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SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OF GREEK LIFE MEMBERS

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ABSTRACT

The present study explored the drinking and sexual experiences of undergraduate students at a major northeastern university who are members of a Greek society. Expectations and motivations for drinking and engaging in risky sexual behavior are explored through expectancy theory and qualitative research methodology in the form of grounded theory. Eighteen individual interviews of fraternity men and sorority women were conducted and audiotaped for transcription. Individual fraternity and sorority members described their preconceived notions and expectations of being a member of Greek life as well as their experiences in the social culture of the Penn State Greek life community in a major theme entitled “Institutional Attitudes.” Two other major themes that emerged were “Mixing Alcohol and Sex” and “Hooking Up.” Many interviewees reported that these experiences had an overall negative impact on their health and well-being resulting in the core variable of “Negative Sexual Experiences.” Data from the present study may be useful in developing interventions in order to reduce and prevent future incidence of risky negative sexual behavior and the detrimental consequences of such behavior.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Drinking and Risky Sexual Behavior

Risky sexual behaviors, that often occur following consumption of alcohol, are a serious problem amongst the undergraduate college student population. Engaging in risky sexual behaviors has been shown to have severe consequences which threaten physical and mental health, such as sexually transmitted infections resulting from unprotected sex, and the psychological and emotional trauma which may result from unwanted sex (Dermen, Cooper & Agocha, 1998). Sexual assault and rape are serious consequences which may result from unwanted sex and unintended pregnancy is also a possible consequence of any form of risky sexual behavior when a form of contraceptive is not used.

Binge drinking amongst college undergraduate populations is also considered a dangerous practice which is associated with serious consequences that pose a threat to an individual's life and health (Scheier & Botvin, 1997). Defined as the consumption of five or more drinks in one sitting for women or six or more drinks in one sitting for men, binge drinking has been demonstrated to be widespread across the college campus culture. Binge drinking is prevalent to a higher extent amongst college students who are involved with Greek life or who are members of a fraternity or a sorority, which will be the population of focus in answering my overarching question (Park, Sher, Wood & Krull, 2009; Barry, 2007). Binge drinking can result in serious dangers posed to the individual, which may include getting in trouble with the law, being involved in a physical fight, getting sick or injuring oneself or engaging in unwanted or unprotected sexual activity among other detrimental outcomes (Ragsdale et al., 2012). In addition to the dangers to the individual which binge drinking poses, binge drinking has been

shown to be harmful and disruptive to peers and friends as well, such that students' have reported being negatively impacted by peers' partying and drinking behaviors by having sleep or studying interrupted or by having to take care of or baby sit a friend who drank too much (Ragsdale, et al., 2012). In my thesis, I will focus on the detrimental outcome of engaging in risky sexual behavior following drinking and I will look specifically at students who are involved in fraternities and sororities. In examining this outcome of binge drinking, I aim to answer the overarching research question of how individuals' expectancies effect their sexual behavior following drinking.

Theory

Expectancies of behavior following consumption of alcohol

Positive alcohol expectancies are defined as beliefs and perceptions about alcohol's positive effects (Wardell & Read, 2013). According to Bandura's principle of reciprocal determinism, (1977) social learning mechanisms such as descriptive norms and positive alcohol expectancies should both be considered to reciprocally influence alcohol use, affecting one another over time. Due to the highly social nature of alcohol use of the general population and especially within the college population, Bandura's social learning theory (1977) is an appropriate and useful framework for studying drinking behavior of college students. According to Bandura's principle of reciprocal determinism, which is part of the Social Learning Theory, individual's cognitions and behavior operate together and influence each other in a dynamic learning process (Bandura, 1969). By this principle, positive alcohol expectancies and descriptive norms, which are individual perceptions and beliefs about socially normative drinking behavior, both influence and are influenced by each other in their effects on drinking behavior of college students.

