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Wanted: Similarities and Differences between Heterosexual and Homosexual Males and Females within Newspaper Personal Advertisements

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Wanted: Similarities and Differences between Heterosexual and Homosexual Males and Females within Newspaper Personal Advertisements

Submitted by Annie Storlie in fulfillment of the Communication Dept. Honors Thesis requirements.
Acknowledgments

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This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of Communication Studies.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Not all men and women prefer all of the same qualities when searching for a prospective mate. Some individuals only look for a few characteristics, while others have endless lists of categories a person must meet to be considered as a prospective partner. For many individuals, personal advertisements open a window of opportunity for meeting their prospective mate.

Personal advertisements not only include characteristics an advertiser seeks in a partner, but they also include qualities of the advertiser. Personal advertisements allow the advertiser to explicitly state what he or she is interested in, and thus allows researchers to get to the heart of what attracts couples without everyday distractions. Not only do personal advertisements allow the advertiser to choose exactly the type of person he/she wants, but also the reader is able to pick and choose between those that placed ads. Thus, personal ads also lend valuable information about social roles, gender stereotypes, and judgments of attractiveness in heterosexual and homosexual samples (Gonzales & Meyers, 1993).

Personal advertisement studies have only been around for the past twenty years, and further research needs to be done in order to uncover distinct patterns that males and females follow. For example, the impact of sexual orientation has not often been researched. Furthermore, few studies have been done on
lesbian attraction, thus there is only a small amount of information on the mating habits within the lesbian community.

There is also a need to look further into the heterosexual population. It is important to do other studies to investigate if heterosexual advertisers, and those they are seeking, have changed over time. Even though these studies have only been around for a short period of time, there still have been changes within society over that time and those changes may contribute to differences in findings.

The purpose of this research is to advance our understanding of heterosexual and homosexual male and female attraction towards an ideal mate, as evidenced in newspaper advertisements across the United States.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand how individuals look for prospective mates, it is important to take an extended look at previous research. By looking through prior studies dominant findings emerge that are repeated throughout the studies. Research has only been around for a short period of time for this study, and because of that it is important to conduct further investigations to observe what findings are consistent with past results and which are not. The studies used for this literature review date from 1979 to 2000. Several changes have taken place and because of those changes the natural attraction males and females posses may have been altered. Another motivating factor for doing this study is that previous research has looked at topics ranging from heterosexual mating styles to homosexual male and drag queen age preferences, but there are no studies that could be found regarding all four groups: heterosexual males, heterosexual females, homosexual females, and homosexual males, within this study that did not focus on more than one variable.

In this literature review, the findings of past research are organized and discussed by gender and sexual orientation: heterosexual males, heterosexual females, homosexual males, and lesbians. The findings within each are further divided into different subjects: desired characteristics, characteristics of the advertiser, and characteristics not looked for in each group. Desired characteristics are those that the advertiser is looking for when seeking out a potential partner. An example of this is a certain hair color they prefer from the
respondent to their advertisement. Characteristics of the advertiser are traits that the advertiser wants the reader to know about his/herself. The last group is the variables not found in each group. This category looks at the information that is least likely to been talked about by the advertiser.

**Heterosexual Males**

**Desired Characteristics**

Research on personal advertisements has found that heterosexual males have one characteristic sought after more than any other feature: female physical attractiveness. This characteristic remains consistent throughout male adult life; however, it is modified slightly as heterosexual males age they become more accepting of heavier women (Miller, Smith, & Rembath, 2000).

To heterosexual male advertisers, the female body structure is of extreme importance. Specifically, heterosexual males seek women who are thin or those who workout and are physically fit. Hsu (1987) reported that thinness, particularly in women, is a well-established hallmark of physical attractiveness. Men who requested a “low weight” partner were, in fact, ideally seeking an individual thinner than those writers requesting a “physically fit” partner and writers not stating a preference (Nasser, 1980). The words “thin” or “skinny” can carry connotations that imply more then just what the word actually means. For instance, thinness can represent sexuality (Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980), intelligence (Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, Vogel, & Fantini, 1986), and self-control (Nasser, 1988).
Female physical attractiveness not only refers to the physical features of the female, but it can also relate to female reproductivity. For example, as females mature and develop they allow their physical bodies to go through pregnancy and nursing, and because of reproduction men value female youth, health, and fertility (Kenwick, 1990). According to Goodwin (1990), “physical attractiveness in a partner is more highly valued by men rather than women, due to its relationship with reproductive potential” (p. 15).

Not only is physical appearance important, but so is female sexuality. Heterosexual men seeking out a mate through personal advertisements not only look at the size, weight, and age of the female, but they also look at the sexual traits and qualities she possesses. Fischer and Heesacker (1995) found that men prefer sex traits, qualities that refer to a person's physical attractiveness and implied sexual availability. However, even with the considerable desire for female sexuality, heterosexual men are still more likely to pursue enduring relationships via personal advertisements than are homosexual males (Gonzales & Meyers, 1993).

As the age of the advertiser increases so does the physical weight of the female they are seeking. Older straight men choose a larger ideal figure and are more accepting of heavier body sizes. This could be linked to an understanding of the natural rise in weight across a lifespan (Miller, Smith, & Trembath, 2000).

Heterosexual males not only look for physical appearance, but they are also looking for a career woman. For example, a recent study done by Lance (1996) found that men are not only looking at the physical aspects of females,
but they are also seeking women with a professional job, or with a college degree. Lance hypothesized that this change from a physically based spectrum only of wants to more educational based desires may be linked to more women attending college and entering into the workforce.

Another characteristic heterosexual males are looking for in a potential mate is a non-smoker. Lance (1996) found that “heterosexual males mentioned non-smoking as one of the top five characteristics in a potential partner” (p. 12).

**Characteristics of the Advertiser**

Unlike physical appearance, which heterosexual males specifically mention for females, heterosexual males are more likely to mention the amount of money they have or the profession they hold in descriptions of themselves. According to Deaux and Hanna (1984), heterosexual men are likely to offer information about their financial status, or occupation. In addition, the researchers also found that heterosexual males mention their religion. An example of this is, “I am a Christian”, or “I am a southern Baptist who believes in God”.

**Characteristics Not Used By Advertisers**

Previous studies have shown that personality is a characteristic not mentioned often by heterosexual males. According to Hirschman (1995), males are less likely then females to mention personality and to seek it out.
Heterosexual Females

Desired Characteristics

Unlike heterosexual males, heterosexual women placing personal advertisements look for characteristics outside of appearance. Past research reveals that heterosexual females listed two dominant characteristics when looking for their potential mate: personality and financial status. In addition to these two dominant characteristics, there are also several other variables looked for including: nonsmokers, appearance, and age. Age has the potential to be linked with financial security.

