher than both WMV and WTV on subscales of autonomy and personal growth, and the WTV had significantly lower scores on sense of purpose in life compared to the WFV cluster. These findings were significant even after removing the effects of health status, age, and educational level. Interestingly, significant differences were not found between clusters in regard to the subscale measuring positive relations with others. Yakushko suggested that this may indicate that women across clusters may have a similar way of relating to others. However, the instrument used in the study measured a broad representation of one's overall relationships (Ryff, 1989) and, as such, may have neglected to take into account the uniqueness of specific kinds of relationships. It may be that tapping into specific relationships, such as women's same-sex friendships, could reveal more meaningful information.

Loss of voice and empowerment. Brown (1991) powerfully captured a theme that she repeatedly observed during a qualitative study examining development in girls and women: "*Cover up*, girls are told as they reach adolescence, daily, in innumerable ways. Cover your body, cover your feelings, cover your relationships, cover your knowing, cover your voice…." (p. 22). Through this statement, Brown recognized the part that

societal messages play in the role of a loss of voice in women. Similarly, GlenMaye (1998) described an "alienation from the self" (p. 31) that can occur due to the oppression women face. This is akin to a loss of voice as women are unable to identify their feelings and needs. An illustration of this is found in a longitudinal study of adolescent girls by Brown and Gilligan (1992) where it was observed that female adolescents came to a place in which they no longer expressed a voice (i.e., their needs, feelings, opinions, and ideas), which affected their relationships with others:

> As the phrase "I don't know" enters our interviews with girls at this developmental juncture, we observe girls struggling over speaking and not speaking, knowing and not knowing, feeling and not feeling, and we see the makings of an inner division as girls come to a place where they feel they cannot say or feel or know what they have experienced – what they have felt and known. (p. 4)

It is important to note that *voice* does not mean a literal act of speaking but instead refers to the ability to manifest and affirm in relationships with others the aspects of self that feel central to one's identity (Jack, 1999). Brown and Gilligan (1992) noted that girls in their study were developing well according to standard measures of social and personality development, including in terms of differentiation and autonomy, yet simultaneously they exhibited a loss of voice and struggled to know and affirm their own experiences (Brown, 1991; Brown & Gilligan). Furthermore, Brown and Gilligan determined that as women developed, they began to speak in "indirect discourse, in voices deeply encoded, deliberately or unwittingly opaque" (p. 24).

Another observation by Brown and Gilligan (1992) was that as women developed

psychologically they spoke of themselves as living in connection with others yet described a paradox of giving up their voice and abandoning the self for sake of having relationships. Jack (1991) maintained that for women, a familiar equation becomes, "…silence yourself to stay in relationship and be good, or speak your feelings, hurt someone, and lose the relationship" (p. 156). Women then silence themselves out of the conviction and fear that if they reveal their feelings and perceptions, they risk rejection and ultimately abandonment. Women also silence themselves or are silenced in relationships rather than risk open conflict and disagreement (Brown & Gilligan). Josselson (1987) found that women tended to be more concerned with keeping harmony than with amplifying contradictory emotional states. Brown and Gilligan concluded that relationships between women are crucial for bringing women's voices fully into the world. As Brown (1991) indicated, in order to be an authority on one's own experience, it requires another person who acknowledges one as such in a relationship in which one is taken seriously.

In Jack's (1991) longitudinal, qualitative study of women who struggled with depression, a theme that emerged was that a loss of self seemed to coincide with a loss of voice (Jack). It was the process of continually monitoring feelings and censoring oneself that led to a loss of self when in relationship (Jack). Josselson (1987) described an observation in her study akin to this when she found that most of the women were "censors rather than sensers" (p. 181) who spent little energy trying to understand themselves psychologically or know their own feelings. Gilligan (1982) posited that, for women, silencing of voice is often not only out of a wish not to hurt others, but also out of a fear of speaking yet not being heard. Thus, women are believed to struggle to

disentangle their voices from the voices of others in an attempt to find a language that represents their experience of relationships and sense of self. Because loss of voice coincides with loss of self, a manipulation of one's identity into someone more socially and culturally acceptable can occur (Harper & Welsh, 2007).