In my thesis, I will focus on the role which alcohol expectancies have in shaping college students drinking behavior particularly within the sub-population of Greek-affiliated students who are members of fraternities and sororities. In answering my overarching question of: How do

expectancies of drinking and sexual behavior influence the experiences of fraternity and sorority members, I will also consider the role which descriptive norms play in influencing sexual behavior. Other sub-questions, which I will examine in my qualitative study, will include:

1. How does gender influence the effect of alcohol expectancies on sexual behavior?
2. How individuals form these expectancies?
3. What are the results of these expectancies?

It will be important to consider the role of descriptive norms in shaping both expectancies and behavior.

Research addressing the role expectancies play in shaping sexual behavior during and following the consumption of alcohol emphasizes the influence of early experiences with alcohol on alcohol-related expectancies and subsequent behavior (George et al., 2006). Such behavior includes sexual risk behavior following drinking alcohol. As many adolescents' introduction to alcohol occurs in a social atmosphere, research suggests that adolescents' early drinking experiences establish alcohol as a vehicle for immediate social rewards (Scheier & Botvin, 1997). Considering the research findings on early experiences of drinking with peers and their influence on the development of alcohol expectancies, one can infer that drinking with friends continues to impact and shape alcohol expectancies in early adulthood and the college years. Most college students have not yet reached full maturity and may still be experimenting with alcohol.

Peers role in the social learning of rewards associated with alcohol use is both direct and indirect, as learning occurs through both direct experience drinking with peers and indirectly through observation of peers' drinking (Scheier & Botvin, 1997; Perkins et al., 2005; Chauvin, 2012). Through each of these mechanisms by which individuals learn the social rewards associated with alcohol, peers play a crucial role in developing and maintaining individuals' expectancies with regard to alcohol and its effect on behavior. In turn, the positive alcohol expectancies established by peers significantly impact the typical quantity of alcohol an

individual drinks and the typical frequency of drinking alcohol (Wardell & Read, 2013). In this way, peers are seen to influence positive alcohol expectancies that are socially rewarding, which influence how much and how often an individual drinks.

Further support for expectancies' influence on sexual behavior is presented by research on post-drinking sexual inferences, which were demonstrated to be influenced by alcohol disinhibition expectancies (George et al., 1995). Expectancy, or belief and perception that a woman would be sexually disinhibited after drinking alcohol, was assessed using a subjective perceptions form. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which a woman drinking alcohol in a short vignette would be sexually disinhibited. In this same experiment male participants' expectancies of alcohol's disinhibition effects significantly predicted their ratings of women subjects who were drinking alcohol as "sexual" or not (George et al., 1995). Interestingly, it was also demonstrated that men's alcohol disinhibition expectancies were not activated when exposed to the woman drinking a non-alcoholic beverage (George et al., 1995). These findings are applicable to my research question. Inquiring about participants' beliefs about alcohol's ability to lower inhibition may be useful in ascertaining reasons for engaging in sexually risky behavior.

Implications of peer relations and social norms in alcohol-related expectancies and expectancies of subsequent sexual risk behaviors

Social normative theory conceptualizes the crucial role which peers play in influencing drinking behavior of individuals. Social norms, such as friends' attitudes to alcohol and perceptions of friends' alcohol use, significantly predict individual alcohol expectancies, which in turn, was a significant predictor for alcohol use (Scheier & Botvin, 1997). Peers serve as a major medium by which positive and negative effects of alcohol and outcomes related to drinking are learned and reinforced. Because of this, peer modeling and social normative theories should be taken into account when exploring college students' drinking behaviors through expectancy theory. From early experiences experimenting with alcohol and outcomes of drinking, peers are

central in individual development of alcohol expectancies and the role of peers can be continued to be seen as central in influencing drinking behavior and drinking-related outcomes during college.

Studies have also illustrated alcohol's influence on expectancy to engage in intercourse (Dermen, Cooper & Agocha, 1998). Alcohol consumption and expectancy interact and together predict sexual risk-taking. Research has shown that expectancies moderated the relationship between alcohol use and risk level when having intercourse (Dermen, Cooper & Agocha, 1998). Findings of this research support the premise that alcohol acts to increase sexual risk taking through its role in activating individuals' expectancies and beliefs about the effects of alcohol. This research is relevant to my overarching question investigating the effect of expectancies on sexual behavior as alcohol use itself can be seen to influence expectancies. Thus, I will ask participants about how their own alcohol expectancies differed before and during the time when they were drinking to test if the interaction affected risk when having sex.

