RECIPROCITY IN THE FRIENDSHIPS OF WOMEN ACROSS THE ADULT LIFESPAN

by

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Reciprocity in the Friendships of Women Across the Adult Lifespan

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ABSTRACT

The current study explored the relationship between perceived equity and friendship satisfaction and distress in younger and older women. Equity theory predicts that equitable friendships will be higher in satisfaction and lower in distress than inequitable ones, and that people who perceive themselves to be underbenefited will report greater distress and less satisfaction than people in overbenefited relationships. Previous evidence by Roberto and Scott (1986a; 1986b) has suggested that, in contrast to patterns predicted by equity theory, older people may find being overbenefited most negative.

The sample of 186 women consisted of university students training to be teachers, current teachers and retired teachers. All participants completed questionnaires which included demographics, measures of perceived equity, self-esteem, friendship satisfaction, and distress, anger and guilt for a close friendship. An additional subsample of 29 women of different ages and equity statuses completed a semi-structured interview exploring issues such as friendship history, equity, friendship satisfaction, conflict, and transitions in friendships.

Quantitative results yielded, overall, highly significant main effects for equity, using distress, anger, guilt, and friendship satisfaction as dependent variables. In general, the results supported equity theory. However, no differences between the younger and older groups were found on these variables. Older women reported higher levels of self-esteem than younger women.

Analyses of the interview data confirmed that a balance of give and take in a friendship is important to women, and that feeling underbenefited may create more problems than feeling overbenefited. Finally, the interviews indicated

that the women may be using equality rather than equity; that is, they may be evaluating fairness in their friendship in terms of inputs rather than a ratio of inputs to outcomes.

The absence of differences between the two age groups raises questions regarding the findings of Roberto and Scott (1986a; 1986b), and illustrates both the need to examine adults from more than one cohort within the same study and the need for representative sampling techniques. In addition, future research should investigate the appropriateness of equity-based versus equality-based perceptions of fairness in intimate relationships.

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CHAPTER I

RECIPROCITY IN THE FRIENDSHIPS OF WOMEN ACROSS THE ADULT LIFESPAN

Centuries of literature have celebrated the importance of friendship. Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle have extolled the virtues of friendship, and its importance in maintaining society (Brain, 1976). Aristotle referred to friendship as "a single soul dwelling in two bodies" and suggested that it was "most indispensable for life" (p. 214). He believed there were three kinds of friendship, based on usefulness, pleasure or virtue. Francis Bacon suggested that the three fruits of friendship were: someone to confide in, get counsel from and to count on to do for you what you cannot do for yourself (as cited in Pogrebin, 1987). For the most part, however, these celebrated scholars were discussing the friendships of *men*. Thoughts regarding female relationships were quite different. Brain suggested that men did not believe that women had the capacity for genuine friendship.

Traditionally, the sociological literature has ignored or devalued women's contributions to culture, and women's friendships. Georg Simmel (1950) claimed that women were at a "stage of low personality development" and had less capacity for friendship than men did. Lionel Tiger (1969) concurred, and suggested that women did not form bonds with each other. Instead, they supported men.

In an examination of women in fiction, Auerbach (1978) pointed out that,

> "Initiation into a band of brothers is a traditional privilege, symbolized by uniforms, rituals and fiercely shared loyalties; but sisterhood...looks often like a blank exclusion...an austere banishment from both social power and biological rewards" (p. 3).

Bell (1981) noted that history has detailed records of male friendships. Smith-Rosenberg (1985) pointed out that, although most historians are aware of friendships among women, very few have written about them. When female friendships

were discussed, they were regarded as being supportive of, and secondary to, women's primary roles of wife and mother.

Popular culture, too, has trivialized the importance of female bonds in our society. Cultural stereotypes portray female friends as untrustworthy, jealous and in competition for men. This competition is thought to preclude the formation of genuine friendships among women (Seiden & Bart, 1975). Female friendships have been considered to be secondary to the more important relationships women form with men.

Further examination of the historical literature, however, reveals a rich network of female friendships. Evidence provided by Smith-Rosenberg (1985) and Faderman (1981) described the intimate and long-lived friendships that women in earlier centuries have formed with each other.

> "The letters and diaries of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women revealed the existence of a female world of great emotional strength and complexity. It was a world of intimacy, love, and erotic passion. Uniquely female rituals drew women together during every stage of their lives, from adolescence through courtship, marriage, childbirth and child-rearing, death and mourning. Women revealed their deepest feelings to one another, helped one another with the burdens of housewifery and motherhood, nursed one another's sick, and mourned for one another's dead. It was a world in which men made only a shadowy appearance. Living in the same society, nominally part of the same culture (bourgeois, farming, or working-class), certainly members of the same family, women and men experienced their worlds in radically different ways. Female rituals rigorously excluded male kith and kin, rituals so secret that men had little knowledge of them, so pervasive that they patterned women's lives from birth to death. (Smith-Rosenberg, 1985, p. 28)

Researchers such as Smith-Rosenberg and Faderman have suggested that these close friendships between women no longer exist. Others, including Seiden and Bart (1975), argued that these relationships have always existed, but by the turn of the twentieth century, they were no longer socially acceptable. They suggested that it is not necessary for women to *re-establish* such friendships, but rather to legitimate the friendships that they have always had with each other. Seiden and Bart credited the women's movement for contributing to this growing interest in, and renewed social

acceptance of, women's relationships.

It has been only in the last two decades that the sociological and psychological literature has examined seriously the friendships of women, and has documented the positive impact of friendship on contemporary women's lives.

Female Friendships

Many researchers have recognized that women and men experience relationships differently (Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Hays, 1985; Mazur & Olver, 1987; Wright, 1982). Jean Baker Miller (1976) suggested that, in our culture, women's sense of self is organized around "being able to make and then to maintain affiliations and relationships" (p. 83). Gilligan (1982) emphasized the connectedness that characterizes women's lives. Chodorow (1978) pointed out that men are unlikely to provide for the satisfaction of the relational needs of women. Women try to fulfill some of this need through important personal relationships with other women, both friends and family. Davidson and Packard (1981) suggested that friendships between women hold therapeutic value in that they provide help and support when women need it, and they contribute to one's personal growth and change. Thus, women turn to other women for a number of reasons, including assistance, support, and intimacy.

Characteristics and Functions

Women's friendships tend to share certain well-documented structural characteristics. Friends tend to be of the same sex and approximately the same age (Bell, 1981; Crohan & Antonucci, 1989). For example, Booth and Hess (1974) reported that only 24 percent of the women in their sample reported close friends of the opposite sex. Similarly, Candy (1977) asked a sample of female teachers to describe their five closest

friends. Over 80 percent of the friends described were female. Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) reported that their subjects tended to report that their friend was the same sex and close to their own age. Matthews (1986) found similar results in her study. Friends also tend to be from the same social class (Allan & Adams, 1989; Bell, 1981; Brown, 1981), and to hold similar attitudes, values and interests (Bell, 1981; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975).

Many researchers have attempted to summarize the essential elements of friendships between women. A number of categories have emerged. Women's friendships are typified by trust and respect, including understanding and affection; assistance and support; intimacy and self-disclosure; and reciprocity (Davis & Todd, 1985).

Trust. Bell (1981) reported that the participants in his study gave trust as the most common response to the question "what is important to a friendship?". Bell suggested that close friendships require the elimination of certain barriers, and that this is possible only if trust is established. Davis and Todd (1985) reported that trust and respect are two of the essential elements of friendship, and that these elements are important across the lifespan. Allan and Adams (1989) claimed that the distinction between casual and close friendships lies partly in the development of trust and loyalty. Blieszner (1989) concurred. The results of her study indicated that new residents of a retirement home consistently rated the level of trust as higher in long-term or close friendships than in less close friendships.

Assistance and Support. Research has indicated that women turn to their friends to unburden themselves, and for affective and instrumental support. Davidson and Packard (1981) found that both communion, described as a special kind of sharing and commitment; and altruism, defined as the giving and receiving of help and support, ranked among the three most important dimensions of friendship. Candy (1977) interviewed

women aged 14 to 80 years of age. Subjects reported that their relationships with their five closest friends were important in terms of three dimensions, including intimacy-assistance, that is, unburdening secrets; emotional and financial support; and comfort. Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) reported that helping and support emerged in the content analysis of important characteristics of friendship as reported by their subjects. Bell (1981) asked what made a good friend. One of the most common answers was someone from whom one could receive support and with whom one could share things. The women who participated in a study by Rubin (1985) demonstrated the importance of assistance and support from their friends when they answered the question "to whom would you turn if your spouse announced he was leaving?". Almost always, the participants mentioned at least one friend to whom they would turn immediately for support. As was the case with the participants in the Rubin study, one important aspect of social support that has emerged is intimacy.

Intimacy and Self-Disclosure. Many researchers have documented the importance of intimacy in women's friendships (Aries & Johnson, 1983; Bell, 1981; Rose, 1985; Rose & Roades, 1987). Johnson and Aries (1983) proposed that the intimacy that comes from talking is an "important component of the oral culture of women" (p. 359). H. Gouldner and Strong (1987) found that for almost all of the women in their study, talking was a very important aspect of their friendship. Talking helped with problems and alleviated loneliness. Hacker (1981) interviewed college students regarding their self-disclosure patterns and the closeness of their friendships. Forty percent of the women reported being high disclosers. Self-disclosure increased with age for women (under 26 years of age versus over 26 years of age). In addition, working class women were more likely to report greater self-disclosure than lower middle- or upper-middle class women. Caldwell and Peplau (1982) found that the women in their study valued relationships that emphasized intimacy and emotional sharing.

In an attempt to discover what women talked about, Johnson and Aries (1983) interviewed 20 women in depth about their friendships. Participants reported that conversation with their friends was noncritical, supportive, enhanced self worth, exclusive (they couldn't talk to others in the same way), and it helped in personal growth and self-discovery. In a related study, Aries and Johnson (1983) examined the frequency and depth of conversations between close, same-sexed female friends. Almost half of the respondents reported that personal problems, doubts and fears and family problems were discussed "frequently". Twenty-six percent reported discussing intimate relationships frequently. Daily activities were discussed frequently by 78% of the participants, hobbies and shared activities were reported by 69%.

Both Cozby (1973) and Bell (1981) have reported that, in addition to the breadth of conversation, and the prominence of talk in female friendships, women tend to report a reciprocity of self-disclosure in their friendships with other women. According to Acker, Barry and Esseveld (1981), intimacy actually implies reciprocity. However, reciprocity in women's friendships is not limited to conversational elements.

Reciprocity. Many researchers have found that women's friendships are typified by reciprocity, the balance of give and take in a relationship (e.g. Davis and Todd, 1985; Rubin 1985). The female participants in the Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) study cited reciprocity as the most important and second to most important aspect of ideal and actual friendships respectively. These subjects emphasized mutual help and support, but also reciprocity of self-disclosure. Hess (1972) reported that friendship involved the *sharing* of information, emotions and problems. Allan and Adams (1989) suggested that all friendships are based on a "rough equality", e.g. where no one holds authority over the other and friends meet as equals. This equality and similarity in friendships makes it easier to maintain an equivalence of exchange within the friendship.

In summary, women's friendships involve a degree of similarity in terms of characteristics such as sex, age, social class, values and attitudes. These friendships are important for a number of reasons. Women turn to each other for help with problems, they find understanding and support, both emotional and instrumental. They trust their friends, and show a great capacity for intimacy and self-disclosure. Reciprocity of self-disclosure, helping and intimacy is an important aspect of friendship between women.

Many researchers, however, have suggested that there may be many differences in these factors across the adult lifespan (Allan & Adams, 1989; Blieszner, 1989). Looking at friendship over the lifecourse, therefore, is important to a complete understanding of friendship in the life of the individual (Fox, Gibbs, & Auerbach, 1985).

Older Adult Friendships

There are two predominant views regarding friendships of the elderly. Disengagement theorists suggest that the opportunity to pursue friendships is increasingly limited for older people (Allan, 1989; Allan & Adams, 1989). Dowd (1975) concurred, and pointed out that elderly people may withdraw from social contact because of an inability to maintain the reciprocity they once enjoyed. Others have suggested that older people are able to maintain old friendships, but are unable to initiate new ones (Chown, 1981; Dickens & Perlman, 1981), hence they are particularly vulnerable to the loss of friends. Dickens and Perlman (1981) concluded that the importance of friendships seems to decline with age, and that marriage and parenthood have important constraining effects on friendships. When one considers that, traditionally, women have been the primary caretakers of children, these factors would seem to be especially salient in women's friendships. Chown argued that, if and when disengagement does occur, it is not

so much a desire to withdraw, but rather a decision regarding how to "spend reduced energy". These authors and others (e.g. Allan & Adams, 1989) pointed out that disengagement may represent the influence of external factors, rather than an internal desire on the part of the elderly person to decrease social contact.

A second perspective on aging and social relations suggests that as we age, our roles change. Proponents of this theory have suggested that elderly people need to increase activities in areas such as friendship, in order to compensate for role loss in other areas, such as employment (Adams, 1986). Evidence which supports this theory has shown that older adults not only maintain friendships through the life course, but that they make new friends as well (Adams, 1987; Blieszner, 1989; Matthews, 1986). In fact, the loss of structure after retirement may allow new opportunities to cultivate new friendships. Matthews found that there were strong individual differences in the friendships of elderly women. She reported that some of the respondents in her study tended to be the "acquisitive" type of person; that is, they acquired new friends throughout their entire life, including old age. In a study examining the network evolution of elderly non-married women, Adams reported a general increase in the number of friends over the three-year period of her study.