Personality is a trait that females specifically look for in a potential mate. In recent studies it has been observed that personality is the characteristic most commonly looked for by heterosexual females (Lance, 1996). According to Fischer and Heesacker (1995), women prefer nurturing traits when choosing a mate because it refers to a person’s potential for warmth and care giving. For example heterosexual females will specifically ask for a “caring guy” or a “sensitive man” (Lance, 1996).

Not only are heterosexual females more likely to ask for certain types of personality, but they are also likely to ask about the financial resources of a heterosexual male. Heterosexual women somewhat put a higher preference on resources and status, which translates into older men (Kenwick, Keete, Bryan, Barr, & Brown, 1990). Furthermore, Lance (1998) found that heterosexual
females seek out men with college degrees more than good looks and appearance.

The increase of female education also plays an effect on the types of traits females are looking for in personal advertisements. Women are more educated, more professionally oriented, and more financially secure and because of this they have strayed further away from appearance and centered on personality. Another feature heterosexual females look for is non-smokers, which was also seen by heterosexual males (Lance, 1996).

Characteristics of the Advertiser

No research could be found regarding the characteristics heterosexual females are likely to use when referring to themselves in personal advertisements.

Characteristics Not Used By Advertisers

Past research has observed that for heterosexual females, weight is not a dominant standard sought for in personal advertisements. It has been seen that women seek men who are physically fit, however, females who are overweight make little reference to weight for fear of rejection (Schafer & Keith, 1990).

Homosexual Males

Desired Characteristics

In previous studies, three dominant factors within homosexual male advertisements emerged: appearance, explicit language, and short-term goals. Appearance is a feature that is specifically stated within the homosexual male
personal advertisements, and it specifically explained what the homosexual male advertiser is looking for. Explicit language used throughout the advertisements is very noticeable. Homosexual men use slang words to describe the male genital region and often use very graphic vocabulary. Short-term goals about relationships are not specifically stated within the advertisement, but implied.

According to Hatala and Predhodka (1996), physical appearance is of utmost importance to gay men. Homosexual male personal advertisements were found most likely to include elements of appearance such as race, age, perceived attractiveness, and unique physical traits. Furthermore, Bartholome, Tewsbury and, Bruzzone (2000) found that within homosexual personal advertisements “body language” was the most dominant theme throughout a majority of the ads reviewed. The authors defined body language as “references and discussion of an individual’s appearance, stature, and size” (Bartholome et al., 2000). Examples of body language would include terms such as “slim” “attractive” or mentioning an eye color.

Age was another feature throughout the personal ads. Bartholome et al. (2000), found some advertisers specifically mention age, such as “I like my men between 18 and 40.” while others give general descriptions of what they are looking for, “I would like someone who is fortyish.”

In addition to physical appearance, previous research reveals that homosexual males cite short-term goals when looking for their ideal mate. According to Hatala and Prehodka (1996), homosexual male personal advertisements list short-term goals as a main focus throughout the content and
apparent motivation of the advertiser. The predisposition for short-term goals demonstrates the likelihood that homosexual males are more centered on immediate desires. For example, homosexual males are more likely to mention the type of sexual position they like than to mention a personality type they are looking for (Bartholome et al., 2000).

Furthermore, it has been seen that homosexual males state specific goals for the anticipated relationship posted within the personal ad (Bartholome et al., 2000). An example of this is seen when homosexual males mention that they want a partner who will perform certain sexual positions. By mentioning this they are showing the partner what it is they want out of the relationship (Bartholome et al., 2000).

**Characteristics of the Advertiser**

Through research conducted on homosexual advertisements it has been observed that one common feature is used often by the advertiser to describe himself and that is his appearance.

Most often homosexual men made reference to their own appearance, which included height, some sort of description for weight, as well as, hair, eye color, and having a muscular body (Bartholome et al., 2000). For example an advertisement might ask specifically for a “slim” or “heavy” individual (Bartholome et al., 2000).
Homosexual vs. Heterosexual Differences

Differences have been documented regarding homosexual and heterosexual male personal advertisements. These differences revolve around four important features: use of language in general, genital language, sexual roles, and the HIV epidemic.

Language was a very important aspect of a homosexual personal advertisement. Very defined words and segments were used to give the receiver the exact picture of what the advertisement was looking for. Very specific requests were made specifying the nature of the sexual acts desired. One such request asked, “I also want a man who likes to wear bikinis, string bikinis, panties, jocks, and things that reveal his manhood, and make him feel good about himself” (Bartholome et al., 2000). The use of explicit language could be more common in homosexual advertisements because of the papers these advertisements are placed in. Most homosexual male personal advertisement studies have taken advertisements out of low budget city publications and not out of highly circulated newspapers.

The use of explicit genital language by homosexual males is a second distinguishable feature. For instance, Bartholome et al. (2000) found that 45 percent of the advertisers used explicit genital language. The most talked about item was the size of the advertiser’s own penis and the preferred size of their partner’s penis. This body part, however, has many terms used to describe it and often they are slang terms. The names of the male genital used included: “penis”, “cock”, “balls”, “well-hung”, “well-endowed”, “dick”, “shaft”, “package”,
"boner", and "meat". Another topic that was discussed referred to circumcision. Those asking about circumcision made reference to their preference of "cut or uncut."

The significance of the penis is seen through the desire for homosexual males to discuss the importance of sexual roles. Homosexual men specifically mention sexual roles that the advertiser desires in a partner and/or themselves sought to fulfill (Bartholome et al., 2000). For example, homosexual males mentioning oral sex stated specifically if they wanted to "give" or "receive" (Bartholome et al., 2000). Other specific requests pertained to the type of sexual act they were seeking, including oral and anal sex. An illustration of this can be seen when the advertiser would specifically mention whether or not they liked to be on the "top" or "bottom", and whether or not they liked to be "dominant" or "submissive" (Bartholome et al., 2000).

Another major difference is caused by a worldwide epidemic. Unlike heterosexual males and females and lesbians, homosexual males have had to deal more intensely with the HIV epidemic. Davidson (1996) reported that accompanying the spread of the HIV epidemic has been an increasing likelihood of gay men to reject stereotypical presentations of self and to include mentions of health status in personal ads. Hatala (1996) stated that HIV-negative gay men are more likely to include mentions of long-term relationships in advertisements, while HIV-positive gay men are most likely to discuss health issues in advertisements.
Characteristics Not Used By The Advertiser

Like heterosexual males and females, homosexual males have characteristics that are not listed as desired characteristics in a potential mate. According to Bhruga (1988), gay men are less likely than their heterosexual counterparts to state a desire for sincerity and security in those they seek via personal advertisements. Laner and Kamel (1977) observed that it is also rare to find gay men who sought status, such as money or a high-profile career. Moreover, Laner and Kamel (1977) found that gay men were less likely than heterosexual men to seek or offer personality characteristics, or specific physical traits, or specifics of appearance.

