

A STUDENT ATHLETES PERSPECTIVE OF THE LESBIAN LABEL IN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

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ABSTRACT

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In this paper I discuss the lesbian label and its role in collegiate women's basketball. I focus on the perspective of female student athletes in southern California, their experiences and understandings of how they were treated and their feelings that resulted from that. These recollections include perceptions of the coaches, universities, teammates, family and other lesbian players. I have compared studies previously done on this topic and examine if there has been a change over time in society's position toward these athletes. My main goal was to address the lesbian label and determine if it had an effect on the women's choices during the crucial teenage years of finding one's identity and during the early adult stages while establishing oneself as an adult.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Several factors have fueled the intimidation of lesbians being openly homosexual in sport. These factors encourage silence and fear in order to promote male homogeneity, hegemonic principles, and the division of female athletes. Openly denying athletes the opportunity to play, coaches jobs and individuals to be themselves are ways in which women's sport has been controlled (Griffin, 1992). Ridicule and discrimination are common practices used in some organizations in order to promote heterosexuality and caution lesbians about revealing their sexuality or appearing masculine. Media portrayal of female athletes and their perception of what is unnatural have also played a role in the negative image of women's sports. It is felt that this image is being perpetuated by heterosexism and its homophobic culture (Krane, 1996; Shaw & Amis, 2001). Females fear this image and the stigmatism it receives when females excel in athletics, contradicting social expectations. As this problem gets increasingly worse athletes are made to feel that they need to manage their identity by dressing and behaving within the norm in an attempt to gain positive attention and social standing. Covertly these athletes begin to live double lives and constantly monitor their mannerisms, sex-specific language and social situations and in a rippling effect can lead to depression and emotional instability (Jacobson, 2002; Krane & Barber, 2003). Another outcome created by the negative image is damage to team unity. Heterosexual players do not want to be identified as lesbians and this generates chaos between the two. Heterosexuals feel as though lesbian players are drawing a negative spotlight to women's sports and this attention is reflected on players that are homosexual and heterosexual alike (Lenskyj, 1994). This lesbian label and its perception by homosexual players is the foundation of this study. I intend to

probe into the experiences of student athletes labeled as such and its effect on individuals' cognitive behaviors and feelings. I will establish what the label means and when used is it to provoke embarrassment and express disapproval or if it is merely just another category used by society. I also intend to address the criticism that female athletes are unnatural and their role in society is to be submissive to male ideals of how women should behave and what they should look like. This study incorporates aspects of the history of woman and their positions in the social order as well as in sports and accomplishments made along the way.

Several other studies have concentrated on the lesbian community in sports and the obstacles they face in different aspects of the industry. Griffin (1992), reports on homophobia and its effects on women in sport. Emphasis is also placed on the emotional frustrations and the women's feelings of obligation to remain silent, silence maintained by lesbian athletes in order to prevent shame and scandal from the sport. The focus is then transferred to the denial they are subjected to by peers, parents and the denial that they even exist in sport. This brings on an attitude of embarrassment to an extent to where athletes become apologetic for who they are.

Lesbians in sport are treated like nasty secrets that must be kept locked tightly in the closet. Lesbians, of course, are expected to maintain deep cover at all times. Not surprisingly, most lesbians in sport choose to remain hidden rather than face potential public condemnation. Friends of lesbians protect this secret from outsiders, and the unspoken pact of silence is maintained and passed on to each new generation of women in sport (Griffin, 1992, p. 253).

Clarke (1998) contributes to Griffin's stance and discusses heterosexism and its dominance as a lifestyle in comparison to radicals that choose otherwise. Clarke states what needs to be done

in order to solve this problem of homonegativism and the separation the lesbian label has caused amongst heterosexual and homosexual athletes. Creating a dialogue between players and dealing with the problem instead of ignoring and avoiding the issue is a start in finding a resolution. The realization that sport belongs to everyone and that there should not be segregation and prejudice is also a point Clarke emphasized. Lenskyj (1994) pays attention to the marginalization of lesbians in sport and the label being used as a method of control and degradation. Athletes changing their appearance to appeal to public standards are a way in which many decided to cope and conform. Krane and Barber (2003) explain social identity and how closeted lesbians maintain a heterosexual persona. The closeted lesbians are tolerated by athletic departments under the 'don't ask don't tell' policy and an (un)happy medium is preserved. 'Protecting the image' becomes the primary goal of these programs and it is secured at the cost of the many athletes' emotional stability. Krane and Barber proceed to discuss how lesbians find a positive social identity through personal accomplishments and a support system that provides positive interactions.

This study attempts to give a voice to so many athletes, athletes I have competed against over the years, women I have had the pleasure to play with and bond with in sports. Personal accounts of the way people are treated because of a difference are always a topic of interest. Jews, Africans and homosexuals all have a history of prejudice as well as many other groups because of sexuality, race, social class, religion and so on. These stories all have significance because each has a personal story and/or struggle that appeals to individuals' minds, hearts and quest for knowledge about each other. In this study I will include many ideas from recent studies along with initial feminist theory to provide a foundation for this research.

I intend to establish whether the subjects' interviews support or reject the concepts of former researchers or if the current data reflects a complex combination of rejection and support.

The purpose of this study is to gather experiences from two lesbian student athletes and to better understand the impact of the lesbian label and the effect it has had in their lives.

This has been triggered by watching, hearing, and reading about the discrimination that gay and lesbian friends and colleagues have experienced, and do experience, on a daily basis in numerous situations at both the individual and institutionalized level (Sparkes, 1997, p. 25).

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Nurture v Nature

The basis of most arguments begins with the obvious biological differences between men and women and continues on into conditioned differences placed by society. Biological differences are then translated into gender differences that require men and women to divide responsibilities based on sex (Boudreau, Sennott & Wilson 1985). It has been proven that this is not so. In the case of twin boys, one being severely deformed during a circumcision at the age of seven months was later socially raised as a girl and sexually reassigned. And at the age of nine, with hormone therapy, she behaved as any other little girl would with no knowledge of ever having been a boy. It all relies on the behaviors taught to a child from a very early age (Romer, 1981).

These institutions have forgotten that females and males are different mainly in their procreative functions and that all other differences have been developed by human society. The ability to have children has become the duty to have them. The ability to have children has become the reason why only women should raise children, be denied access to many jobs, be paid less, not be allowed to own property, and be labeled witches (Boudreau, Sennott & Wilson, 1985, p. 13).

