

THE INCIDENCE OF FEMALE APOLOGETIC BEHAVIORS IN MODERN ROLLER
DERBY ATHLETES

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my love (Abby), my family (Kathy, Dave, Kaity, Sam, Mark, Jo, Scott, Bonnie, and Angela), and my friends (too innumerable to name) who have given me endless support over these last few years. Thank you for never doubting my abilities, especially at those times when I was the one doubting; thank you for encouraging me, for bearing with my hectic schedule without complaint, and for reminding me that there is still life outside of grad school. Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the sport of roller derby. Thank you for providing me with a community, a passion, endless challenges, an outlet, and so much laughter and happiness over the years, as well as for inspiring the subject of this thesis. I hope we have many years together yet to come.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The Women’s Flat Track Derby Association WFTDA
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, and more.....LGBTQ+
Institutional Review Board IRB
Analysis of Variance..... ANOVA
Question 1 (2, 3, etc.).....Q1 (Q2, Q3, etc.)

ABSTRACT

THE INCIDENCE OF FEMALE APOLOGETIC BEHAVIORS IN MODERN ROLLER DERBY ATHLETES

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George Mason University, 2017

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This thesis explores the presence of apologetic behavior, and its motivations, within the population of adult, women's roller derby athletes in the United States. Study of apologetic behavior can facilitate the creation of strategies to counter the stigmas and stereotypes responsible for it. This thesis examined the relationships between apologetic behaviors and demographic characteristics, as well as the stereotypes recognized by roller derby athletes. A modified, online version of the mixed methods Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire, originally created by Davis-Delano, Pollack, and Vose in 2009, was distributed to roller derby leagues in the U.S.A. Responses revealed that the same stereotypes and themes present in the sample of the original study were still expressed by the responding roller derby skaters. Contrary to the hypothesis of the author, the roller derby athletes engaged in more apologetic behavior than the pilot study. Similarities and differences between samples were evaluated and several significant relationships were analyzed. This study added to the data available about apologetic behavior within the

field of women's sports. Hopefully, this thesis can serve as a catalyst for self-evaluation and behavior changes by roller derby athletes while also encouraging further research into the sport of roller derby, gender theories, and apologetic behavior.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This study was created to investigate the prevalence of female apologetic behaviors as a response to female athlete stereotypes among adult, women's flat track roller derby athletes in the United States of America. Aside from roller derby athletes being an under-researched population, this study's focus also offers a different perspective within the realm of women's athletics, with much of previous research focused on collegiate and high school student-athletes. The pilot study upon which this is based sought to measure the presence of female apologetic behavior across many individuals of different backgrounds, sports, and competition levels. The authors (Davis-Delano, Pollack, & Vose, 2009) originally created the Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire as a method of generating greater amounts of data by sacrificing some of the depth offered by the popular personal interview approach. The latter method requires a smaller sample size due to the heavy workload of in-depth interviews whereas the Questionnaire can be used with a much larger sample size. This study endeavors to add to that database of information on female athletes' perceptions, opinions, and actions. Additionally, this study hopes to improve on the original instrument through the addition of other common apologetic behaviors and an extensive demographics section.

Rationale for the Study

Women in sport has been a passionately researched topic, particularly since the passage of Title IX created more opportunities for women to participate as athletes. As Hall described in her 1988 article, Americans are subjected to a skewed system when it comes to masculinity and femininity. This system promotes, and also maintains, the conflict between gender and culture: “[t]he conflict between gender and culture exists only in the realm of femininity because masculinity is culture” (Hall, 1988, p. 333). Sport, as an idealized form of masculinity, can be seen as an analogy of our culture; a statement that is reinforced by the pressures felt by women who have endeavored to succeed as athletes.

Apologetic behavior has been previously determined to result from these pressures through pervasive stereotypes about female athletes and harmful stigmas associated with women’s participation in sport. Studying apologetic behavior, including its causes, prevalence, and intensity can facilitate the creation of appropriate ways to counter these stigmas and stereotypes. Amassing more information by utilizing the instrument created by Davis-Delano, Pollack, and Vose in 2009 allows for evaluation of patterns on a large scale, which can provide insight into trends associated with demographic characteristics.

Further investigation into the topic of modern women’s roller derby, a sport that is uncommonly situated in the sports field as women-dominated, self-organized, and not-for-profit, can offer an unusual domain in which to study the prevalence of apologetic behaviors: “Roller derby thus occupies an ambivalent position of gendered alterity in

relation to a broader cultural field of sport, where women's struggles for sporting legitimacy are well rehearsed in the literature" (Breeze, 2014, p. 3). In this environment where some obstacles for women's sporting legitimacy are diminished, this study sought to determine (1) whether less apologetic behavior by participants would be found, and (2) whether a relationship exists between athlete age and level of engagement in apologetic behaviors. The study offered an opportunity to (1) determine the preconceptions surrounding female athletes held by adult roller derby athletes in the U.S., (2) the incidence and prevalence of apologetic behavior within the target population, and to (3) record the demographics of this target populations for further research.

Statement of the Problem

Though previous research has been completed on the impact of negative stereotypes and stigmas on female athletes, most the research on apologetic behavior has been in the form of in-depth interview with individuals or small groups which limits the transferability of the information from a small population of individuals to the group at large. Through the interviewing process, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of individuals' gender interpretations, but the effort involved in the research limits the sample size. By sacrificing this for the broader-but-shallower scope of Davis-Delano et al.'s (2009) Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire, the increased subject population allows for the evaluation of possible trends to answer comparative questions. For example, "do the age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, disability status, body size, sexual orientation, and gender identity of the athletes affect the amount and type of apologetic behavior?" and "does the type or level of sport affect the amount and type of

apologetic behaviors?” (Davis-Delano et al. 2009, p. 136). The current study intends to provide some insight into those questions. Minimal demographic information was collected in Davis-Delano et al.’s (2009) original questionnaire; by adding a larger demographic section, the current study created an opportunity to examine trends between the prevalence of apologetic behaviors with different population characteristics. The current study also offers insight into an under-investigated population: women’s roller derby athletes in America.

Background for the Study

We are at once the creators and the captives of our perspectives. The perspective for each individual is unique to their experiences and socialization, but it is also at the mercy of those experiences. As we continue to learn and grow, it is no small task to try to change these perspectives. In his 1969 essay, Herbert Blumer condensed the nature of perspective into three core principles of symbolic interactionism: “(1) ...people act toward things, including each other, on the basis of the meaning they have for them; (2) ...these meanings are derived through social interaction with others; and (3) ...these meanings are managed and transformed through an interpretive process that people use to make sense of and handle the objects that constitute their social worlds” (as cited in Snow, 2001, p. 367).

We use symbolic interactionism to categorize all aspects of our world; it allows us to navigate, store, and later retrieve the massive amounts of information we encounter every day. We stereotype and profile people as we encounter them and this allows us to quickly and subconsciously determine how to interact with them. We categorize

individuals we interact with each day to gain as much information as possible, in as little time as possible. One of the first attributes that we are conditioned to recognize in an initial encounter is gender; this conditioning causes us to immediately file each person into a 'male' or 'female' category, as dictated by our society. Symbolic interactionism explains the basis of this assignment of sex to everyone with whom we come into contact. We recognize physical traits in appearances that we have come to associate with each of the sexes. Through a process known as sex-typing, there are also several non-physical, dichotomous attributes that we ascribe to the people based on this assignment of their sex. It is this way that "[American] society thus transmutes male and female into masculine and feminine" (Bem, 1981, p. 354). However, while the biological sexes "male and female" are determined through chromosome pairings, 'masculine' and 'feminine' are mutable constructs of western society, despite how often we make those constructs out to be immutable.

"[T]here appears to be no other dichotomy in human experience with as many entities assimilated to it as the distinction between male and female" (Bem, 1981, p.354). Our perceptions are guided by an overarching network of associations that create our schemas, the frameworks through which we perceive the world. Bem (1981) maintains that every individual we encounter, all incoming stimuli- be it actors in a television program, a new acquaintance, or athletes in a sports game- are run through our existing schemas like change through a coin sorting machine: collected, weighed, divided, and sorted. Information is easily and quickly filtered through our schemas; which are simultaneously fulfilling their purpose and, at the same time, continually being reinforced

by this process. We are subject to our individually created schemas and strongly influenced by our familial, environmental (i.e., school, hobbies, etc.), and societal schemas. From childhood, we learn how to appropriately build our schemas through conscious and subconscious reinforcement from society. In terms of the gender schema, we have a very distinct understanding of what is masculine and what is feminine. These are often perceived as mutually exclusive descriptors that align with biological sex. Kagan (1964) and Kohlberg (1966) describe the gender schema as a “prescriptive standard or guide” (cited in Bem, 1981, p.355). Further, “the child ... learn[s] to invoke this heterogeneous network of sex-related associations in order to evaluate and assimilate new information” (Bem, 1981, p.355). Through this guide, we classify both the people around us and ourselves. As we recognize our own biological sex as children, we are then often restricted in our selection from the almost endless dimensions of personality to only those that are perceived as acceptable to our individual sex. From the time that we are children, we will continually evaluate our own adequacy in fulfilling the gender schema based on our own prescription of it.

We are trapped within this cyclical paradox: the gender schema helps us to order our everyday world and, in the same manner, restricts the scope of our own perception through which we interpret the world. As described by Paechter (2006), our society has taken the words ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ and evolved them to have a strict meaning: “in practice masculinity becomes ‘what men and boys do’ and femininity [becomes] the Other of that” (p. 254). We are restricted by the very definitions that we have given to the words; the relation, the comparison between our self and others, is then

what we use to define ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity.’ The concept and burden of masculinity is certainly a pressure felt by all men and boys with its own troubled course; however, this study will focus on femininity and its pressures on women and girls. Particularly because “[f]emininities are not constructed in the ways masculinities are; they do not confer cultural power, nor are they able to guarantee patriarchy. They are, instead, constructed as a variety of negations of the masculine” (Paechter, 2006, p. 256). Paechter (2006) touches on several vital details about the conundrum of femininity. In theory, femininity is supposed to be the opposite of masculinity- but only in its relation to masculinity; specifically, it is the absence of masculinity. Therefore, since masculinity is where the power resides in America’s patriarchal society, hegemonic masculinity, or hypermasculinity, can be considered the prime position of power, whereas, conversely, hyperfemininity is the position utterly lacking power. In this dualistic relationship created by our society, femininity-- the subordinate term-- is negated by masculinity, rather than the two terms forming a balanced measure.

It is easy to consider this power framework to be purely hypothetical, but American society, particularly in the world of athletics, is rife with evidence of its impact. The world of athletics and competitive sport has long been male dominated. It was only with the passage of the United States Education Amendments of 1972, specifically Title IX, that there was much, if any, room for girls and women in competitive sport in our society. Title IX read: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal

financial assistance.” The amendment applied to collegiate athletics, requiring equitable participation opportunities and provisions (including equipment, facilities, travel, coaching, etc.) for male and female student-athletes and funding and scholarships that are proportional to participation. However, those new opportunities afforded through Title IX came at a cost: the masculinization of female athletes as an effect of their participation in sports. Griffin (1995) theorized that sport serves five functions: “a) defining and reinforcing traditional conceptions of masculinity, b) providing a context for acceptable and safe male bonding and intimacy, c) establishing status among other males, d) reinforcing male privilege and perceptions of female inferiority and e) reifying heterosexuality” (as cited in Légère, 2013, p. 3). We continue with our focus on (d), the fourth function, that of the derogation of the female and the commending of the male through the assignment of masculine and feminine traits.

Competitive sports typically contain elements of danger or physicality, and require strength, speed, resilience, strategy, assertion, and aggression by their participants. According to our society, these traits are overwhelmingly considered masculine in nature, ergo, sport, as a whole, is considered the idealized form of masculinity. Accordingly, women in sport are in a uniquely difficult position: to be successful in competitive sports, they, as women and therefore (according to society) inherently feminine individuals, must adopt masculine traits. However, this adoption and presentation of masculinity not only negates their femininity, it also presents as a challenge to the power system that is relayed through the patriarchy; a power that is typically reserved for males. Though often subconscious, this is viewed as a threat to

men, their power, and their masculine behavior. The Female Apologetic is a result of this paradox.

As Felshin (1974, p. 36) observes, “To the extent that masculinity represents a mode of assertion and aggression, and femininity, passivity and social desirability, women and sport can exist only in uneasy conceptual juxtaposition.... Because women cannot be excluded from sport and have chosen not to reject sport, apologetics develop to account for their sport involvement in the face of its social unacceptability.”