Homosexual Females

Desired Characteristics

As few studies have been conducted on homosexual females there is little information on characteristic patterns that are desired in a potential mate. Within the limited studies done, there have been two common traits found in lesbian personal advertisements: age and casual sex.

Bartholome et al. (2000) observed that lesbians prefer increasingly younger partners as they age. The age difference is not as wide for lesbians as for homosexual men. In fact, the acceptable minimum age for partners does not drop as rapidly as for homosexual males. Older homosexual females continue to value partners their own age and older, but over the last few years there has
been an increase in younger women desired. With this age trait lesbians have a tendency to follow more heterosexual male tendencies.

However, lesbians do follow heterosexual female tendencies when it comes to casual sex. Both heterosexual females and homosexual females are less likely to write about casual sex (Bartholome et al., 2000).

**Characteristics Listed By the Advertiser**

No research could be found regarding lesbian personal advertisements, and therefore, there is no information on what traits are most often used to describe the lesbian advertiser.

**Characteristics Not Used By The Advertiser**

With few studies done on lesbian personal advertisements there has been no information on characteristics not used by the advertiser
Research Questions

Although research on personal advertisements has not been extensive, several patterns have been documented with heterosexual and homosexual males and females. Some characteristics cross over into more than one group.

Previous studies have shown that heterosexual males are more likely to place emphasis on the appearance of the individual they are looking for. However, heterosexual males are beginning to take an interest in the education of a potential partner. Heterosexual males are also less interested in a smoking female.

Unlike heterosexual males, it has been seen through previous research that heterosexual females look for financial security within a potential partner, as well as appearance. Heterosexual females also focus on personality and nurturing traits. They, like heterosexual males, are more likely to look for a nonsmoker.

Similar to heterosexual males, homosexual males have been found to have a strong interest in the appearance of their potential partner. However, homosexual males are less likely to stress long-term relationships and are more likely to look for sexual partners as evidenced through their use of genital language. These latter findings are very different from heterosexual males and females.

The limited research on homosexual females did reveal that they follow heterosexual male tendencies concerning age and female tendencies regarding casual sex.
Questions, however, still remain beyond the conclusions from previous studies. There are issues that need to be addressed in order to fill in the gaps from previous research.

With the lack of studies done on homosexual females there are few patterns that have been found that help to describe dominant characteristics looked for by the advertiser. Without more information on lesbian attraction little conclusions can be formed to help better understand their desires.

Another limitation that needs to be addressed is the lack of nationwide data. Past studies have employed large populations, however, those studies have stayed in a central location and have not examined a wide database. It is important to see if the information found in those studies spreads across the country or if it is just a general trait found in a certain area.

Lastly, no studies to date have compared and contrasted heterosexual and homosexual males and females in one study. It is important to try and collect data on more than just one type of group at a time. This study intends to look at both genders and two different sexual orientations.

These limitations and findings from previous research point to the following research questions:

RQ1: What similarities and differences are evident in the characteristics desired by males and females and homosexuals and heterosexuals listed in personal advertisements?

RQ2: What similarities and differences are evident in the characteristics of the advertisers listed in personal advertisements?
CHAPTER 3

METHODS SECTION

Sampling and Subjects

To study personal advertisements a sample of ten newspapers from across the nation was desired. It was also desired to analyze a total of 400 advertisements. To obtain a random sample, several steps were enacted.

First, all fifty states, and Washington DC, were written on small pieces of paper, each the same size. They were then placed in a hat and shuffled around. Once a state was chosen the remaining pieces of paper where again shuffled, and this process continued until all ten were selected. In total nine states were chosen, as well as, Washington DC making it ten. The states, which were randomly selected, were: Nevada, Texas, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Washington DC, Arizona, Hawaii, and Kentucky.

Second, after these states were randomly selected, the Internet was used to find the seven most populated cities within the states, with the exception of Washington DC. Once the seven cities were found they were randomly selected the same way each state was. Each grouping of cities from one state was put into a hat, shuffled around, and one was randomly selected. This process occurred for all nine states. The cities that were randomly selected were: Las Vegas, Dallas, Atlanta, Kansas City, Boston, St. Paul, Phoenix, Honolulu, and Frankfort.

Third, once these cities were chosen the Internet was used to find out what papers were printed in the cities, and they were the ones used for the study.
Since Washington DC is not a state, no city could be randomly selected. Instead, the largest paper was picked for the study. The newspapers selected were: Las Vegas Sun, Dallas Morning News, Atlanta Journal Constitution, Kansas City Star, The Washington Post, Boston Globe, and Star Tribune. I was unable to obtain newspapers from Arizona, Hawaii, and Kentucky due to circumstances with the several libraries. To make a more nationwide sample I replaced those three papers with ones from Spokane, Denver, and Billings. These papers were selected based on their availability.

Fourth, with the newspapers selected the next step was to randomly select the month and date that would be looked at. It was decided that Sundays would be used because the Sunday paper has the highest potential of carrying the most personal advertisements. The random selection of which month was distinguished in the same way that that states and cities were chosen. Twelve pieces of paper, each holding the name of a month, were placed into a hat and one was selected. The month was November. Once the month was chosen four pieces of paper were placed into the hat, and these each contained one of the numbers 1, 2, 3, or 4. These numbers represented the week that the Sunday would come from. The number four was selected and, therefore, November 25, 2001 was the date of the papers that was selected.

The papers were collected from the Minneapolis library and the Lewis and Clark library. Each personal advertisement section was divided into the four categories. Each category was looked at individually and starting from the very first one in each group, they were then studied by looking at every third. Ten
personal advertisements were collected at in each section, except for lesbians. Lesbians never had more than ten personal advertisements in their section. Instead of randomly going down the list and looking at every third, all of the lesbian personals were gathered.

Thus, the total number of personal advertisements looked at was 351 (100 heterosexual males, 100 heterosexual females, 91 homosexual males, and 51 lesbians).
**Variables**

Thirteen variables were investigated in the current study. Eleven variables were used because they were commonly observed in previous studies. Age, ethnic classification, financial security personality, smoking, religion, and gender where taken from the study done by Lance (1996). Sexuality and sexual orientation was used in the study by Bartholome et al. (2000). These variables were chosen for this study because they have been observed to be important aspects through previous studies. The operational definitions of these variables used by Lance (1996) and Bartholome et al. (2000) were also employed here.

Age was operationally defined as “reference to an exact age or age range” (p.6). Ethnic or Racial classification was operationally defined as “reference to what ethnic or racial background the advertiser is, and what they are looking for” (p.6). Financial Security was operationally defined as “reference to prosperity, financial security, stability, college degree, or well educated” (p.6). Hobbies were operationally defined as “reference to specific hobbies or activities (examples: sewing, sailing, and hiking)”. Personality was operationally defined as “reference to personality disposition (examples: intelligent, loving, caring, funny, and thoughtful)” (p.6). Religion was operationally defined as “reference to whether or not it was mentioned” (p.6). Sexuality was operationally defined as “reference to specific sexual language (examples: sensuous and sexy)” (p.6). Smoking was operationally defined as “reference to would or would not accept” (p.6). Marital Status was operationally defined as “reference to whether
the advertiser was single, divorced, widowed, separated, or married also whether the person they are looking for is”.