Scientist during the 1800's and early 1900's tried to find medical comparisons that would prove women's inferiority to men and it was noted that women had smaller brains. It was also believed that women reached full maturation during childhood and therefore were less intellectually and emotionally competent (Lenskyj, 1986). Physical strength was also

considered a point in the favor of men representing power and the ability to dominate. When several intellectual tests were performed it showed that overall men were mentally stronger in terms of quantitative and field independence while women on the other hand were stronger in verbal skills (Boudreau, Sennott & Wilson, 1985). Medically, in this era women were given contradictory reports on whether sports were physically positive or negative on the body. It was said that small amounts of leisure and activity added to her vitality but an excess of strenuous labor, physically or mentally could cause body defects and uterine dysfunction (Lenskyj, 1986). A woman's health could decline due to sports and its effects on the reproductive system. Athletics could cause complications during childbirth and ultimately detract from the critical functions of the uterus. Exercise, especially during menstruation, created additional strain on the uterus which weakened the uterine ligaments. Around this time women's athletic competitions were being limited, these ranged from intramural to Olympic. If modifications were not adhered to, women's sport would have been eliminated altogether.

Gender roles

Sport has provided a stage for battles amongst men and in contrast, women have been viewed as rigid and fragile in terms of athleticism and intelligence. Women were primarily seen to be ethical and religiously sound, but physically inept (Theberge, 2000). This way of thinking is still apparent in some of today's practices. From a young age children are persuaded into picking certain toys based solely on gender. This in turn limits the child's potential and experiences from a very early age. Generally it is the behavior and choices of the parents and

family that dictate the selection the child will have. All extracurricular activities then become gender based and formed around masculinity and femininity. Boys are immediately encouraged to be active and athletic while girls are taught to be motherly and reserved. It is even pushed so far as color coding genders, blue for boys and pink for girls (Greendorfer, 1993; Romer, 1981). As the child gets older their role in society is engrained in them. As girls become women they will experience prejudice in sport because of their unfeminine like ways. Women have to choose between being a feminine woman and being a physical competitor. Vigorous exercise and physical activity can masculinize a woman's features which further feeds into the stereotype of women who play sports as being unnatural. Woman who gain more muscle mass were thought to eventually want to walk, talk and behave like men and through sports, this would damage the balance in society (Cahn, 1993; Twin, 1979). A woman can exhibit the same attributes as a man in a sporting competition and if that includes toughness, strength, skill and ambition then she will be labeled masculine (Griffin, 1993; Stevenson, 2002). That is the fate of women who want to succeed athletically, being inconsistent with social standards. This presents a constant struggle between femininity and masculinity, being labeled a real woman and possibly being labeled a lesbian. Real women behave in a way that makes them attractive to men and everything else is abnormal. Men find femininity in figure skating and dance, not in team sports (Lenskyj, 1994). Women should not be seen as tough, sweaty competitors and certainly not forceful with each other, they must remain meek and refined to keep with the standards of true ladies (Shaw & Amis, 2001).

The muscular athletic female body stands in sharp contrast to cultural perceptions of what it is to be stereotypically female, namely, passive and having a 'feminine' appearance. To transgress these bodily boundaries is to be deviant,

not normal. Sport in general is associated with the defeminization of women and the masculinization of men, hence women and girls who participate in the male domain of physical education and sport and specifically in those activities not seen as stereotypically feminine run the risk of their sexual identity being called into question and the pejorative label lesbian applied (Clarke, 2002, p. 44).

In more ways than one, lesbians are seen as outcasts or 'others' in male hegemonic sports.

They are considered others because they are female and homosexual and may be further excluded by ethnicity and or culture. White males are generalized as the dominant figures in American culture and in sports it is heterosexual males. Therefore, females who are homosexuals are 'others' and if they are also non-white or atheist (non-Christian), they may be additionally marginalized. Once women realize their homosexuality, they adapt to thoughts of life without a man and develop additional roles usually belonging to men. Feminine women are included in the marginalization, although they may be heterosexual, they are not seen as dominant figures and do not possess the qualities of a true athlete. They are also still seen as possible threats, not to the physical aspects of sports, but to the social norms. Although feminine women maintain the physique and mannerism of an average woman they are still shunned because of their participation in sport (Lenskyj, 1994).

Despite efforts to keep the focus on the pretty ones or the ones with husbands and children, women in sport still carry the lesbian stigma into every gym and onto every field. Women in sport must begin to understand that it wouldn't matter if there were no lesbians in sport. The lesbian label would still be used to intimidate and control women's athletics (Griffin, 1992, p. 259).

Several factors make women in sports prone to misperceptions, instead of participating in duties to make them better mothers and wives; they would rather engage in activities

traditionally considered male preserves, consequently abandoning society's structure and ideals. Whether the women, who congregated to sports, were masculine initially or became masculine once encompassed in sports is irrelevant, what is viewed by society is a discrepancy in the idea that a woman can be heterosexual, somewhat 'masculine' and normal, again feeding male hegemonic beliefs (Griffin, 1992; Lenskyj, 1986). Many lesbians just begin to discover their sexuality during their teen years; this is also a time when peer pressure and the pressures of being normal is strongest (Romer, 1981). Homophobia and heterosexism begins to then be openly and outwardly expressed by players, coaches and administrators. Rather than schools embracing the variety of athletes, they limit the possibility of success by discouraging great competitors with discrimination (Clarke, 2002). Lesbians believe they need to hide their sexuality in order to participate and protect themselves. They are uncomfortable being placed in a category of negative forms of sport and they choose to keep it hidden which sends a message that conformity or at least perceived conformity is the best route. Lesbians that have revealed their orientations are sometimes treated as social rejects and despite this some still feel that their honesty allows them a better life. They attempt to become positive role models for other lesbians as well as represent a positive model for society and the best way for this is upward movement and progress. Although there are boundaries and sometimes alienation, without these models society would only have one view and both sides of the story would not be told (Krane & Barber, 2003). While society and the media hold lesbians responsible for the stigma on women's sports it continues to create a division amongst female athletes and no sexual preference, of any kind, should take precedence over another in sports (Griffin, 1992; 1993).