A loss of voice can hinder women's ability to be empowered through the creation of mutually empowering relationships (Surrey, 1991). For the purposes of the proposed study, the empowerment model as conceptualized by Worell and Remer (1992, 2003) will be relied upon. This empowerment model consists of four broad principles which emerge out of feminist therapy. Principle I, *Personal and Social Identities are Interdependent*, recognizes the need to acknowledge the roles of both the larger culture and the smaller groups with which women self-identify in relation to their personal identity and development (Johnson et al., 2005). Goals relevant to the first principle include increasing awareness of "…social locations with respect to gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, etc…." (Johnson et al., p. 112) and learning to cope with the interdependence of these social identities. The *Personal is Political* captures the essence of Principle II. This encompasses gender-role socialization and gender discrimination with social causes being explored as potential sources of women's problems. GlenMaye (1998) noted that the link between the personal and political can remain hidden until women together begin to share common experiences. The goals related to this principle are focused on replacing oppressive gender-role beliefs with self-enhancing ones, developing a range of behaviors that are freely chosen and flexible, and developing a sense of personal power (Worell & Remer, 1992). Principle III is called *Relationships are Egalitarian*, and addresses the unequal power status between women

and men as well as the inequality between majority and minority groups. Examples of goals include developing egalitarian and interdependent relationships. The final principle, *Women's Perspectives are Valued*, focuses on reconceptualizing and affirming those characteristics that are traditionally considered feminine traits, such as communal perspectives of caring, concern for others, and emotional expressiveness (Johnson et al.). In addition, this principle comes out of a recognition that women are often placed in a double bind (Worell & Remer, 1992). To describe this double bind, Worell and Remer wrote:

> They are reinforced for being "appropriately" female and taught to be nurturing of their families, to put their family members' needs before their own and to devote their life energies to "making the home." Yet women are criticized for being "enmeshed" with their families and for being "dependent" on a man economically. (p. 97)

The double bind often results in women feeling guilty and inadequate no matter what choice is made (GlenMaye, 1998). To combat this notion, Worell and Remer (1992) posited that women need to validate their female characteristics and define themselves based on trusting their own experiences. Learning to believe in oneself as a woman is key to women's empowerment (GlenMaye). When women are able to do this, they then learn to value other women and their relationships with them. This increased bonding with women is seen as an important avenue for them to understand the shared social conditions that at times work against them (GlenMaye; Worell & Remer). Other goals believed to be salient to empowerment are learning to appreciate female-related values, trusting one's intuition and experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge, and valuing

relationships with other women. Finally, GlenMaye noted that empowerment can result from full, authentic relationships with other women.

Interventions with an empowerment philosophy have been foundational to teaching women self-defense techniques as well as in treatment focused on victims of domestic violence (e.g., Peled, Eisikovits, Enosh, & Winstok, 2000) and those women who are homeless (GlenMaye, 1998). An empowerment approach has also been employed in HIV prevention programs for women (Levine et al., 1993). Other conceptualizations of empowerment have been examined and discussed in qualitative research. For example, one qualitative study examined participants' written responses to an imaginary scenario depicting a male making unwanted sexual advances (Masters, Norris, Stoner, & George, 2006). The researchers determined that empowerment was depicted by those stories that consisted of some type of physical resistance. This conceptualization views empowerment as a primarily behavioral response, such as fighting back. Another qualitative study by Andrews and Boyle (2003) found the emergence of an empowerment theme when teenage girls who chose to have an abortion after an unplanned pregnancy described their decision-making process. Specifically, the participants described feeling a greater sense of control and increased trust in their abilities to make decisions and choices.

Gutiérrez, Parsons, and Cox (1998) discussed other components of empowerment believed to be significant. One of those components included beliefs and attitudes, such as a belief in self-efficacy and a sense of control. Another component was that of obtaining validation through collective experiences, in that people recognized shared experiences which allowed for a sense of legitimacy and reduction of self-blame. For

example, a path toward empowerment can arise out of support networks (Negroni-Rodríguez & Bloom, 2004), such as the friendships shared among women. Negroni-Rodríguez and Bloom discussed an all-female support network in Puerto Rico and identified the benefits that arose out of it. One of the benefits was that the relationships developed between the women magnified resources and opportunities for themselves and other women. Also, involvement in the group allowed them to change their attitudes of powerlessness and to increase self-efficacy and self-esteem. From these observations, Negroni-Rodríguez and Bloom determined these aspects to be representative of a sense of empowerment, which they believed emerged as a direct result of connections with women.