Hobbies and marital status have been included in this study because they have not been investigated in previous studies. For this study, hobbies are operationally defined as activities that individuals like to do in their free time. This variable can help to see if males and females are attracted to a potential partner who has the same interest as they do. Marital status was brought in to see if males and females are looking for a certain type of person. For example, whether or not a divorced advertiser would want to date a divorced individual. These two categories are meant to help further understand what heterosexual and homosexual males and females want. For this study the operational definition is the acknowledgement of whether or not an individual is married, divorced, separated, or single.
Chapter 4: Results

The results from the current study are delineated below by the four categories of gender and sexual orientation. The results are also shown in table form in Appendix A.

**Heterosexual Males**

**Characteristics Desired**

For heterosexual men physical appearance was the most desired characteristic (92%). Besides physical appearance, age (64%), marital status (52%), hobbies (51%), ethnic and racial classification (47%), smoking (41%) and personality (37%) were the top seven categories looked for. Religion (12%), financial security (12%), and sexuality (2%) make up the remaining three traits sought for by heterosexual men.

**Characteristics Listed**

For heterosexual males the outcome for listed characteristics showed that marital status (80%) was mentioned the most as a characteristic of the advertiser. Along with marital status, age (78%), physical appearance (76%), ethnic classification (76%), and hobbies (51%) made up the top five most often mentioned categories by the advertiser. Being a nonsmoker (33%) was stated by the advertiser in some instances. The remaining four characteristics talked about were: financial security (25%), personality (24%), religion (10%), and sexuality (6%).
Heterosexual Females

Characteristics Desired

For heterosexual females, the results concerning the characteristics desired showed physical appearance (78%) was the most desired trait. After physical appearance, personality (61%), hobbies (59%), age (56%), and ethnic classification (53%) and marital status (52%) made up the top six categories asked for by heterosexual female advertisers. The remaining three qualities asked for are: financial security (25%), smoking (17%), and religion (9%). Sexuality was a variable used for this study, however, zero percent of the advertisers asked for it.

Characteristics Listed

For the characteristics listed by heterosexual female advertisers, marital status (91%) was the feature mentioned by the advertiser the most. Ethnic classification (81%), age (70%), physical appearance (64%), and hobbies (59%) completed the top five categories stated by the advertiser. Personality (48%) was the next most requested category mentioned and was followed by financial security (30%). The remaining three categories mentioned by the advertiser about themself were smoking (14%), religion (9%), and sexuality (9%).

Homosexual Males

Characteristics Desired

For homosexual males, physical appearance (95%) was the most asked for feature by the advertiser. After physical appearance age (56%), personality
(45%), ethnic classification (42%) were asked for in homosexual personal advertisements. The remaining categories requested by the advertiser were hobbies (19%) marital status (14%), financial security (10%), smoking (7%), and religion (2%). Zero percent mentioned sexuality in their personal advertisements.

**Characteristics Listed**

This study found that among characteristics listed by the advertiser physical appearance (88%) was mentioned most often. After physical appearance came age (85%), and ethnic classification (71%). Financial security (52%), personality (42%) and marital status (40%) were the next most frequently requested three categories by the advertiser. The final categories mentioned by the advertiser were: hobbies (19%), smoking (7%), religion (2%), and sexuality (2%).

**Lesbians**

**Characteristics Desired**

Regarding the characteristics desired by a lesbian advertiser, this study found that physical appearance (54%) was the feature asked for most often. After physical appearance lesbian looked for: non-smoking (40%), age (36%), hobbies (33%), personality (28%) and marital status (27%). The remaining categories desired by homosexual females were: ethnic classification (17%),
financial security (4%), and sexuality (4%). None of the homosexual female advertisers asked for religion.

Characteristics Listed

Through this study it was observed that lesbians most often mention their age (51%) in their personal advertisements. Age was followed closely by ethnic classification (46%), physical appearance (42%), marital status (37%), hobbies (33%), smoking (33%), financial security (29%), personality (28%), and sexuality (17%). The lesbian advertisers did not mention religion.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This study has discovered differences from the research findings presented within the literature review. Such changes were anticipated to occur due to the changes in society. Through each category it can be seen how items have changed or stayed the same from the literature review.

This chapter is set up in two different ways. First, the variables are placed in alphabetical order. The reason physical appearance is first is because all four categories of individual advertisers placed it as their number one characteristic looked for in a potential mate. This category is also divided into two sections: characteristics desired and characteristics listed. This was done because it is separated in the same manner throughout the literature review.

Physical Appearance

Besides homosexual males, there have been no previous findings on the importance of physical appearance used by the advertiser to describe themselves.

Heterosexual Males

Characteristics desired. Physical appearance was the most commonly (92%) requested feature by a heterosexual male advertiser. Physical appearance was ranked first out of ten categories with ninety-two percent of male advertisers specifically mentioning what physical appearance they were looking for. Many of these males (57%) mentioned that they wanted a female with long hair. There
was usually no mention of a specific hair color. Besides hair the most commonly asked for items were long legs and a tan complexion. This was consistent with previous studies that stated physical appearance was the most common category that heterosexual males looked for.

Characteristics listed. Heterosexual male advertisers used appearance frequently as a way of describing themselves in their advertisements.

Heterosexual male advertisers often stated such things as "nice body," "tan," and "working out" a lot.

Heterosexual Females

Characteristics desired. Physical appearance was the feature asked for most often by heterosexual female advertisers. The most commonly sought trait was a well-shaped body. Females were usually very specific with the type of physical trait they were looking for. Such traits include: a tan complexion, muscular legs, and a specific hair color. This fits with previous studies because physical appearance was found to be important to heterosexual female advertisers.

However, there was a difference with this current study and the previous studies because physical appearance was asked for more often than personality types, which were observed to be the most common feature looked for.

Characteristics listed. Heterosexual female advertisers used physical appearance (48%) occasionally throughout their personal advertisements. They were specific with such features as eye and hair color, but vague when describing their body type. Those that mentioned body type stated phrases as "nice body" or "proportionate."
Homosexual Males

Characteristics desired. Similar to previous research, physical appearance was overwhelmingly the characteristic most often asked for by the homosexual male advertiser. The most commonly sought trait was not a specific request, but rather a general request for an attractive male. They did not specify what created an attractive male. However, most did mention that they wanted someone who worked out a lot.

Characteristics listed. Like past studies, physical appearance was also the number one aspect used by homosexual male advertisers to describe themselves in their personal advertisements. It was the number one characteristic used out of the ten used in this study, with eighty-eight percent mentioning details about their appearance. Homosexual male advertisers provided very specific details. For example, those that mentioned being in-shape stated phrases such as “tight butt,” “firm legs,” and “defined arms”.