The Label

The lesbian label, it is not what you say it is how you say it. It is the negative connotation that is implied when the word lesbian is used. It is commonly associated with other words used to sometimes hurt individuals, like queer, dyke, amazon and butch, just to name a few. It is also more hurtful when these labels are used by outsiders. If an individual is a lesbian then other lesbians do not take offense to it if the term is used because they themselves is included when the reference is made, but when it is called out to demean and belittle it should not be used. The label negatively impacts individuals because when it is used by society it reduces a woman to that and that only. Female athletes do not want to be seen as lesbians because they are so much more than that. No person can be only one thing and sexuality cannot completely define a person. There's race, gender, sex, religion and many other characteristics that define a person but when the lesbian label is used, it is used to define women for all that they are and how society will view them. A prime example of the lesbian label used to destroy and divide is the case of *Harris v. Portland*. Jennifer Harris a basketball player at Pennsylvania State University accused her coach Rene Portland of racial and sexual orientation discrimination. Portland perceived Harris as being a homosexual after she continuously denied the lesbian identity. Harris was constantly humiliated and ultimately cut from the team by Portland. This then led Harris to engage in a law suit against Portland, the athletic director and Penn State in federal district court in Pennsylvania. Portland's long history of homophobia and homosexual discrimination along with other players stepping forward to confirm her principles resulted in the matter being settled out of court in favor of Harris for an undisclosed amount and Portland being dismissed as head coach (Newhall & Buzuvis, 2008).

This depicts a worst case scenario. A talented player, that wasn't even a homosexual was assumed to be one and had to forfeit her opportunity to play at the collegiate level while a coaches biased and negativity towards homosexuality pushed her to the termination of her career and one less female coach representing women at the Division I level. This is how society and male hegemony works, separate, conquer and eventually further stigmatize women's sports. On the other hand, many feel it was a victory that sent a message to other programs that choose to limit recruiting, hiring and playing time because of sexual preference (Roberts, 2009).

Biblically, reference to Sodom and Gomorrah explicitly depicts punishment for the hypersexual and homosexual. In the 17th century, during the "Age of Reason", individuals that committed homosexual acts were hung. Several concepts of why homosexuality is condemned were presented by Leiser (1973). Many of these statements reflect society's ideas of homosexuals and their conduct. Leiser says that besides homosexuality being unnatural and psychologically hindering it is also a dangerous practice. It is a disgusting practice and immoral and those that are opposed to it find it offensive. It is an abomination of human nature and does not serve the purpose of procreation amongst human beings. Homosexuals are often viewed as child molesters and sexual deviants; it is an unstable way of life and usually results in short-term relationships where sexually transmitted diseases are prominent. Leiser goes on to dispute each argument with reason and logic. He dissects society's misperceptions with truths and explanations and provides understanding. Psychologically homosexuals have feelings of shame and guilt because they are taught by society that what they are doing is wrong. Homosexuals are also commonly categorized with pedophiles which are completely separate

one from the other. Homosexuals' public affections may be offensive, but so are heterosexual displays when in sight of bystanders. It then becomes a matter of freedom of expression and civil liberties. Homosexuality cannot be classified as unnatural for it is a natural behavior for many and if unnatural means going against nature then we all are guilty from the very beginning, from the clothes that cover us to the sexual acts committed with no means to procreate.

Forms of Control by Society

Although parents play a large role in conditioning children for their parts in society, school is also a major contributor in what is deemed appropriate and inappropriate (Clarke, 2002). Just in terms of what children are allowed and prohibited to wear to school is gender based. Sexuality is also taught as well as other concepts of masculinity and femininity. 'Other' ways of thinking and behaving are often ridiculed and strongly discouraged, demeaned and not tolerated. External homophobia is constructed by the cultural environment and internal homophobia is produced by feelings drawn from the depiction of the cultural environment. It is not surprising that the topic of homosexuality or homosexual people is complex; people have been programmed to be uneasy and negative towards alternative lifestyles. This is an example of hegemonic objectives, to promote one set of ideals and to shun all other concepts that do not comply. Sport and the media's portrayal of lesbians are partially responsible for the pessimistic reflection. Women in sport are perceived as women trying to do what men do, therefore creating the brand of lesbian (Griffin, 1993; Krane, 1996). Because athletic women are linked to masculinity and lesbianism, stereotypes surrounding sport affect heterosexual women also.

These women are constantly trying to prove their identity and avoid the stigma, and in the process they end up denying their own teammates (Jacobson, 2002).

An effective way to prevent women from challenging these social norms is to stigmatize sport participation by women. Accusing women athletes of being masculine is one way to stigmatize women in sport. Another, even more effective, mode of intimidation is the use of the lesbian label. Because lesbian stereotypes are so severe (sick, evil, abnormal, predatory), most women are loath to be associated with them. Consequently, calling women in sport lesbians effectively marginalizes women's sport. In this way the sexist status quo in sport is maintained. Women in sport are afraid to challenge their low status because stepping out of the line in this way brings intensified accusations of lesbianism and masculinity. As a result, all women in sport, not only lesbians, are affected by homophobia. As long as the lesbian label can be used to intimidate and divide heterosexuals and lesbians, women's sports can be trivialized and controlled (Griffin, 1993, p. 195).

Referring to women as lesbians is a method used to control them and make them aware that their conduct is unsuitable. This creates a very conscious and fragile atmosphere for female athletes that fear homosexual labels and could possibly ruin opportunities for future athletes. Women become susceptible to further regulations, which in actuality may or may not have anything to do with sexuality. While these women are being manipulated by fear and prejudices they are losing rights in the sports arena, strengthening male aspects of sport (Griffin, 1992; Sabo & Messner, 1993). Shaming women and destroying their reputations has been a ploy to maintain the patriarchal structure in sports. Even in schools, female athletes are molded into individuals to fit society's expectations and are made into compliant and passive beings (Garrett, 2004; Theberge, 2000).

Homophobia reinforces sex inequality and male hegemony in sports in several ways. First, homophobia obviously hurts gays in sports, who face the daily threat of stigma and discrimination. A woman basketball player who openly

identifies herself as a lesbian or who is even suspected of being a lesbian may be ridiculed or ostracized by peers. Second, homophobia in sports hurts many women, whether they are gay or not. Allegations of lesbianism and questions about women's sexual preferences are sometimes used on college and university campuses to intimidate female students and faculty members (Sabo & Messner, 1993, p.19).