Whether the disengagement or role change theory is preferred, there are a number of external constraints that can seriously affect older adults' ability to socialize with others. Factors such as gender, health, financial resources, retirement and widowhood can influence the participation of elderly people in social interactions (Allan & Adams, 1989; Blau, 1961; Brown, 1981; Dickens & Perlman, 1981)

Bankoff (1981) and Allan and Adams (1989) have described the popular view of widowhood as one of decreased interaction with friends. Although it is true that initially, the loss of a spouse can disrupt a woman's life severely, Bankoff hypothesized that

research which supports this idea examined only early reactions to the loss, rather than the process of adjustment over time.

Widowhood involves a restructuring of the friendship network, but not necessarily a reduction in the overall level of interaction. Interaction with married couples has been found to decline, whereas interaction with widowed or ever-single women increases (Allan & Adams, 1989). For those women who find it difficult to initiate new friendships, this can mean an overall drop in contact with others. This is a problem especially if one is widowed at a young age. Blau (1961) found that when one is widowed early, one may become isolated from peers, the majority of whom still have living spouses. In contrast, older women are able to find many peers in the same circumstances.

Retirement may result in the loss of opportunity to develop and maintain work-related friendships. This may be true especially for working-class women, who, as Allan (1977) noted, tend to cultivate friends met on the job, and to see these friends mainly in the workplace. Other groups of elderly women may find that the increased leisure time allows them to expand their social network, to re-activate previous friendships, cultivate new ones, and maintain current ones (Matthews, 1986).

The effects of retirement on friendship may be different for the contemporary group of elderly women than for future groups of aged women. Current elderly women are less likely to have worked for pay, and consequently to have their sense of identity strongly connected to their paid work (Allan & Adams, 1989). Relationships they cultivated during their years of domestic labour probably will be maintained during their later years. Women who have worked the majority of their adult lives for pay may be affected by retirement to a greater degree. In addition, Gee and Kimball (1987) noted that more than one-third of Canadian elderly women are poor, and many more could be classified as "near poor". The drop in income that often accompanies retirement may

limit the socializing that the elderly woman is able to do (Allan & Adams, 1989).

Declining health, and the decreased mobility that may be associated with it, may further affect the friendships of elderly people (Allan & Adams, 1989). It can influence the amount of social contact with friends, especially if friends are also in poor health. It may result in relocation, putting more distance between friends. Elderly women may find that they are responsible for more and more care of relatives at this time; for example, husbands in ill health, very elderly parents or parents-in-law (Allan and Adams, 1989). This may severely limit their ability to see friends. As Allan and Adams pointed out, however, health issues do not affect all old women uniformly.

In summary, it is evident that the elderly are not a homogenous group. Individual differences can affect the style of friendship acquisition in old age (Matthews, 1986). Life circumstances such as widowhood and declining health can interact to affect social ties in later life. The old-old, most of whom are women, are most vulnerable to events and circumstances that can impede friendships (Bleiszner, 1989). These circumstances can affect friendships in a number of ways. Reciprocity, the balance of give and take in a relationship, can be upset when one's health and resources are failing. The consequences of such an imbalance can be far-reaching.

Equity Theory

Equity theory is concerned with the question of fairness in a relationship, and the methods used to determine if a relationship is fair (Roberto, 1989). Equity theorists suggest that we strive for a sense of balance in our relationships, and that any perceived imbalance results in some degree of distress. Walster, Walster and Berscheid (1978) developed a version of equity theory in which they attempted to integrate aspects of reinforcement, psychoanalytic and exchange theory. They hypothesized that people are

constantly concerned with fairness and justice in their interpersonal exchanges. We are motivated to maximize our outcomes, which are the balance of positive and negative consequences that a person incurs in the course of a relationship (the rewards we obtain minus the costs we incur). To do this, and to avoid continual confrontation, we evolve systems of apportioning rewards and punishments. We try to induce others to participate in this set of rules by rewarding members who treat others equitably and punishing those who do not. An equitable relationship exists when the relative net gain (the outcomes of a person minus the inputs) of one participant is equal to the relative net gain of the other participant. When we find ourselves participating in an inequitable relationship, this leads to distress; the more inequitable the relationship, the greater the distress.

Different researchers have labelled distress in different ways. Walster et al. (1978) cited research by Brock and Buss (1964) which found that the feeling that one is overbenefiting from a relationship (i.e. one perceives one's net gain to be greater than one's partner's) leads to feelings of guilt. The feelings associated with feeling overbenefited also have been labelled as dissonance, empathy, fear of retaliation, and conditioned anxiety (Hatfield, Utne & Taupmann, 1979). Other evidence has suggested that feeling underbenefited (perceiving one's net gain to be less than one's partner's) can lead to feelings of anger or resentment. In either case, when we discover ourselves to be in an inequitable relationship we attempt to restore equity in one of two ways. First, one can restore *actual* equity, i.e. changing the balance of one's own or one's partner's gains and losses. This can be accomplished by lowering one's inputs by initiating less contact with one's friend. Alternatively, one may attempt to revise one's outcomes (e.g. requesting more assistance from the friend). Another strategy is to raise the partner's inputs, such as not returning phone calls, so the friend must make several attempts to contact you. Finally, one can lower the partner's outcomes, perhaps by no longer being as supportive when the friend is in need. When it is not possible to restore actual equity, a person will

strive to restore *psychological* equity. This can be accomplished by changing one's perceptions and convincing oneself (through various distortions) that an inequitable relationship is equitable, either by minimizing one's inputs or exaggerating one's outcomes. One can also exaggerate the partner's inputs or minimize the partner's outcomes. Again, the greater the perceived inequity, the harder we will try to restore a balance. Whether a person attempts to restore actual or psychological equity will depend on the costs and benefits to be gained from the use of one or the other strategy in a particular instance (Walster et al., 1978).

Equity can be evaluated by either partner in the relationship, or by an outside observer (Walster et al., 1978). Thus, equity is very much "in the eye of the beholder" and can be very difficult to calculate. It is possible that different observers will weigh the various inputs and outcomes of each person differently and arrive at different conclusions. The participants may assess the inputs and outcomes of themselves and their partners differently and disagree in their estimation of equity in their relationship (Hatfield et al., 1979). Roberto (1989) suggested that egocentric bias, cognitive ability and personality factors may influence a person's perceptions of equity.

In sum, Walster et al. (1978) theorized that humans are basically selfish and will try to maximize outcomes. The best way for us to do this is to follow the prescribed rules, and to treat others fairly and equitably. According to principles of equity theory, others will tend to reciprocate in kind. Distress results partially from fears of retaliation and threatened self-esteem, and also from anxiety when we break the rules we have internalized. Thus, although being overbenefited does appear to maximize our outcomes, it may promote distress because we have broken equity rules.

The Norm of Reciprocity

Reciprocity may exist when there is an expectation of give and take between parties in a relationship. It is one of the strategies that people use to maintain fairness, and it represents a compromise in which one does not gain much more than the other (Arling, 1976). "Balanced reciprocity" has been defined as exchanges in which the equivalent value of what one has received is expected to be returned within a particular period of time (Wentowski, 1981). A.W. Gouldner (1960) traced the importance of reciprocity through centuries of sociological, anthropological and philosophical research. He hypothesized that the norm of reciprocity is both compelling and universal. He pointed out that it is a concept often studied and called upon to explain human behaviour, but it is frequently poorly defined. For example, Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) reported that although reciprocity was not explicitly stated as a characteristic of friendship by the respondents in their study, it was often implied by the subjects' responses.

The balance of exchange in a relationship may be restored immediately or it may be deferred for a time. Research by Wentowski (1981) and James, James and Smith (1984) has demonstrated that whichever exchange strategy is used depends on the intentions of the people involved. When one wishes to continue a more distant relationship with the exchange partner, immediate reciprocity is used. Deferred reciprocity involves a willingness to trust and to assume greater obligation. This strategy is used more often in close relationships.

Clark and Mills (1979) and their colleagues discussed reciprocity, but offered an alternative to equity theory. They distinguished between communal relationships where each person is concerned with the welfare of the other, and exchange relationships where each person expects to give benefits *and* to receive the same in return. They hypothesized that reciprocity is important in exchange relationships but in close

relationships (of the communal type) reciprocity, especially immediate reciprocity, is seen as an impediment to a closer friendship. Clark and Mills found that when a communal relationship is desired, receiving an immediate benefit following assistance given decreases attraction, whereas the opposite was found for exchange relationships. In addition, Clark and Mills suggested that the unit of time used to calculate equity lengthens in a close relationship. Walster et al. (1978) also suggested that there are differences between close and more casual relationships, and that, in close relationships, reciprocity is calculated over a longer period of time.

The concept of reciprocity in friendship relations is especially salient in the lives of older people (Rook, 1987). Wentowski (1981) pointed out that the amount of credit built up over a lifetime of balanced participation in one's social network is related to the support one receives in old age. Crohan and Antonucci (1989) suggested that, over a lifetime, people try to maintain a balance of give and take, but that a reserve of credit is most desirable, so that one may call upon it when it is needed. Research using samples of older adults has shown that reciprocity is associated with the maintenance of self-worth (Wentowski, 1981); morale (Roberto & Scott, 1984); coping with the stresses of daily living (James et al., 1984); decreased loneliness (Rook, 1987) and happiness (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987).

Two studies examined the relationship between exchange patterns and satisfaction in best friendships. In a sample of older men and women (average age of 73.8 years), Roberto and Scott (1986b) examined perceived equity and friendship satisfaction for a best friend relationship and one other friend. The authors expected a curvilinear relationship to exist, i.e. the greatest degree of satisfaction would be found in equitable relationships, and the least satisfaction would be found in over- and underbenefited friendships. No significant effect was found in the relationship with the best friend. In the case of the other friend, however, the expected curvilinear relationship was reported.

The authors suggested that the lack of effect in the best friend relationship may reflect the fact that satisfaction in this relationship may be high, regardless of whether there is an immediate balance of exchange or not, ie. deferred reciprocity is being used to calculate equity in these friendships. On the other hand, concern with immediate reciprocity is more important in the less intimate friendship. Walster et al. (1978) pointed out that equity is more difficult to calculate in an intimate rather than a casual relationship. Intimate relationships tend to be more long-term than casual ones, and the length of time over which one could calculate equity potentially increases. It may be difficult to know how far back in a relationship, or how far into the future, it is fair to go in one's calculation of equity. Each partner may have differing ideas regarding the length of time over which equity is determined.

In a study of the ongoing primary relationships of older women, Rook (1987) found that women with over- or underbenefited relationships in their social network reported greater loneliness. In addition, reciprocity was significantly associated with positive feelings toward friends.

Although reciprocity in relationships is important, for many older people the possibility of diminishing financial resources and decreased health and mobility may adversely affect their ability to reciprocate with their friends and relatives (Rook, 1987). For example, dwindling finances may not allow a woman to reciprocate gifts at holiday time; poor vision may keep an older person from taking turns driving on a weekly outing with friends. This is especially true for older women who, because they tend to be poorer than older men, and because they tend to live longer than men, are more apt to encounter greater health and financial problems. Dowd (1975) suggested that, in our society, "power resources" decrease with age, and older people are less able to engage in balanced exchange relationships. As a result, they may withdraw from many interactions.

The inability to reciprocate can lead to various problems for older people. Roberto and Scott (1984) examined the relationship between equity and general morale in a sample of women aged 65 years and older. They hypothesized that women with inequitable friendship networks would have lower morale scores than women with equitable networks. The equity measure, a total number of 11 helping behaviours given to a friend or neighbour minus the total number of those same helping behaviours received from the friend or neighbour, was related to a measure of general morale. The prediction was partially supported. Women with equitable relationships had a higher mean morale score than those with overbenefited relationships; however, the underbenefited women also had a higher mean morale score than overbenefited women. There was no significant difference in the mean morale scores of women in equitable versus underbenefited friendships. The authors suggested that, whereas underbenefited women may not be receiving the same kind of aid they are giving, they may perceive other benefits from the relationship (e.g. intimacy) that this study did not measure. Further, Roberto and Scott suggested that expectations may change over the lifespan, and mutual help in certain areas may not be expected. It may also be that the ability to give assistance to others takes on an increased value in later life--it may be an indication of self-sufficiency, usefulness and general independence--hence being underbenefited may not be viewed as negatively by older people as it may be by younger people.

In a study of equity theory and best friendships among older people, Roberto and Scott (1986a) examined the equity propositions that (1) older women and men in inequitable best friend relationships will report greater distress than those people engaged in equitable ones, and (2) underbenefited people will express more anger with the relationship and overbenefited people will report more guilt. Using a modified version of the Walster et al. (1978) measure, three slightly different perceptions of equity were obtained, first in terms of a helping component, i.e. give and receiving financial aid,

running errands; second in terms of an affective component, i.e. giving comfort, expressing affection; and third in terms of their friendship overall. Distress was measured using Austin's Total Mood Index. The first prediction was confirmed. Contrary to expectations, however, the only significant difference between over and underbenefited people on the distress measure was in amount of anger they felt in their overall relationships with their best friend. The overbenefited reported greater amounts of anger than the underbenefited. Roberto & Scott posited that it may be that the lack of reciprocity at this age is indicative of declining resources, and the older person feels anger, rather than guilt, at what may be a growing dependence on others. Age, however, may not be the only factor to affect the ability to reciprocate, and the feelings associated with non-reciprocal relationships.