In her description of the Female Apologetic, Felshin (1974) holds that, due to the juxtaposition of an “inherently feminine” woman participating in the “inherently masculine” competitive sport, the female athlete adopts apologetic behavior to validate her womanhood and femininity. The Female Apologetic counters the necessity of exhibiting masculine (unfeminine) traits in the field of competition by attempting to look feminine (with makeup, accessories, etc.), downplaying her athletic feats, avoiding and apologizing for aggression and physical force, and/or promoting desires to achieve appropriately feminine goals such as marrying and raising a family-- often at the sacrifice of achievements on the athletic field. While progress has been made in the acceptance of female participation in sports since 1974, when Felshin published her essay, many of these apologetic behaviors have been found to be present in today’s female athletes. However, within some sports and among certain populations, there may be a significantly diminished prevalence of these apologetic behaviors, due in part to the environment and in part to the members of the population. One such population, where it was anticipated

that diminished female apologetic behaviors may be seen, is in the modern roller derby community.

Roller derby has evolved through many forms since the 1930s, including endurance races and scripted theatrics. It was revived in its modern incarnation in the first years of the 21st century in Austin, Texas. This latest revival created a regulated, full-contact women's sport. The sport spread rapidly after the flat track variation eased track set up and expanded available location options. (WFTDA, 2009) Hundreds of leagues were founded in the next decade, run as businesses by the athletes who played on the teams. By 2006, international games were being played; in 2014 thirty countries were represented in the Blood and Thunder World Cup. Over 400 leagues around the world are supervised by the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA), the largest coalition of roller derby leagues worldwide. There are estimated to be over 1,750 leagues in more than 50 countries, playing under a collection of modified rulesets and different regulating bodies (Lampert, 2015). At the heart of the sport's modern life is a do-it-yourself ethos. "By the skaters, for the skaters" is the governing philosophy of the WFTDA. Athletes are engaged in the business of running their teams and leagues from top to bottom.

Modern women's roller derby supplies an unusual philosophy in juxtaposition to the typically male-dominated sports world. Under the regulation of the WFTDA, skaters participating in top level competition must be 'female-identifying' with the international regulations currently evolving as a broader gender spectrum is evaluated and accepted into the sport. Since its modern inception, roller derby has been significantly more

accepting of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, and other (LGBTQ+) participants than most sports by incorporating specific legislation into its rules to allow for a broader gender spectrum for its participating athletes. Modern roller derby also represents the antithesis of the common conception of sport and gender. Roller derby is known and understood to be a *women's* sport. It flips the gendered modifier found in most sports, such as Soccer and *Women's* Soccer or Basketball and *Women's* Basketball, to produce Roller Derby and *Men's* Roller Derby. Yet, per the previously mentioned scholars' criteria, it is a decidedly masculine sport with the basis of game play requiring aggression, physicality, speed, and assertion from its players. It is a sport of women who are using their bodies defiantly by competing in a full contact, team sport. While American society tells women to be small, supple, and soft, skaters are taking up space, holding their ground, and hitting and blocking unapologetically. Different body types are celebrated and employed to achieve success. In this sport that is so female-focused, it was anticipated that the prevalence of female apologetic behaviors would be much lower than what was found among female collegiate athletes in the original study by Davis-Delano, Pollack, and Vose in 2009. Important to note, was the difference in age ranges of participants of this study compared to the pilot study. Where the pilot study was a sample of collegiate athletes, the majority of which were presumably 18-25 years old, adult women's roller derby athletes must simply be over 18 years of age with some skaters playing in their 50s and beyond. It was also anticipated that this older range of participants that a relationship would be found between age and apologetic behavior engagement.

Overview of the Study

In 2009, Davis-Delano et al. created a questionnaire to study apologetic behavior in female athletes. The hope was that this questionnaire would allow for systematic comparison of female athletes across all ages, sports, locations, and time periods. It allowed for a broader study of female apologetic behavior, as opposed to the preceding research which relied on small group interviews. They distributed their questionnaire in a pilot study to several collegiate women's teams and reviewed the results. By including qualitative questions and 5-point Likert scale options, the survey allows for collection of qualitative and quantitative data as well as comparison. This questionnaire was distributed to roller derby leagues and individual skaters across the United States of America to evaluate the presence of female apologetic behaviors among American women's roller derby athletes. Modifications were made to the pilot study survey as suggested by the authors in their conclusion (Davis-Delano et al., 2009). A limitation identified after the original study's completion was the lack of demographic information collected from participants, which inhibited the ability to distinguish any trends during data analysis. As suggested, a significant demographic section was included to allow for the assessment of any correlating trends within the population. The final questionnaire that was used in this study will be explained further in the Research Design and Instrumentation section. Throughout the literature review, conventional gender roles and stigmas will be examined through the theories of Bem (1981), Felshin (1974), Griffin (1992), and Sartore and Cunningham (2009).

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

We know that women have been involved in sport, albeit in a severely limited fashion, as long as there has been sport to play. Homer wrote of women playing ball in his epic *The Odyssey* and Roman mosaics depict women participating in foot races and games. Even so, the world of athletics and competitive sport has been, and continues to be, male dominated. Only as more women became involved in physical activities did an element of competition begin to emerge and expand into the competitive field known today.

Gender Expectations

Since Title IX (theoretically) evened the playing field in terms of funding and associated programs, equipment, and facilities for women's sports compared to men's sports, there has been an explosion of opportunities for, and participation of, girls and women in sport. However, what was true in the eighties still holds today: gender expectations still perpetuate and reinforce prevalent sexist and heterosexist stereotypes (Hall, 1988). For every forward progression into the sports world that has been made by women, there has been a simultaneous backlash by way of the belief that it will result in the masculinization of the female participants. Beliefs like these, and the subsequent

response by the majority of the sports world, continue to regulate women to the role of the subordinate sex and maintain the patriarchal nature of our society.

Gender Theories

As is evident, the regulation of women's participation in sport has always been cemented in our society's pervasive opinions on the dichotomy of femininity and masculinity. In her 1981 study, Bem asserts that our gender schemas serve as a basic organizing principle of both our self-concept and our perception of others. These schemas are a network of associations by which we evaluate incoming information and assimilate it to fit into our current understanding of our world and society. Our schemas become the standard of our perception (Kagan, 1964; Kohlberg, 1966, as cited in Bem, 1981). Balanced precariously on the axis of these schemas is our self-esteem. We are not only the perpetuators of our gender schemas; we are also the subjects as we measure our own adequacy to the requirements self-imposed by them. Bem argues that this assimilation of self into our own gender schemas is based on our society's "ubiquitous insistence on the functional importance of the gender dichotomy ...it insist[s] that an individual's sex makes a difference in virtually every domain of human experience" (Bem, 1981, p. 362). Integral to the process of creating, evolving, utilizing, and reinforcing our gender schemas is sex-typing, or the process by which we (as influenced by our family, society, and environment) take "male" and "female" and, from them, create "feminine" and "masculine." From biological sex, American society has constructed concepts of what we perceive to be appropriate and desirable. Society considers these concepts to be extensively relevant in almost every aspect of life (Bem, 1981).

While the terms “masculinities” and “femininities” have been defined at a base level as the ways of “doing boy” and “doing girl,” respectively; in our society, we have a difficult time distinguishing these terms from “masculinity” and “femininity” (Paechter, 2006). Add in that these terms also differ from the terms “masculine” and “feminine” and the fact that all of the definitions of these terms are constantly shifting depending on our current state of society. What we are left with is a confusing and often harmful terminological battleground that has significant effects on how we interpret, interact, and respond to those around us and ourselves. The issue here is that we cannot define one word of each pair without the other; the definitions come from their relationship to each other. And yet, this relationship is in a constant flux as we expand definitions, instill regulations, and continue to redefine it all (Paechter, 2006). However, there is a key limitation to these definitions and relationships: we consistently perceive the paired terms to be mutually exclusive. To be feminine is to practice femininity and to perform femininities. The question, then, is what happens when you are feminine but perform a masculinity? The dichotomous nature of our definitions, and our adherence to a gender binary that distinctly correlates with our definitions of these terms, results in rigid expectations about sex appropriate actions. If these expectations are not met, it results in concern, aggression, and discrimination. Our language selections not only restrict us but also propagate a continuation of the hegemonic masculinity (Paechter, 2006).

Due to the patriarchal system of our society, we also see a distinct difference in the power associated with the sexes, and subsequently with masculinity and femininity. Power lies in the hegemonic masculine-dominant masculinity or the intersection of power

and gender-- with femininity being the absence of masculinity and, thus, the absence of power. In our society, disempowerment comes hand in hand with femininity. As previously stated, masculinity and femininity are also seen as mutually exclusive and only available to the appropriate sex. Thus, when females exhibit masculine traits or when males exhibit feminine traits, a power shift temporarily occurs: males who step away from hegemonic masculinity by performing femininities weaken their power, while females performing masculinities claim power through the disruption of stereotypes. (Paechter, 2006) These are not simple choices to adjust the power of our society. As Redman recognized in 1996, “there is no self-evident reason why boys and men should want to give up any of the power that their social position affords” (cited in Paechter, 2006, p.256). Alternatively, women may resist stereotypes and seek to assume masculine traits or participate in masculine activities such as sport. However, when women either cannot or will not be excluded from masculine activities, they develop methods of managing their involvement to counter the social unacceptability and subsequent discrimination that may result from their performance of masculinities (Felshin, 1974).

The Female Athlete Paradox

As Hall proclaims in her 1988 essay *The Discourse of Gender and Sport*, it is a one-sided conflict between gender and culture. Masculinity is American culture- success, individuality, self-promotion- so it is only femininity that is dissonant. She also infers that “femininity is a thinly disguised code word for heterosexuality” (p. 333). Other scholars also support this theory (Adams et. al, 2005; Broad, 2001; Sartore & Cunningham, 2009). Sexuality and gender are vastly interrelated in our society. So, it is

the lesbian stigma under hegemonic masculinity and femininity that serves as another layer of regulatory control over female-identified individuals and their actions.

Heterosexism reinforces traditional masculine and feminine roles. “Gender expectations are constantly perpetuated and reinforced and often are not challenged” (Krane, 2001, p. 121). Female athletes walk a fine line: they must perform masculinities to achieve success in their sport, but they must also uphold their femininity to fulfill their role as a woman in our society. Engaging in athletics and sport offers an opportunity for empowerment of female athletes, yet maintaining a society-certified level of femininity is disempowering; female athletes must “perform femininity to protect themselves from prejudice and discrimination” (Krane, 2001, p. 120). Krane (2001) discusses this “cycle of discord” (p. 122), where women cannot win in traditional sport settings due to the paradoxical situation created by their participation in sport. When an appropriate level of femininity is achieved by female athletes, the result is then sexualization of the individual, trivialization of their skills and achievements, and/or general devaluing of the athlete. However, if a female athlete does not submit to societal pressures and does not produce an acceptably feminine presentation, she faces sexist and heterosexist discrimination and stigmatization.

The Lesbian Stigma

Stigmatization is the devaluation of specific social groups due to the attributes or characteristics that they possess and the resulting discrimination, stereotyping, and status loss that occur as allowed by the power system in place. It reinforces the power structure by fortifying the acceptable “in” groups and the unacceptable “out” groups (Sartore &

Cunningham, 2009). Even with the improvement of attitudes about homosexuality in recent years, “the stigma associated with being, or perceived as being, gay or lesbian is one of the most powerful and pervasive stigmas in society” (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009, p. 289). While the consequences of the lesbian stigma on lesbian athletes is commonly studied, Sartore and Cunningham (2009) examined the effects of the stigma on all heterosexual and non-heterosexual female athletes. They created a model in their essay to identify the components that form the lesbian stigma and the consequences that may arise from it. Their theory built its foundations on the “in” and “out” group membership of males and females, respectively, due to hegemonic masculinity. It then expanded on the ways in which the lesbian stigma is applied and women’s conscious and subconscious responses to it. Finally, the relation of power and hegemonic femininity is explored. Due to the dualist thinking of sexuality and gender, there are differences in power and status between heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals. Most importantly these status and power differences result from actual sexual orientation but also from perceived sexual orientation (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009).