In addition, researchers propose that for some individuals, alcohol could serve as a handicapping or excuse mechanism to lessen the degree to which they assume responsibility for engaging in risky sex (Dermen, Cooper & Agocha, 1998).

Gender Differences

Considering differences in expectancies for drinking and for engaging in sex following drinking occurring among each gender, men perceived targets of the other sex who were consuming alcohol to be more sexual than women perceived male targets who were drinking. In this study, sexiness was operationalized by ratings of how a respondent perceived the target drinker to "enjoy sex," to be "sexy," and would be a "good lover" (George et al., 2006). These findings support men's perception of the other sex being more sexually desirable when drinking than did women. In answering my research question, I hypothesize that heterosexual fraternity men's motivations to engage in a risky sexual behavior, such as having unprotected sex or

sexually victimizing someone, would be largely influenced by sexual desire for a person of the other sex drinking alcohol. I will assess differences in each gender's motives for having sex after drinking by asking questions about why they wanted to have sex with a particular partner after drinking. These differences may be explained in part by the normative pressures for men to have sex with many partners may partially explain men's' perceptions of female drinkers being sexier.

Masculine norms which reinforce the social value of having sex with many women may be especially prevalent within the culture of fraternity life due to the cohesive nature of these organizations. On the other hand, research has indicated although females held the expectancies that alcohol would enhance sexuality, their sexual responsiveness measured in a laboratory setting was not in line with this expectancy as was men's (George et al., 1995). This incongruity has been posited to be due to increased risks posed to women associated with sex, such as risk of unintended pregnancy and risk of sexual assault, as well as concerns about social stigmatization (Crowe & George, 1989)

Outcome

Implications

Study of the motivations of fraternity men and sorority women for engaging in sexual risk behavior following alcohol consumption is a worthy concern to public health. Risky sexual behaviors are detrimental to individuals and communities due to the increasing prevalence of sexually transmitted infections and sexual assault. Identification of specific expectancies, such as expectancies of positive social rewards and disinhibition associated with sexual risk behavior, could be important in efforts to reduce sexual risk behavior. Approaching this concern to public health by studying the effect of fraternity and sorority members' alcohol expectancies on sexual risk behavior is useful as potential interventions may seek to alter expectancies in order to reduce sexually risky behavior. The study of these expectancies using expectancy theory and social norms theory, is appropriate due to the highly cohesive and social nature of Greek organizations.

Personal experience and observation of peers' behavior has been demonstrated to be impacted by perceptions of peers' alcohol use and attitudes toward alcohol which have been shown to influence individual expectancies (Scheier & Botvin, 1997).

The Present Study

In the present study, I aim to explore the motivations of fraternity and sorority students for engaging in sexual risk behavior through qualitative research. I will aim to answer my overarching research question: How do expectancies of drinking and sexual behavior influence the experiences of fraternity men and sorority women? I will also examine three sub-questions:

1. How does gender influence the effect of alcohol expectancies on sexual behavior?
2. How individuals form these expectancies?
3. What are the results of these expectancies?

Sample

The sample population for the present study consisted of Penn State students between the ages of 18 and 25 who are members of a social fraternity or sorority. Participants were recruited using convenience and snowball sampling techniques. The researcher distributed study information to acquaintances who were members of a Greek organization. These key participants disseminated information to members of their fraternity or sorority chapter. Prospective participants were asked to contact the researcher if interested in participating in the study to determine a time and date to be interviewed. The final sample composition consisted of 10 sorority women and 8 fraternity men.

Procedures

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Penn State University was obtained by the researcher prior to contacting participants or initiating the study. All participants were emailed an informed consent form prior to their designated interviewing time and participants were asked to verbally consent to being interviewed before interview questions were

posed. Interviews took place in room 203 of the Biobehavioral Health building. Interviewees either came to the room to answer the questions or interviewed over skype. All interviews were audio-recorded to allow the researcher to go back and code the interviews to interpret findings later in the research process. Thirty-one interview questions were posed to participants (interview questions can be found in the Appendix 1 on page 49). Each interview lasted between twenty-five and forty minutes.