The use of homophobia to lure students and college athletes away from rival schools is not a new tactic. Some schools go to great lengths to rid their own schools of anyone even suspected of having homosexual tendencies. The conflict with removal of lesbian and gay athlete's is that it does not solve the real problem. The real problem is the lesbian label itself that prohibits and limits women's sports involvement. It is a mechanism used to discriminate and produce an inferior complex in women. Schools should address the catalyst of the problem and not the victim. Diversity should be embraced, but instead it is erased when an athletic department disposes of student athletes based on sexual orientation. Women stated that it affected their positive impact in the media. Athletes felt compelled to show that not only were they competing to win but that they were also feminine and believed in the roles society had predetermined them to play (Cahn, 1993; Griffin, 2003; Jacobson, 2002; Thompson, 1994). Conversations with homosexual coaches and athletes revealed the toll and burden of homophobia and its impingement in their daily lives. Lesbians who admitted their sexuality publically found that it could be detrimental and could cause great risk to their lifestyle. Fear of failure and seclusion along with possible demise of their careers kept most lesbians quiet. Losing one's job or personal relationships is not a risk worth taking for many closeted lesbians. Lesbians are thought to be unfit role models and silencing them sustains dominance which was standard protocol.

Closeted lesbians are the norm and are encouraged to remain so in the best interest of their livelihood (Krane & Barber, 2003).

Lesbians continue to be stigmatized, sexually harassed, and silenced in sport contexts, and women's sport continues to be coopted, controlled, and exploited in the interests of patriarchal hegemony. Despite the high representation of lesbians –in some sports, a majority –lesbian marginalization and invisibility continue to characterize women's sport. Lesbian invisibility contributes to the overall problem. Lesbians are everywhere (Lenskyj, 1994, p. 361).

Heterosexual athletes and coaches are told to promote their lifestyle in the hope of undoing some of the damage formed by the homosexual stigma. When ratings of televised women's sporting events are low, the blame is placed on the appearances of the athletes rather than level of skill or venue (Garrity & Nutt, 1996). It is always the fault of the players, not the media, for portrayal of unnatural behavior. This victimizes all women and a façade has to be presented in order to gain respect and popularity with the majority (Griffin, 1992). Men are the only one's who gain from the humiliation formed by the lesbian label. They preserve power over everything affiliated with sports, while defaming the perception of female athletes (Sabo & Messner, 1993).

Management of Identity

Many people have more than one social identity. Some people have a particular personality for work that is different from the one shown at home. This is a very common practice and can also be based on culture and sexuality. Several ways have been developed by individuals to maintain these separate identities and in relation to sexuality many lesbians choose to pose as heterosexuals. Lesbians may accessorize with hair bows, make up and

jewelry to pass as 'normal' women. Another outward attempt to belong is to associate themselves with a dominant heterosexual group, while secretly living a double life with other lesbians in other social settings (Clarke, 2002; Krane & Barber, 2003). Lesbians are also very discrete and careful not to use gender specific language when talking to co-workers, peers and students. By refraining from intimate and personal conversations they attempt to avoid uncomfortable and possibly revealing situations. Also, if there is a known or openly homosexual individual they disassociate or keep a cautious distance to prevent any sort of involvement (Clarke, 1997).

Having the freedom to portray and perform your homosexuality openly therefore carries a number of risks and so heterosexual hegemony leads gay men and lesbians to either ignore the risks, self censoring their performances or finding 'safe' spaces where their performances are not threatened or challenged (Garret, 2004, p. 199).

Concealing ones identity is the primary way lesbians handle their sexuality as far as society is concerned. Being invisible is easier than being honest and bare, vulnerable to scorn and hassle. For security purposes lesbians would rather endure constant discretion than be on display or suffer persecution. Homosexuals are concealing their true identities to at least one person and this is largely due to a desire to protect careers and family. People are afraid of rejection and will remain closeted for fear of loss, loss of respect, friendship, opportunities and other forms of social alienation. Some lesbians were paranoid when speaking aloud anonymously about their preferences. It is terrifying for some to consider what their parents or superiors would do or say if they were aware of this type of behavior, but female athletes must not continue the trend of silence that has already caused so much turmoil in women's sports. It is pertinent that

it be known that there are many successful and proud lesbians in sports. Athletic associations need to acknowledge that lesbians are not deviant and sick, but are normal women that lead normal lives. Women's sport is comprised of a significant population of lesbians and should be recognized for the positive contribution they make (Garrity & Nutt, 1996; Griffin, 1992; Ravel & Rail, 2006). In the midst of all the separation, silence and negative perceptions of women's role in sports, many find comfort in a new category, success. Successful athletes want to be defined by what they have accomplished and not by any other means. Although identity management plays a small part, it is the rewards of the game that they want to be defined by. They will use wins, personal records, and achievements to determine their self-worth in the sporting world (Mean and Kassing, 2008).

The portrait of women and their roles as sisters, mothers, and wives is complex and multifaceted in many ways. It is a division of who they are, who they want to be and who society and the family need them to be. The identity struggle as an athlete is just one of the many added complexities to the character of women. It is a hardship sometimes and can be disheartening, but it may also be a sisterhood and provide a sense of belonging for women in sport.

Chapter 3: Procedures

Participants

This study's primary focus was to examine the experiences of 2 individuals during the years they participated in college sports. The purposive sample consisted of recent graduates, from Division I and Division II women's basketball programs. Both participants are African American and played 4 years of collegiate basketball. Participant A is 26 years old, played basketball for 18 years and graduated from a private university in 2005. In college she lived in some social atmospheres as a lesbian, but did not consider herself an open homosexual, especially around her coaches and professors. Participant B is 27 years old, played basketball for 19 years and graduated from a public university in 2007. She lived as both heterosexual and homosexual in college depending on her surroundings and her perception of the attitudes of the people around her. Participant A acknowledged her identity at age 16, while Participant B acknowledged her age at 18, but coincidentally they both began to outwardly express and act on their homosexuality once they left the family home. Both participants grew up in large families with 4 or more siblings and were raised in southern California. They both now live openly as homosexuals and were selected for their ability to speak freely about their sexuality and ideas of the lesbian label. They are representative of the this population because they have both lived as heterosexual and homosexual as suggested by literature and can provide their perceptions of society's treatment from both sides. They understand the lesbian label and although they chose to not always identify with it, they have experienced it and can discuss their perspectives.