Griffin (1992) suggests that the social constraints of heteronormativity, male superiority, and female subordination are reinforced by sport: “women who defy the accepted feminine role or reject a heterosexual identity threaten to upset the imbalance of power enjoyed by white heterosexual men in a patriarchal society” (p. 252). Due to the extremely negative stigma of the mannish, depraved, psychologically disturbed lesbian created by male sexologists in the early twentieth century, “crying lesbian” is a political weapon. Women must accommodate and assimilate to the pressures of the

heteronormative society as payment for the scant space leased from men in the hegemonically masculine sports world. The prevalent sexism and heterosexism makes it seem that there is no chance that change is possible. There is the fear that all the progress women have made in sport is only “one lesbian scandal away from being wiped out” (Griffin, 1992, p.253).

Apologetic Behavior

As a response to the pressures and the threat of the lesbian stigma, women may compensate by trying to meet the prescribed heterosexual standards of beauty. The message that women in sports receive is that “in their natural state [they] are not acceptable or attractive and therefore must be fixed and ‘femmed up’ to compensate for their athleticism” (Griffin, 1992, p. 254) Felshin (1974) was the first scholar to describe how female athletes engage in apologetic behavior. Her hypothesis presumed that there were three options for female athletes to respond to the hostility they faced in their paradoxical position as women – therefore feminine – in the decidedly masculine sports world, one of which was enacting apologetic behaviors. Apologetic female athletes emphasize femininity by downplaying athleticism and aggression; highlighting feminine appearance; avoiding association with lesbians and/or masculinity; publicly displaying or flaunting heterosexuality, boyfriends, and/or being seen with men; avoiding muscular development; and displaying “heterosexiness” through apparel choices and actions (Adams et al., 2005; Clasen, 2001; Davis-Delano et al., 2009; Felshin, 1974; Griffin, 1992; Kaskan and Ho, 2014; Krane, 2001; Sartore & Cunningham, 2009). Felshin (1974) did not see this apologetic response as a solution to the problem, but rather an avoidance

tactic to escape confrontation of the heterosexist, sexist, and homophobic culture of sports.

Griffin (1992) acknowledges the presence of apologetics but also recognizes that maintaining the static quo will not allow for forward progress by women in sport. Her argument, as previously mentioned, centers around the lesbian stigma as it relates to control exercised by the hegemonic masculinity over women in sport. Broad (2001) offers the example of the un-apologetic as a counter to Felshin's (1974) apologetic behaviors. Based on an ethnographic study of female rugby players, Broad (2001) discovered that their unapologetic response to patriarchal pressures generated destabilized heterosexism, transgressed gender, and confronted the lesbian stigma under the theory of queer resistance. The women's rugby players refused assimilation and instead became "male-identified and male-defined." These players challenged the traditional feminine standards through their continued participation in their sport (Broad, 2001). Krane, in 2001, also supports the bucking of patriarchal bindings; she suggests that women's psychological well-being depends upon forming new modes of perceiving their bodies, methods that are unrestrained by hegemonic femininity.

In 2009, Davis-Delano et al. created a mixed methods survey to record and compare the presence and prevalence of apologetic behaviors among female athletes by distributing the survey to three female collegiate sports teams. More than 70% of their participants engaged in some form of apologetic behavior due to the stereotypes surrounding female athletes. Their results also indicated that the type of sport may influence the prevalence of apologetic behaviors, as the softball players engaged in more

behaviors than soccer or basketball players. Davis-Delano et al. (2009) theorized that the since softball is a more masculinized sport, the players may have felt greater pressure to engage in apologetic behavior. Another possibility was that the softball players may less often feel that they fulfill the hegemonic, slim beauty ideal due to decreased aerobic capacity of the sport compared to the other teams, soccer and basketball. The researchers theorized that the softball team may have also had a higher instance on non-heterosexual/gender non-conforming participants, prompting increased apologetic behavior to counter or distance from those players or assumptions. Davis-Delano et al. (2009) hoped for continued evolution of the study to compare apologetic behavior across geographical locations, ages, socioeconomic classes, races, sexual orientations, and level of play.

Synthesis of Literature

As represented by the broad diversity of theories and studies reviewed, the fields of sport sociology, psychology, education, women's studies and feminism, and physical education all have an interest in the progression of women in sport. The literature supports that American society has strict views of gender roles and appropriate behaviors assigned to each sex. Our gender schemas and sex-typing not only influence our perception of others, they also directly influence our self-concepts and subsequent self-regulation. The rigidity of our gender binary creates a paradox when women enter the masculinized sports world. Since femininity is perceived as the absence of masculinity, it is impossible for a female athlete to perform in a masculine sport without sacrificing a piece of her femininity. Women are controlled by society's gender roles and stigmas;

female athletes contend with these restrictions by either transgressing their assigned gender responsibilities or assimilating and submitting to hegemonic femininity. Apologetic behaviors result from the latter and are used to validate femininity and womanhood. Generally, these behaviors will downplay masculine traits such as aggression or physical force; increase superficial expressions of femininity like makeup and hair ribbons or tight-fitting, sexy clothing; and can cause athletes to distance themselves from the lesbian stigma. It is understood by scholars that apologetic behavior is not a resolution to the challenges faced by women in our hegemonically masculine society. It is recognized that these behaviors in fact exacerbate the issue by colluding with patriarchal restrictions. However, apologetic behavior is still present within the realm of women in sport and therefore worthy of study. Increased review of the prevalence, intensity, and recognition of these behaviors may provide guidance in how to challenge and ultimately eliminate sexism and homophobia in women's sport.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Research Questions

1. What preconceptions about female athletes are recognized by adult, woman's roller derby athletes in the United States of America?
2. What is the prevalence of apologetic behavior in adult, woman's roller derby athletes in the United States of America?
3. Is there a relationship between specific demographic characteristics (age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, educational background, socioeconomic status, geographical location, or years of participation) and the (high or low) incidence of apologetic behavior in adult, woman's roller derby athletes in the United States of America?

Variables and Definitions

The study sought to determine the prevalence and intensity of apologetic behaviors in female roller derby athletes in the United States of America, as well as to reveal the preconceived notions that these athletes believe exist about female athletes. The results of the current study were compared to results from previous research of collegiate female athletes' responses to the Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire. Collected

demographic information was weighed against the results of the survey to determine whether any relationship existed between any of the demographic characteristics and the prevalence and/or intensity of apologetic behaviors. Interview questions were submitted to and approved by George Mason University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in accordance with ethical considerations for conducting research.

Hypotheses

Overall, the current study hopes to provide insight into a unique, under-investigated population of female athletes. Any trends between the demographic information collected and the incidence of apologetic behaviors were examined, but the relationship between the age of participants and their behavior was a focus. It was anticipated that there would be a negative relationship between age and the frequency and intensity of apologetic behavior. Pressures to conform to gender-based, heteronormative standards increase with puberty when the possibility of relationships begins. Adults can control the environment in which they live and work, and with whom they interact in a manner not always available to high school and college athletes. So, it was thought that there may be less pressure to 'put up a front' in the environment which the adult athlete chooses for themselves. Also, in some cases, high school and college may be time that is spent determining sexual orientation, understanding and establishing a sense of self and a degree of self-worth. It was also anticipated that a lower incidence and prevalence of apologetic behavior would be found among the roller derby sample compared to previous studies. This was expected due to the accepting nature that is lauded within the roller derby community.

Population and Sampling

There are over 1,500 adult, women's roller derby leagues worldwide. These leagues may vary in size from a single team of approximately 15 individuals to leagues with seven or more teams who count upwards of 250 individual skaters, officials, coaches, and volunteers involved in their ranks. It is estimated that tens of thousands of people are playing roller derby worldwide. The United States represents over 700 of those leagues, but it is difficult to put an exact number on the active skaters in the country. To put it into perspective: The Women's Flat Track Derby Association, the largest regulating body of modern roller derby (but still only one of five governing organizations that are based, primarily, in the United States), conducted a participation census survey in 2015. Though the results are certainly biased due to sampling procedures and the organization's scope, the United States had 15,924 responses from "current participants." The country with the next largest response group was the United Kingdom with 2,478 responses.

The target population for this study was any adult, women's roller derby skater, living and playing in the United States of America. For the purposes of this study, "adult" referred to someone 18 years of age or older and "women" followed the accepted gender policy of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA): "An individual who identifies as a [woman,] trans woman, intersex woman, and/or gender expansive may skate with a WFTDA charter team if women's flat track roller derby is the version and composition of roller derby with which they most closely identify" (WFTDA Statement About Gender, 2015). Demographic factors recorded in this study include age, race,

sexual orientation, gender identity, educational background, socioeconomic status, geographical location, years of participation in roller derby, and competitive level of the athlete's team/league.

To represent the population and to properly assess for trends among any demographic factor and apologetic behavior, a diverse sample needed to be achieved. Given the statistics reviewed earlier, it was safe to assume that there are at least 20,000 adult, women's roller derby skaters playing in America. It would be impossible to gain participation from every one of those skaters. As such, a more manageable sample population was selected using the Survey Systems Calculator. With a confidence level of 95%, a confidence interval at 5, an anticipated response rate of 25%, and an estimated population of 20,000, the target sample size was approximately 284. Since the goal of Davis-Delano et al.'s (2009) questionnaire was to analyze a wide variety of female athletes in different contexts to ascertain large trends in apologetic behavior, focusing further on the quantitative aspects of the survey and utilizing a large sample size was beneficial. As a nonprobability sample, convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods were utilized. The rise of the contemporary version of roller derby has coincided with the maturity of the internet; the readily available exchange of information has been integral to the sport's rapid expansion across the globe. Given the thriving online roller derby community, the internet was the key to the sampling for this study. The survey was distributed online, using convenience sampling. Any leagues that had a contact email address listed on their websites, linked from the WFTDA database, were sent an invitation. In total, 228 leagues were invited to participate. Participation and subsequent

circulation were also requested of skaters known to the researcher via snowball sampling. Contributors retained the right to refrain from answering any of the questions on the survey, both the qualitative components and the quantitative. Given the mixed methods design of the study, it was difficult to receive an acceptable number of fully completed responses and the response rate ultimately felt short of the target sample size. Also, sampling bias chances were increased due to the nonprobability sampling methods used.

Research Design and Instrumentation

The design selected for this study was a non-experimental, mixed methods design. No group was manipulated or controlled; the instrument for this study was a questionnaire delivered in the format of an online-accessible survey through Google Forms. The convenience sampling technique and supplemental snowball technique for producing an appropriately sized sample was selected given breadth of the population across the country, the format of the questionnaire as an online survey, as well as the thriving, interactive online roller derby community. The intention was to conduct the study in a thorough but inexpensive manner to gain many responses for quantitative analysis; as was the purpose provided by the creators of the pilot study. Utilizing a mixed methods design allowed the researcher to acquire comparative data through the quantitative section while the qualitative sections facilitate deeper understandings participants' quantitative responses. The quantitative section identified the incidence and intensity of apologetic behaviors in the population of adult, women's roller derby athletes in the United States. The qualitative sections provided explanations of preconceptions

that may have influenced the participants and opportunities to explain why each athlete does or does not engage in apologetic behavior.

The questionnaire of this study was kept as close as possible to the original questionnaire used by Davis-Delano et al. (2009) in their pilot study. Suggestions made by the authors after the completion of the pilot study were considered, as well as suggestions from other studies that have used the Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire. Informed consent, directions, and extended introductory information were delivered at the beginning of the survey. One sentence of the introduction to the quantitative section was adjusted to be more inclusive of the broad spectrum of genders and sexualities anticipated to be expressed from the respondents. The sentence “And, female athletes are mostly heterosexual, but also include bisexuals and lesbians.” (Davis-Delano et al., 2009) was changed to “And, female athletes are mostly heterosexual, but also include non-heterosexual individuals.” Due to the inherently physical nature of roller derby and the degree of physical contact necessary for standard game play, two questions dealing with aggression and physical force were modified in the quantitative section. Questions 2 and 3 of the pilot were changed from:

“2. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid being aggressive or using physical force.

3. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I apologize when I am aggressive or use physical force”

to read:

“6. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid being aggressive.

7. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I apologize when I am aggressive.”