Lesbians

Characteristics desired. Physical appearance was observed to be an important aspect because it was ranked first out of the ten categories. However, only fifty-four percent mentioned the physical appearance they were looking for. Such requests were: “long beautiful hair” or “a nice complexion”. With the lack of studies done on homosexual females there is no research to compare this with.

Characteristics listed. At times (42%), homosexual female advertisers mentioned their own physical appearance in their personal advertisements.
Those that mentioned appearance stated things such as “short hair” and likes “lipstick.” Those that like lipstick could be referring to the phrase “lipstick lesbian” in which the homosexual female is very feminine.

**Heterosexual Males**

**Characteristics desired.** In past studies, age of the potential partner was very important (64%) to heterosexual males in personal advertisements. This was also seen within this study. The tendency was for heterosexual males to create an age range below their own. These findings fit with previous research that stated heterosexual males have a tendency to look for younger women.

**Characteristics listed.** Age was a common trait (68%) for heterosexual male advertisers to use when describing themselves. In this current study it was the second highest characteristic used by the advertiser out of ten categories for this study. More males made reference to their own age than specifically stating an age they desired from a potential partner.

**Heterosexual Females**

**Characteristics desired.** Age was a moderate factor within the current study. This fits with previous findings; however, there was a difference in the age range. Heterosexual female advertisers did specify an age range slightly higher than their own, but it was not as dominant as seen in previous research. Most age ranges fell close to the advertiser, especially for professional women. This slight change could come from more women attending college. It was observed that professional women looked for men closer to their age.
Characteristics listed. Age was the third most common quality (70%) used by heterosexual female advertisers when depicting themselves in their personal advertisements. A common pattern used in the ads was for the advertiser to first state their marital status and ethnic classification, and then to remark on their age.

Homosexual Men

Characteristics desired. Within this study age was the second most prominent category within homosexual advertisements. Like heterosexual females this feature fit with previous research, however, the age range was similar to the advertiser, and an attraction towards youth was not as visible. Many of the advertisers only looked five to ten years younger than their own age.

Characteristics listed. This current study observed that age was a prevalent characteristic used by homosexual male advertisers in their personal advertisements. Age was mentioned in eighty-five percent of the homosexual male ads and was the second most mentioned category out of ten in this study. They specifically mentioned their age at the beginning of the ad just before they began to describe the physical appearance they were looking for. This is consistent with previous studies that observed homosexual males often state their age within their advertisements.
Lesbians

Characteristics desired. This study found that lesbian advertisers occasionally looked for a certain age range. Age was the third most asked for category, however it was only asked for by thirty-six percent of the advertisers. These findings are consistent with past research because younger women did continue to look for older women, while older women continued to look at someone their own age, or slightly younger.

Characteristics listed. Age was the most important feature mentioned by a lesbian advertiser when providing information about themselves. However, only fifty-one percent of the lesbian advertisers specified their age was. Most advertisers placed their age first and then mentioned the age they preferred in their potential partner.

Ethnic Classification

There has been little research done on the importance of ethnic and racial classification. This current study does not have previous research to compare data with for any of the four groups.

Heterosexual Males

Characteristics desired. In this study it was observed that ethnic and racial classification was moderately used by heterosexual males. It was the fifth most common category. Most commonly observed was one ethnic and racial group seeking out the same. For example, a white male asked for a white female.

Characteristics listed. Ethnic and racial classification was an important tool used by the heterosexual male advertiser to describe themselves. This
characteristic was used by seventy-six percent of the advertisers and was the fourth most common trait used. Most advertisers specifically stated what race they were. For example, some advertisers stated that they were “white” or “African American.”

Heterosexual Females

Characteristics desired. Heterosexual females do specify what racial or ethnic group they prefer. As with heterosexual males, female advertisers asked for someone of the same ethnic or racial background.

Characteristics listed. Heterosexual females commonly mentioned (81%) their race or ethnic background when they described who they were in their personal advertisements. Those that mentioned their own race usually preferred the same one for their potential partner. For example, a heterosexual female made reference to being “black” and then requested for a “black” male.

Homosexual males

Characteristics desired. Ethnic and racial classification of a potential partner is a feature looked for by homosexual advertisers. It was the fourth highest feature with forty-two percent of the advertisers asking for a specific group. Unlike both heterosexual males and females, there was no reference to a specific group the advertiser was looking for. For example, a homosexual white male did not often mention a specific ethnic or racial group they were looking for.

Characteristics listed. Ethnic and racial classification of the homosexual male advertiser was an important feature (71%) used to illustrate themselves through
their advertisement. It was usually placed at the very beginning of the advertisement.

Lesbians

**Characteristics desired.** Ethnic and racial classification was not an important feature to homosexual female advertisers. It was the seventh most common category out of ten. Lesbian advertisers rarely made mention (17%) to the specific racial group they were looking for.

**Characteristics listed.** In contrast, homosexual females used ethnic and racial classification in almost fifty percent of the advertisements to describe themselves. It was commonly found at the beginning of the advertisement.

**Financial Security**

Heterosexual Males

**Characteristics desired.** This current study observed that financial security was not an important feature desired by heterosexual male advertisers. This fits with previous studies because males asking for financial security from a female were rarely mentioned. Most often it was seen that the heterosexual males specifically mentioned their own.

**Characteristics listed.** Financial security was a characteristic not offered often (25%) by heterosexual male advertisers. This characteristic was ranked the seventh category with twenty-five percent of advertisers mentioning their status. When it was, men spoke of being employed or being a professional. Some mentioned specifically the type of job they had, such as being a “janitor” or
a “businessman.” This did not fit the previous data, which documented the importance heterosexual males placed on their financial status. This could be because men are looking for females who have degrees. Many males specifically stated they wanted a woman with a degree or was a professional.

**Heterosexual Females**

*Characteristics desired.* In contrast to prior research, financial security of a potential partner was not an important feature desired by heterosexual females in this study. This study observed that females were not as interested in financial security. Only twenty-five percent of the females asked for financially secure males. Financial security, in previous studies, was one of the most common features asked for by heterosexual females. Perhaps, as mentioned earlier, this could be because females are working more and going to school; there is less economic reliance on the heterosexual male.

*Characteristics listed.* Financial security was also a category not offered often (30%) by heterosexual female advertisers. Most females did not mention a specific profession they had and just simply stated they were “professionals.” However, this is an increase for heterosexual females because prior studies had rarely observed heterosexual female advertisers mentioning their own status. This is consistent with heterosexual males who decreased in the mentioning of financial security. With more heterosexual females stating their own shows more equality between the two groups.
Homosexual Males

Characteristics desired. This study observed that financial security was not a dominant category (10%) for homosexual male advertisers. This fits with past research that observed that financial security was hardly mentioned. This could be because these men have their own money. It was observed in this research that homosexual male advertisers spoke more about their own financial security, and paid little attention to that of their potential partners.