Self-Esteem and Reciprocity

The relationship between self-esteem, reciprocity and friendship has been examined in several contexts. Wentowski (1981) examined self-esteem and reciprocity in a sample of older adults (ranging in age from 55-83 years). When the older people in her study were no longer able to reciprocate fully, they gave token repayments, reciprocating as much as they were able. If the helper refused to accept these token repayments, some older people refused further aid on the basis that they wouldn't accept "charity". The author concluded that the ability to reciprocate is essential to the self-esteem of these elderly. Rook (1987) and Arling (1979) also concluded that the ability to reciprocate was related to enhanced feelings of self-worth.

Self-esteem has been purported to affect people's help-seeking behaviour and their reactions to receiving help (Nadler, Mayseless, Peri & Chemerinski, 1985). In one study, Nadler et al. examined the relationship between self-esteem and adherence to the norm of reciprocity in helping behaviour. Participants were required to indicate their agreement

with a number of statements regarding reciprocity, such as "When my neighbour invites me for dinner, I often think of a convenient date to reciprocate". The researchers found that commitment to reciprocity is mediated by self-esteem: the higher the self-esteem, the higher the score on the commitment-to-reciprocity scale. A second study assessed help-seeking behaviour, and demonstrated that people high in self-esteem who did not anticipate an opportunity to reciprocate sought help less than individuals with low self-esteem who had no opportunity to reciprocate, or individuals with either high or low self-esteem who had an opportunity to reciprocate. They concluded that receiving help that cannot be reciprocated may establish dependency and increase distress. Dependency is inconsistent with the positive self-concept of high self-esteem individuals, so these people would try to avoid such aid. Receiving non-reciprocated aid would be consistent with the self-concept of low self-esteem people, however, and distress would be lower. Therefore, when in need of aid, people with high self-esteem will be more affected by a lack of reciprocity, i.e. being overbenefited, than people with lower self-esteem.

Type of Relationship

Adherence to the norm of reciprocity may be mediated not only by self-esteem, but also by the type of relationship. Evidence suggests that rules of equity may differ in relationships with family and with close and casual friends. As reported above, Walster et al. (1978) suggested that close friends may accept non-reciprocal relationships temporarily, because they assume the inequity will be redressed at some future point in the friendship. Casual acquaintances may be less likely to tolerate inequities over extended periods of time, and more likely to expect a more immediate restoration of equity. Evidence from Rook (1987), who examined elderly women's relationships with their friends and children, suggested that relationships with friends were more likely to be reciprocal than were exchanges with adult children. In addition, greater reciprocity was significantly associated with more positive feelings toward friends but not children.

Rook pointed out that older mothers may feel entitled to receive more from their grown children than they are giving, as payment for having raised them as young children. Hence immediate reciprocity with children at this life stage may be less important, and less related to positive feelings.

In a study which focused on aid received by subjects, Willmott (1986) argued that, whereas reciprocity is important in our relationships with both friends and relatives, different kinds of reciprocal aid were expected from different relationships. Relatives were more likely to give aid in the form of childcare, financial advice and loans. Friends offered more support with house maintenance, personal advice and were more important as confidants. Arling (1976) compared involvement with family to that with friends and neighbours in a sample of elderly widows. Contact with family did not raise morale significantly, whereas contact with friends and neighbours was related to less loneliness, less worry, and a feeling of usefulness and respect. He concluded that the ability to reciprocate assistance with one's friends accounts, in part, for the more positive feelings of the participants toward friends.

Prevalence

It would appear that the majority of adult friendships tend to be characterized by reciprocity. Rook (1987) found that the older women in her study reported, on a general level, fairly equitable exchanges with members of their networks. Indeed, Lopata (1981), Bell (1981) and others considered reciprocity to be one of the basic defining features of friendship. Research partially supports this idea. In one study, older men perceived their relationships with best and other friends to be equitable 85.4% and 78.2% of the time respectively. Although the older women in this study were significantly less likely to judge their best and other friendships to be equitable, (58.2% and 56.4% of the time respectively) at least half considered their relationship to be fair (Roberto and Scott,

1986b). Babchuk and Anderson (1989) reported that reciprocity of intimacy was the norm in their sample of older widows and married women (73% and 61% respectively). Hatfield, Greenberger, Traupmann and Lambert (1982) found that most of the newlywed couples in their study (all couples were under the age of 45) felt equitably treated by their spouse. James et al. (1984) described a rural Irish community where reciprocity between older and younger age groups is the norm.

Most of these studies, however, have been restricted to examining a single age group. Comparison of reciprocity across all ages within the same study, as Ingersoll-Dayton & Antonucci (1988) pointed out, is important to a full understanding of reciprocity and its relationship to aging.

In conclusion, women's friendships tend to be similar in terms of age, class, attitudes and values. These relationships are characterized by trust, support and intimacy. Throughout the lifespan, reciprocity remains an important factor in women's relationships. The friendships of aging women are often restricted by external factors such as widowhood, retirement and diminishing health and financial resources. These factors may also affect the ability of the older woman to reciprocate in friendships. This is of particular significance at this stage of adulthood because the ability to reciprocate may be understood by older women to demonstrate independence and health. Research has indicated that reciprocity has been shown to be related to self-worth, distress, morale, coping, decreased loneliness and happiness.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present research was designed to explore the role of reciprocity in women's friendships. It is based on the assumptions of equity theory, which suggest that participants in a relationship must perceive a reciprocity of inputs and outcomes or negative feelings such as guilt or anger will result. Previous research by Roberto and Scott (1984; 1986a; 1986b) has suggested that the usual pattern outlined by equity theory may not apply in the same way for the friendships of older people.

This study is an attempt to clarify what age differences, if any, may be found in the equity patterns of women across the adult lifespan. Whereas Roberto and Scott (1984; 1986a; 1986b) sampled older adults only, this study measured the perceived equity in the friendships of young, middle-aged and older women. Equity scores for young and old women were compared with several measures, including distress and friendship satisfaction.

Hypotheses

Specifically, the following hypotheses were proposed:

(1) Based on equity theory (Walster et al., 1978), it was predicted that the women in this study who perceived themselves to be in an inequitable close friendship would be more distressed than those who perceived themselves to be in an equitable relationship. In addition, overbenefited women would report less distress than underbenefited women. Empirical results from Roberto and Scott (1986a), however, indicated differences in the relationship between equity and distress scores for older people. In their study of older women and men, overbenefited subjects reported *more* distress than those who considered themselves underbenefited. Therefore, an interaction was also predicted: the

younger group would follow the pattern predicted by equity theory, whereas in the older group, the *over*benefited would report greater distress than the equitably and underbenefited. This may reflect the increasing importance of dependence in the relationships of older adults, and the notion that receiving more than one is giving in a relationship, i.e. overbenefiting, implies dependency.

(2) In an effort to explore further the negative affect experienced by some people who perceive themselves to be in inequitable relationships, the distress measure was broken down into two of its four components: anger and guilt. Equity theory (Walster et al., 1978) proposed that those who felt underbenefited would tend to feel angry, whereas people who felt overbenefited would tend to feel guilty. Contrary to this theory, Roberto and Scott (1986a) reported that, in their sample of older men and women, overbenefited participants reported significantly greater amounts of anger than underbenefited subjects. Therefore, several specific predictions were made. First, in terms of anger, it was predicted that the younger group would follow equity theory propositions; that is, underbenefited women would report more anger than equitably or overbenefited women. In the older group, however, *over*benefited women would report more anger than either equitably or underbenefited women. In addition, overbenefited women in the younger group would report less anger than overbenefited older women. Underbenefited women in the younger group would report greater anger than underbenefited women in the older group.

Second, in terms of the guilt component, it was hypothesized that the younger group would follow equity theory predictions, with the overbenefited women reporting more guilt than underbenefited or equitably benefited women. Roberto and Scott (1986a) failed to find a difference between the amount of guilt reported by underbenefited and overbenefited older people. Therefore, it is predicted that in the older group, inequitably benefited women would report more guilt, although there would be no difference between

over- and under-benefited. In addition, overbenefited women in the younger group would report greater guilt than overbenefited women in the older group.

(3) In their sample of older adults, Roberto and Scott (1986b) found a curvilinear relationship between equity and friendship satisfaction for a casual friend. Participants in inequitable relationships were less satisfied than those in equitable relationships. In addition, equitable and underbenefited relationships were more satisfying than overbenefited relationships. Based on these findings, a curvilinear relationship was also predicted in the present study. Overall, equitable friendships would be most satisfying, and both under- and overbenefited relationships would be less satisfying. An interaction was also predicted. Following equity theory, the younger group would report greater satisfaction for overbenefited than underbenefited friendships. In the older group *under*benefited would report greater friendship satisfaction than the overbenefited.

(4) People in inequitable relationships may attempt to restore psychological equity. Those who are underbenefited may find reasons to explain why their partner is unwilling or unable to provide reciprocal exchanges (e.g. the friend is in poor health), whereas overbenefited people may attempt to justify why they are deserving of a more positive relative outcome than their partner. In order to give women a clear opportunity to demonstrate the restoration of equity in this manner, the questionnaire included an open-ended question which asked for an explanation for any perceived inequity in their friendship. In addition, the interviews, conducted on a subset of 30 participants, explored again the participants' perceptions of equity. It was predicted that those who considered themselves to be in inequitable friendships would attempt to restore equity through psychological means.

(5) Based on research by Wentowski (1981) which indicated that maintaining reciprocity is important to self-worth, and research by Nadler et al. (1985), which

indicated that self-esteem may mediate people's reactions to receiving non-reciprocated assistance, this study will examine the relationship between self-esteem and equity. It may be that older people view being overbenefited in a more negative way than do younger people. To an older person, being overbenefited may represent the inability to reciprocate now or in the future. It may be that younger people view being overbenefited as a temporary condition, one that will be rectified at some future point. It was predicted, therefore, that being overbenefited would be associated with lowered self-esteem in the older group but not in the younger group. There would be no group differences in self-esteem for those people in equitable relationships.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 186 women who were current teachers, retired teachers or university students training to be teachers. They were recruited from two sources. Questionnaire packets were mailed to a random selection of 1989/1990 female teachers and retired teachers who were members of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and who lived in the Greater Vancouver region, specifically North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Vancouver, Burnaby, Delta, Richmond, and Surrey. In addition, female students in the Professional Development Program (PDP) at Simon Fraser University (SFU) were approached in psychology class tutorials and during a week of PDP workshops and asked to participate. In addition, posters were put on appropriate bulletin boards in the Education and Psychology Departments. The poster asked for students training to be teachers to participate in psychology research on women's friendships. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which would take about 15 minutes. Subjects were told they could also participate in a confidential interview lasting about 30-40 minutes. Contact information was provided. Of the participants who volunteered to participate

further, a subsample was selected to be interviewed in more depth.

Questionnaire packets were distributed to 985 women. Two mailings took place. Four hundred packets were sent out in July 1989, and 475 more in March 1990. One hundred and ten women were approached at SFU through tutorials and workshops. Eleven packets from the first mailout and 13 packets from the second mailout were returned by the post office marked "Moved. Address Unknown". One packet from the second mailout was returned marked "Deceased". Two hundred women returned questionnaires: 77 from the first mailout, 94 from the second, and 29 from tutorials and workshops. The response rates were 19.7% for the first mailout, and 20.3% for the second mailout and 26.3% for the tutorials. Of these 200 returned questionnaire packets, the data from eight were discarded because the participants reported on their relationship with a male friend (three from the first mailout, two from the second mailout, and three from the tutorial groups). The data from six respondents were discarded because they were incomplete (two from the first mailout, three from the second, and one from the tutorials). In total, the data from 186 respondents were used. In addition to the questionnaires, interviews were conducted with 30 of the participants who had indicated that they would be willing to participate further. They were divided into three groups based on their equity score from the questionnaire. Ten from each group were randomly selected, and contacted by phone to set up an interview. If the subject could not be reached after three attempts, another subject was randomly selected to take their place. Because only 11 subjects in the underbenefited category agreed to be interviewed, there was no random selection; attempts were made to contact each subject.

All participants were divided into two age groups: the younger group ranged in age from 19 to 64 years and the older group from 65 years and older. The response rate by age was 12% for the older group and 26% for the younger group. In total, 126 younger women and 60 older women participated. The overall mean age was 53. The mean age of

the younger group was 43.2 years and 73.6 for the older group.

Procedure

A pilot test of the questionnaire packet was carried out on a group of eight women, ranging in age from 23 to 62. Minor revisions were made to the original questionnaires in order to clarify meaning. The interview questions were formulated at this time.