The modification of the original questionnaire to remove phrases referring to “physical force” was intended to avoid any bias that may have come from participants associating this with the abundant physical contact present in basic game play. The “aggression” phrases sufficiently preserved the original meaning of these questions without the references to “physical force.” These questions ultimately became questions 6 and 7 of this study’s survey, due to the addition of extra questions pertaining to other apologetic behaviors. Questions 2-4 of this survey were added, which consisted of the behaviors of wearing makeup while playing roller derby, wearing “sexy” clothing while playing, keeping long hairstyles, and keeping fingernails manicured and/or painted. The language of the Likert response levels was changed from “Never, Occasionally, Sometimes, Often, and Always” to “Never, Rarely, Occasionally, Often, and Almost Always.” At the suggestion of the authors of the pilot study, in the final qualitative section, one question was split into two. Originally, the question contained two questions (the item asked why respondents did engage and did not engage in apologetic behavior) but only provided a single space to answer. The two components were split into two standalone questions with an available answer space for each. Finally, an expansive demographics section was added at the suggestion of previous research including the factors of age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, educational background, socioeconomic status, geographical location, years of participation in roller derby, and the competitive level of their team/league. The demographics section also allowed for the identification, and subsequent removal, of any respondents who do not fit the

characteristics selected for the target population: (1) roller derby skaters who are (2) woman-identifying, (3) eighteen years of age or older, and (4) current U.S. residents.

The online survey was broken into three sections. The first page of the survey was an introduction to the project along with an informed consent agreement ensuring that respondents were at least 18 years old and had been properly informed prior to participation. The first section was an opportunity to identify preconceptions of female athletes. The next section of the survey made up the body of the apologetic behavior questionnaire with quantitative questions and qualitative explanations, followed by the demographics section where age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, educational background, socioeconomic status, geographical location, years of participation in roller derby, and team/league competitive level were assessed.

The first part of the questionnaire was a qualitative section with spaces for participants to supply any preconceptions of female athletes known to them. The results of this section supplied further understanding of the prevalent stereotypes about female athletes within the U.S. women's roller derby community. The second part of the questionnaire was quantitative in nature. Fifteen apologetic behaviors were represented in fifteen questions that were presented with Likert-type scale response options. Five response options ranged from "Never" to "Almost Always." Along with the two items listed previously, sample apologetic behavior statements include, "Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid (non-game related) physical contact with other females in public." and "Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I try to look feminine (such as wearing make-up, wearing bows, or having long hair)." The conscious decision to begin

each of the fifteen quantitative questions with the phrase “Because of stereotypes of female athletes...” ensured that the responders rated behavior engagement appropriate given that the ensuing behavior was engaged in – or not engaged in- due to apologetic reasons (Davis-Delano et al. 2009) Likert-type scale responses were assigned a numerical value, from “Never” = 1 to “Almost Always” = 5, with higher frequencies of apologetic behaviors and/or higher intensity of apologetic behaviors being indicated by higher scores. This section also included open-ended questions such as “If you DO engage in the behaviors on the previous page, please explain why you do so.” and “Are there any other ways (other than those mentioned on the previous page) that YOU or OTHERS respond to stereotypes of female athletes?” By including these questions, the researcher could understand some of the motivation experienced by participants that did or did not lead to apologetic behavior. Researchers could then ensure that apologetic behaviors were engaged in because of the stereotypes understood by the female athlete. Understanding motivational factors of participants, to engage in or to not engage in apologetic behavior, could have significance in working to remove the societal pressures that have created apologetic behavior in the first place. This section also included an opportunity for participants to comment on the survey itself. Finally, the third section supplied the demographic questions.

When Davis-Delano et al. first created the Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire in 2009, in order to establish preliminary content validity, they presented the questionnaire to an expert panel of established scholars in the field of gender and sport. With the appropriately revised questionnaire, the pilot study was conducted. Pilot study

participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the questionnaire after their participation. The original researchers scrutinized the responses to further establish content validity. No specific validity data was provided. No reliability data was provided. Email inquiry by other researchers revealed that the original authors did not take any measures to determine reliability of the instrument (Weese, 2012).

Possible threats to internal validity included instrument mortality. Some respondents may have initiated the survey but may not have completed it due to any number of reasons. Respondents were also given the option to abstain from answering any question on the survey, should they feel so inclined. To combat these possibilities, the estimated time for survey completion and the option to exclude answering any question with which there was conflict were advertised to the participant at the initiation of the survey. Although there were no experimental and control groups, participants may have communicated and/or discussed the contents of the survey with other respondents. Due to the online nature of delivery of this survey, the researcher had no way of knowing if this occurred. The survey was based on individual assessments, motivations, behaviors, and opinions. Most of these items were not subject to simple, singular persuasion by other participants. However, participants may have also responded without being completely truthful as they may have wished to present a different image of themselves and their actions through the anonymous format. The anonymity and confidentiality of participation and answers were emphasized through survey introduction, instructions, and informed consent. Some selection bias may have been present through the convenience sampling methods used to produce the study's sample population.

In terms of external validity, threats included the limitation of the population selected for the study. Adult, female roller derby athletes in the United States represent a very specific selection of the female athlete population. The intent of the survey was to analyze the prevalence of apologetic behaviors in this specific population, though. Generalization of the results were only able to be applied to that population. Comparisons to previous studies focusing on collegiate female athletes were only indicative of a need for further research.

Research Setting

Though the sample was restricted to participants currently living in the United States, the online format of instrument delivery encouraged a wide reach. At least two roller derby leagues in every state (except those locations that only had one league listed, such as Washington, D.C. or Rhode Island) throughout the country were invited to participate. A total of 228 leagues were invited to participate. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, it is unknown how many of those leagues shared the invitation with their skaters or how many of those skaters responded. Ultimately, all 50 states were not represented in the data, however, when condensed into US Census regional divisions, every division was represented in the responses. Divisions 6 and 7 were combined to produce adequate *n* counts for data analysis. Division 6, East South Central, only had one response. It was combined with Division 7, West South Central, to make one Division referred to as South Central which was made up of respondents from Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas.

Data Collection

The entirety of the survey instrument was delivered and administered over the internet via Google Forms. Invitations to participate were distributed through email addresses available on league websites across the nation with the intention of recruiting a broad audience and large sample population. Leagues were selected by reviewing lists of member/participating leagues from the website of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA). After selecting a league from the available lists, the league website was assessed. If the league was based in the United States and included a contact email address, an invitation to participate was sent with a request that the survey link be distributed to league members. Other forms of recruitment of participants included personal request made by the researcher to acquaintances asking for participation and subsequent distribution to the skater's league. No league specific information was recorded in the survey (unless offered by individual participants in the qualitative sections) to keep anonymity intact. Therefore, it is unknown how responsive contacted leagues were to participation.

Data Analysis

The goal of this study was to determine the answers to three research questions:

1. What preconceptions about female athletes are recognized by adult, female roller derby athletes in the United States of America?
2. What is the prevalence of apologetic behavior in adult, female roller derby athletes in the United States of America?

3. Is there a relationship between specific demographic characteristics (age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, educational background, socioeconomic status, geographical location, or years of participation) and the (high or low) incidence of apologetic behavior in adult, female roller derby athletes in the United States of America?

A modified version of the Female Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire created by Davis-Delano et al. in 2009 was implemented in this study. The first research question was addressed in the qualitative portion of the survey. The second and third questions were addressed through the quantitative portion and demographic section. For the qualitative responses, themes were developed from the responses. To be consistent with previous research (Davis-Delano et al. 2009; Weese, 2012), percentages of these themes among responses were calculated. Themes were labeled as “common” if 33% or more of the participants’ responses included the theme. 25-32% representation in participant responses labeled a theme as ‘somewhat common.’ The second research question was answered by the quantitative section of the apologetic behavior questionnaire and quantitative data analysis procedures. Participant responses were converted to numerical data through the 5-point Likert scale, with ‘Never’ corresponding to 1, ‘Rarely’ to 2, ‘Occasionally’ corresponding to 3, ‘Often’ to 4, and ‘Almost Always’ corresponding to 5. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each question as well as for the total response of all fifteen items together. A one-sample t-test was computed to determine whether the mean amount of apologetic behavior that was engaged in by the sample was significantly different from not engaging in any apologetic behavior, which would have

been indicated by a mean score of 1. For the final research question, the data from the quantitative response section was compared with the demographic factors recorded at the end of the survey. One-way ANOVAs, one sample t-tests, comparisons of means, and correlations were used to determine whether any relationships exist between any of the demographic factors and the prevalence of apologetic behaviors in the sample population of adult, female roller derby athletes in the United States.

To satisfy n counts for data analysis, some of the independent variable response groups were condensed. Age ranges were condensed from 18-20 years and 21-25 years into a group of 18-25, also groups 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61-65, and 66+ were condensed into a group of 46+ years. The variety gender responses were condensed into two groups: “cisgender women” and “non-cisgender individuals.” The “non-cisgender individuals” group consisted of nine respondents, one intersex woman and eight gender expansive/gender fluid/gender non-conforming individuals. Ultimately, the low n count of non-cisgender individuals ($n=9$) meant that results would be inconsistent, thus unsuitable for significance testing. Like gender, race groups needed to be condensed to satisfy n counts for analysis. Groups were condensed to two: White/Caucasian and Minority Races, the latter of which was made up of thirty respondents: three individuals who indicated their race/ethnicity as Black/African, two East Asians, four Hispanic/Latino individuals, two Pacific Islanders, one respondent who selected “other,” and eighteen individuals of mixed races who selected multiple racial/ethnic groups. All other demographic groups had wide representation among the sample. Some testing was

done with the full eight options of sexual orientation and some testing was done with condensed groups of heterosexual and non-heterosexual individuals.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Although the target sample size was 284 individual responses, the survey only yielded 247 respondents who satisfied the population requirements of being over 18 years old, living in the United States, and identifying as a women's roller derby player (congruent with the definition of the WFTDA.) These individuals completed the quantitative portion of the apologetic behavior survey but did not necessarily complete all qualitative questions. Of those 247 individuals, 225 identified one or more preconceptions of female athletes that they knew to exist. Only 223 individuals explained why they did and/or did not engage in any of the apologetic behaviors discussed in the survey. These populations sizes were used to determine the respective percentages of responses.

Table 1 - Demographic Characteristics of Sample

| Variable | Category | <i>n</i> | % |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Geographical Region | New England | 16 | 6.5 |
| | Mid-Atlantic | 35 | 14.2 |
| | East North Central | 36 | 14.6 |
| | West North Central | 17 | 6.9 |
| | South Atlantic | 57 | 23.1 |
| | South Central | 24 | 9.7 |
| | West Mountain | 32 | 13.0 |
| | Pacific | 27 | 10.9 |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 3 | 1.2 |

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----|------|
| Age Range | 18-25 | 33 | 13.4 |
| | 26-30 | 71 | 28.7 |
| | 31-35 | 62 | 25.1 |
| | 36-40 | 60 | 24.3 |
| | 41-45 | 13 | 5.3 |
| | 46+ | 8 | 3.2 |
| Self-Identified Gender | Cisgender Woman | 233 | 94.3 |
| | Non-Cisgender Individuals | 9 | 3.6 |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 5 | 2.0 |
| Sexual Orientation | Heterosexual | 136 | 55.1 |
| | Homosexual | 18 | 7.3 |
| | Bisexual | 55 | 22.3 |
| | Asexual | 3 | 1.2 |
| | Pansexual | 20 | 8.1 |
| | Undecided/Unknown | 6 | 2.4 |
| | Queer | 5 | 2.0 |
| | Other | 4 | 1.6 |
| Race/Ethnicity | White/Caucasian | 216 | 87.4 |
| | Minority Races/Non-White/Caucasian | 30 | 12.1 |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 1 | 0.4 |
| Educational Background (highest level completed) | High School/Secondary School or Less | 8 | 3.2 |
| | Some College | 50 | 20.2 |
| | Associate's Degree | 13 | 5.3 |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 95 | 38.5 |
| | Some Graduate School | 14 | 5.7 |
| | Master's Degree | 57 | 23.1 |
| | PhD/Professional Degree | 10 | 4.0 |
| Yearly Household Income (pre-taxes) | Under 15,000 | 6 | 2.4 |
| | 15,000-24,999 | 17 | 6.9 |
| | 25,000-34,999 | 29 | 11.7 |
| | 35,000-49,999 | 46 | 18.6 |
| | 50,000-74,999 | 51 | 20.6 |
| | 75,000-99,999 | 40 | 16.2 |
| | 100,000-149,999 | 32 | 13.0 |
| | 150,000+ | 21 | 8.5 |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 5 | 2.0 |
| Years Involved in Roller Derby | < 1 | 29 | 11.7 |
| | 1-2 | 49 | 19.8 |
| | 3-4 | 76 | 30.8 |
| | 5-6 | 56 | 22.7 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----|------|
| | 7-8 | 25 | 10.1 |
| | 9-10 | 7 | 2.8 |
| | 11+ | 4 | 1.6 |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 1 | 0.4 |
| Competitive Level of League/Team | Non-competitive | 3 | 1.2 |
| | Recreational | 21 | 8.5 |
| | Intra-league Competitive (Home Teams) | 8 | 3.2 |
| | Inter-league Casually Competitive | 34 | 13.8 |
| | Inter-league Moderately Competitive | 90 | 36.4 |
| | Inter-league Highly Competitive | 89 | 36.0 |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 2 | 0.8 |