Mutuality, Feminist Identity Development, and Empowerment

Miller (1997) eloquently remarked:

> I believe that more people should continue to work on emphasizing women's strengths and women's values because powerful forces still act upon us to lead us to ignore or diminish these valuable characteristics. While some changes have occurred, it still takes extra effort because most of us have internalized a deficiency model of women. (p. 26)

Scholarship and research on the psychology of women have brought the developmental issues of women to the forefront (Worell & Remer, 1992). Since women have begun to give voice to and acknowledge their unique concerns (Miller, 1986), the recognition and vital importance of mutual and empowering interpersonal connections in regard to development has been acknowledged. Jack (1991) underscored that the focus on relationships in women's psychology has been transformed by emerging perspectives on

women's interpersonal orientations, female identity development, and gender norms. If the self is indeed relational as proposed by theorists, then this compels an examination of how the interpersonal world is affected by gender norms (Jack). Recognizing that women may psychologically develop in unique ways becomes useful when it allows for new questions to be asked about women's particular circumstances and experiences (Worell & Remer, 1992). As discussed in the preceding sections, literature has been reviewed that demonstrates the importance of relationships in women's lives and the benefits that come from these relationships when they are perceived as mutual and empowering. The reviewed literature also discussed the impact of societal and gender norms on women and their relationships, and the feminist identity development model was presented as one that considers the impact of these norms.

An important aspect of women's interpersonal relationships is that of friendships, namely same-sex friendships. It is a near unanimous assertion that friendship between women holds therapeutic value for the lives of women (e.g., Becker, 1987; Davidson & Packard, 1981; Gilligan, 1991). It has also been noted that mutual relationships that promote growth can facilitate the experience of empowerment (Surrey, 1991). Additionally, empowerment and feminist identity development both consider the role of oppression and its impact on women's lives. As depicted, mutuality, feminist identity, and empowerment are all constructs that are theoretically related yet have not been explored empirically, let alone examined in the context of the friendships between women. Thus, attempting to broaden the knowledge base of feminist identity, empowerment, and mutuality in relation to women's same-sex friendships is a natural extension of prior pieces of literature and would be a meaningful and significant

endeavor.

The literature reviewed leads to research questions for the proposed study. Because these constructs have yet to be empirically examined jointly, it seems important to first explore the relationships between feminist identity, empowerment, and mutuality. Then, specific cluster patterns of feminist identity development stages that emerge in a sample of adult women will be identified. The final step will first examine whether feminist identity stage clusters and personal empowerment predict significant variance in perceived mutuality in women's same-sex friendships. Then, the clusters of feminist identity development will be investigated as a potential moderator between empowerment and mutuality.

Chapter Three

Methods

Participants

Participants will be women between the ages of 18 and 64 in an effort to capture women across different age groups. Because of the often noted limitation in the feminist identity literature that most research samples have largely consisted of undergraduate college students (Moradi et al., 2002), this study will not be collecting in traditional university classrooms. Instead, nontraditional college settings will be targeted; for example, one that offers modular degree programs that are nine to 12 months in length. Another limitation often highlighted in feminist identity development research is that participants are of limited diversity; in fact, several researchers have called for future studies to include greater diversity within samples (Hansen, 2002; Moradi & Subich, 2002a; Yakushko, 2007). Ultimately, including women of diverse ages and backgrounds in this study is an attempt to extend this literature base by increasing generalizability as well as exploring within-group diversity among women (Moradi et al.). An example of settings that will be targeted in an effort to gain a diverse sample of women will be doctors' offices. Finally, because this study proposes to utilize a web survey, a snowball method will also be relied on in that women will be asked to forward the survey to at least four women they know.

In regard to targeted sample size for the proposed study, there are generally no rules of thumb when utilizing cluster analysis (Dolnicar, 2002). Dolnicar noted that the sample size is expected to coincide with the number of variables used for clustering. Furthermore, Dolnicar deduced from the literature that a sample size should preferably be

$5*2^k$, where k = number of variables. Using this recommendation as a guide, the result is $5*2^5$, as the five feminist identity stages will be used as cluster variables. Thus, this study aims to collect a sample of at least 160 women.

Instruments

The Personal Progress Scale-Revised (PPS-R; Johnson et al., 2005), the Mutual Psychological Developmental Questionnaire (MPDQ; Genero, Miller, & Surrey, 1992), the Feminist Identity Composite (FIC; Fischer et al., 2000), and a demographic information form (Appendix A) will be administered for the purposes of this study.