The BCTF was approached by letter and telephone and asked for access to their computerized mailing list. Permission was granted and they provided mailing labels for a randomized sample of their female members living in Greater Vancouver. BCTF staff mailed the questionnaire packets to the potential participants (Appendix A). Interviews took place between July and October of 1990. The length of time between completing the questionnaire and taking part in the interview ranged from four months to 15 months. The modal length of time was 14 months. The introductory page in the questionnaire packet indicated to the respondents that BCTF had provided their name and address, and they were assured that confidentiality would be maintained in accordance with the request of the BCTF. In addition to the introductory letter and the questionnaire packet, a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope was provided to facilitate return of the questionnaires. Those people wishing to participate further by agreeing to an interview indicated this on an optional contact sheet which included their name, phone number and address.

Students in the PDP program were approached in a variety of ways. Posters were placed on accessible bulletin boards in the Education Department at Simon Fraser University (see Appendix B). An information table was set up during a week of special workshops for PDP students. In addition, certain psychology classes which are frequently elective choices for students in PDP were approached and volunteers solicited. In all cases, a questionnaire packet was provided to the students to take away with them to

complete and return via inter-campus mail. The questionnaire packet was identical to the packet provided to the BCTF member, with one exception; reference to BCTF was deleted from the introductory letter to the students (see Appendix C). Completion of the questionnaire required approximately 15-20 minutes.

Interviews were conducted at a time and place of the respondent's choosing. In all cases but three, the interview was carried out in the subject's home. In two of these instances, the interview was carried out at the researcher's office at SFU and one interview was carried out at Sunset Beach in Vancouver. The data from one subject categorized as underbenefited were lost because of faulty equipment. The interview consisted of ten questions (see Appendix D); completion time ranged from 20 minutes to 90 minutes.

Several steps were taken to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The principal investigator conducted the interviews, gathered questionnaire data, transcribed interviews and coded the raw data. Each questionnaire was numbered; the contact sheet indicating either a desire for further information regarding the study and/or agreeing to an interview was not identifiable by number. When information was returned to the researcher, the contact sheet was separated from the completed questionnaires. For those respondents who indicated only a desire for further information, the names were no longer matched to their responses. Respondents indicating a desire to participate in an interview had their names entered on a master list along with the assigned number on their questionnaires. This list was kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the researcher. When the study was completed, the master list was destroyed.

Any potentially identifying information collected during the taped interview sessions was changed during the transcription of the tapes (e.g. name of friend, name of school where respondent is employed, etc). Only the assigned number identified the

transcripts. Once the interviews were transcribed, the tapes were erased.

Measures

Friendship Definition. Subjects were asked to complete the questionnaire about their relationship with a particular friend. "Friend" was defined as someone very important to the subject, not a relative or spouse; someone whom the subject has known for at least six months, and whom the subject has either seen or talked with in the last six months.

The Equity Measure. A version of the Walster Global Measure of Participants' Perceptions of Inputs, Outcomes and Equity/Inequity, modified by Roberto & Scott (1986b) was used to measure the participants' perceptions of equity (Questionnaire One in Appendix A). The wording was changed by Roberto and Scott to make it more appropriate for an older population. To replicate the work of Roberto and Scott more closely, equity was measured in three ways: first, volunteers were asked to fill out the questionnaire in terms of their friendship overall. Second, for descriptive purposes, and in order to explore further what types of things are exchanged in the friendship, subjects were asked to complete it twice more, once with the idea of giving and receiving instrumental aid (e.g. shopping, running errands, financial aid); and again in terms of the sharing aspects of their friendship (e.g. giving comfort, displaying affection, and help in decision-making).

Several formulae have been suggested as appropriate measures of equity (Adams, 1965; Harris, 1976, 1983; Moschetti, 1979; Walster et al., 1978). Many of the earliest studies in equity theory have utilized the Adams' formula. Although this formula accurately assessed equity when each person's outcomes and inputs have the same sign, i.e. are both positive or both negative, it also assessed relationships as equitable when each partner's outcomes and inputs had opposite signs. For example, if Person A had an input score of 3, and an outcome score of -30 (i.e. an equity score of -.1) and Person B

had an input score of -5 and an outcome score of 50 (also a score of -.1), it would be declared an equitable relationship. Walster et al., (1978) corrected for this with a new formula. Further improvements were suggested by Harris (1979; 1983) and Moschetti (1979). This study will use the following formula, suggested by Harris (1983), and used by Roberto and Scott (1986a; 1986b)

$$(O_A - aI_A) - (O_B - aI_B)$$

Each half of the formula contains the relative gain score for each participant. O_A and I_A refer to the outcome score and input score respectively of participant A, while O_B and I_B refer to the outcome score and input score of participant B. The term *a* is a constant parameter between 0 and 1, determined on a priori grounds. With this formula, a score of zero indicates an equitable relationship. A negative score indicates the subject is underbenefited, a positive score indicates the subject is overbenefited.

Relationship Satisfaction Measure. There is a lack of appropriate, sensitive scales with which to measure friendship satisfaction. Several different scales have been used to access this concept, including scales that measure loneliness. One of the difficulties with measures of loneliness is that not all friendless people feel lonely, and, despite feeling lonely, many people have high contact with friends. For this reason, this study used a more direct measure of friendship satisfaction--a 10-item scale developed by Gilford and Bengtson (1979) (see Questionnaire Two in Appendix A). Its use is appropriate for at least two reasons. First, it has been tested and found appropriate for use with people over 65 (Roberto & Scott, 1986b), and second, it allows for a replication of the study by Roberto and Scott. The scale is a two-dimensional measure based on a factor analysis of 10 items. It provides scores on both a positive dimension and a negative one. An overall score of friendship satisfaction is reached by subtracting the negative subscale from the positive one.

During the initial derivation of the measure, internal consistency was assessed by correlating each item with the total score. All correlations were in the expected direction and ranged between .62 to .77 for the positive interaction items, and between -.51 to -.63 for the negative sentiment items. Moreover, the positive and negative items were negatively correlated, as expected. Principal component factor analysis was utilized to assess discriminant validity. Two dimensions emerged, reflecting those outlined by the authors. Convergent validity was demonstrated by correlating the two dimensions with a single-item measure of marital happiness. The positive interaction dimension was positively correlated (for males, r = .44, for females, r = .41), and the negative sentiment dimension was negatively correlated (for males, r = -.18, for females, r = -.30) (Gilford and Bengtson, 1979).

Self-esteem Measure. The adult form of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) was used as a measure of self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1981). The adult form of the scale was designed for use with persons aged sixteen and above and contains twenty-five items adapted from the School Short Form (see Questionnaire Four in Appendix A). The positive items that are answered "like me" are considered correct, i.e. indicating high self-esteem, and the negative items answered "unlike me" are considered correct. All correct answers are added for a total score. The upper quartile of the sample scores can be considered to be high in self-esteem, the lower quartile can be considered to be low in self-esteem and the interquartile range generally indicates medium self-esteem. Coopersmith reported means generally in the range of 70 to 80 with a standard deviation of 11 to 13. Reliability and validity data have not been described in the research literature for the Adult Form. The correlation of the total score for the School Short Form and the Adult Form is greater than .80, as reported by Coopersmith.

Distress Measure. The Austin Mood Checklist was suggested for use by Walster et al. (1978), and has been used by researchers in the area (Roberto & Scott, 1986a). Roberto

and Scott altered the wording to make it more directly a measure of mood in relation to friendship. An overall index of distress is obtained by adding contentment and happiness scores, then subtracting anger and guilt scores. The higher the score, the less distressed the respondent (see Questionnaire Three in Appendix A).

Demographics. Several demographic variables were collected, mainly for descriptive purposes. Respondents were asked to complete information on themselves regarding the following: age, marital status, education, occupation, employment status, health, number of living children, and frequency of contact with children. They were asked to give the following information about their close friend: age, sex, occupation, length of friendship, and frequency of contact.

Interview Format. Verbal consent to participate (in addition to the written consent form already signed) and to allow the audiotaping of the interviews was obtained when subjects were contacted by telephone. The interview provided an opportunity for the subjects to describe their friendship in ways that were important to them, and allowed them to expand on areas that they felt were pertinent. Questions were asked regarding conflict, transitions, the importance of friendship at their current lifestage, equity and friendship satisfaction (see Appendix B, Interview Schedule).

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Characteristics of the Sample

The data used for this study came from questionnaires returned by 200 women and from interviews with 29 of those women. Of all questionnaires returned, eight (4%) reported on a friendship with a male. The sex of the friend was not defined in the questionnaire. Previous research has indicated that same-sex friendships are the norm. The four percent figure in this study is lower than that cited by some researchers (e.g. Booth & Hess, 1974; Candy, 1977), but similar to the figure reported by Roberto and Scott (1986b). The questionnaires that were answered about male friends were not included in any analysis. An additional six questionnaires were excluded because they were incomplete, leaving a total of 186 respondents.

The participants reported on a number of demographic variables, describing themselves and their friendship. The majority of women were married (61%). Eighteen percent had never married, and 10% and 11% respectively were divorced or widowed. The sample was very highly educated: 20% reported some university, 39% had graduated university, and 40% reported some post-graduate courses. The number of women who reported post-graduate courses seemed very high. It may be that 40% of the sample had taken graduate courses. However, professional development is stressed in the teaching profession. It could be that teachers responded "yes" to this choice if they had taken any courses or workshops after their university degree, regardless of whether or not it was part of a graduate program. Almost half of the respondents were retired (45%); 38% were working for pay either full-time or part-time. The remainder were either attending school (11%), homemakers (2%) or unemployed (1%). Generally, subjects reported themselves to be in good (51%) or excellent (39%) health.

Characteristics of the Friendships

The friends described in this study were similar in age: the correlation of subject age and friend age was high (r = .92). Slightly more than half of the friends (53%) were also in the teaching profession, or were likewise retired. Respondents reported that their friendships lasted an average of 19.7 years; the friendships of the younger group lasted an average of 14.5 years and those of the older group lasted an average of 30.3 years. Friendship length ranged from 12 months to 70 years. Participants reported that they had contact with their friend an average of once a week.

The majority of participants perceived their friendship to be equitable (64%); 25% reported that they were overbenefited in their friendship; 11% said that they were underbenefited. As Table 1 indicates, when examined separately by age, the same pattern was found for both age groups. This is inconsistent with the percentages reported by Roberto and Scott (1986b), who reported that although most of the women in the sample reported equitable friendships (58%), more women were in underbenefited (27%) than overbenefited (15%) friendships.

Quantitative Results

Analysis of the Data

The effects of age and equity were tested in a series of 2 X 3 (Age X Equity) analyses of variance. Dependent variables included those related to friendship: distress, anger, guilt and satisfaction. Self-esteem was also measured. The age variable was divided into two groups: younger (less than 65 years of age) and older (65 years of age and over). This division was chosen to ensure that all participants in the older group would be retired, and to make it possible to compare results with Roberto and Scott (1986a; 1986b). The equity variable was divided into three categories based on the

TABLE 1.

Proportion of sample as a function of equity level and age level.

AGE	UNDERBENEFITED	EQUITABLE	OVERBENEFITED
Younger			
N	17	74	34
%	13.6	59.2	27.2
Older			
N	4	42	11
%	7.0	73.6	19.2
All ages			
N	21	116	45
%	11.2	62.3	24.1

subject scores on the equity measure. Those with a negative score were categorized as underbenefited, those with a positive score were classified as overbenefited and those with a score of zero were classified as equitable. The family-wise alpha rate for post hoc comparisons was corrected using the Bonferroni method.

Distress Scores

The analysis of the composite distress scores indicated a main effect for equity, $F(2,175) = 6.97$, $p<.001$, as predicted. The mean and standard deviation scores for the distress measure are shown in Table 2. Pairwise contrasts confirmed that women with inequitable friendships were significantly more distressed than women with equitable friendships ($M = 5.51$), $F(1,159) = 5.79$, $p<.01$ and $F(1,134) = 28.43$, $p<.0001$, for overbenefited ($M = 5.04$) and underbenefited women ($M = 3.85$) respectively. Note that the higher the score, the lower the distress. Among women in inequitable friendships, overbenefited women reported significantly less distress about their friendships than underbenefited women, $F(1,63) = 7.22$, $p<.009$. Thus, the hypothesis that the younger group would follow the propositions of equity theory and the older group would be most distressed when overbenefited was supported only for the younger group. Both groups followed equity theory.

Components of Distress

In order to examine more closely the feelings of distress experienced by the participants, the distress measure was broken down into two of its four components: anger and guilt. Tables 3 and 4 indicate the mean and standard deviation scores for anger and guilt respectively. The analysis of anger scores yielded a significant main effect for equity, $F(2,175) = 13.03$, $p<.00001$. Pairwise contrasts demonstrated that both age groups followed the propositions of equity theory; that is, underbenefited women ($M = 1.60$) reported significantly more anger than both equitably benefited, ($M = 1.03$) $F(1,134) =$

TABLE 2.

Distress scores as a function of equity level and age level.

AGE	UNDERBENEFITED	EQUITABLE	OVERBENEFITED
Younger			
Mean	3.62	5.48	5.02
S.D.	2.36	1.08	1.26
N	16	74	34
Older			
Mean	4.75	5.57	5.09
S.D.	1.89	0.96	1.44
N	4	42	11

NOTE: The higher the score on the distress measure, the lower the perceived distress.

TABLE 3.

Anger scores as a function of equity level and age level.