Qualitative Results – Research Question One

For the qualitative response section, themes were developed from the survey responses. An adjustment that was made from the pilot study was to condense two open-ended qualitative questions asking for positive stereotypes and negative stereotypes of female athletes into a single question asking for any preconceptions of female athletes. The most common responses to this question pertained to the idea that female athleticism and lesbianism were interrelated with respondents giving answers such as: “sexual deviance from societal norms (i.e., LGBTQ+),” “female athletes are all lesbians,” or often simply the word “lesbian(s)” or “butch.” This preconception of rampant lesbianism among woman athletes was present in 50.60% of the responses offered (125 of 225), gaining the designation “common” as it was represented in $\geq 33\%$ of the responses. The second response theme that was frequent enough to warrant the “common” label was the idea that female athletes are masculine or unfeminine. “They're not feminine,” “they are overly masculine,” “look ‘manly,’” and “masculine,” are examples of responses. This response appeared 38.46% of the time. The pilot study also designated themes that were

present in 25%-32% of responses as ‘somewhat common.’ A “somewhat common” preconception about female athlete that was indicated by respondents was that female athletes are somehow “less than” male athletes, expressed by 29.96% of respondents. Several different ways of being “less than” were reported, including such responses as: “[female athletes are] weaker than men,” “female athletes aren't as good or as interesting as male athletes,” “female athletes are less athletic and [less] devoted to their sports than male athletes,” “female athletes aren't worthwhile because male athletes are more skilled.” It is important to note that this “less than” theme denoted responses that indicated that female athletes, in and of themselves, were somehow “less than” male athletes. A separate theme was created for responses indicating that female sports are somehow “less than” male sports, i.e., “play a lesser version of a male sport,” “slower,” “boring,” or “less interesting.” While this theme was not prevalent enough to be labeled “somewhat common,” it did appear in 11.3% of responses. Interestingly, these three most prevalent preconceptions were the same negative stereotypes that were identified by the athletes in the pilot study: (1) lesbianism is prevalent, (2) female athletes are masculine or unfeminine, and (3) female athletes are lesser than male athletes.

Most of the responses to the question about female athlete preconceptions were negatively natured, as previously discussed. Positive responses to the question included “fast,” “outgoing,” “smart,” “passionate,” “athletic,” “graceful,” “capable,” “dedicated,” and “self-motivated,” however the response rates indicating these stereotypes were no higher than 1.2% (just three responses out of 225) with seven of these nine responses only being mentioned once. For several other responses, it was undetermined whether the

preconception was positive or negative in nature; the remainder of the qualitative response was either not indicative of connotation or the preconceptions were used in both positive and negative fashions by the respondent. These responses included: “competitive,” “independent,” “muscular,” “strong,” and “tough.” It is difficult to deduce which light to shine on these responses because these are traits that are valued in parts of our society but not always valued when represented in a woman. These response rates saw higher percentages than the purely positive responses, from 1.2% (independent, competitive) to 6.1% (strong).

While many respondents objected plaintively about the phrasing of the quantitative questions, “I don't do some of the behaviors because of a stereotype. Each question should be 2-fold: 1-do you do this...2-if so is it because of a stereotype,” they did adjust their answers due to the opening clause: “I picked “never” for my answers because of the ‘because of stereotypes’ clause.” This was, in fact, the goal of phrasing the questions in such a way. A response indicating engagement in a behavior must be interpreted as an admission of a stereotypical influence on behavior, as opposed to simply the respondent’s “preferred behavior” (Davis-Delano et al., 2009). Some respondents recognized that the disclaimer “because of stereotypes of female athletes,” prompted the modified response. One response summarized, “Actually I do a lot of these things because I like the way I look or feel, not because of a stereotype. Without that in front of every question I would've answered differently.” Another individual recognized the greater arc of sexism made up by the pressures of female apologetic behavior, saying, “the items above that I do participate in probably have more to do with general societal

expectations for how women should look and probably not directly related to the stereotypes of female athletes, but it definitely carries over into my behavior within the sport” or “people taking this survey might not always be aware of why they're doing things - and are especially unlikely to admit that it's because of a stereotype.” The full effects of gender roles and pressures are not always recognized or understood and so, likely, have influenced some of the responses. Due to the inability of the survey to fully inform respondents of the entire background, development, learning, and active unlearning of gender roles and pressures, inferences on the questionnaire responses had to be limited to the explicit wording of the responses. As such it is also reasonable to extrapolate that while this survey might give us some insight into the prevalence of apologetic behavior within the target population, it is not a strict measurement of all apologetic behavior.

Respondents were given the opportunity to explain why they do engage or do not engage in the apologetic behaviors listed in the Likert portion of the questionnaire. Several themes could be recognized, however only one response could be called “common” (expressed by $\geq 33\%$ of the sample) with 40.4% of respondents indicating this explanation. This response was used to explain any apologetic behavior listed in the questionnaire, but most frequently was applied to the first five behaviors dealing with physical appearance. The idea that was expressed by respondents was that these behaviors were performed, or not performed, because of their personal desires; they simply did or did not do the behavior(s) because they wanted to. They had long hair, or short hair, because they wanted to, wore makeup or tight clothes because they wanted to,

etc., “I wear what I wear during bouts and do my hair, nails, and make up how I do, for me and no one else. I do it because it makes me feel good and confident.” Another respondent engaged in these behaviors to assuage the pressures of stereotypes “Wearing makeup, trying to look feminine, and wearing athletic clothing I think looks sexy is not about trying to prove that I am feminine or heterosexual. It is more of a confidence boost for me. When I like how I look, I am less likely to worry about stereotypes.” Conversely, for some respondents, physical appearance decisions were consciously dependent on playing into these stereotypes of a “derby girl” to market their league’s events, “I do try to look feminine and approachable for fans. Fans buy our tickets and merchandise which pays for our travel season. People have a preconceived notion of what roller derby is supposed to look like, the majority [of the audience] isn't interested in learning the rules, they're interested in seeing pretty girls on roller skates hit each other. I love my sport; if a little eyeliner and shorts sell tickets I'm willing to look the part all the way to the bank.” It is plain to see from the responses that discovering the multitude of motivations behind the behaviors of respondents would require deeper exploration and communication than this questionnaire allowed.

Personal preference and desire was the only theme prevalent enough to satisfy the either range for the “common” or “somewhat common” designation but other themes emerged in explanation for engaging or not engaging in apologetic behavior. No other theme breached the 20% mark, but several themes were present in 10-20% of responses. First, 15.2% of respondents indicated that they felt pressure from societal expectations to apologize for aggression. In response to question seven, “because of stereotypes of

female athletes, I apologize when I am aggressive,” 59.5% of the respondents engaged in the behavior at least occasionally. The total mean response score for that question was 2.21, which would fall in the “high” range of apologetic behavior. Explanations of the behavior included such responses as: “Sometimes I apologize when I do hard hits in derby, it's just a habit and it pops out of my mouth without thinking about and whether I mean it or not. I feel like as women in this society we are expected to apologize if we are too rough whereas if we were male it would be encouraged,” and “It's like I've been auto trained to apologize for any bouts of physical assertiveness and I say I'm sorry quite a bit.” This behavior was the most commonly engaged in by the sample.

Questions 10-14 all dealt with variations of the effect of the lesbian stigma, 13.4% of those surveyed explained that they rejected the implications of this stigma. The respondents indicated that they did not care whether they were perceived as being a non-heterosexual individual, with several of these responses including a variation of the statement that they did not perceive non-heterosexuality as being in anyway negative or an undesirable trait. “I don't care if people assume I'm a lesbian because I play sports, because being a lesbian isn't a bad thing. Someone assuming I'm a lesbian isn't offensive to me” or “I have a lot of social privilege so I feel like if people think I'm gay, maybe it will help normalize homosexuality a bit.”

Finally, 12.1% of respondents were appalled at the idea of criticizing another woman because of her sexuality or lack of femininity. The mean apologetic behavior score for this question was just 1.04, the lowest of the fifteen behaviors, only just above the 1.00 score indicating that the behavior is never engaged in by those surveyed. “I

actively go against these stereotypes. I believe that women should raise up fellow female athletes and not tear them down.” Many of the responses also made note that roller derby has opportunities for many different types of individuals: “Something that I really love about roller derby is that (in my experience) there is lots of room for different expressions of womanhood, femininity and female strength” and “any given teammate can get a compliment on her big hits, new feminine haircut, and rocking biceps all in one day.” Of all the apologetic behaviors surveyed, this was the least prevalent among the sample population.

Quantitative Results – Research Questions Two and Three

In the quantitative portion of the survey, if an individual had a mean score of 1.00, it indicated that they do not engage in any of the apologetic behaviors listed in the survey. 20.6% of the respondents, 51 out of 247, had a mean score of 1.00. This means that the other 79.4%, 196 individuals, engage in some, or all, of the behaviors, at least occasionally. Without knowing the true population variance, a one-sample t-test was run to determine if the mean Likert response of all 247 respondents ($\mu=1.52$) was significantly different from the 1.00 mean of never engaging in any apologetic behavior. The one-sample t-test did find that the mean response of this sample was significantly different from 1.00, $t(246)=16.727$, $p=0.000$, as were the mean responses of each individual question.

Table 2 - Individual Questions One-Sample T-Test Result

Test Value = 1.00

| Quantitative Questions | <i>n</i> | μ | <i>sd</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Q1: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I try to look feminine when I play my sport. | 247 | 2.00 | 1.099 | 14.36 | 246 | .000 |
| Q2: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I wear makeup when I play my sport. | 246 | 2.00 | 1.164 | 13.47 | 245 | .000 |
| Q3: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I wear "sexy" clothing when I play my sport. | 247 | 1.74 | .970 | 12.01 | 246 | .000 |
| Q4: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I keep my hair long. | 245 | 1.66 | 1.092 | 9.41 | 244 | .000 |
| Q5: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I keep my nails manicured and/or painted. | 247 | 1.36 | .813 | 6.89 | 246 | .000 |
| Q6: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid being aggressive. | 247 | 1.40 | .741 | 8.41 | 246 | .000 |
| Q7: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I apologize when I am aggressive. | 246 | 2.21 | 1.254 | 15.20 | 245 | .000 |
| Q8: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I don't play as hard as I can when I am competing against males in sports. | 245 | 1.33 | .800 | 6.47 | 244 | .000 |
| Q9: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid talking about sport in public. | 247 | 1.44 | .885 | 7.76 | 246 | .000 |
| Q10: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid hanging out with other female athletes in public outside of the sport setting. | 247 | 1.11 | .413 | 4.15 | 246 | .000 |
| Q11: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid (non-game related) physical contact with other females in public. | 247 | 1.29 | .672 | 6.82 | 246 | .000 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|------|------|-------|-----|------|
| Q12: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I hang out with males in public, outside of the sport setting. | 243 | 1.53 | .820 | 10.02 | 242 | .000 |
| Q13: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I talk about, or try to be seen with, a boyfriend. | 247 | 1.42 | .807 | 8.12 | 246 | .000 |
| Q14: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I don't talk about lesbianism/bisexuality in public. | 247 | 1.25 | .656 | 5.91 | 246 | .000 |
| Q15: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I criticize females who are not feminine or who are lesbian. | 247 | 1.04 | .230 | 2.52 | 246 | .012 |

This indicates that respondents, overall, did engage in some apologetic behaviors at some times. Davis-Delano et al. (2009) found 72.5% of their sample engaged in apologetic behavior versus the 27.5% who never engaged in apologetic behavior. The results of this study are loosely like those of the pilot study. Both studies found that their samples engaged in apologetic behavior at a significant rate.

