One Night of Pleasure or Risk: Hook-Up Culture and Sexual Violence
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Abstract
This was a grounded theory project that used a focus group and interview to examine the extent to which students at MacEwan University conceptualize connections between sexual violence and hook-up culture. During the focus group and interview, observational notes were recorded while the moderator maintained conversation with the participant(s). As per the information disseminated by the participants, it is evident that undergraduate students may define hook-up culture differently than their peers and, while there may be risks associated with engaging in hook-up culture, it is suggested that there may also be benefits. This study's limitations are concerned with participant sample and data collection. The findings of this exercise demonstrate that students conceptualize connections between sexual violence and hook-up culture.

Methods

Grounded Theory
This project was conducted as a grounded theory study. Observations, a focus group, and an interview were conducted with undergraduate students from MacEwan University in relation to hook-up culture and sexual violence.

Data Collection Techniques
This study was completed using qualitative methods. Three data collection techniques were used for triangulation: participant observation, one focus group, and one interview.

Sample Selection
The sample consisted of undergraduate students at MacEwan University that were enrolled in a Sociology class. Participant make-up included four female-identifying persons as well as one male-identifying person.

Coding Procedure
MAXQDA, a qualitative analysis software, was used to code theverbatim transcriptions. In order to create thematic codes, action codes were created and then grouped together according to similarities.

Results

Common Themes
The themes discussed below were among the most represented thematic codes between the focus group and interview.

Engagement in hook-up culture is normalized: Within broader society, engagement in hook-up culture is normalized through not only media but also through the behaviour exhibited by many students, as it is often encouraged and thought of as being “part of the university culture”.

Engagement in hook-up culture comes with risk: Engaging in hook-up culture comes with many risks which may include, but are not limited to, the contraction of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and/or sexual violence. The risk for sexual violence increases when a person engages in hook-up culture.

Engagement in hook-up culture comes with benefits: For many, engagement in hook-up culture is strictly associated with a desire for pleasure. For others, engagement may help to increase confidence in social and sexual atmospheres.

Engagement in hook-up culture is gendered: Male-identifying persons and female-identifying persons may think of engagement in hook-up culture differently due to its stigmatized nature (i.e., women are more likely to be labelled “slut” if they engage in hook-up culture).

Engagement in hook-up culture allows for exploration: Engagement in hook-up culture allows a person to explore different relationships and different people. This culture enables them to discover what type of love or relationship they desire in life.

Sample
Male-identifying 20%
Female-identifying 80%

Conclusions
This study demonstrates the extent to which undergraduate students at MacEwan University conceptualize the connections between hook-up culture and sexual violence. Although the themes emerging from the focus group and interview were consistent in terms of there not being any major outliers, it is possible that there would have been an emergence of other themes aside from the ones mentioned in the results section had there been more focus groups and interviews conducted. Also, other themes may have emerged with a larger participant sample or a greater mixture of genders; in other words, a more representative sample. However, despite the limitations of this study, it remains evident that students do in fact conceptualize connections between sexual violence and hook-up culture.

References

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