The Interviews

The interviews were conducted via telephone. Questions were asked in relation to experiences as college athletes participating in team sports. Open-ended questions pertained to the perceptions of the participants and their understanding of how they were treated by coaches and other players because of their alternative lifestyles, how their demeanor and behaviors were either embraced or rejected and if their appearances or mannerisms affected their ability to participate in sports. The initial interviews lasted approximately one hour and primarily covered topics found to be of importance in the literature reviewed but mainly topics surrounding their experiences and feelings in relation to the lesbian label. A second interview took place also via telephone that lasted up to one hour. This second interview was primarily to follow up the initial questioning and to obtain more details and a better understanding of the participants feelings during events previously mentioned. Interviews were decided to be the best method of choice primarily due to the depth of the information that could be retrieved from personal first hand experiences. Semi-structured interviews were the best method because it allowed for freedom of expression and unconfined conversation. Interviews administered over the telephone also allow for the participant to be more relaxed and respond more candidly because the interviewer is not present (Thomas, Nelson, & Silverman, 2005). Conducting interviews is the most widely used method in collecting qualitative data. Whether it is a questionnaire, survey or interview, asking direct questions to receive insight into a particular community or institution is primarily how knowledge is gained qualitatively (Creswell, 2003).

Data Trustworthiness

Establishing the reliability and validity of the data collected, found in most quantitative studies, are not a processes generally used in the discussion of qualitative studies. If validity were to be measured it would be in the context of consistency and genuineness of the responses from the participants (Creswell, 2003). Studies are performed in a way that they may be repeated by other researchers with similar participants, but when analyzing personal accounts and events, some variation has to be expected. The reliability of the data relies on the participants' willingness to be open and honest. The collected data is left to the interviewer and their ability to remain unbiased and accurate as well as the individual interviewees' reflection of events, feelings and awareness. Several measures were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the presented data. The data was transcribed verbatim and the participants reviewed and approved any and all data before presentation. A method of triangulation was used as a system of checks and balances, which included comparing interpreted data to the results found in the literature, the data transcribed from the interviews and participants review of the accuracy of the context documented in the interviews. The data was also peer reviewed and the interpretation of the principal investigator was compared to that of the peer. With a strong consensus in the understanding of the information the interpretation was to be considered correct. Another way of assuring a legitimate study was designing questions that were relevant to the subject matter. As previously stated, the questions revolved around the perception of the environment according to the characteristics of experiences with the lesbian label and the subjects' behavior influenced by the label.

Another issue to be addressed is the small sample size used in this study. This study was designed to be an intimate look at the student athlete perspective of collegiate basketball in California. The majority of the previous studies completed were done on Caucasian, middle class women, but with the exception of race the experiences of my participants were still very similar, even ten to twenty years later. I specifically chose African American student athletes to find out if the lesbian label would be different if race was a factor and I didn't find that to be true. I also specifically focused my subject selection to athletes that I knew personally. I believed these athletes would be more candid with me given that we already have a personal relationship. I felt I could trust them to be honest and less inhibited as they trusted that I would present the data accurately and without censorship or prejudice. Andrew Sparkes (2002) discusses many different techniques and formats for presenting research. He presents qualitative studies in fictional representations and realist tales where there is only one case study. Especially in qualitative study, as opposed to quantitative study, it is constantly being developed with more methods and new ways of being interpreted and presented. My decision to select such a small sample is also supported by Borg & Gall:

In many educational research projects, small samples are more appropriate than large samples. This is often true of studies in which role-playing, depth interviews, projective measures, and other such time-consuming measurement techniques are employed. Such techniques cannot be used in large sample studies unless considerable financial support is available. However, a study that probes deeply into the characteristics of a small sample often provides more knowledge than a study that attacks the same problem by collecting only shallow information on a large sample (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Treatment of Data and Interpretation

All data received via telephone was recorded and transcribed under fictitious names in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. The data was reviewed and grouped into categories for interpretation. The number of categories along with their subject matter was determined as the project developed. After recording the responses, the categories were derived by grouping common themes found in the transcription. The responses in some ways correlated to the literature review but it didn't necessarily correspond to the reviewed topics and therefore categories that best suited the data collected were created. The interpreted data was compared and presented in correspondence with the data obtained during the literature review and studies previously done. The data was then examined by a researcher experienced in qualitative studies. Because the method consists of open-ended questions, responses by participants lead to additional questioning.

Fear

Fear has been known to be an extremely strong driving force in a variety of situations and experiences. Participant A's initial fear included the possibility of disappointing her family and coaches which was her support system in high school. She felt revealing her sexuality could cause those who stood behind her to lose interest and respect for her as an athlete.

When I was 16 I had a lot going. I had a lot of support and so forth to get me to college. So once I got to college, I turned 18 and it was no longer about disappointing the people around me, it was more to this is who I am and I could say it now.

It always helps to have supportive parents. My dad, he doesn't really want to talk about it, but he doesn't bash me or anything like that. When I say hihi, I

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

There appeared to be four themes that continued to present themselves among the participants, fear, acceptance, identity management/compartmentalization and the label. Fear of what might happen or what could be lost reoccurred as a response in the interviews as something that drove their actions when attempting to function in society with discrimination. Wanting to be accepted by family and friends as well as society at large was also a common response. Using ways to manage their identity and compartmentalize their lives off and on campus to find a medium that would work and not be self destructive was a major contribution to their behavior in college. Lastly the label and all that it encompasses was their primary concern and is strongly related to and intertwined with the three previous issues as the participants made an effort to maintain a stable atmosphere for themselves.

Fear

Fear has been known to be an extremely strong driving force in a variation of situations and experiences. Participant A's initial fear included the possibility of disappointing her family and coaches which was her support system in high school. She felt revealing her sexuality could cause those who stood behind her to lose interest in her potential and respect for her as an athlete.

When I was 16 I had a lot going, I had a lot of support and so forth to get me to college. So once I got to college, I turned 18 and it was no longer about disappointing the people around me, it was more so this is who I am and I could say it now.

It always helps to have supportive parents. My dad, he doesn't really want to talk about it, but he doesn't bash me or anything like that. When I say bash, I

mean like ridicule me or tell me that I'm doing something wrong. But I think having the support of my mom throughout it all really helped me. So it definitely took a little pressure off and I could talk to her about anything. (Participant A)

Another concern she expressed was once she made it to college, would her teammates be receptive of her:

I think being a lesbian in an environment that consists of probably 15 to 20 ladies causes you to become consciously aware. You don't want to offend anyone or step on anyone's toes or be accused of anything. So I was always just very cautious, period. Locker room talk, being nude in the locker room and showering with other girls I just always remained cautious . . . (Participant A)

Participant A stated that even in the university handbook; homosexuality was addressed and was noted as being a cause for expulsion. She was fearful that everything she had worked so hard to attain as an athlete and a student could be stripped from her if she were caught participating in any acts of homosexuality. This alone caused her to be guarded and introverted because she constantly had to assess who she could trust.