AGE	UNDERBENEFITED	EQUITABLE	OVERBENEFITED
Younger			
Mean	1.62	1.02	1.02
S.D.	0.88	0.16	0.17
N	16	74	34
Older			
Mean	1.50	1.04	1.18
S.D.	1.00	0.21	0.40
N	4	42	11

TABLE 4.

Guilt scores as a function of equity level and age level.

AGE	UNDERBENEFITED	EQUITABLE	OVERBENEFITED
Younger			
Mean	1.35	1.20	1.52
S.D.	0.60	0.43	0.78
N	17	74	34
Older			
Mean	1.25	1.07	1.45
S.D.	0.50	0.26	0.93
N	4	42	11

39.17, $p<.00001$, and overbenefited women (M = 1.06), $F(1,63)$ = 14.10, $p<.0004$. Overbenefited women were not significantly more angry about their friendships than equitably benefited women. Thus, the hypothesis was supported for the younger group. The older group, however, did not respond differently from the younger group.

The results of the analysis of the guilt measure, yielded, once again, a main effect for equity, $F(2,176)$ = 5.48, $p<.004$. There was no main effect for age, nor was there a significant age by equity interaction. Pairwise contrasts demonstrated that overbenefited women reported significantly more feelings of guilt (M = 1.51) than did equitably benefited women (M = 1.15), $F(1,159)$ = 14.06, $p<.0002$ but not significantly more than underbenefited women (M = 1.33). The data indicated a trend toward underbenefited women reporting marginally greater feelings of guilt than did the equitably benefited women ($p<.07$).

Positive feelings about friendship

Table 5 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for the friendship satisfaction measure. The analysis of the friendship satisfaction measure demonstrated a significant main effect for equity, $F(2,157)$ = 11.01, $p<.00001$. Planned comparisons confirmed that, as predicted, underbenefited women reported significantly less satisfaction with their friendship (M = 8.65) compared to both equitably benefited women (M = 12.30), $F(1,124)$ = 16.13, $p<.0001$, and overbenefited women (M = 13.37), $F(1,55)$ = 16.68, $p<.0001$. Contrary to predictions, however, there was no significant difference in reported friendship satisfaction between equitable and overbenefited women, although a trend ($p<.07$) indicated that overbenefited women reported slightly more friendship satisfaction than equitable women.

TABLE 5.

Friendship satisfaction scores as a function of equity level and age level.

AGE	UNDERBENEFITED	EQUITABLE	OVERBENEFITED
Younger			
Mean	9.18	12.92	13.39
S.D.	5.61	3.09	2.87
N	16	67	28
Older			
Mean	6.50	11.23	13.33
S.D.	7.18	3.12	3.24
N	4	39	19

Self-esteem

Finally, contrary to expectations, there was no age X equity interaction in the analysis of self-esteem. Table 6 reports the mean and standard deviation scores for self-esteem. There was, however, a significant main effect for age, $F(2,168) = 7.51$, $p<.006$, demonstrating that women in the older group reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem ($M = 82.94$) than did women in the younger group ($M = 77.03$). The overall mean (78.8) was within the range of means reported for the Self-Esteem Inventory (range = 70-80) (Coopersmith, 1981). When examined separately by age, the younger group was within the range of means reported; however, the older group reported higher than average levels of self-esteem.

To summarize, although the hypotheses concerning age differences were not supported, the hypotheses derived from equity theory were largely supported. It appears that one feels best when one is in an equitable relationship, and generally it feels better to be overbenefited than underbenefited. Overall, equitable women reported less distress, anger and guilt and more satisfaction than women in inequitable relationships. Overbenefited women reported less distress, less anger and greater friendship satisfaction than underbenefited women.

Post Hoc Analyses

Initial analysis of the data using analysis of variance indicated several interesting main effects, but no interaction effects. The lack of interaction effects may have been the result of small numbers in some of the cells (as shown in Tables 1 - 5). In order to corroborate the findings from the ANOVA, and to minimize the effects of unequal cell sizes, multiple regressions were performed on measures of friendship distress, guilt, anger and friendship satisfaction using the All Possible Subsets technique. Since the principle variables were all continuous (prior to grouping procedures), the multiple

TABLE 6.

Self-esteem scores as a function of equity level and age level.

AGE	UNDERBENEFITED	EQUITABLE	OVERBENEFITED
Younger			
Mean	76.76	78.51	73.03
S.D.	19.24	17.38	14.82
N	17	74	32
Older			
Mean	97.75	83.18	79.33
S.D.	2.62	16.03	16.55
N	4	38	9

regression technique was appropriate. Four predictor variables were entered into the equations: subject age, equity score, equity-squared and an age X equity interaction term. The equity score, which ranged from -5 to 5, captured the linear aspects of the relationship between equity and the dependent variables. Because a curvilinear relationship was predicted and observed, the equity-squared term was included to measure this component. A lower equity-squared score indicated more equity, and a higher score indicated a more inequitable relationship (either underbenefited or overbenefited).

The results of the multiple regressions, overall, confirmed the findings from the ANOVA. The multiple regression performed on the composite distress measure indicated that equity and equity-squared together accounted for 22% of the explained variance (7% and 15% respectively), indicating the strong effect of the equity variable. None of the other variables contributed more than 1% to the adjusted R-squared.

Mulitiple regression performed on the anger measure indicated that, again, equity and equity-squared accounted for 41% of the known variance. Any other combination actually lowered the adjusted R-squared.

Similar results were found for the friendship satisfaction measure. The subset of equity and equity-squared accounted for 19% of the variance, and no other combination could add more than 1% to the adjusted R-squared.

The best subset for the guilt measure was made up of equity, equity-squared and subject age, and this set accounted for only 7% of the explained variance.

Thus, in the case of friendship distress, anger and friendship satisfaction, the findings from the multiple regression procedures were similar to those from the ANOVA. In all three cases, the linear and curvilinear terms for equity accounted for the largest

portion of the explained variance, indicating a main effect for equity. Subject age did not add to the explained variance, nor did the interaction term. This is consistent with the ANOVA findings of no main effect for age, and no age x equity interactions. In terms of the guilt measure, equity, equity-squared and subject age were the best predictors, but together explained only 7% of the variance.

Qualitative Data

The women who agreed to be contacted regarding an interview were divided into three groups: equitable, underbenefited and overbenefited, depending on their score on the equity measure. Ten subjects from each category were randomly selected and telephoned for an interview. When it became clear that there would not be ten interviews in the underbenefited group, one interview each was added to the other two groups. Of the thirty women originally interviewed, the data from one subject were lost due to faulty equipment. Of the remaining 29, 11 were classified as equitable, according to their score on the equity measure in the questionnaire. Eleven more women were classified as overbenefited, and the remaining seven were considered underbenefited. Ten of the respondents were from the older group, and 19 were from the younger group.

In an attempt to corroborate the equity score derived from the quantitative data, the participants were asked if there was a balance in terms of the give and take in their relationship with their close friend; or whether they or their friend contributed more to the friendship, or received more from the friendship. Three of the 29 women could not recall which close friend they had referred to in their questionnaire. Of the remaining 26, 19 of the women's ratings were in agreement with their original, quantitative equity score. One additional woman spontaneously offered that her evaluation of the fairness of give and take at the time of the interview had changed from what she had originally reported. At

the time of the questionnaire, she felt herself to be overbenefited, now she felt the relationship was equitable. Two more of the 26 women reported a very small difference, from slightly underbenefited (a score of -.5) or slightly overbenefited (a score of .5) on the questionnaire to equitable (0) at the time of the interview. Thus, only four of the women differed substantially from their original, quantitative evaluation of equity, and in all four cases, the scores changed from inequitable (scores of 1, 1.5, -1, -2.5) to equitable.

Some of the women whose scores had changed between the questionnaire and the interview, and some whose scores had not, reported that, although they couldn't really remember their scores, their answers *may* have been different when they completed the questionnaires. This may indicate a perception that reciprocity is not static, and may change over time.

Is reciprocity important?

Many researchers have suggested that reciprocity is very important in women's friendships (e.g. Weiss and Lowenthal, 1975). In an attempt to ascertain if this was indeed the case, subjects were asked if a balance of give and take in friendships was important to them. Twenty-five of the 29 women described this balance as "important" or "essential". Twenty-one of these women described a balance of giving and receiving as a necessary or defining feature of close friendship. One woman summed it up by suggesting that, without such a balance,

> "...you don't have anything to build on. You must have a rapport of going back and forth, otherwise you don't have a true friendship, you have one person leaning on the other, or someone taking all the time. And that is draining, it gets to be a burden. You get nothing out of it. There *has* to be a balance".

One woman hastened to add that although she considers a balance important, she doesn't "keep a ledger book", and suggested that one thinks of these things "subconsciously, rather than consciously".

It appears that the women in the interview sample were mostly concerned with the problems of feeling underbenefited. Of the 21 women who described equity as a necessary feature of a close friendship, 10 women made reference to problems of feeling underbenefited. Three women discussed problems associated with feeling overbenefited, and eight women did not specify either one. For instance, one woman observed that "if you have someone who is always taking from you, it's not a friend". Another subject explained that she wouldn't get into a friendship with someone who was continually needy. She referred to this as her "sense of self-preservation". Several women indicated that they would drift away from a friendship in which they felt underbenefited. One women said that, in the past, she had "gravitated away from people like that (who take more than they give), to those who were more fair". When asked how she would feel if she were overbenefited, she replied,

> "I'd feel quite comfortable from that standpoint, and delighted to be entertained by them or whatever, but I still have that strong feeling that I must do my share".

Of the three women concerned with being overbenefited, one replied that she would feel like a "creep", like a "user" if she were continually given more from her friend.

The remaining four of the 29 subjects responded that a balance was not important. Two of these women, however, later noted that "it (balance of give and take) has to be there, it can't go one way only", and "we have a true friendship, we are there for each other and support each other". When asked if the balance mattered to her, a third woman suggested that "it does and it doesn't. I do have friends where I think about it, but with her, I don't worry about it, it's even". At least in this one case, it appears as though reciprocity is not a conscious issue when it exists, but may become one when it does not. The fourth woman observed that "it (the balance) isn't something I go looking for", but relented, and said that "once you are asked to analyze it, yes. But it's not something I think about". She later added that "if a friendship got beyond that (balance), it wouldn't be

a friendship".

Clearly then, reciprocity is an important issue for *all* of the women who were interviewed. Even the four women who initially reported that it was not important to them indicated otherwise at some point in the interview.

Equity or equality?

The calculation of equity requires comparing the ratios of one's input and outcome with the input and outcome of one's partner. Roberto (1989) suggested that this requires a certain level of abstract thought, and reported evidence which suggests that not all adults may reach this level. Major and Deaux (1982) reported that women are more likely than men to use the norm of equality rather than equity when apportioning rewards. The norm of equality allocates resources in equal shares to all members of the exchange, regardless of the individual amount of input. Outcomes are assumed to be the same for all.

In an attempt to obtain information regarding how women calculate the fairness in their friendship, participants were asked how they perceived the balance of the give and take in their friendship--whether one person brought more to the relationship or one person got more from it. As noted, 11 were classified previously as equitable, 11 as overbenefited and the remaining 7 as underbenefited.

Further discussion regarding the quality of the input and outcome revealed that, when describing the exchange component of their friendship, 15 of the 29 women referred to inputs only, with no mention of outcome for themselves or their friend. Six additional women made mention of the concepts of giving and receiving, but limited their discussion to inputs only. Seven more women discussed both the inputs and outcomes of themselves and their friends. Of the women who referred only to inputs, one woman said that each person brought different things to their friendship. The subject brought "social

life and excitement to Jane, who would never do these things on her own", and Jane gave a balance "of quiet times. (She is) steadfast and (pause) *there*". Another participant described her attitude about fairness, and said the question was difficult to answer because "you're not looking at what you're getting, but you're looking more for the giving". One of the participants who mentioned outcome but discussed only inputs replied that "we both get the same out of it", but then went on to describe inputs only. She mentioned that her friend writes more but that she phones more, so they give different things. A different woman mentioned that she and her friend "each give different things and receive different things", but again described only inputs. The subject suggested that she brings creativity to the relationship which she then shares with her friend, and in turn, her friend has given her a great deal of support through several crises. Of the women who discussed both aspects of giving and receiving, one woman commented that, although she and her friend gave and received different things, "what you give is about equal to what you get". Another said that in her friendship, too, different things were given and received in an even manner, "if not, a person feels strain that they're not getting back when they put stuff out". These women, then, have considered both input and outcome in their evaluation of the fairness of exchange. No one limited their discussion to the quality of outcome only.

Finally, one last woman outlined the equity norm when describing her friendship. She observed that,

> "Probably each gets what we want out of it (the friendship), but we're not getting the same amount. You couldn't say exactly the same (amount). Mary puts more in it than I do, but then she would be inclined to demand more".

Thus, the women who were interviewed in this study tended not to consider both input and outcome when evaluating the fairness of the exchange in their relationship. Rather than compare the ratios of the inputs and outcomes of each partner, the input of each partner was the critical factor in the participants' perceptions of fairness.