Davis-Delano et al. (2009) had a much smaller sample size ($n=40$) which they then divided by mean score range to create “clusters” based on the engagement levels of respondents. The ranges used were 1.00 – “Never,” 1.21-1.39 – “Low,” 1.40-2.00 – “Substantial,” and 2.20-2.99 – “High.” To keep the same general levels to allow for comparison, this study’s results were also grouped into Never to High clusters. The individual levels were expanded to take up the gaps between Davis-Delano et al.’s (2009) clusters, since some of the data points of this sample fell into those gaps. The updated cluster ranges used in this study were: Never: 1.00, Low: 1.01-1.39, Substantial: 1.40-

2.19, and High: 2.20-3.40. Even with the adjusted clusters, the end results of this study closely mirror those of the pilot study.

Table 3 - Mean Apologetic Behavior Clusters

| Cluster Range | n | Current Study % | Pilot Study % |
|-------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Never (1.00) | 51 | 27.5 % | 20.6 % |
| Low (1.01-1.39) | 63 | 22.5 % | 25.5 % |
| Substantial (1.40-2.19) | 111 | 40 % | 44.9 % |
| High (2.20-3.40) | 22 | 10 % | 8.9 % |
| Total | 247 | 100.0 % | 100.0 % |

When the apologetic behaviors were grouped as either a physical behavior or a social behavior, a paired sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the means. Physical apologetic behaviors were represented in question one-five and included behaviors such as wearing makeup, keeping long hair, or trying to look feminine. Social apologetic behaviors were represented by questions six-fifteen and were such behaviors as apologizing for aggression, avoiding talking about sports in public, or trying to be seen with or to talk about a boyfriend or husband. There was a significant difference between the values of physical apologetic behaviors ($\mu=1.75$, $sd=0.81$) and the values of social apologetic behaviors ($\mu=1.40$, $sd=0.43$); $t(246)=8.11$, $p=0.000$.

Table 4: Quantitative Response Frequencies

| Survey Questions | Response Options | Frequency | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|---|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Q1: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I try to look feminine when I play my sport. | Never | 105 | 42.5 | 42.5 |
| | Rarely | 67 | 27.1 | 69.6 |
| | Occasionally | 56 | 22.7 | 92.3 |
| | Often | 7 | 2.8 | 95.1 |
| | Almost Always | 12 | 4.9 | 100 |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-----|------|------|
| Q2: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I wear makeup when I play my sport. | Never | 111 | 44.9 | 45.1 |
| | Rarely | 66 | 26.7 | 72 |
| | Occasionally | 40 | 16.2 | 88.2 |
| | Often | 16 | 6.5 | 94.7 |
| | Almost Always | 13 | 5.3 | 100 |
| | Total | 246 | 99.6 | |
| | <i>Missing data</i> | 1 | 0.4 | |
| Q3: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I wear "sexy" clothing when I play my sport. | Never | 135 | 54.7 | 54.7 |
| | Rarely | 58 | 23.5 | 78.1 |
| | Occasionally | 41 | 16.6 | 94.7 |
| | Often | 9 | 3.6 | 98.4 |
| | Almost Always | 4 | 1.6 | 100 |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |
| | <i>Missing data</i> | | | |
| Q4: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I keep my hair long. | Never | 160 | 64.8 | 65.3 |
| | Rarely | 40 | 16.2 | 81.6 |
| | Occasionally | 25 | 10.1 | 91.8 |
| | Often | 9 | 3.6 | 95.5 |
| | Almost Always | 11 | 4.5 | 100 |
| | Total | 245 | 99.2 | |
| | <i>Missing data</i> | 2 | 0.8 | |
| Q5: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I keep my nails manicured and/or painted. | Never | 194 | 78.5 | 78.5 |
| | Rarely | 32 | 13 | 91.5 |
| | Occasionally | 11 | 4.5 | 96 |
| | Often | 6 | 2.4 | 98.4 |
| | Almost Always | 4 | 1.6 | 100 |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |
| | <i>Missing data</i> | | | |
| Q6: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid being aggressive. | Never | 181 | 73.3 | 73.3 |
| | Rarely | 40 | 16.2 | 89.5 |
| | Occasionally | 20 | 8.1 | 97.6 |
| | Often | 6 | 2.4 | 100 |
| | Almost Always | 0 | 0 | |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |
| | <i>Missing data</i> | | | |
| Q7: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I apologize when I am aggressive. | Never | 100 | 40.5 | 40.7 |
| | Rarely | 51 | 20.6 | 61.4 |
| | Occasionally | 51 | 20.6 | 82.1 |
| | Often | 30 | 12.1 | 94.3 |
| | Almost Always | 14 | 5.7 | 100 |
| | Total | 246 | 99.6 | |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 1 | 0.4 | |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-----|------|------|
| Q8: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I don't play as hard as I can when I am competing against males in sports. | Never | 201 | 81.4 | 82 |
| | Rarely | 20 | 8.1 | 90.2 |
| | Occasionally | 12 | 4.9 | 95.1 |
| | Often | 11 | 4.5 | 99.6 |
| | Almost Always | 1 | 0.4 | 100 |
| | Total | 245 | 99.2 | |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 2 | 0.8 | |
| Q9: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid talking about sport in public. | Never | 186 | 75.3 | 75.3 |
| | Rarely | 29 | 11.7 | 87 |
| | Occasionally | 21 | 8.5 | 95.5 |
| | Often | 7 | 2.8 | 98.4 |
| | Almost Always | 4 | 1.6 | 100 |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |
| Q10: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid hanging out with other female athletes in public outside of the sport setting. | Never | 228 | 92.3 | 92.3 |
| | Rarely | 12 | 4.9 | 97.2 |
| | Occasionally | 6 | 2.4 | 99.6 |
| | Often | 1 | 0.4 | 100 |
| | Almost Always | 0 | 0 | |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |
| Q11: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid (non-game related) physical contact with other females in public. | Never | 198 | 80.2 | 80.2 |
| | Rarely | 32 | 13 | 93.1 |
| | Occasionally | 12 | 4.9 | 98 |
| | Often | 4 | 1.6 | 99.6 |
| | Almost Always | 1 | 0.4 | 100 |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |
| Q12: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I hang out with males in public, outside of the sport setting. | Never | 159 | 64.4 | 65.4 |
| | Rarely | 47 | 19 | 84.8 |
| | Occasionally | 30 | 12.1 | 97.1 |
| | Often | 7 | 2.8 | 100 |
| | Almost Always | 0 | 0 | |
| | Total | 243 | 98.4 | |
| | <i>Missing Data</i> | 4 | 1.6 | |
| Q13: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I talk about, or try to be seen with, a boyfriend. | Never | 185 | 74.9 | 74.9 |
| | Rarely | 29 | 11.7 | 86.6 |
| | Occasionally | 26 | 10.5 | 97.2 |
| | Often | 6 | 2.4 | 99.6 |
| | Almost Always | 1 | 0.4 | 100 |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------|-----|------|------|
| Q14: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I don't talk about lesbianism/bisexuality in public. | Never | 207 | 83.8 | 83.8 |
| | Rarely | 26 | 10.5 | 94.3 |
| | Occasionally | 9 | 3.6 | 98 |
| | Often | 3 | 1.2 | 99.2 |
| | Almost Always | 2 | 0.8 | 100 |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |
| Q15: Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I criticize females who are not feminine or who are lesbian. | Never | 240 | 97.2 | 97.2 |
| | Rarely | 5 | 2 | 99.2 |
| | Occasionally | 2 | 0.8 | 100 |
| | Often | 0 | 0 | |
| | Almost Always | 0 | 0 | |
| | Total | 247 | 100 | |

Of the fifteen apologetic behaviors referenced in this study, over 50% of the respondents engaged in three of these behaviors at least somewhat frequently. These behaviors were: wearing makeup while playing, attempting to look feminine, and, apologizing for aggression. 55.1% ($n=135$) of respondents wore makeup while playing and 57.5% ($n=142$) attempted to look feminine. Most commonly, 59.5% of respondents ($n=146$) apologized for being aggressive. Conversely, several behaviors had little engagement by respondents; five behaviors were engaged in by fewer than 20% of the sample. Just 19.8% of respondents ($n=49$) avoided non-game related physical contact with of females in public situations. Only 18.6% of respondents ($n=44$) did not play their hardest when competing against males. 16.2% of respondents ($n=40$) did not talk about lesbianism and/or bisexuality in public. Finally, two behaviors had engagement percentages less than 10% of the sample. Only 7.7% of respondents ($n=19$) avoided hanging out with other female athletes in public, outside of the sports setting. Least of all, only seven individuals out of 247 respondents criticized woman athletes who are not

feminine or who are lesbians, and those seven individuals only engaged in this behavior occasionally, at most. When looking at the total mean score for each of the apologetic behavior, we find that these two low percentages have a mean score near to 1. This indicates that the behaviors are rare among respondents. Contrarily, the three behaviors with the higher engagement percentage are the only ones out of the fifteen listed in the survey that have total mean scores of 2.0 and greater. This indicates that these behaviors are more common among the population, either by happening more frequently by a small number of respondents or occasionally by a larger number of respondents.

One of the suggestions offered by the pilot study's authors (Davis-Delano et al., 2009) was to include a greater demographic section to assess any relationships or significant differences between groups. The demographics collected from the respondents to this survey included: geographical location, age range, self-identified gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, educational background, socioeconomic status, years of participation in roller derby, and the level of competitiveness of the respondent's team/league. Comparisons of means, one-sample t-tests, and one-way ANOVAs were run to determine which relationships were significantly different. In terms of relationships between individual respondent mean scores of apologetic behaviors engagement and each independent variable (the demographic information collected), only the Years of Participation in Roller Derby indicated a significant difference between groups. For this demographic, a statistically significant difference was found between the mean score of those individuals who had participated in roller derby for 7-8 years compared to those who participated in roller derby for 3-4 years or those individuals who have been

involved for less than one year. When the response to individual questions were analyzed against each independent variable, several questions found statistically significant differences in apologetic behavior engagement between respondent groups.

For the independent variable of respondent age range, the engagement in apologetic behavior of those in the 41-45 years old age range was significantly different than some other age ranges for the apologetic behavior of wearing “sexy” clothing while participating in sport. 41-45 year olds had a mean response of 2.54; this response was significantly different from the 1.70 mean response of 26-30 year olds ($p=0.045$), as well as from the 1.64 mean response from 31-35 year olds ($p= 0.028$), and from the 1.58 mean response of 36-40 year olds ($p=0.015$). 41-45 year old individuals felt that they needed to wear “sexy” clothing while playing roller derby more than their counterparts between the ages of 26 and 40 years.

While there were three separate genders represented in the sample (cisgender women, intersex women, and gender expansive/genderfluid/gender non-conforming), the n counts of non-cisgender individuals did not satisfy the necessary amount to produce viable analysis. Due to low sample n count, results of a one-way ANOVA or one-sample t-test would be inconsistent and not suitable for testing. Therefore, a comparison of means was tested revealing a total mean score of 1.51 with a standard deviation of 0.48 for cisgender women and a total mean score of 1.78 for non-cisgender individuals with a standard deviation of 0.61. Different gendered respondents had several significant differences for engagement in (a) apologizing for aggression, (b) adjusting play intensity against males, (c) avoiding hanging out with other females in public, and (d) avoiding

physical contact with other female athletes outside of sport. In terms of (a) apologizing, cisgender respondents had a mean engagement value of 2.19 while non-cisgender individuals had a mean response of 3.11. When (b) lowering level of play against male competitors, cisgender individuals had a mean value of 1.31 while their counterparts had a mean of 2.00. Non-cisgender individuals (c) avoided hanging out with female athletes at a rate of 1.56 while the rate of engagement in the behavior for cisgender women was 1.09. Finally, the responses about (d) avoiding non-game related physical contact with other females in public had cisgender women reporting a mean engagement rate of 1.27 and non-cisgender individuals reporting a mean of 2.00. For each of these behaviors, non-cisgender individuals had a higher rate of apologetic behavior engagement than cisgender women.

Although small n counts may have been responsible for some inconsistency, there was a statistically significant difference between groups of different sexual orientations when confronted with the apologetic behavior of avoiding talking about sports in public. Those respondents who indicated that their sexual orientation was undecided/unknown had a mean engagement rate of 2.67; a mean that is significantly different from the engagement rate by heterosexuals ($\mu=1.37, p=0.010$) and bisexuals ($\mu =1.40, p=0.018$); heterosexual and bisexual respondents engaged in the apologetic behavior less frequently or less intensely. When sexual orientations were classified as heterosexual individuals and non-heterosexual individuals, avoiding talking about sports in public no longer had significantly different means (heterosexual individuals: $\mu=1.37$, non-heterosexual individuals: $\mu=1.52$). However, the behavior of trying to talk about or be seen with a

boyfriend remained significantly different, but it was heterosexuals who engaged more significantly in this behavior ($\mu=1.59$) compared to non-heterosexual individuals ($\mu=1.21$), $p=0.000$. Also of note, while post-hoc analysis did not reveal any significant differences between pairs, the overall relationship testing between the sexual orientation demographic and the behavior of trying to talk about or be seen with a boyfriend was significant ($p=0.002$).