Participant B had similar fears to Participant A, especially with regard to her family's reaction and understanding of her choice:

Family really was a major concern for me: I didn't want anyone in my family to know, my dad was southern, from Kentucky. He had a certain view about homosexuals and it was not positive at all. So I just had a fear that I would lose them. (Participant B)

Participant B was also afraid of her coaches' ability to ultimately make her experience as an athlete nonexistent. She realized very early that he did not condone homosexual behavior and

was openly prejudice. She believes that the combination of her race (African American) and her sexuality lead the coach to eliminating a portion of her scholarship and her playing time. She feared him as a leader; he had power and influence over a college team and used that to provide a negative environment for her, with negative racial and homosexual comments. Participant B soon left that university with a perspective that reiterated her fears from high school. In high school her sexuality led her to fear the loss of family and in college the fear transitioned to a loss of scholarship, education, playing time, friendship and camaraderie with those payers who had come to accept her. Krane and Barber (2003) specifically talked about these exact same fears and the impact it has had on homosexual athletes' social development. They discuss identity management and maintenance of the heterosexual persona. Griffin (2002) describes how this leads athletes to being shamed into silence. What society has taught them is that if one chooses this type of lifestyle then it is to be kept quiet and behind closed doors.

Well my father, I thought for a long time, was not going to be open about it just because throughout my life he had a negative view about homosexuals. It was something that he did not hide. But once he did find out he was actually accepting. He let me know that he loves me no matter what decision I make and just to kind of keep the sexual part of my lifestyle hidden so no one was to find out or stumble upon it and be shocked. He just told me to be careful, basically. (Participant B)

Acceptance

Both participants really began to come to terms with who they were after leaving the family home and starting college. The largest contributor to the acceptance and ownership of their identities was their mother's approval. Both stated that after revealing and admitting to

their parents and to themselves that being a lesbian was a part of their identity, the rest of their fears diminished. They recognized that even if the rest of the world shunned them, they would always have their mothers' love and understanding. Participant A goes on to state: 'I think I was accepted for being a good athlete. I'm not sure about the lesbian part. I really couldn't say, again because that conversation was never had'. She was a part of an institution where the 'don't ask don't tell' policy was exercised and as long as she didn't publically display any sexual misconduct she could function in a tolerant environment. (Participant B)

It was kind of like there was a hidden contract. There's an unwritten contract that you're not going to display any lesbian activity and I'm not going to call you on any. I'm not going to ask you about it nor am I going to discriminate on you for being a lesbian. (Participant A).

Participant B had an entirely different experience from the problems previously

mentioned about her coach to the treatment she received from the majority of her team.

Although she felt college was more open and allowed for more diversity she still felt shunned by some of her teammates: 'they would always talk about another player on the team who was openly lesbian and dressed just about the same as me, but a little more masculine. And they made it clear that they were disgusted by it, and blurted just all types of derogatory terms about her choice'. She felt socially limited in a number of ways. Members from the men's basketball team expressed that they didn't want to hang out with her because she was a lesbian and she also thought that some of her professors frowned upon her appearance as a homosexual. Griffin (1992) speaks about the emotional frustrations of lesbians in sport and similar experiences by these athletes. Lenskyj (1994) adds to Griffin's arguments by examining the team conflict and division that is commonly found in the team setting. There is an invisible

line drawn between the heterosexual and homosexual players that create distractions and the destruction of relationships on and off the playing field. Her college experience really became an atmosphere where she had to become tolerant with 'tongue in cheek'. She described many instances where her acceptance by others relied on her embrace of the situation.

At every school that I ever went to when we had away games I had my own bed. And at certain schools they would throw jokes at me about being a homosexual, which it was funny to me, we have that relationship. They made it clear that they weren't sleeping in the bed with me for that reason. (Participant B)

Identity Management/Compartmentalization

Participant A primarily used a coping mechanism to get through her four years as a collegiate athlete. She separated her life as a student athlete and the life she led with her lesbian companion. She disengaged socially and declined to attend activities and events to protect her reputation and to prevent other students from learning about her sexuality. She chose to be secretive and closed doors to possible friendships and relationships in order to manage what she believed to be a healthy setting.

There is a fine line between your personal life and you life as an athlete. I think almost anything could have affected my playing time, if your coach didn't like you; you were disrespectful to your coach or regarding something else outside the court. I think anything could have affected my laying time to be honest. I've never experienced an incident where being a lesbian or my activity as a lesbian affected my playing time. Again, I always kept quiet because I just looked at it as a profession. I always treated basketball as it was my professional atmosphere and so, I tried to keep my personal life out of it as much as possible. (Participant A)

I know I speak as if it's easy. Although I understand professionally and personally, it was sometimes difficult not having the ability to share my experiences with my girlfriends, whether they were bad or good, I was never

able to share that with a lot of people at school. So, if I had a rough day as far as my relationship [with my girlfriend], if it was going downhill, I would just have to cope as best I could. I had to simply push forward, because I couldn't let that show and affect me playing basketball and being there doing what I was supposed to do. (Participant A)

Participant B shared many of the same circumstances. She did not attend many social functions or introduce her girlfriend at the time because they were sometimes uncomfortable and in a predominantly heterosexual atmosphere. The events where she did make an appearance, were mixed socials (gay and straight) and allowed for a more relaxed and natural environment. Jacobson (2002) and Krane & Barber (2003) define identity management and along with athletes trying to portray a heterosexual persona they discuss many different precautions lesbians take to avoid revealing their individuality. Measures like avoiding compromising situations, changing mannerisms, being introverted and not engaging in personal conversations which tie into many of the tactics these athletes used.

Opinion of the Label and the Media

It is a strong consensus between the participants that the media does have a role in how women's basketball and sports as a whole are depicted. Participant A feels that the label should not or does not reflect the nature of the game.

I don't think that there should be a label for women's basketball. I always get asked questions, 'exactly how many of these girls are really lesbians'? That's kind of annoying, but I mean I think it doesn't matter. It doesn't have anything to do with the game and who the players are. I don't think the lesbian title should be there. Despite the stereotyping athletes have as lesbians, they're a lot of straight women that play the sport and I don't know you just get caught up doing labels and stereotypes. (Participant A)

Participant A views the media as a whirlwind that stirs up the label and blows it out of proportion. She goes on to mention a particular professional women's basketball player that revealed her identity as a lesbian although at that time she had a husband and a child.