Feminist Identity Composite (FIC). Fischer et al. (2000) developed the 33-item FIC in response to calls for the use of improved empirical instruments when measuring women's feminist identity development. The FIC was made up of items from the Feminist Identity Scale (FIS; Rickard, 1987) and the Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS; Bargad & Hyde, 1991) in an attempt to merge the best items from each instrument into a single measure. As a result, Fischer et al. found that the FIC contained five homogeneous subscales, which corresponded to the theorized stages of the feminist identity development model (Downing & Roush, 1985). These subscales were termed Passive Acceptance (PA), Revelation (R), Embeddedness-Emanation (EE), Synthesis (S), and Active Commitment (AC). Participants are instructed to indicate their level of agreement on each item using a 5-point Likert scale from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree." Subscale scores are obtained by calculating mean scores across the items that compose each subscale with the highest obtained mean score used as the indicator of stage of feminist identity development. A total score can also be obtained by adding responses from all items, with a scoring range from 33 to 165 with higher scores

indicating greater feminist identity development.

The FIC has demonstrated adequate psychometrics. Internal consistency reliabilities of the five subscales of the FIC were an improvement over the FIS and FIDS. Specifically, Cronbach's alphas were .75, .80, .84, .68, and .77, which correspond with the subscales of PA, R, EE, S, and AC, respectively (Fischer et al., 2000). Sample items from each of the five subscales are:

PA: "I don't see much point in questioning the general expectation that men should be masculine and women should be feminine."

R: "I never realized until recently that I have experienced oppression and discrimination as a woman in this society."

EE: "I am very interested in women artists."

S: "I enjoy the pride and self-assurance that comes from being a strong female."

AC: "I care very deeply about men and women having equal opportunities in all respects."

In a validation study by Fischer et al. (2000) utilizing a sample of female college students and female community members, convergent validity was demonstrated by significant correlations between the FIC subscales and a measure of ego identity development. In particular, PA was significantly correlated with an ego identity stage in which people may adopt commitments from others yet not evaluate and shape them for personal fit. Moreover, AC was significantly correlated with an identity stage characterized by possession of a well-defined sense of self that emerges after active exploration of alternatives and options. Convergent validity was also supported by significant correlations among the FIC subscales and perceptions of sexist events (Fischer

et al.; Moradi & Subich, 2002b) and involvement in women's organizations (Fischer et al.). In addition, there were weak to no correlations between FIC subscales and a social desirability measure (Fischer et al.; Moradi & Subich, 2002a), which demonstrated discriminant validity. Finally, a confirmatory factor analysis revealed excellent fit to the data supporting a five factor solution that "clearly reflected" (Fischer et al., p. 27) the five stages of the model proposed by Downing and Roush (1985). Scholars have recommended the use of the FIC (Moradi & Subich, 2002a) and reported that the FIC was an improvement over the FIS and the FIDS (Hansen, 2002).

Personal Progress Scale-Revised (PPS-R). Johnson, Worell, and Chandler (2005) developed a 28-item scale, the PPS-R, which is intended to measure empowerment in women. Items are weighted on a 7-point Likert scale (score range = 28 to 196) from *almost never* to *almost always*, with higher scores indicating greater level of personal empowerment. Examples of items include, "It is difficult for me to be assertive with others when I need to be" and "I am determined to become a fully functioning person."

The PPS-R is meant to be an improvement over the original PPS by a greater inclusion of diversity issues. To do this, items were altered to better represent the intersections of both social and personal identities. In addition, original items with low item-total correlations were either re-worded or removed. In a validation study with adult women aged 18 to 62, the PPS-R demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .88 (Johnson et al., 2005). A more recent study reported a Cronbach's alpha of .85 (Moradi & Funderburk, 2006). Moreover, Johnson et al. ran an exploratory factor analysis in which seven factors emerged that were determined to correspond to at least one of the four principles of the empowerment model (Worell &

Remer, 2003). However, due to only a few items loading on each factor and high correlations between the factors, the authors concluded that the instrument measures a unitary construct, empowerment. Therefore, Johnson et al. stated that the PPS-R is most useful for assessing overall empowerment.

Convergent validity was demonstrated by significant, positive correlations between the PPS-R total score and measures of autonomy, self-acceptance, and overall well-being. For discriminant validity, the PPS-R total scores were found to be negatively and significantly correlated with various subscales of a measure of psychological distress. Discriminant validity was also demonstrated by the PPS-R successfully discriminating between women diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and women who did not meet PTSD criteria in a sample of abused women, even after controlling for general psychiatric symptoms.