Characteristics listed. Homosexual male advertisers use financial security as a way of describing themselves through their personal advertisements. It was the fourth most common feature out of ten with fifty-two percent mentioning they had a job. Those that mentioned financial security simply mentioned that they had a job and did not state what type. This does not fit with past research because it was found that homosexual males paid little attention to job status and more attention to physical features. While physical features were still a main topic in the current study, financial security became more noticeable through the advertisements.

Lesbians:

Characteristics desired. Lesbians, like homosexual males, expressed little interest in the financial security (4%) of a potential mate. If the advertiser did ask for someone they usually asked for a “professional woman.” There has been little research done to compare these results with.

Characteristics listed. Likewise, financial security was not an important feature used by homosexual female advertisers in their personal advertisements
(29%). Those that did mention their financial security usually stated a specific job such as being a “lawyer” or a “business woman.”

**Hobbies**

There has been little research done on the importance of hobbies. This current study does not have previous research to compare data with for any of the four groups.

**Heterosexual Males**

**Characteristics desired.** It was observed in this study that hobbies were a major aspect for heterosexual males when looking for an ideal mate. Half of the heterosexual males specifically stated hobbies they enjoy and want their ideal mate to as well. Unlike heterosexual females, males only listed roughly two hobbies per advertisement. Also, most were very vague, desiring such things as “playing sports” and “going out.”

**Characteristics listed.** Similarly, about half of the heterosexual male advertisers used hobbies throughout their personal advertisements as a way of describing themselves. Those that mentioned hobbies were not specific in the types of hobbies they enjoyed. For example, some advertisers replied that they like to “go out.”

**Heterosexual Females**

**Characteristics desired.** Hobbies, both the advertiser’s and those of a potential partner, are an important aspect (59%) for heterosexual females when looking for a potential partner. Most females stated between one and five
hobbies they enjoyed and they were more specific then heterosexual males in what they requested. Some examples include tennis, walking, salsa dancing, and hiking.

Characteristics listed. Likewise, hobbies were an important quality (59%) heterosexual female advertisers used to describe themselves in their personal advertisements. Most advertisers stated more than one hobby they enjoyed.

Homosexual Males

Characteristics desired. Hobbies were not an important feature (19%) for homosexual males and their prospective partners. There was no pattern found on whether they stated specifically what hobbies they liked. Also there was no common number as to how many hobbies were mentioned per advertisement. Those advertisers that spoke about hobbies asked for such things as “taking long walks” or “clubbing.”

Characteristics listed. Similarly, hobbies were not commonly mentioned (19%) in homosexual male advertisers within their personal advertisements. There was no specific number of hobbies used per advertisement. The characteristics listed were similar to those desired by the advertiser. Examples include, “clubbing” and “walking.”

Lesbians

Characteristics desired. Lesbian advertisers, while looking for an ideal mate, asked for hobbies about one-third of the time. Although this category ranked fourth out of ten, and like homosexual males it ranked high on the list of categories, only thirty-three percent of advertisers were looking for it. Some
examples of hobbies range from sewing to swimming in the ocean. There were no distinct patterns of how many hobbies were mentioned per advertisement.

Characteristics listed. Homosexual females described their own hobbies occasionally (33%) throughout their personal advertisements. Like homosexual males, there was no set number of hobbies mentioned per advertisement, however those that mentioned a hobby usually placed it in the middle of their ad.

Marital Status

There has been little research done on the importance of marital status.

Heterosexual Males

Characteristics desired. Marital status was a characteristic mentioned often (52%) by heterosexual male advertisers. Many divorced men were looking for a female who was either divorced or separated. Those that mentioned they were single were the least likely to mention specifically what they wanted. There were still those that did not mention what they were looking for and what they expected from their potential mate.

Characteristics listed. Marital status of the advertiser was an important feature mentioned by heterosexual male advertisers. In this study it was the number one quality talked about by the advertiser with eighty percent mentioning specifically what they were. This included: divorced, single, married, and separated. Those that mentioned their marital status placed it at the very beginning of their advertisement.
Heterosexual Females

Characteristics desired. Heterosexual female advertisers commented regularly (52%) on the marital status of their potential partner. Most divorced women mentioned that they would like a divorced male. Also, like heterosexual males, those that mentioned they were single did not mention a specific marital type they were looking for.

Characteristics listed. Marital status of the advertiser was an important feature mentioned by heterosexual female advertisers. It was the number one most commonly mentioned feature about the advertiser with ninety-one percent stating what they were. Out of these, almost all ads were placed immediately at the beginning of the ad. This could be because it is the most important feature used by the advertiser to describe themselves.

Homosexual Males:

Characteristics desired. Marital status of a prospective partner was observed to be a quality not commonly (14%) asked for by homosexual males. Most of these stated that they were looking for a single male. There were roughly two-percent that said they were divorced but they did not make reference to what their potential partner had to be.

Characteristics listed. The advertiser's own marital status was a characteristic mentioned somewhat commonly (40%) throughout homosexual male advertisements. Those that mentioned it usually were looking for someone with the same standing, such as if they were single they wanted someone else who was. This is not consistent with the characteristics desired by a homosexual
male advertiser. This could show that they are not as interested in mentioning their own marital status and find other characteristics more important to use when describing themselves.

Lesbians

Characteristics desired. Homosexual female advertisers appear not to be very concerned with the marital status of their ideal mate. Only twenty-seven percent of the lesbian advertisers looking for a specific type of marital status. Most lesbians asked for a single friend first. There were very few divorced or separated women. Most of those that mentioned a single partner specifically stated that they wanted a friend first, and then they could see what would develop later.

Characteristics listed. Marital status was stated by homosexual female advertisers about one third of time. Out of ten characteristics it was ranked fourth with thirty-seven percent mentioning a specific type they were. Those that did mention that they were single implied that they first wanted a friend, and they would see what would happen from there.

Personality

There has been little research done on the importance of personality used by the advertiser to describe themselves.

Heterosexual Males

Characteristics desired. This study found that a specific personality type requested by heterosexual males about one third of the time. This is consistent
with past research, which observed that heterosexual males were less interested in personality and more interested in physical features. Most men asked for females that were “happy,” “loved to laugh,” and those that were “spunky.” Heterosexual males stated specifically the type of personality they preferred.

**Characteristics listed.** Personality was a feature that heterosexual male advertisers did not use often (24%) in their personal advertisements to describe themselves. In this current study it was the eighth category out of ten with twenty-four percent mentioning their type of personality. Those that mentioned personality stated things such as being a “nice guy” or a “respected” person.