Participant A states that the media hyped up the story and if an individual chose to be open about their sexual orientation then it should just be acknowledged and not scandalized. It is that individual's freedom to claim their identity and they should not be ridiculed or reprimanded for doing so.

Its how the public views it. If it's shared in that light where this is something that normally doesn't happen or it's a trend that will result in the end of American families and all this other stuff, no one will support it. (Participant A)

Participant B finds the label to be annoying because of its overuse and the stigma associated with it. She uses a popular television host as an example of how once the label is used, it becomes or assumes the principal tag of that person and all associations surrounding that person refers back to their sexuality. Both participants conclude their thoughts of the label with reference to Proposition 8 in the state of California. Overall, Proposition 8 prohibits the recognition of same-sex marriages and denies gays and lesbians civil liberties that heterosexuals enjoy. Both participants feel that Proposition 8 is the beginning of a long struggle to eliminate discrimination towards homosexuals, but at least it is a start.

I think that the label itself is interpreted differently depending on the situation or circumstance. However, overall, assuming that most people are heterosexuals, the lesbian label has and will continue to be viewed predominantly as a stigma. Whether in the sport of basketball or in the workplace, barriers will always be present. It's my advice that one focuses on just being professional. Professionalism is the only way to earn respect regardless of sexual orientation. (Participant A)

I feel a large part of society judge's masculine and strong women in a negative way. It's a great way to keep a hierarchy system of sex within society. Most of these women are always viewed as being homosexual or too independent. A physically and mentally strong woman is not viewed the same as a man in society. This I feel is a huge annoyance and fault that we as a people have carried throughout society. Sadly, women basketball players have taken a large part of that criticism. It's a terrible thing when the fight for equal rights still exists 160 years after it began. (Participant B)

Greendorfer (1993) and Romer (1981) touch on society's expectations and how the media plays a part in how these women are perceived. Sabo & Messner (1993) talk about how this perception hurts women's sports and how these politics push the control of sports into the men's corner. Labels are a large part of society and always have been. Everything is and has been put into a category and depending on the weight of the label of that category, may determine if the label defines what society will see you as entirely. I believe this is the case for many lesbians, it no longer becomes a matter of talent or intelligence, it boils down to (homo)sexuality.

Picture Day

Although both participants had separate experiences at different schools and played basketball on different collegiate levels, many of their answers were very similar if not the same. One incidence not previously mentioned was having to wear a skirt on picture day. Both participants stated that they were forced to wear skirts or dresses in order to take part in the team picture. Participant B refused to wear a dress and was therefore not allowed to stand for the photo, while Participant A borrowed skirts for her team pictures but to this day has regrets for not taking a stand then. Participant A goes on to reflect on how it made her feel to belittle

herself and her individuality to conform to the directive of her coach, tying into Clarke's (2002) and Griffin's (1992) argument about the women's femininity and the need to portray it. Did the dress make her look feminine, or did it further expose her masculine characteristics and isolate her even more.

I understood that I didn't really have a choice. I couldn't show up in pants even though I wanted to. Now that I think back I'm thinking wow that wasn't right, maybe I should have taken a stand, but I did it each year for 4 years straight. I look at the photos and I think oh my God, what was I thinking. But in the grand scheme of things, I guess it was okay, considering they were paying a quarter million dollars for school. I don't know if that's selling myself or not, I did it. (Participant A)

This is just one of the many commonalities I found in their replies and when they found peace of mind once their mother's and families knew and still accepted them was another. To find ways to manage outsiders' views and treatment, as well as finding ways to better understand themselves was all a part of this transitional process. Denial by teammates and alienation was especially expressed by Participant B another point previously made by Sabo & Messner (1993). They both seemed to gain more and more confidence as time progressed and independence was achieved, independence from their parents along with freedom from the burdens of caring about what everyone else thinks about you.

I have made major changes to my attitude. I don't see it as a crutch anymore. I used to see it as a crutch and I always felt that I was looked down upon by others because of it. But now since I've been able to embrace it I feel like a lot of doors have opened up for me and it's not so much a crutch. Participant B

Lastly, the participants believed that college provided them with very valuable lessons about life and society's perception of them. Their experiences were positive and negative and capacitated their growth as lesbians, athletes, students and individuals.

The older I got, the more secure I became and really didn't care what others thought about me. At a certain point in my life I really didn't care what others thought about me. So the older I got, I just embraced my identity. (Participant A)

It was just something that I clarified to myself. No ones thoughts, concerns and feelings should affect who you are and how you feel. And I stopped getting nervous and once I stopped caring what they thought it really didn't matter. I just wanted to be happy. So as long as I was happy with myself, other people's feelings and views really weren't a big concern. (Participant B)

Positive Outcomes

There were positive milestones the participants expressed that are invaluable even still to this day. Since claiming their identities and becoming more secure they both feel with the change of attitude and mindset, they will no longer use their sexuality as a crutch or an excuse for not succeeding in life. They met people along the way that understood the fight and conflict and found asylum amongst the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) community. The bonds within their families grew stronger with new and more open lines of communication and better understandings of each other.

Every single lesbian that I met or just about, open lesbian or not, any homosexual really that I've ever met, that has been open, cool and comfortable around me, I would say I admire. Just because they helped me to become more comfortable in my shoes and more comfortable with the baggage I was carrying around. (Participant B)

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gather experiences from two lesbian student athletes and to better understand the impact of the lesbian label and the effect it has had in their lives. Homosexuality continues to be the topic of discussion in women's sports. It remains the stereotype associated with the institution, some sports in particular more than other, but overall it continues to stigmatize many of its best athletes and students. It is submerged in a system in society where not only are women being judged for their talents but also their appearances, demeanor and affiliations. I suppose this is the way society is after college as well and college is meant to be preparation for life thereafter. It still amazes me that although things change over time, they have still very clearly remained the same. Many of the problems faced by female athletes over twenty years ago are continuously representing themselves in the arena today. And although much progress has been made in terms of equality, men and women are still held to two different standards.

The results concluded from this study are consistent with results found in previous studies. Fear of rejection and seclusion is still a powerful force that persuades lesbian athletes to remain closeted and silent. The lesbian label is still found to be a stigmatism that divides and destroys team unity and cohesion. Lesbian athletes find comfort and acceptance primarily with other lesbian athletes and/or professionals. Identity management is used by these athletes to uphold the integrity of the sport and to contribute to a heterosexual persona.

