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FRIENDSHIP PATTERNS, DESIRE FOR CHANGE AND SATISFACTION

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This thesis is dedicated to my Nana & Da.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to investigate friendship patterns and change within these over the past twelve years. A replication of an earlier friendship study conducted using a New Zealand sample was undertaken. Additional information was gathered relating to satisfaction with elements of friendship and desire for change in friendships. Few changes in variables relating to friendship patterns were expected. Being in a relationship was expected to reduce the numbers of friends possessed especially in cross-sex friendships. Both men and women were expected to value women more in areas of emotional support, discussing personal problems and therapeutic value in friendship. Men and women were expected to rate greater satisfaction with women in areas of assistance and emotional support. Men were expected to desire greater increases in friendship numbers and conversation intimacy than women. A sample of 64 male and 78 female Massey University Psychology students volunteered as participants. Comparisons were made between the present study's findings and those of earlier work, noting changes in males friendships. Most friendship patterns were found to be largely unchanged. Predictions about valuing friendship were supported. Satisfaction data indicated that women rate themselves more satisfied in same-sex friendships than men. Men rated themselves as more satisfied in opposite-sex friendships than women. No significant sex-differences were noted for desire for change in friendship. However both sexes would like more friends of each type, and greater personal conversation in friendship. Results are discussed with reference to change in friendship patterns and traditional male sex-roles.

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