Psychological equity

Walster et al. (1978) proposed that equity can be restored either by changing one's behaviour or psychologically, by changing one's perceptions. The women who were interviewed described many reasons for their evaluation of the fairness in their relationship with a close friend. Some women also described how they evaluated the fairness of other close friendships. These results have been included. Not all of the women interviewed offered examples of restoration or maintenance of psychological equity, and some women used more than one strategy to explain their evaluation of fairness in their friendship, hence the figures below are not cumulative. Twenty-three of the 29 women offered some type of explanation; 17 offered one strategy, five offered two different strategies, and one offered three strategies.

In addition, five of the 23 women who demonstrated the restoration of psychological equity also described ways in which they would restore equity by changing their behaviour. Four women said that they would leave a friendship if it was unbalanced for a long period of time. Another woman said that she felt that her friend gave more to the relationship than she did, and planned to increase her input into the friendship.

The most common response illustrating the restoration or maintenance of psychological equity was given by ten women who said that the give and take in their friendship was allotted according to need. "Some friends need more, some friends need less". Although most of those women preferred a balance in the long run, it was more important that each partner's needs be met: "If a person needed something, I would give it and not think if it upsets the balance".

Related to the idea of need, Roberto and Scott (1986a) pointed out that one's satisfaction with a friendship, and one's willingness to continue that friendship may be affected by one's evaluation of the "equity potential" of one's friend. Equity potential is

described as the resources available to a person (health, income, time, etc.). When one perceives oneself to have a higher or lower equity potential than one's friend, an equitable relationship may be not expected. Four women described the idea of different equity potentials between themselves and their friend. One of these women reported that, because she was in ill health, her friend helped her out quite a bit, and she was unable to reciprocate. Since their long relationship had been perceived generally as equitable by the subject, she was satisfied with this. As she pointed out, "you can only do what you can do, so..." In at least two of the four cases, this different equity potential applied to money matters: one friend had more money than the other, and so their relationship was not reciprocal in this way. It seemed, though, that the women made attempts to give according to their ability. One of these women reported that, although she was unable to reciprocate in amount, she tried to anticipate small things that her friend would like, and get them for her before the friend had a chance to buy them for herself, thereby demonstrating a thoughtfulness that went beyond the monetary value of the gift. Brown (1986) suggested that this idea of each according to one's means renders the "objectively non-equivalent (exchange) subjectively equivalent" (p.62).

Interestingly, six women used personal attributes of themselves or their friends to explain any inequities in their friendship. Three women explained that their friend was able to give, but was unable to accept things from others. One women had been friends with another for 41 years, and could remember clearly the few times she felt she was able to help her friend. Two more women acknowledged that either they or their friend were generous, helpful people who gave unselfishly to others. Finally, another woman put her friend's lack of understanding and reciprocity regarding feelings and support down to her friend's "immaturity". In each case, it seemed the respondents were implying that the personal attributes they mentioned overrode ideas of reciprocity within their friendship.

Religious ideas were cited by four women as explanations for differences in the give and take of friendships. Three women mentioned that being a good friend and giving to others was an important part of their Christian worship, and that expecting to be repaid in kind was not "what being a friend is all about". "It is better to give than receive". The fourth woman decribed an idea of karma: "when you give, you also get too. If you do things for people when they need it, it will come around", if not in that specific friendship, then from elsewhere. Thus, for these four women, their religious or spiritual doctrine teaches them that fairness is not necessarily an expectation or requirement of friendship.

Finally, as suggested by Walster et al. (1978), several women either exaggerated their inputs (two women), exaggerated their outcomes (two women), or exaggerated their friend's outcomes (two women). In one case, a participant who had originally described herself as overbenefited re-evaluated her friend's outcome. She explained,

> "it's just that I realized that there must be something, there *has* to be something that she's getting out of it, (be)cause she wouldn't stick around, so now I think it's even (the give and take)".

Another subject felt that "I tend to give more to friendships than I receive", then she re-examined her contribution and said, "However, I enjoy it so much, I enjoy giving so much that it gives me a great deal of pleasure....in a sense I'm getting more out of it...".

Generally, the interview data regarding the restoration of psychological equity indicated that, when calculating the fairness of the exchange in their friendship, reciprocity was not as important as considering the needs of the partners, or the ability of each partner to contribute to the relationship. To a smaller extent, restoration of psychology equity, as outlined by Walster et al. (1978) did take place. It is not clear from the interviews whether participants were restoring equity or equality; they appeared to be restoring whatever "fairness" or an approximation of fairness meant to them.

To summarize the interview data regarding equity, it appears that there is strong agreement between equity calculated by the equity formula and verbal evaluations during the interview. An overwhelming majority of the women interviewed reported that a balance of give and take was important, important enough to be considered necessary for close friendship. It appears, however, that most of the women in this study were using the norm of equality rather than equity, and that need and ability to contribute were considered more important than the actual balance of give and take suggested by equity theory.

Conflict

In an attempt to obtain information regarding the less positive aspects of their friendship, participants were asked how they dealt with disagreements or conflict in their friendship. Some interesting differences between the older and younger women emerged. Of the 26 women who responded to this question, seven of them claimed that they <u>never</u> had conflicts or disagreements of any kind with their friend. Of these seven women, two were aged 52 and 57, and the remaining five were all 75 years of age and older. Five more women reported that they tended to avoid conflict, so that if something came up that had produced conflict in the past, or had the potential to produce conflict, they dropped the subject. One woman asserted "we really go out of our way to avoid conflict--big time!". These women ranged in age from 25-67. Five more women reported disagreeing rarely, either once (three women) or twice (two women) over the course of their friendship. Women in this category ranged in age from 32-67.

The response given most often was that occasionally women experienced conflict in their friendship, but the disagreements were small, and easily discussed and solved. All of the eight women who answered in this fashion were in their early forties or younger. For example, a woman described such disagreements,

> "A few times one of our feelings would be hurt, or one of us would feel slighted...we would resolve them by talking about them, and usually it would turn out we just had a misunderstanding or miscommunication".

Only one woman responded that there were several serious conflicts in her relationship with her friend. These conflicts were left unresolved and were interfering with that relationship. As she said,

> "There are the two main things (conflicts in their friendship)...neither one has ever been confronted. But in my mind, its always there, so I'm sort of on guard when she talks about things.".

These findings are consistent with the data from the questionnaire. Two questions asked specifically about anger in their friendship: the anger component of the distress measure consisted of one question which asked, "How angry do you feel about your overall relationship with your close friend?". The distribution of responses was very skewed: 91% reported "Not at all", 7% reported "A little", 1% reported "Somewhat" and less than 1% reported "Very much". The other question which asked about anger came from the friendship satisfaction measure. One of the 10 questions asked how often "You become angry" with your close friend. Of the 167 responses, 87% reported "hardly ever", 11% "not usually but sometimes", 1% "fairly often" , 0% answered "quite frequently" and 3% responded "always". Of the 146 who responded "hardly ever" to this question, 20 (14%) crossed out "hardly ever" and wrote in "Never". Another woman crossed out "angry" and wrote in "annoyed", then answered the question. A final woman wrote "Why? Vague. Righteous anger?" and refused to answer at all. Eleven of the 22 women (55%) who had difficulty answering the question as asked were over 65 years of age, whereas in the overall sample, women over 65 make up only 32% of the respondents.

Thus it appears from both the questionnaire data and the interviews that women are either reluctant to report feelings of anger in their friendship, or they do not have angry feelings in their close friendship. Half of the women reported either no conflict, or

conflict once or twice in their friendship. Approximately 20% reported actively avoiding conflict, and just under one third reported experiencing (at most) only occasional disagreements of a minor nature. The younger women tended to report having occasional disagreements, and the older women tended to report that they never have conflict with their friend. Since the data are cross-sectional, there is no way to ascertain if these differences reflect developmental or cohort changes. One woman in her seventies, however, hinted at a developmental change. She said, "You know, at my age, I can't afford to stay mad at my friends, I have to cling to all I've got!"

Transitions

Life is marked by transitions. Friendships of any duration may be affected by the transitions of the individual friends. Participants were asked to describe a transition either they or their friend had gone through and to describe what effect, if any, it had had on their relationship. Some participants offered more than one example of a transition in their interview. Only four subjects reported that transitions in their life had no effect on their friendship.

The majority of women reported that geographical distance had had a major effect on a close friendship, if not with the friend they had reported on, then with another close friend. Twenty of the 29 women (69%) indicated that their relationship with a close friend was interrupted by the relocation of either the subject or the friend. Although geographical distance limited the amount of time spent together, 14 of those 20 women indicated that they were highly committed to these close friendships, and had gone to great lengths to maintain them. For instance, one woman explained that, since her friend lived two provinces away and had for nine years, they put a great deal of effort, time and money into keeping contact. They visited each other once a year, including their respective spouses and children, they visited once a year without their families, and they

went away for a short vacation together once a year. In addition, they write and phone each other frequently. In fact, eight of the 14 women who were highly committed to bridging the geographical distance explained that getting together with their friend, even after as long as a few years had passed, was "as if nothing has changed". One woman explained "the friendship is so strong, because three years of not seeing one another can go by and then just be together as though it's not been a day apart". Five women who indicated that geographical distance was a factor in their friendship reported that it had interfered with their relationship. An additional woman made a conscious decision to end the friendship, or at least downgrade it to an acquaintanceship, because she felt that a long-distance friendship was too difficult to maintain.

The next most common transition described by informants was the beginning or ending of a marriage or intimate relationship. Of the 16 women who indicated this, ten described the beginning of a relationship, and six described the ending of one. Almost to a person, when either partner began an intimate relationship, there tended to be less time and energy for the friend. The ending of an intimate relationship tended to bring the friends closer. The friend commiserated with and supported the person who had experienced the breakup.

The death of a family member, or major illness of self or family was cited by seven of the respondents as a major transition. In all seven cases, subjects reported that their close friend was supportive and empathetic, and in all cases but one, this strengthened their bond. One woman said, "I think that we both have lost, you know, she lost her dad, I lost my mom. Those times we came closer together because we were a support to each other, and those were big transitions". Another of these seven women reported that her friend was also very helpful and supportive through some undisclosed personal problems,

> "Susan knows about it all and she just took me aside and said, 'You've got to do something...I've never seen you like this', and so she helped me through that transition. And it's those kinds of things that have strengthened, deepened our

relationship".

Finally, two women indicated that the retirement of themselves or their friend negatively affected their friendship. One woman began spending more time with her retired husband, and less time with her friend. The other woman had worked with her close friend, and since retirement saw much less of her friend.

In summary, it appears that transitions can have a negative effect on relationships, especially those that involve relocation. Many of the women in this study expressed a high level of commitment to their friendship, however, and worked hard to bridge that distance. Although beginning an intimate relationship may interfere in the time available for friendships, friends are supportive and sustaining of each other in the event of illness, death and other personal problems such as the breakup of intimate relationships.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

In general, the quantitative findings of the present study provide strong support for equity theory. It was predicted that the women in the younger group would follow patterns outlined by equity theory. Results indicated that women in equitable friendships reported less distress than women in inequitable friendships. Overbenefited women reported less distress, less anger and greater friendship satisfaction than underbenefited women, and more guilt than equitably benefited women. Underbenefited women were more angry, more distressed and less satisfied with their friendship than both overbenefited and equitable women. Thus, in the case of the younger group, the hypotheses were supported.

In contrast to equity theory, it was predicted that the women in the older group would be most upset when overbenefited, indicating greater distress and anger, lower self-esteem and less satisfaction than women who were underbenefited. Contrary to expectations, there were no differences between the two age groups, with the exception of self-esteem. The results indicated that the older group reported higher levels of self-esteem than the younger group. This is consistent with Lee and Shehan (1989), who suggested that the social psychological literature indicated a modest, though significant, general increase in self-esteem with age. The specific difference in this sample may represent a cohort difference. It may be that the older women in this group worked in a respected profession and earned their own money at a time when many women did not work outside the home. For the younger women, however, working outside the home is not unusual and may not result in higher self-esteem. This is consistent with Lee and Shehan's findings that the older women in their study who were not employed had lower levels of self-esteem than those who worked for wages. These authors, too, speculated

that employment may have a positive effect on self-esteem for this older cohort.

The lack of predicted age differences on the friendship variables in this study may have occurred for several reasons. Roberto and Scott (1986a; 1986b) used proportionate area sampling, representative of urban, noninstitutionalized older adults. The sample in the present study, however, consisted of a selection of students training to be teachers as well as currently employed and retired teachers. The subjects in this study were well-educated, healthy, financially-secure women and cannot be said to be representative of the population at large. There may be differences between the samples on a number of factors affecting friendship, including the fact that all of the women in this sample have worked, or plan to work, outside the home at some point in their lives. This is not true for all women, particularly women who are in older cohorts.

Roberto and Scott (1986b) suggested that being overbenefited in old age may indicate an increasing dependence and inability to reciprocate, now or in the future. This inability to reciprocate may lead to greater feelings of distress for the older group. In contrast to the more representative sample studied by Roberto and Scott, it is very likely that the older women in the present study feel secure in their health and in their ability to look after themselves, financially and otherwise. Hence, those who reported themselves to be overbenefited may not view this as indicative of an inability to reciprocate, and thus feelings of distress may not arise. The explanation that older people view being overbenefited as an indication of increased dependency has not been studied directly, however one question in the current study was designed to explore this issue. One of the questions in the questionnaire packet asked the participants to "Imagine...that you are getting much more from the relationship than a friend. To what degree do you think this implies a weakness of some kind in yourself?". Participants were asked to respond on a scale of one to five; one indicated no weakness at all, and five indicated a great deal of weakness. Participants were also asked to "Imagine...that you are giving much more to

the relationship than a friend. To what degree do you think this implies independence or self-sufficiency in yourself?". Answers were again given on a one to five scale. There were no differences between the younger or older groups on either question, nor did the means indicate strong agreement or disagreement to either question ($\underline{M}$ = 2.78 for the weakness question, and $\underline{M}$ = 2.94 for the self-sufficiency question). For this study at least, the older participants did not consider getting more than they were giving to be indicative of weakness, nor were they more distressed than their younger counterparts. It would be interesting to ask the same questions of a sample of older people who reported greater distress when overbenefited.