The Mutual Psychological Developmental Questionnaire (*MPDQ)*. Genero, Miller, and Surrey (1992) developed a 22-item self-report scale that measures perceived mutuality in close relationships by tapping one's own perspective as well as the perspective of one's friend. Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin (1992) point out that the MPDQ is a unique measure since it is based on a psychological model of connection with others and captures the bidirectional nature of relationships. This is accomplished by the first half of the items beginning with "When we talk about things that matter to my friend, I am likely to…". Examples of the stems (i.e., response items) are, "be receptive" and "avoid being honest." Then, participants are instructed to rate a friend on the last half of the items. These begin with, "When we talk about things that matter to me, my friend is likely to…". Examples of these response items include "pick up on my feelings" and

"respect my point of view." For the current study, items will be rated on a 10-point Likert scale from "1= never" to "10 = all the time" with a scoring range of 22 to 220. Higher scores indicate greater levels of perceived mutuality in one's friendship.

Results from the initial validation study with a sample of women and men aged 18 to 58 indicated high inter-item reliability coefficients ranging from .89 to .92 (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). Subsequent researchers reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .94 (Kayser et al., 1999). Additionally, construct validity has been demonstrated showing significant positive correlations with measures of social support, relationship satisfaction, and cohesion (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992).

Procedure

Data will be collected utilizing a web-survey (i.e., Survey Monkey) that will be created and maintained by the Center for Educational Development and Research (CEDAR) at the University of Oklahoma. As such, the survey will be secure as CEDAR staff will be the only ones that are able to access the data. Once the survey is placed online by CEDAR, a recruitment email with the study link will be sent to women who meet the inclusion criteria. Additionally, postcards that contain the study link will be sent to professionals who have access to women who may fit the inclusion criteria. Those women who choose to participate will first be taken to an online informed consent page, where they will be given the opportunity to either opt in or out of the study. Those individuals who choose to participate will complete the demographic form and the three previously discussed instruments which will take a total of approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. A link to exit the survey will be provided on each page of the survey to allow for participants to withdraw their participation at any time. Those

participants who complete the surveys will be offered an opportunity to enter a raffle for a $50 gift card. This raffle will only require the participants to enter a valid email address, which will be kept in a separate database and not connected to survey responses in order to maintain confidentiality. The actual drawing for the raffle will not occur until after data collection is terminated. The winner will be notified via the email address provided at which time a mailing address will be requested in order to receive the gift card. However, the winner will be instructed not to release their name as their mailing address will be sufficient for receipt of the gift card.

Research Questions

The research questions for the proposed study are: (a) What cluster patterns of feminist identity development stages, as measured by the FIC, are found in a sample of adult women? (b) Do empowerment, as measured by the PPS-R, and cluster of feminist identity development predict significant variance in perceived mutuality, as measured by the MPDQ, in women's same-sex friendships? (c) Will feminist identity stage cluster predict significant variance in perceived mutuality beyond that of empowerment? (d) Does the relationship between mutuality and empowerment differ depending on cluster pattern of feminist identity development?

Data Analysis

Hansen (2002) encouraged researchers to employ diverse methods as a way to extend the research on feminist identity. In an attempt to do so, the present study will utilize a cluster analysis. A primary reason for using cluster analysis is to find groups of similar entities in samples of data (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). In addition, cluster analysis has been used infrequently in counseling psychology research although scholars

have noted that it can be a promising technique as it allows for the organization of heterogeneous groups and examinations of differences among people (Borgen & Weiss, 1971; Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999).

An example of the use of cluster analysis with the feminist identity development model was a study by Yakushko (2007), where cluster analysis was used to identify patterns of feminist identity rather than the often used procedure of assigning women to single stages. As discussed in the literature review, a reliance on cluster analysis in relation to feminist identity development allows for women to differ in their views of feminist identity as well as to be at multiple stages at a time (Yakushko, 2007). This approach also addresses the criticism that the feminist identity development model has not demonstrated reliable evidence of being a linear, sequential stage model (e.g., Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997; Moradi & Subich, 2002a). Therefore, a cluster analysis will be utilized in this study in order to identify and label distinct patterns of feminist identity development without assigning women to specific stages.

After identifying and labeling the cluster patterns of feminist identity development, the identified clusters will be used as predictor variables in a hierarchical multiple regression. For the regression, relevant demographics will be entered in step one, followed by PPS-R total scores in step two, the clusters of FIC feminist identity which will be effect coded in step three, and an interaction term of PPS-R and feminist identity cluster for the final step. These variables will be regressed onto MPDQ total scores.

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