**Heterosexual Females**

**Characteristics desired.** Personality of the potential partner was an important feature (61%) for heterosexual females. Heterosexual females, like heterosexual males, stated specifically what personality types they preferred: “fun,” “loving,” and “warm.” This follows with previous research which observed heterosexual females wanting nurturing personality types as seen in the examples above.

**Characteristics listed.** Almost one half of the time, personality was used by the heterosexual female advertisers to describe them in this study. Those that listed a type used such words as “honest” and “sweet.” The words illustrate a focus on nurturing characteristics.

**Homosexual Males**

**Characteristics desired.** Personality of the prospective partner was common (45%) among homosexual male advertisers. Unlike heterosexuals, homosexual males did not mention specific types of personality. They mentioned in round
about ways what they were looking for. For instance, an advertiser mentioned that he “liked to laugh.” This could insinuate that they wanted someone who was funny or someone who liked to have fun. This does not fit with previous studies that observed homosexual males are less likely to mention sincerity and more likely to ask for physical features.

**Characteristics listed.** Personality was a feature that homosexual advertisers used commonly (42%) when listing features about themselves. The most commonly used word was “fun.”

**Lesbians**

**Characteristics desired.** This study observed personality of a potential partner was less commonly (28%) asked for than other features. However, lesbians were similar to heterosexual females because they specifically mentioned what they were looking for. Some examples of personality types looked for were: “sweet,” “sensitive,” and “fun.”

**Characteristics listed.** Homosexual female advertisers do not use personality as a significant way of describing themselves. Personality was ranked eighth out of ten categories with twenty-eight percent mentioning a specific type. Those that mentioned a type stated such things as “nice” and “loyal.”

**Religion**

There has been little prior research done on the importance of religion in personal advertisements. Religion was a category in which the advertisers that did mention a specific type or implied a faith insinuated that they wanted
someone with the same beliefs. That is why this category only has
characteristics desired.

Heterosexual Males

Religion was not a category requested very often (12%) by heterosexual
males. Of those that did heterosexual males mentioned their own religion and
how it was important to them. They specifically named the type of religion they
followed; however, they did not mention a specific one for the potential partner. It
can be assumed that they are looking for someone with the same religious
background. This does fit with previous studies that observed that heterosexual
men do mention religion.

Heterosexual Females

Religion was not a characteristic mentioned often by heterosexual female
advertisers. Religion was ranked ninth out of ten categories with nine percent of
the heterosexual female advertisers stating their own faith. Most mentioned a
specific religion that they follow, but they did not state the religion that they
wanted their potential partner to have. Heterosexual females did mention that
they wanted a partner with a "spiritual outlook" or someone who carries their
same beliefs. Like heterosexual males, it can be assumed that they are looking
for someone with the same religious background.

Homosexual Males

Homosexual male advertisers were unlikely to mention religion when
looking for a perspective partner. Religion placed ninth out of ten categories with
two-percent of the advertisers mentioning their own. Out of the two percent,
most mentioned they had a “Christian Faith,” but never used a specific name. They also did not specify what religion they wanted their potential partner to have.

**Lesbians**

Religion was not a characteristic asked for by homosexual females. This category was observed to be insignificant. Religion was ranked tenth out of ten categories with zero percent mentioning religion. There was no hint towards religion within any of the advertisements.

**Sexuality**

Besides homosexual males, there has been little prior research on whether or not the advertiser uses this term to describe themselves within their personal advertisement.

**Heterosexual Males**

**Characteristics desired.** Sexuality was not a quality often asked for by heterosexual male advertisers. This study found that the use of sexual terms, such as sexy, was not an important feature. Only two percent of the heterosexual males mentioned that they were looking for a “sexy” individual. Most often the men looking for a “sexy” female mentioned that they wanted a woman who worked out. This did not fit with previous studies because it was observed through those studies that heterosexual men use sexual terms. It was not seen in this study.
Characteristics listed. Sexuality was a term not often used (6%) by heterosexual males in advertisements to describe themselves. Those that did specifically state the word "sexy" also mentioned they worked out.

Heterosexual Females

Characteristics desired. Heterosexual female advertisers did not mention sexual terms among the characteristics they desired in a potential mate. This finding is consistent with past research that stated nurturing traits were asked for more often than sexual traits.

Characteristics listed. Sexuality was a term used from time to time (9%) in heterosexual female self-descriptions. Those that did mention it also mentioned that they "worked out."

Homosexual Males

Characteristics desired. Sexuality and sexual language has often been studied in homosexual personal advertisements. However, this study found that sexual language was not an important characteristic for homosexual males. This isn't consistent with previous studies which have overwhelmingly stated that sexuality played a large part in homosexual male advertisements.

Characteristics listed. Homosexual male advertisers rarely (2%) used sexual terms in their personal advertisements. Those that did specifically stated the word "sexy." Sexuality was not mentioned with a combination of other phrases, liking "working out," as seen with other groups. This contradicts previous studies that said sexuality was a very important aspect of homosexual male personal advertisements.
Lesbians

Characteristics desired. Sexuality of a potential partner is not a feature commonly (4%) sought by lesbian advertisers. Those that requested a sexual feature mentioned specifically the word “sexy.” There is no previous research done on homosexual females and the use of sexuality.

Characteristics listed. Sexuality of homosexual female advertiser was used more (17%) describing themselves then it was in describing their perspective partner. Those that did stated specifically the word “sexy,” and like homosexual males, did not connect it with other phrases.

Smoking

Smoking was a category not mentioned often in three out of the four groups, however, lesbians did mention smoking as one of their top categories.

Heterosexual Males

Characteristics desired. Smoking was observed to be an important category (41%) for heterosexual male advertisers. Only one-percent asked for a smoker and in that one percent all were smokers themselves. This is consistent with past studies that stated non-smoking was a rising feature asked for by heterosexual males advertisers.

Characteristics listed. A heterosexual male advertiser within their advertisement occasionally stated smoking. Thirty-three percent mentioned that they were non-smokers. Those that did were looking for a non-smoker as well.
This fits with previous studies that observed non-smoking was increasingly asked for heterosexual males.

**Heterosexual Females**

*Characteristics desired.* Non-smoking was a quality heterosexual females do not commonly (17%) look for when they are seeking for a potential partner. Two percent of the advertisers asked for a smoker, and all of them were smokers as well. This is not consistent with previous research because it was seen through those studies that non-smoking was a feature that was being asked for more often.

*Characteristics listed.* Heterosexual female advertisers did not mention their own smoking status often (14%) in their personal advertisements. Most asked for a non-smoker, and they themselves were non-smokers. The two percent that wanted a smoker were smokers as well. This did not fit with previous studies because those stated smoking was a more important feature.

**Homosexual Males**

*Characteristics desired.* Non-smoking was a quality not asked for often (9%) by homosexual male advertisers. Smoking was ranked eighth out of ten categories with seven percent looking for a non-smoker. There was only one advertisement that mentioned a smoker, and was a smoker as well. There are no studies at this time that have looked the importance on non-smoking with homosexual advertisers.