Directions or avenues that need further attention are specific comparisons of experiences that strictly dissect race, basketball and homosexuality. I did not go in depth into race because I strongly feel that ultimately lesbians in sports have many of the same experiences regardless of race and I wanted to focus on the label. The fact that both participants were African American may have effected the data but when comparing it to the literature it didn't appear to make much difference. The sample selection may have also partially skewed the research but again I think it is a representation of the population when accounting for proximity and particular sport. Another issue that needs to be examined would be the different regions of the United States and the possibility that schools in different parts of the country have different practices in terms of sexuality. Student athletes in the southern schools as opposed to northern schools may be treated with more or less tolerance of their homosexuality and that would impact experiences of the players and perception.

The label in this paper has been narrowly focused compared to most of the work previously done in this field but without disappointment shares many of the same underlying themes found in the literature review, that homophobia is real and does exist, lesbians should still feel that silence is the best method for success and division amongst female athletes between heterosexuals and homosexuals is still a current battle being lost by both sides.

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APPENDIX A

Interview I Questions

What sports have you played?

What collegiate sport(s) have you played?

Why did you choose to play that sport in college?

How many years did you play in college?

At what age did you acknowledge your homosexuality and identify yourself as a lesbian?

Were you openly homosexual with your teammates? Why?

Were you openly homosexual with your coaches? Why?

Did you feel like you were accepted for whom you were?

Were you verbally told at any point during your athletic career that homosexuality was unacceptable?

Were you discriminated against for being a lesbian during your athletic career?

How do you know your discrimination was because of your appearance or sexuality?

Have you ever been asked to change your appearance or demeanor to be more feminine?

Were you ever afraid that your appearance would limit your playing time?

Have you ever been asked to leave an athletic program because of your appearance or behavior as a homosexual?

Have you ever introduced your significant other to your coaches and/or teammates? Why or why not?

Have you ever displayed public affection with your significant other around your teammates and/or coaches? Why or why not?

Did you ever feel like you made other teammates uncomfortable either in the shower, locker room or hotel room?

What sports have you played?

What collegiate sport(s) have you played?

Why did you choose to play that sport in college?

How many years did you play in college?

At what age did you acknowledged your homosexuality and identify yourself as a lesbian?

Were you openly homosexual with your teammates? Why?

Were you openly homosexual with your coaches? Why?

Did you feel like you were accepted for whom you were?

Were you verbally told at any point during your athletic career that homosexuality was unacceptable?

Were you discriminated against for being a lesbian during your athletic career?

How do you know your discrimination was because of your appearance or sexuality?

Have you ever been asked to change your appearance or demeanor to be more feminine?

Were you ever afraid that your appearance would limit your playing time?

Have you ever been asked to leave an athletic program because of your appearance or behavior as a homosexual?

Have you ever introduced your significant other to your coaches and or teammates? Why or why not?

Have you ever displayed public affection with your significant other around your teammates and or coaches? Why or why not?

Did you ever feel like you made other teammates uncomfortable either in the shower, locker room or hotel room?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

A Student Athletes Perspective of the Lesbian Label in Women's Basketball

Christina Tucker

Informed Consent Form

Human Performance and Physical Education

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to get a better understanding of on the perceptions of homosexuality in women's sports along with the homonegativity created by the lesbian label.

Procedures: Procedures used to assess homonegativity consist of interviews to provide detailed personal experiences.

Duration: The estimated time for completion of each participant's contribution is two hours.

Benefits of participation: Benefits include the participant's telling and sharing their experiences for educational purposes.

Risks: Risks may consist of, but are not limited to, participants surfacing negative feelings and emotions.

Confidentiality: Participant's names will not be used, nor will their universities names be used on any documentation. The participants of the study will be completely anonymous to everyone but the Principal Investigator. I will know who they are for contact purposes only.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: I do not have to participate in this research project. If I agree to participate I can withdraw my participation at any time without penalty.

Human Subject Statement: If there are any questions or concerns the participant can contact the principal investigator and/or the Chair of the Institutional Review Board.

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Chair of the Institutional Review Board
719.587.7010
brankings@xjnu.edu

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Name

Researcher's Signature

Date

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

A Student Athletes Perspective of the Lesbian Label in Women's Basketball

Christina Tucker

Adams State College

Human Performance and Physical Education

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to get a better understanding of on the perceptions of homosexuality in women's sports along with the homonegativism created by the lesbian label.

Procedures: Procedures used to assess homonegativism consist of interviews to provide detailed personal experiences.

Duration: The estimated time for completion of each participant's contribution is two hours.

Benefits of participation: Benefits include the participant's telling and sharing their experiences for educational purposes.

Risks: Risks may consist of, but are not limited to, participants surfacing negative feelings and emotions.

Confidentiality: Participant's names will not be used, nor will their universities names be used on any documentation. The participants of the study will be completely anonymous to everyone but the Principal Investigator. I will know who they are for contact purposes only.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: I do not have to participate in this research project. If I agree to participate I can withdraw my participation at any time without penalty.

Human Subject Statement: If there are any questions or concerns the participant can contact the principal investigator and or the Chair of the Institutional Review Board.

Christina Tucker
Principal Investigator
310.753.7257
cmt_90047@yahoo.com

Dr. Brent King
Chair of the Institutional Review Board
719.587.7010
brentking@adams.edu

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Name

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

ASC IRB Committee Approval Form

To: Dr. Anthony Lefler

Re: IRB clearance for Christina Tucker

From: Brent King, Chair of IRB

The IRB submission from Christina Tucker was reviewed and approved by the committee. As of April 21, 2009, Christina is free to conduct her research at Adams State College. If Christina makes any revisions to her protocol she will need to receive further approval from the IRB.

If you or anyone involved in the project have any further questions please contact me at brentking@adams.edu or 567-7010.

To: Dr. Anthony Laker

Re: IRB clearance for Christina Tucker

From: Brent King, Chair of IRB

The IRB submission from Christina Tucker was reviewed and approved by the committee. As of April 21, 2009, Christina is free to conduct her research at Adams State College. If Christina makes any revisions to her protocol she will need to receive further approval from the IRB.

If you or anyone involved in the project have any further questions please contact me at brentking@adams.edu or 587-7010.