The two race groups had significantly different levels of engagement in the apologetic behaviors of (a) keeping their hair long, (b) talking about or trying to be seen with a boyfriend, and (c) avoiding talking about lesbianism/bisexuality in public. For (a) keeping a long hairstyle, Minority Races indicated engaging at a mean rate of 2.27 while White/Caucasians engaged at a rate of 1.56 ($p=0.001$). White/Caucasian respondents engaged in (b) talking about or trying to be seen with a boyfriend at a rate of 1.37 and Minority Race respondents engaged in the behavior at a mean rate of 1.77. These means were significantly different ($p=0.012$). Finally, engagement in the behavior of (c) avoiding talk of lesbianism and bisexuality in public was significantly different between the two racial groups ($p=0.025$). Minority Races had a mean engagement value of 1.50 while White/Caucasians had a mean value of 1.21. Here, as well, the minority group had a higher engagement in apologetic behaviors than the majority group.

The final demographic that expressed significantly different engagement rates between groups was the number of years of participation in roller derby in relation to the questions about avoiding aggression and apologizing for aggression. Those individuals who had less than one year of derby experience avoided aggression at a significantly

different rate than those individuals with 1-2, 5-6, and 7-8 years of participation. Respondent with less than one year of participation had a rate of engagement of 1.83 while those individuals with 1-2 years of experience had a rate of 1.31 ($p=0.037$), individuals with 5-6 years had a rate of 1.30 ($p=0.028$), and individuals who've played for 7-8 years had a rate of 1.12 ($p=0.007$). In terms of the behavior of apologizing for aggression, individuals with less than one year of derby experience had a mean engagement rate of 2.72 which was significantly different ($p=0.035$) from the engagement rate of individuals who had 7-8 years of experience who engaged at a rate of 1.67. These results are not entirely unexpected as aggression is such a key element to the sport of roller derby. It makes sense that those with more experience in the sport would have less engagement than those individuals who are rather new to it. In this instance, these results may, cautiously, be said to represent individuals overcoming societal pressure that influence behavior in regards to aggression-related apologetic behaviors. The question then stands, was it their participation in roller derby that led to these lowered aggression-related apologetic behavior scores? This study and its results cannot provide the answer to that question.

A Pearson correlation was run to evaluate the relationship between the individual respondents' mean score of apologetic engagement and their years of experience in roller derby. A slight but statistically significant negative correlation was found between the two variables ($r = -0.176, p = 0.003$). A Pearson correlation was also run to evaluate the relationship between respondents' age and their years of experience playing roller derby. This test revealed a positive correlation that is statistically significant but small ($r =$

0.257, $p = 0.000$). Similarly, a slight positive correlation was found between level of education completed and years involved in roller derby ($r = 0.138$, $p = 0.015$). Finally, a small positive correlation exists between years of roller derby engagement with the competitive level of the league/team ($r = 0.261$, $p = 0.000$) No other significant correlations were found between independent variables and mean scores of apologetic behaviors engagement. Several very small correlations were found between other independent variables, such as age and sexual orientation or education and household income, but these relationships were deemed to be inconsequential to the study topic and, accordingly, will not be discussed here.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusion

Summary of Purpose of the Study

When it comes to research on the impact of the preconceptions and stigmas surrounding female athletes, most studies have been individual or small group interviews. This limits the transferability of these findings from the small samples to the group of woman athletes at large. Davis-Delano et al. (2009) created the Female Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire to help to remedy this problem; the questionnaire allowed for broader data collection but sacrificed some of the detail offered through in-depth interviews. After completion of the pilot study, the researchers offered insights into adjustments that they wished to see from future research with the questionnaire. The goal of this study was to investigate apologetic behavior and its motivations within the population of adult, women's roller derby athletes in the United States. This study incorporated those suggestions made by Davis-Delano et al. (2009); specifically, it added a large demographic section to offer further insight into any trends in individual responses.

Summary of Findings

This study investigated the prevalence of apologetic behaviors in the understudied population of adult women's roller derby athletes in the United States. Previous investigations into female apologetic behavior have typically examined collegiate or high school athletes. One important difference is that the total mean score of the responses was statistically different from the mean value of the pilot study. Davis-Delano et al. (2009) had a total mean apologetic behavior value of 1.45 with a significant difference of 0.50. The total mean value for this study was 1.52 ($sd=0.48$). When the 1.45 value was used as the test value of a one-sample t-test, the score was found to be significantly different than the total mean value of this study: $t(246)=2.17, p=0.031$. Ultimately, there was more apologetic behavior, either at a higher frequency or at a greater intensity, in the population that completed this survey. It is safe to question whether this has some relation to sample size as the pilot study had a sample size of 40 while this study sampled 247 individuals.

When examining the mean scores for each of the fifteen apologetic behaviors in this study and the eleven behaviors in the pilot study, there are several similarities. For both studies, the apologetic behavior of attempting to look feminine while engaging in sports was common among respondents, as well as apologizing for aggression. Avoiding public socializing with other female athletes outside of the sports setting and criticizing other female athletes who are either not feminine or are lesbian were behaviors that were rare among both populations. The range and frequency of mean value clusters were also similar between the two studies.

Two primary hypotheses were examined through this study. It was anticipated that age would play a factor in prevalence of apologetic behavior; specifically, that there would be a negative correlation between increasing age and behavior intensity and frequency. Secondly, overall prevalence of apologetic behavior in the roller derby population was suspected of being lower than in the collegiate athlete population of the pilot study. Ultimately, the mean response of all the different age groups of the sample were not significantly different from one another nor was a relationship between the independent variable and the dependent means, negative or otherwise. In terms of overall prevalence of apologetic behavior, the mean score of apologetic behavior engagement by the sampled roller derby athletes was significantly greater than the mean of the pilot study and is discussed further below.

Research Question One – Findings and Discussion

Many the qualitative responses referencing existing preconceptions about female athletes were negatively expressed. The three most prevalent of these were the preconception that (1) all female athletes are lesbians, (2) female athletes are unfeminine or are more masculine than other women, and (3) female athletes are “less than” their male counterparts. These three preconceptions match the three most prevalent negative stereotypes expressed by the collegiate athletes of the pilot study. No positive preconceptions were prevalent enough in the sample responses of roller derby athletes to warrant comparison to those found in the pilot study.

Research Question Two – Findings and Discussion

As mentioned, the total mean score of this study's sample was greater than that of the pilot study with a μ -value of 1.52. This mean was calculated from a wide variety of individual rates. Respondents could choose values from 1.00, never engaging in apologetic behavior, to 5.00, indicating that they almost always engaged in a specific behavior. 20.6% of the sample reported never engaging in any apologetic behavior, 25.5% engaged in a low amount of behavior (scores from 1.01-1.39), 44.9% engaged in a substantial amount of apologetic behavior with mean scores from 1.40-2.19, and finally 8.9% of respondents engaged in high levels of apologetic behaviors with values from 2.20-3.40. Although a score of 3.4 is considered a high amount of apologetic behavior, and the value is higher than that of the pilot study, it only falls in between the "occasionally" and "often" options on the apologetic behavior questionnaire. This, at least, is promising that no respondent engages in a behavior so intensely and frequently that they are at a value of "almost always" engaging in apologetic behavior. Davis-Delano et al. (2009) did not separate their results into the values of physical apologetic behaviors or social apologetic behaviors so those results of this study cannot be compared to the original study.

Research Question Three – Findings and Discussion

Several relationships were established between groups of the demographics recorded. When the total mean apologetic behavior score was calculated from all question responses, it was only individuals with 7-8 Years of Participation in Roller Derby who were significantly different than those participants with 3-4 years of

experience and individuals who had been involved for less than one year. Other statistically significant relationships were between groups pertaining to the responses to specific questions on the survey, each regarding a single apologetic behavior. 41-45 year old athletes reported wearing “sexy” clothing while participating in their sport at a higher rate than 26-40 year old athletes. In terms of self-identified gender, non-cisgender individuals apologized for aggression at a higher rate than cisgender women and had a higher engagement rate in decreasing their level of play when competing against male athletes. Non-cisgender women also had higher scores of avoiding public socialization with other female athletes and in avoiding non-game-related physical contact with other female athletes in public. While no significance value could be calculated for this independent variable, a comparison of means can offer some insight into the sample. Within the groups separated by sexual orientation, those who indicated that their sexual orientation was non-heterosexual individuals had lower engagement in the apologetic behavior of trying to be seen with or talking about a boyfriend than the group of heterosexual individuals. While post-hoc analysis did not reveal any significant differences between groups, the overall relationship testing between these variables was significant. Significant differences were also identified between White/Caucasian respondents and Minority Race respondents when it came to the apologetic behaviors of having long hair, talking about or trying to be seen with a boyfriend, and avoiding talk of sexual orientation in public. For each of these behaviors, the White/Caucasian respondents engaged less frequently or at lower levels. The final demographic that had a statistically significant relationship was regarding the number of years of participation in

roller derby. Those individuals who had less than one year of experience engaged in more apologizing for aggression than those who had 7-8 years of experience. Individuals who had 1-2 years of experience avoided aggression more than individuals who had 5-8 years of experience (two demographic groups). Overall, a slight negative correlation was found between individuals' mean apologetic behavior score and their years involved in roller derby. A small positive correlation was revealed between respondent age and their years of roller derby experience.

Of the demographics with relationships between groups, even with different apologetic behaviors, it could be noted that it is a minority group that is engaging in more apologetic behavior in each instance, although it is not necessarily the case for every single minority group of each demographic (i.e., age groups). This could, perhaps, be due to the intersectionality of societal pressures surrounding age, race, gender, and sexual orientation with the hegemonic masculinity that influences apologetic behavior. The compounding of these pressures may lead to increased apologetic behavior in the hopes of satisfying the status quo. The exception to this rule is the years of participation in roller derby, but of these significant demographics, this is the single one that can be controlled by the respondent. A respondent can elect whether to continue to play roller derby, they cannot elect to change their personal characteristics like race or sexual orientation. There is also the significant difference between heterosexual respondents and non-heterosexual respondents who had lower mean scores than the former when the behavior in question was trying to be seen with and/or talking about a boyfriend. This discrepant result is sensible, in that some of those among the non-heterosexual group

would not ever have or be seeking a boyfriend. Overall, this distinction of demographics, the minority groups higher engagement values, would be worthy of further study.

Study Limitations

Study limitations include a very specific target population under the survey. These results cannot be generalized to the total population of woman athletes and can only be viewed within the context of the target population. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, researchers are unable to follow up with respondents regarding any questions about the qualitative responses. If something could have positive or negative connotations, the researcher must make the best educated guess as to the meaning behind the response based on all qualitative response, or the response must simply be read at face value. The self-report structure of the questionnaire is always at risk of biased responses from the sample. The honesty behind individuals' responses is unable to be determined due to the anonymous conditions of the survey. Finally, it has been theorized that the language used in the study and the publicizing of the questionnaire may have had an unintentional self-limiting effect. While transgender women were a valid gender group within the study, no transgender individuals participated in the study. It was noted that the use of the word "female" as opposed to "woman" when describing apologetic behaviors and the subjects of the study may have discouraged these individuals from participating.

Recommendations for Future Studies

While still a minority group within the target population, it was disappointing that no transgender individuals responded to the survey. One respondent pointed out,

transgender women may have been dissuaded from participation by the use of the word “female” as opposed to the word “woman.” It is a suggestion, then, to make use of the more inclusive wording throughout the questionnaire when used in future research.

Question 15, “because of stereotypes of female athletes, I criticize females who are not feminine or who are lesbian” currently stands on the ground that “unfeminine” and “lesbian” are equally derogatory/undesired labels under these stereotypes, as if femininity and lesbianism are mutually exclusive and mutually undesired in women. In future studies, it is suggested that the question should be split into two separate questions, one asking about criticism of unfeminine female athletes and one asking about criticism of lesbian athletes. As suggested by Davis-Delano et al. (2009), it would be worthwhile to examine whether the amount of apologetic behavior is the same in different settings and situations within this population (i.e., multi-part questions), “Because of stereotypes surrounding woman athletes, you engage in X behavior when: -in public, -around your coach, -around your teammates, -around your family” with the Never-to-Almost Always Likert scale for each environment. Since individuals adjust their behavior depending on their environment, a study of this nature could yield different results.