In the more representative sample used by Roberto and Scott (1986a; 1986b), many of the older women would have been poor. When one's resources are few, the implications of being overbenefited may be greater. For instance, if two friends are poor, and one of the friends feels overbenefited, at least in material terms, her distress may be greater because her friends' contributions represent more of a sacrifice than if that friend were well-off financially. In the current study, the women were middle-class. Although the financial status of their friends is not known, many of the friends were also teachers and since friends tend to belong to the same social class, most were probably middle-class as well. It may be, then, that the salience of being overbenefited is reduced for the current sample of relatively financially-secure women.

Perhaps the pattern of results found by Roberto and Scott (1986a; 1986b) were peculiar to their sample. Because they examined older adults only, there is no way to determine if a comparable group of younger adults would have responded differently. Roberto and Scott, themselves, pointed to the need for age comparisons on these results. Many other studies of friendship are primarily of one age cohort (Adams, 1986). One of the strongest features of the present study was the use of subjects from across the adult lifespan. The current research is a partial replication of Roberto and Scott, using both a

different sample and a greater age range. Although the cross-sectional nature of the study does not allow us to differentiate age changes from cohort differences, it is a start toward delineating what, if any, age differences may exist.

The measures used in the current study may have contributed to findings of no age differences. The particular measures were chosen, in part, to replicate Roberto and Scott (1986a; 1986b). They are commonly used in the literature, however a number of problems with these scales have emerged. The composite friendship distress measure, when broken down into its four components: anger, guilt, contentment and happiness, indicated very skewed results with possible floor and ceiling effects. Participants scored very high on the positive aspects, and very low on the negative components. The older group, in particular, seemed to report less anger with their friends than the younger group, as evidenced by the number of older women (n=20) who stroked out "hardly ever", and wrote in "never" for the questions regarding anger. This restricted range, for the older group especially, could have masked any age differences that may have existed.

The finding that the women in this study reported little conflict and very little anger is intriguing. The anger component of the distress measure indicated that 91% of women were "not at all" angry about their relationship with their close friend. One of the friendship satisfaction questions that asked how often the participants became angry with their friend was answered "hardly ever" by 87%. The qualitative information from the interview bore out these findings: half of the women reported either no conflict, or conflict once or twice in their friendship. One can speculate as to the reasons for these results; there are several possibilities. There may be a self-selection bias; that is, the women who responded to the questionnaire may be women who are very happy with their friendship, and who experience very little conflict. Perhaps those who encounter conflict in their friendship were less happy with it, and less inclined to complete a questionnaire about that relationship. The voluntary nature of participation in friendship research makes

it very difficult to solve the problem of selection bias.

Second, it may be that the terminology used in the interview contributed to the underreporting of conflict by some participants. Many interviewees hastened to say that they did not experience conflict or disagreements (or any other word the researcher used to probe), but then reported incidents that they labelled "having words", "being annoyed", "getting cross", etc. Perhaps if the information could be elicited in a more indirect fashion, with the researcher able to pick up on language or other cues from the subject, a more realistic indication of conflict, anger or disagreement in a relationship could be found. It is important to allow the subjects themselves to define conflict or disagreements in their friendship, and to describe what effects this may or may not have.

A final interpretation of the conflict data may be that the women in this study were reluctant to report anger because it is antithetical to their views about women and women's roles as the nurturers and caregivers in society. Jean Baker Miller (1983) noted that our society constrains the expression of anger for women. The attitude that anger is incompatible to femininity may be internalized by women and they may come to believe that anger is unworthy of and abnormal for them. As Lerner (1988) and others have noted, women may also feel that their anger will disrupt a relationship. Given the connectedness that is so much a part of women's lives, this can be a serious threat. Whether the women feel the anger but don't express it, or whether they suppress even those feelings is beyond the scope of the current work.

One of the most interesting outcomes from the present research was the apparent contradictory findings of the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of the study. The questionnaire data provided strong support for equity theory. The interview results, on the other hand, indicated that over half of the women in this study tended to use equality rather than equity to judge the fairness in their friendship; i.e. rather than comparing the

ratio of their own and their friends' inputs to outcomes, they assumed outcomes to be comparable, and evaluated fairness in terms of inputs. The latter results are consistent with the conclusions of Major and Deaux (1982), who reported that women more than men tend to use equality-based notions of fairness, rather than equity.

It may be that equity is truly the method of choice for the women in this study. Major and Deaux (1982) suggested that the findings which showed that women tended to use equality rather equity to apportion rewards may be the result of self-presentation concerns. It may be, as the data from the anonymous questionnaire indicated, that the women in this study tend to use equity. But concerned with self-presentation during the face-to-face interview, they may have preferred to present a more stereotypically female approach, one which de-emphasizes status differences and establishes more equal links with others.

In contrast, perhaps the support for equity theory is an artifact of the equity measure itself, combined with an order effect. The equity measure breaks the exchanges down into subject input, subject outcome, friend input and friend outcome, and requires the participant to estimate each one on a scale of one to eight. All participants answered these questions first, then went on to complete the questionnaires on distress, friendship satisfaction and self-esteem. By answering these specific, rather objective questions first, participants may have been primed to think in terms of equity, and then completed the remaining measures with equity in mind. However, in face-to-face interviews a minimum of two months later, participants may have answered more spontaneously, indicating the method they usually use to judge reciprocity. Several women, both those who were interviewed and those who were not, indicated either through comments written on the questionnaire or comments made during the interview that they did not think of their relationships in that way; that is, measuring the give and take on an ongoing basis.

Finally, it may be that equity theory is not an appropriate model for use in intimate relationships. Brown (1986) suggested that intimate relationships are a special case of equity. Within the equity framework, the rule of fairness is one of equal ratios, i.e. the ratio of Person A's inputs to outcomes is equal to the ratio of Person B's inputs to outcomes. However, Brown pointed out that in intimate relationships, the inputs of Person A (e.g. paying for dinner out, helping out with personal problems) are the outcomes of Person B, and vice versa. Therefore, although equity may be appropriate in casual or economic relationships, in intimate relationships equity reduces to a comparison of what Person A gets from the relationship with what Person B gets from the relationship. Presumably, as the current study would indicate, the converse is also true: if Person A's outcomes are Person B's inputs, then the equity formula can be reduced to a comparison of the inputs of the two individuals. That is, in intimate relationships, equity reduces to equality. As Brown also suggested, the measure of equity theory, which asks for estimates of the inputs and outcomes of both Person A and Person B, could be reduced to a much simpler question: Does your friend put more into the relationship, do you put more into the relationship, or do you both put the same amount into the relationship?". This is the basic question that the interviewees in the current research answered. Thus, the apparent contradiction is resolved.

If the above explanation is accurate, then theoretically there should be a perfect correlation between the subject's inputs (SI) and the friend's outcomes (FO), and between the friend's inputs (FI) and the subject's outcomes (SO). An examination of the data indicated a strong correlation between those variables ($\underline{r}$ = .76 and $\underline{r}$ = .71 respectively). When the helping and affective components of equity were examined, the correlations were higher: for the helping measure of equity, $\underline{r}$ = .87 and $\underline{r}$ = .89 for SI and FO, and SO and FI respectively. For the affective measure of equity, the correlation was $\underline{r}$ = .80 for both SI compared with FO and for SO compared with FI.

Furthermore, if equity in intimate relationships reduces to equality, then those people who evaluated their friendship as equitable on the equity measure should also have evaluated their friendship as equal, overbenefited people on the equity measure should also be overbenefited on an equality measure, and so on. The number of participants whose equity category (underbenefited, overbenefited and equitable) matched their category on an equality measure (underbenefited, overbenefited, and equitable) was calculated. Equality was measured by subtracting the friend's overall input score from the subject's overall input score. Participants were categorized as underbenefited when the score was positive, equitable if their score was zero, and overbenefited if they had a negative score. In terms of this equality, 135 (73%) reported that their relationship was equal, 37 (20%) reported that their relationship was overbenefited, and 14 (7%) reported that their relationship was underbenefited. Of the 186 respondents, all who reported equitable friendships also reported that their relationships were equal (n=116). Equity scores were missing for four participants. In all, 16 (9%) did not match. All but one of remaining 16 were categorized as overbenefited or underbenefited on the equity measure and reciprocal on the equality measure (n=6 and n=9 respectively). The final participant was categorized as underbenefited on the equity measure, and overbenefited on the equality measure. Thus, all but one of the non-matches occurred because more people were classified as reciprocal on the equality measure than on the equity measure. Although the match between the two measures was not exact, there is strong agreement between the two.

In conclusion, there is some evidence to suggest that equity theory may not be appropriate to intimate relationships. If, as suggested, one person's inputs are another person's outcomes, then equity reduces to equality. The correlations between inputs and outcomes in the current research, and the match between equity and equality measures support this speculation.

Another curious outcome in the current study involved the apparent use of the equality concept by over half of the women in the interviews, yet the demonstration of restoration of psychological equity. If, indeed, equity theory is inappropriate for use with intimate relationships, it may be that the women are restoring "psychological equality", or at least restoring whatever means of evaluating fairness that they use. There was no indication from this research that the women were restoring equity rather than equality. In fact, only six women reported restoring fairness in the manner suggested by Walster et al. (1978); that is, exaggerating one's inputs or outcomes, or exaggerating one's partner's inputs or outcomes. Perhaps the concept of psychological restoration is valid across different subjective definitions of fairness.

In conclusion, the quantitative results of the current study would appear to lend strong support to equity theory. Given the results from the qualitative data, however, this support is called into question. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in this study has proven to be a powerful combination. As Adams (1989) suggested, there is a need for more than one type of data collection within the same study. It may be that previous research in support of equity theory may have yielded different results if more than one method had been used.

Implications for Further Research

The present study adds some interesting information to the study of reciprocity and friendship, however limitations in this work point to several areas where further research is warranted.

Replication is needed. The present study is a partial replication of previous work, and the results are at odds with that work. More replication with similar and different samples are needed to clarify the conflicting results. Adams (1989) also noted the importance of replication, a feature lacking in much of the friendship research.

The present sample is one of healthy, middle-class white women, hence generalization is limited. Various methods of probability sampling would add important information regarding the effects of colour, class, culture and especially the effects of frailty, disability and poverty on peoples' attitudes toward reciprocity and friendship.

It is not possible, given the cross-sectional nature of the research, to determine if differences noted (and not noted) between groups were the result of developmental or cohort issues. Longitudinal research is needed to clarify the origin of differences between groups. Retrospective data collection, employed most notably by Matthews (1986), may provide information that cross-sectional data cannot. However, the usual problems of accuracy associated with this method, coupled with the phenomenon of psychological restoration of fairness, suggest that the longitudinal method would be the method of choice.

Improved measures of distress, anger and guilt are necessary. Considering the floor effect demonstrated for the measures of anger, it is clear that a more sensitive instrument would add valuable information about the more negative aspects of friendship, an aspect the women in this study seemed somewhat reluctant to divulge.

In addition to the methodological issues, several conceptual issues warrant further research. Certainly, future research will need to investigate the appropriateness of equity-based versus equality-based research examining perceptions of fairness. Quantitative data, with the addition of qualitative information in which participants are able to describe and voice their own views about reciprocity, may enlighten researchers as to which rules of fairness subjects chose to use, and when they chose to use them.

The women, particularly the older women, in this study reported very little anger in their friendship. It is not clear whether the participants were reluctant to report anger, or whether they did not feel anger, or experience conflict in their friendship. Future research

examining women's feelings of anger in friendships compared with anger in other relationships may shed some light on the present findings. Differences among age groups should also be examined.

Although the present study predicted that only women in inequitable relationships would attempt to restore equity through psychological means, it was evident from the interviews that most women, including those who evaluated their relationships as equitable, used some strategy to restore or maintain a sense of fairness. It is not clear from the current data *when* this restoration took place. Walster et al. (1978) implied that restoration takes place after one evaluates a relationship as unfair. It could be that some women restored their perceptions of fairness immediately or soon after perceiving some injustice. Others may have re-evaluated their perceptions while completing the equity measure, whereas others may have done so during the interview process. It could be, therefore, that some of the women who indicated that their relationship was equitable had already restored it through psychological means. It is not clear how researchers can begin to separate the rather nebulous concept of psychological restoration from the actual evaluation process itself, if indeed they are separate concepts.