*Characteristics listed.* Homosexual male advertisers did not mention their own smoking habits often. Smoking was the eighth category out of ten with only
seven percent mentioning if they smoke or not. Those that did wanted their potential partner to have the same habits as them.

Lesbians

**Characteristics desired.** Unlike all of the other sub-groups non-smoking is a feature that was commonly mentioned by lesbian advertisers. Smoking was the second highest category out of ten with forty percent of lesbians mentioning that they wanted a non-smoker. There was two percent that mentioned they wanted a smoker, and like the other sub-groups, these individuals were smokers as well. It was mentioned specifically at the beginning of the advertisement that they wanted someone who was not a smoker, and it rarely was placed at the end. This could show its importance to the advertiser. With little prior research done on lesbian personal advertisements there are no studies to compare these results with.

**Characteristics listed.** Homosexual female advertisers occasionally (33%) mentioned their smoking habits in their personal advertisements. Those that did were generally looking for someone who had similar habits as they did.

**Summary**

This current research found similarities and differences with past research. Throughout both heterosexual and homosexual male advertisements there were also commonalities between the groups.

This study found that the characteristics males and female look for in a potential partner have changed in certain ways. It was seen that heterosexual
males are narrowing the age gap between themselves and their potential partner. Also ethnic and racial classification, as well as smoking, is becoming a more an important feature to the advertiser. Heterosexual females also have new categories incorporated into finding their potential mate. Ethnic and racial classification, hobbies and marital status all came before financial security, which through previous studies was seen to be the most important aspect to a heterosexual female advertiser.

The similarities observed crossed many categories. Physical appearance was a dominant characteristic for all four groups, especially homosexual and heterosexual males and females. This has been seen in previous studies. Another feature was age, which heterosexual males and females, as well as, homosexual males most frequently requested. It was third most commonly asked for trait by lesbians, however, only a low percentage asked for it. Smoking, religion, and sexuality were characteristics hardly asked for by heterosexual and homosexual males and females. Sexuality was seen in previous research and was observed to be a commonly requested feature by homosexual males, however, it was rarely observed in this study. Lastly all four groups mentioned hobbies and marital status within their advertisements. Lesbian advertisers were the only ones that had low percentages for each group. This was a pattern for most of the lesbian categories. The highest percentage was only in the fifties.

Homosexual males had the most overwhelming surprises. Past research indicated that homosexual male advertisers were only interested in short-term
relationships with a vast emphasis towards physical appearance. Homosexual male advertisers were also supposed to use graphic language. While physical appearance was still the number one asked for trait, sexual terms were rarely used and there were no graphic terms. Out of all of the homosexual male personal advertisements none mentioned the word penis. This could be because the papers used in this study were mainstream newspapers, and each advertisement is screened for acceptable content. Prior studies have only used local papers that allow more graphic content to be used.

Another major difference occurred in the financial status category. In prior studies it was observed that heterosexual males were more likely to mention their own financial status and heterosexual females were more likely ask for a financially secure male. This still occurred, however, it was not as common as was expected. More females, especially professionals, looked for men in their own age range. Earlier studies found that females seeking older men correlated with them looking for a financial secure male.

Lastly, this study found that hobbies and marital status are important features that were mentioned by all four groups. Heterosexual males and females, as well as, homosexual males mentioned specifically what they enjoyed doing and what they wanted their potential partner to enjoy. These three groups were also likely to mention their marital status and looked for an individual similar to them.

With little research on homosexual females it was hard to distinguish what traits the advertiser would use. Lesbians, like all of the other sub-groups, placed
the most emphasis on physical appearance. However, unlike the other groups, lesbians placed an emphasis on a non-smoker. Looking for a non-smoker was the second highest category used by a homosexual advertiser. Lesbians did not place any emphasis on religion.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This study has contributed to the field of knowledge on newspaper personal advertisements. Through the advertisements observed it was seen that hobbies and marital status are commonly requested variables by advertisers. These variables have never been looked at before and because of this study it can be seen that there are variables out there that still need to be studied.

Another contribution this study made was that it looked at similarities and differences between heterosexual and homosexual males and females. By looking at all four groups the commonalties between the groups and differences could be easily examined.

Limitations

This study did encounter some limitations. The first limitation was the small sample size. There were only three hundred and fifty three personal advertisements examined, and out of those only sixty were homosexual females. The second limitation to this study was that three out of the ten papers were not randomly selected. This may or may not have affected the findings.

Future Research

For future research, there are a few modifications that need to be made. First, the sample size needs to be increased. With a larger sample size, more personal advertisements can be observed to get an even more accurate account of patterns occurring. The second is that transsexuals should also be looked into further. It was observed in several newspapers that transsexuals and
transvestites also had personal advertisements. This could be another opportunity for future research. By looking into transsexual behavior more patterns may emerge and this could give insight as to why homosexual males and females pick certain traits. Lastly, the depth of variables should be examined more. For example, instead of looking at whether or not hobbies are mentioned, it should be observed what type of hobbies each group talks about with in their advertisement. By looking more into the variables a better understanding of why certain characteristics are used more often may come about.
Work Cited


Comparison of Characteristics Desired

Variables

Age, Ethnic and Race, Financial Security, Hobbies, Marital Status, Personality, Physical Appearance, Religion, Sexuality, Smoking

Percentages

Series 1, Series 2, Series 3, Series 4
Characteristics Listed

Variables

- Marital Status
- Age
- Physical Appearance
- Ethnic and Race
- Hobbies
- Smoking
- Financial Security
- Personality
- Religion
- Sexuality

Percentages

Variables
Characteristics Listed by Females

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Characteristics Listed by Homosexual Males

- Physical Appearance
- Age
- Ethnic and Race
- Financial Security
- Personality
- Marital Status
- Hobbies
- Smoking
- Religion
- Sexuality

Variables

Percentages
Characteristics Listed by Lesbians
Characteristics Desired

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The graph shows the desired percentages for various variables, with Physical Appearance being the most desired at 90%.
Characteristics Desired by Women

![Bar chart showing desired characteristics by women]

- Physical Appearance
- Personality
- Hobbies
- Age
- Ethnic and Race
- Marital Status
- Financial Security
- Smoking
- Religion
- Sexuality

Variables

Percentages
Characteristics Desired by Homosexual Males

![Bar chart showing percentages for various characteristics desired by homosexual males. The chart includes categories such as Physical Appearance, Age, Personality, Ethnicity and Race, Hobbies, Marital Status, Financial Security, Smoking, Religion, and Sexuality. The chart indicates that Physical Appearance is the most desired characteristic.](chart.png)
Characteristics Desired by Lesbians

Variables

Percentages

Physical Appearance
Smoking
Age
Hobbies
Personality
Marital Status
Ethnic and Race
Financial Security
Sexuality
Religion