One of the most interesting results of this study was the prevalence of the behavior of apologizing for aggression. Roller derby participants have a multitude of motivations in participation, from an outlet for aggression, to a social community, to a place to be unapologetic physical and competitive. The results of this study then seem to be oxymoronic to those types of motivations. It would be fascinating to examine individuals’ motivations for playing roller derby in line with their individual engagement

in apologetic behavior. This study has given a small indication that apologetic behavior regarding avoidance of aggression may be diminished as experience in roller derby is gained. Further research is warranted into this phenomenon, to first verify whether it is true, but to also explore how the socialization of roller derby affects its athletes and their relationship with aggression.

Conclusion

This study adds to the data of how different woman athletes in different sports at different levels of competition respond to hegemonic masculinity with apologetic behavior. It expands the collected demographics of previous studies for analysis and review among the wide population of woman athletes. The apologetic behavior questionnaire was modified in a way that furthers the research with modern culture and in a fashion to fit the sport of roller derby.

The results of this study can serve to motivate change within the roller derby community. These initial results indicate that, when it comes to apologetic behavior, the roller derby community may not be as progressive as it lauds itself to be. Roller derby athletes perceive negative stereotypes surrounding woman athletes and respond with apologetic behavior. With these results, it can initially feel as though nothing has changed to improve apologetic behavior in the eight years since the pilot study first tested the Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire. Certainly, direct comparison cannot be made between the two samples due to distinctive populations, but the first feeling was one of disappointment. However, instead of discouragement, these results should serve as a catalyst for community education and advancement through action. Recognition is the

first step in remedying the presence of apologetic behaviors within the roller derby community, and further, to allow the actions to live up to the words.

This study has theoretical implications, as well. The field of gender theories needs further expansion as broad spectrums of sexual orientation and genders are more widely expressed in the public. The data recorded from this survey reveals that the roller derby community is a ready population that can offer study subjects of a wide range of demographics such as orientation, gender, income, location, and educational background. Hopefully, this research can serve as a foundation for further expansion in the field of gender theories. Apologetic behavior, for all its prevalence among our society, is deserving of greater study and focus. Many different pressures and societal beliefs factor into an individual's level of engagement in apologetic behavior. Should we hope to puzzle out how these intricate pieces combine into apologetic behavior, more effort and exploration must be devoted to the theory. It is the hope of the author that this study adds to the conversation surrounding femininity and masculinity, stereotypes of woman athletes, and can encourage greater research on both roller derby and apologetic behavior.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire

Apologetic Behavior Questionnaire

Thank you very much for participating in this questionnaire. The results of this research project will help us understand more about the experiences of female athletes.

It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey. Some of the questions on this survey may make you feel uncomfortable. You have the right to not answer any particular question, or to stop answering questions at any time. If you have any comments about the survey itself, there is a place for you to write your comments at the end of the survey. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. While it is understood that no computer transmission can be perfectly secure, reasonable efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of your transmission. There is no penalty for refusing to participate. You are free to withdraw your consent and participation at any time. There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research. No compensation will be offered for participation. There are no direct benefits to you for participating other than to assist us with the research.

CONTACT: This research is being conducted by Christopher Atwater in Sport and Recreation Studies at George Mason University along with the student researcher Emily Cookson. Dr. Atwater may be reached at 703-993-7608 for questions or to report a research-related problem. Ms. Cookson may be reached via email at ecookson@gmu.edu.

Part II:

Female athletes who play some sports are stereotyped by many outsiders as masculine or as lesbians. Of course, female athletes have personalities that range from very feminine to very masculine, and everything in between. And, while female athletes are mostly heterosexual, sport also includes non-heterosexual individuals. Research indicates that stereotypes by outsiders create lots of pressure on female athletes and can even result in discrimination. This questionnaire is designed to examine some possible ways that female athletes respond to these pressures.

1. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I try to look feminine when I play my sport.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

2. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I wear makeup when I play my sport.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

3. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I wear "sexy" clothing when I play my sport.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

4. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I keep my hair long.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

5. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I keep my nails manicured and/or painted.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

6. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid being aggressive.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

7. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I apologize when I am aggressive.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

8. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I don't play as hard as I can when I am competing against males in sports.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

9. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid talking about sport in public.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

10. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid hanging out with other female athletes in public outside of the sport setting.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Almost Always |
| <input type="radio"/> |

11. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I avoid (non-game related) physical contact with other females in public.

Never Rarely Occasionally Often Almost Always

12. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I hang out with males in public, outside of the sport setting.

Never Rarely Occasionally Often Almost Always

13. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I talk about, or try to be seen with, a boyfriend.

Never Rarely Occasionally Often Almost Always

14. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I don't talk about lesbianism/bisexuality in public.

Never Rarely Occasionally Often Almost Always

15. Because of stereotypes of female athletes, I criticize females who are not feminine or who are lesbian.

Never Rarely Occasionally Often Almost Always

If you DO engage in any of these behaviors, please explain why you do so.

If you DO NOT engage in any of these behaviors, please explain why you do not do so.

Are there any other ways than those listed that YOU or OTHERS respond to stereotypes of female athletes?

Please express any additional comments you have about the behaviors questionnaire.

| | |
|------|----------|
| << | Continue |
| Back | >> |

Part III:

The survey concludes with a demographics section. For each question, please select the answer that you feel is most representative of you at this current time.

Do you consider "Skater" to be your primary* role in roller derby?

*The role in which you engage most often or with which you most strongly identify.

Other possible roles include: Official, Announcer, Photographer, Volunteer, Fan, Family member of someone involved in roller derby, etc.

- Yes
- No

Do you currently live in the United States of America?

- Yes
- No

In which state or territory do you currently reside?

Please select your age group.

- 18-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46+

In terms of gender, how do you identify?

- Cisgender Woman (Self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to biological sex)
- Cisgender Man (Self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to biological sex)
- Trans Woman
- Trans Man
- Intersex Woman
- Intersex Man
- Gender Expansive/Gender Fluid/Gender non-conforming (Used to describe those who view their gender identity as one of many possible genders beyond strictly female or male.)
- Other:

In terms of sexual orientation, how do you identify?

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Asexual
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Undecided/Unknown
- Other:

What is your race/ethnicity?

- Asian Indian
- Black/African
- East Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Indigenous/Native
- Pacific Islander
- White/Caucasian
- Other:

What is your educational background (highest level completed)?

- None
- High School/Secondary School
- Some College
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Some Graduate School
- Master's Degree
- PhD/Professional Degree

What was your approximate household income, in U.S. dollars, before taxes in the previous year?

- Under 15,000
- 15,000-24,999

- 25,000-34,999
- 35,000-49,999
- 50,000-74,999
- 75,000-99,999
- 100,000-149,999
- 150,000+

How many years have you been involved in roller derby, if any?

- < 1
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9-10
- 11+

How would you rate the level of competition of your team/league?

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Intra-league | Inter-league | Inter-league | Inter-league |
| Non- | Recreational | Competitive | Casually | Moderately | Highly |
| competitive | | (Home Teams) | Competitive | Competitive | Competitive |
| <input type="radio"/> |

| | |
|------|--------|
| << | Submit |
| Back | |

Appendix B: Cover Letter

Emily Cookson

4400 University Dr., Fairfax, VA 22030 | (703)993-1000 | ecookson@gmu.edu

December 1, 2016

Dear Participant:

My name is Emily Cookson and I am a graduate student at George Mason University completing my Master's degree in Sport and Recreation Studies. As a part of that degree, I am conducting a research study to explore the use of apologetic behaviors in female* roller derby athletes to fulfill my thesis requirements. This project seeks to gain insight into current stereotypes about female athletes and how these stereotypes can influence behavior. Several studies have been conducted researching similar information in the populations of female collegiate athletes. As a member of the roller derby community, I have found that modern roller derby offers a unique and under-researched population of female athletes, including a broader spectrum of genders, sexualities, ages, and socioeconomic statuses than those that may be represented in a population of female collegiate athletes. Your participation in this survey will add to the knowledge and understanding of the experiences of roller derby athletes.

This study is a mixed methods design that will collect both qualitative data and quantitative data through open-ended questions and closed-ended questions, respectively. Responses will be recorded through an online survey which includes an informed consent, an apologetic behavior questionnaire, and a demographic questionnaire. The

total completion time of the survey should not exceed 20 minutes. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. There is no penalty for refusing to participate. You are free to withdraw your consent and participation at any time. No compensation will be offered for participation. No identifying information will be collected from participants. No individual data will be reported. Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions at ecookson@gmu.edu.

Sincerely,

Emily Cookson

*For the purposes of this study, “female” shall follow the accepted gender policy of the Women’s Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA): “An individual who identifies as a [woman,] trans woman, intersex woman, and/or gender expansive may skate with a WFTDA charter team if women’s flat track roller derby is the version and composition of roller derby with which they most closely identify.” (WFTDA Statement About Gender, 2015, retrieved from <https://wftda.com/wftda-gender-statement>)

Appendix C: Researcher Reflexivity Statement

As a part of the fulfillment of my masters of science degree, I was required to complete a thesis. This study was one that blossomed out of a semester-long project that was assigned during the first term of my graduate studies. Although, initially, I looked only for a way to incorporate my passion, roller derby, into a school assignment, I found the subject of apologetic behavior came to be more and more important to me. I was at once blind to and the subject of this social construct. I did not know anything about apologetic behavior, merely stumbling across the pilot study in a web search for class, but the phenomenon is one that I immediately recognized in myself and in those women around me. Over the course of two years throughout completing this project, I've become more and more involved in the conversations about sexism and gender bias within the roller derby community. The information I've learned motivates my actions and influences my point of view each day.

My personal experiences with roller derby are vastly influential to this project, my opinions, my perception, and my potential bias. As a twenty-seven year-old woman, born, raised, and living in Virginia, playing as much roller derby as she can, I am a member of my target population. I am a white, cisgender, bisexual, middle-class, well-educated woman. I've played roller derby for 4 years on teams that range from intra-league competitive to inter-league highly competitive. Roller derby is my passion and holds a firm position within my personal identity. I started playing just after I completed my undergraduate degree while I was floundering, trying to make my way in the "real world." It also served an integral part of my coming out, as the timing of the two

coincided closely, and it was one of the first communities where I felt comfortable being out and true about my identity. It took me time to join the sport, though, as my initial, uninformed, and heavily stigmatized preconception of the community was that everyone who played was a lesbian. By that logic, if I played roller derby, then everyone would think that I was a lesbian and then they would be (at least partially) right. They would know that I wasn't heterosexual! It was a pretty important crisis at the time, but the community that I found was completely welcoming to me as a queer woman. I feel that I am so much better for my involvement with roller derby.

I continue to fight internalized pressures of how a woman should present, act, and desire. I have always been a “tomboy” in every sense of the stereotype: no makeup, little hair-styling skills, every choice more functional than fashionable, interested and involved in athletics, and, lo-and-behold, not heterosexual. Initially, when I was only just learning about apologetic behavior and did not fully understand it, I believed that I had been unconsciously transgressive, bucking the system of femininity. Soon enough, I recognized all the ways that I still experienced these societal pressures and how I still responded to them, including with apologetic behavior, at times. When I came to graduate school and began to work around college students again, I especially felt the pressures increase. I was back “in school,” navigating the complex, if less rigid, social structure once again. Though, my apologetic behavior engagement is low ($\mu=1.5$), I still initially feel compelled to submit to the pressure, especially to physically present in an appropriately “feminine” way. The work of this study has helped me recognize, understand, and analyze these pressures as well as to begin working to adjust my

behavior. It is not easily unlearned after decades of conforming and a society that still tells you that masculinity in women is inappropriate, but I am glad to have learned from this study and its influences as I work to move forward.

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BIOGRAPHY

Emily Cookson was born on August 7, 1989 and raised in Herndon, Virginia. She graduated from Herndon High School in 2007. She attended Towson University in Towson, Maryland for her undergraduate studies where she received Bachelor's degrees in Athletic Training and in Exercise Science in 2012. She was employed as an athletic trainer for several years in and around Baltimore, Maryland. Emily spent two years serving as a Graduate Assistant Athletic Trainer for the George Mason Women's Soccer and Baseball teams while completing her graduate studies.