In summary, the quantitative data in the current research were consistent with equity theory. Descriptive evidence, however, indicated that equality rather than equity may be a more appropriate method with which to evaluate fairness in intimate relationships. In contrast to previous research, no differences between the younger and older groups were found on the friendship variables. This finding of no difference may reflect the relatively healthy and financially-secure sample of older women studied in this research. Replication is needed. The current study confirmed the importance of reciprocity in the friendships of women across the adult lifespan. Future research examining the possible mediating effects of health and poverty on the negative feelings associated with non-reciprocal relationships, especially for the elderly, is warranted.

F R I E N D S H I P S U R V E Y

Recently, researchers have become more interested in the study of friendship and it's importance in our lives. Dr. Meredith Kimball and myself, from Simon Fraser University, are interested in studying women's friendships, how women feel about their friends, and the kinds of people they choose for friends.

Please fill out the following questionnaires. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete them. When completed, please mail using the envelope provided. No postage is necessary, it is prepaid. Your participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If you do not wish to participate, simply discard the questionnaire.

Your name has been provided through the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, and proper procedures to ensure confidentiality have been followed in accordance with BCTF request. A summary of the study and results will be made available to BCTF. All information you give will remain anonymous.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact me, or Dr. Meredith Kimball of the Psychology Department at Simon Fraser University.

Thank you for your assistance.

--Dianne Chappell
Psychology Department
Simon Fraser University

INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT OR EXPERIMENT

Note: The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures, risks and benefits involved. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received the document described below regarding this project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Having been asked by Dianne Chappell of the

Psychology Faculty/School/ Department of Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project experiment, I have read the procedures specified in the document entitled:

Friendship Survey

I understand the procedures to be used on this experiment and the personal risks to me in taking part.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this experiment at any time.

I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the experiment with the chief researcher named above or with

Dr. Roger Blackman,

Dean/Director/Chairman of Psychology Department Simon Fraser University.

Copies of the results of this study, upon its completion, may be obtained by contacting:

Dianne Chappell, Psychology Department, Simon Fraser University

I agree to participate by filling out a packet of questionnaires.

I MAY also agree to participate in a face-to-face interview.

(state what the subject will do)

as described in the document referred to above, during the period: _____

at _____

(place where procedures will be carried out)

NAME (Please print): _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

SIGNATURE: _____ WITNESS: _____

DATE: _____

Once signed, a copy of this consent form and a subject feedback form should be provided to you.

Before you begin the questionnaires, please complete the following questions about yourself:

Age (please circle one):

(a) 24 years or less
(b) 25 - 29 years
(c) 30 - 34 years
(d) 35 - 39 years
(e) 40 - 44 years
(f) 45 - 49 years
(g) 50 - 54 years
(h) 55 - 59 years
(i) 60 - 64 years
(j) 65 - 69 years
(k) 70 - 74 years
(l) 75 years and older

Marital Status (please circle one):

(a) never married
(b) divorced or separated
(c) widowed
(d) married or living as married

Education (please circle one):

(a) some high school
(b) graduated high school
(c) some university
(d) graduated university
(e) post-graduate university courses or degree

Occupation: _____

Are you presently:
(a) attending school
(b) working full-time
(c) working part-time
(d) homemaker
(e) retired
(f) unemployed

How would you rate your health compared to other people your age?

(a) poor
(b) fair
(c) good
(d) excellent

Number of Living Children:_____

Ages of Children:_____

If your children are not living at home, approximately how often do you see, or talk on the phone to any of them? (please circle one):

(a) less than once a month
(b) 2 - 3 times a month
(c) once a week
(d) 2 - 5 times a week
(e) every day

The following questions are about friendships. I would like you to take a few moments and think about your friends. What I mean by friends are those special people who mean a lot to you. I want you to pick out one particular person from your circle of friends whose friendship is very important to you. While relatives can certainly be friends, I would like you to pick someone who is *not* a relative or your spouse. When picking out the friend, please consider someone whom you have known for at least six months, and whom you have either seen or talked with in the last 6 months. A friend whom you care for but haven't seen for several months or longer should not be used to answer these questions. Please answer the following questions about your friend and your friendship.

Age of your friend (please circle one):

(a) 24 years or less
(b) 25 - 29 years
(c) 30 - 34 years
(d) 35 - 39 years
(e) 40 - 44 years
(f) 45 - 49 years
(g) 50 - 54 years
(h) 55 - 59 years
(i) 60 - 64 years
(j) 65 - 69 years
(k) 70 - 74 years
(l) 75 years and older

Sex of your friend (check one): Male__ Female__

Occupation of your friend: _____

Length of your friendship (please indicate how many years and months): _____ years_____ months

Approximately how often do you see your friend or talk to your friend on the phone? (please circle one):

(a) less than once a month
(b) 2 - 3 times a month
(c) once a week
(d) 2 - 5 times a week
(e) every day

Questionnaire One

People often differ markedly in how much they *contribute* to a friendship, and they may also differ in how much they get *out* of a friendship. Once again, I would like you to think about your relationship with your close friend. I will ask you questions first about your friendship overall, than ask you about certain aspects of your friendship.

First, please consider your relationship overall. Taking *all* things into consideration (i.e. how much do you help each other, the kinds of things you share with each other, etc.), please answer the following questions using the key below:

1--extremely low
2--very low
3--moderately low
4--slightly low
5--slightly high
6--moderately high
7--very high
8--extremely high

How would you describe your contributions (what you give) to your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8--
extremely           slightly slightly          extremely
   low                low      high              high
```

How would you describe your friend's contributions to your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely           slightly slightly          extremely
   low                low      high              high
```

How would you describe your outcomes (what you get) from your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

How would you describe your friend's outcomes from your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

Now, I want to ask you about specific aspects of your friendship. Think now about the ways that you and your friend may *help* each other (e.g. running errands, transportation, shopping, financial aid, etc.). Please answer the following questions:

How many times in the past year have you given and/or received help from your close friend in the ways mentioned above? _____

How would you describe your contributions (what you give) to your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

How would you describe your friend's contributions to your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

How would you describe your outcomes (what you get) from your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

How would you describe your friend's outcomes from your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

Now, I would like you to think about a different aspect of your your friendship. Think now about the things that you and your friend may *share* with each other (e.g. giving comfort when lonely, spending special occasions together, sharing personal problems, displaying physical affection, helping to make important decisions, etc.). Please answer the following questions:

How many times in the past year have you shared things with your close friend or has your close friend shared things with you in the ways mentioned above?____

How would you describe your contributions (what you give) to your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

How would you describe your friend's contributions to your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

How would you describe your outcomes (what you get) from your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

How would you describe your friend's outcomes from your relationship?

```
---1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8---
extremely          slightly slightly          extremely
   low               low      high              high
```

Questionnaire Two

Please read the following list of some things that friends may do when they are together. For each event, indicate (by circling the appropriate number) how often it happens between you and your friend.

You calmly discuss something together.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

One of you is sarcastic.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

You work together on something (dishes, yardwork, hobbies, etc).
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

One of you refuses to talk in a normal manner.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

You laugh together.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

You have a stimulating exhange of ideas.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

You disagree about something important.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

You become critical and belittling.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

You have a good time together.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

You become angry.
1. hardly ever
2. not usually but sometimes
3. fairly often
4. quite frequently
5. always

Questionnaire Three

Please answer the following questions about how you feel about your friend *at this moment*.

How content do you feel about your overall relationship with your close friend?

(1) Not at all
(2) A little
(3) Somewhat
(4) Very much

How happy do you feel about your overall relationship with your close friend?

(1) Not at all
(2) A little
(3) Somewhat
(4) Very much

How angry do you feel about your overall relationship with your close friend?

(1) Not at all
(2) A little
(3) Somewhat
(4) Very much

How guilty do you feel about your overall relationship with your close friend?

(1) Not at all
(2) A little
(3) Somewhat
(4) Very much

1. Overall, do you feel your relationship with your friend is reciprocal/fair/about equal in terms of give and take?

Why do you think that is?

Overall, how satisfied are you with your relationship with your friend?

Imagine for a moment that you have a friendship and you are *getting* much more from the relationship than your friend. To what degree do you think this implies a weakness of some kind in yourself?

--------1--------2--------3--------4--------5--------

implies no weakness at all — implies a great deal of weakness

Imagine for a moment that you have a friendship and you are *giving* much more to the relationship than your friend. To what degree do you think this implies independence or self-sufficiency in yourself?

--------1--------2--------3--------4--------5--------

implies no self-sufficiency at all — implies a great deal of self-sufficiency

2. What do you believe are the most important characteristics of an ideal friendship (for example, helping each other, confiding in each other, going places together, etc)?

Think about your notions of an ideal friendship. To what degree does your friendship meet your ideal of friendship?

--------1--------2--------3--------4--------5--------

not at all extremely well

What characteristics of an ideal friendship does your friendship have? Which ones does it not have?

What would you change about your friendship if you could? What would you like to see more (or less) of in your friendship?

3. Is there anything else about your friendship that you would like the researcher to know?

Questionnaire Four

Below you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Like Me." If a statement does not describe how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Unlike Me". There are no right or wrong answers. Please mark all statements.

Like Me	Unlike Me	
____	____	1. Things usually don't bother me.
____	____	2. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.
____	____	3. There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could.
____	____	4. I can make up my mind without too much trouble.
____	____	5. I'm a lot of fun to be with.
____	____	6. I get upset easily at home.
____	____	7. It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.
____	____	8. I'm popular with persons my own age.
____	____	9. My family usually considers my feelings.
____	____	10. I give in very easily.
____	____	11. My family expects too much of me.
____	____	12. It's pretty tough to be me.
____	____	13. Things are all mixed up in my life.
____	____	14. People usually follow my ideas.
____	____	15. I have a low opinion of myself.
____	____	16. There are many times when I would like to leave home.

____ ____ 17. I often feel upset with my work.

____ ____ 18. I'm not as nice looking as most people.

____ ____ 19. If I have something to say, I usually say it.

____ ____ 20. My family understands me.

____ ____ 21. Most people are better liked than I am.

____ ____ 22. I usually feel as if my family is pushing me.

____ ____ 23. I often get discouraged with what I am doing.

____ ____ 24. I often wish I were someone else.

____ ____ 25. I can't be depended on.

This page is OPTIONAL. Again, all information is strictly confidential. Please fill out and return to the researcher.

If you wish to be mailed a summary of the completed study, and the results, please fill out your name and address below:

Name_____

Address_____

If you wish to participate in an interview (lasting 30-40 minutes) conducted by the researcher, Dianne Chappell, please indicate below, and give your name, address and phone number.

Yes, I consent to be interviewed____
No, I do not wish to be interviewed____

Name_____

Address_____

Phone Number_____

Again, this interview concerns your thoughts and feelings about friendships. The researcher will contact you to arrange the interview. The interview will be conducted at a time and place that is convenient to you. Confidentiality of all information is assured, and tapes of the interview will destroyed after the study. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Dianne Chappell
Psychology Department
Simon Fraser University
291-3354 (8:30 - 4:30 for messages)
253-8224

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA V5A 1S6
Telephone: (604) 291-3354

WOMEN AND FRIENDSHIP

STUDY

Subjects are needed to participate in research about women's friendships. If you are female, and in the Professional Development Program, and you would be willing to talk about your friendships, please contact the researcher listed below.

A set of questionnaires will take 15 minutes to complete. A second, optional, segment will consist of an interview, lasting 30-40 minutes. Interviews will be completed at your convenience. Confidentiality is assured, and all tapes of the interview will be destroyed after the completion of the study. If you have any questions, please contact:

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Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a bit of history of your friendship; for example, when and where you met, how your friendship developed, how long you've known each other, how you spend your time together, what kinds of things you talk about together.

2. In friendships of any duration, people go through changes in their lives that may affect the friendship--marriage, parenthood, moving, changing jobs, going to school, separation/divorce, long-term illness, etc. Can you think of a transition (either positive or negative) that happened to either you or your friend? Can you describe it, and tell me how it was dealt with? Did it affect your relationship in any way?

3. In the time you've been friends, have you and your friend ever had any disagreements, any kind of conflict or arguments? How do you deal with such things when they come up in your relationship?

4. How many other friends do you spend time with? Are you happy with the number of friends you have and the amount of contact you have with them? Would you change any of this (i.e. increase or decrease the number of friends, or amount of time you spend with them)?

5. At various times in our lives, friendships may take on greater importance than at other times. For example, when we are young, friends are often very important. As we raise small children, go to school, or work on our career, we may have less time for socializing with friends, and our focus may be primarily on our work and family. After our children have left home, friends may take on more importance to us. How important are friends to you at this point in your life (on a scale of 1 to 5)?

   1--very important

   2--somewhat important

3--moderately important

4--somewhat unimportant

5--not at all important

6. How do you spend most of your time with your other friends? Is this the same or different from how you spend your time with your close friend?

7. One of the things I'm interested in is the give and take in friendships: the kinds of things you each contribute to your friendship, and the things you each get out of the friendship. I'm wondering if you feel that there is a balance in your relationship with your friend, or do you feel that either one of you is bringing more or less to the friendship, or getting more or less out of it.

8. Is a balance of give and take important to you?

9. If I asked you the same question about the give and take in a relationship with a more casual friend, would your answer be the same? Would it have the same importance to you, or more or less importance?

10. Overall, can you tell me how satisfied you are with your relationship with your friend (on a scale of 1 to 5)?

    1--very important

    2--somewhat important

    3--moderately important

    4--somewhat unimportant

    5--not at all important

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