By interviewing both fraternity men and sorority women, I will ask questions in the following categories in aiming to gain a more comprehensive understanding of motivations of these students for engaging in risky sexual behavior following consumption of alcohol. First, I will focus on the motivations of these students for joining a fraternity or sorority, as to understand how expectations of the Greek life and Greek culture may have influenced individuals' expectations to engage in sexually risky behavior and motivations for engaging in such behavior. Second, I will ask questions regarding the participants' satisfaction with their experience with Greek life and the extent to which partying and drinking culture is an important component of this. Third, I will ask questions regarding particular experiences with alcohol that were negative and involved the participants' experience in a dangerous or risky situation or their observing or hearing about an incident anecdotally which was unsafe. I will ask particularly about situations which placed participants' or someone they knew at a sexual risk, as to gain a deeper understanding of how peer norms and expectancies of drinking and partying and their consequences have influenced sexual risk behavior.

Interpretation of Findings:

To analyze and interpret the individual interviews which were held, I employed grounded theory, using the processes of open coding, axial coding and selective coding, to identify the core variable (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). All interviews were transcribed by the researcher and open coding of the transcripts took place to identify key themes and phrases which were frequently

occurring. After the process of open coding, axial coding occurred. In the process of axial coding, codes that were similar were combined into a broader code and sub-categories were constructed for more specific codes which could be grouped under a broader code or theme. The process of selective coding then occurred to establish the core variable.

More specific sub-categories are all conceptualized into sub-themes which are grouped under the major themes developed during the selective coding process. The results of this qualitative analysis are presented in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Chapter 2

Institutional Attitudes Impact on Behavior

Grounded theory was used to analyze personal interviews conducted with fraternity men and sorority women regarding the overarching question: How do expectancies of drinking and sexual behavior influence the experiences of fraternity and sorority members? The first of the three major themes that surfaced at a high frequency during the open coding process was the “Institutional Attitudes” theme. (See Figure 1-1 on page 48). This theme conceptualizes the social norms and standards for behavior communicated to Greek members by their peers in their Greek organization. This common thread that surfaced throughout many of the interviews will be divided into sub-themes. The sub-themes include, “Formal Rules,” “Members Messages,” and “Socializing.”

i. Formal Rules

The “formal rules” sub-theme includes the establishment of rules and positions instituted by both individual chapters of fraternities and sororities as well as by the governing body of Penn State Greek life, the Interfraternity Council. Fraternity and sorority members adopted various attitudes impacted by these rules which influenced their drinking and sexual risk behaviors. Some interviewees spoke about certain positions and responsibilities they held which included enforcing rules and reporting to the Interfraternity Council. Many individuals said that the rules, or holding a position to enforce rules, impacted their drinking behavior. One fraternity member said about his role as risk manager:

Well most Thursday Friday, Saturday, like every normal, we drink at socials. Well Penn State has a lot of new rules. By Penn State I mean the IFC, a separate entity. They report to the borough and university. They have mandated that only beer in twelve ounce cans can be served.

Put a lid on. I'm a so-called risk manager for the house, so I have to think about what everyone else is doing while they're having fun. It's more just staying sober some of the nights, and I have some other risk managers I can delegate to being sober. I have to enforce the IFC's rules which there are a good amount of them. (I.D. I., p. 2)

Another fraternity member said this about his role as the president of his fraternity:

I'm 21 so I have a beer with dinner every day. But I wouldn't say I get absolutely hammered. I'm in an executive position so I can't really get to the point where I'm belligerent, if, god-forbid, I ever have to talk to the police or anything like that. You can't get to that level. When I first joined I was much more ... adventurous with my drinking. By the time I was 20, I started taking executive positions in the house, and you have to realize that you have to stop fooling around because this is like a full time job you have to partake in. (I.D. E., p. 3)

A sorority member said about rules of the Greek system:

IFC establishes rules, and our sorority has a social chair and a risk management chair, who vote on more specific rules. A girl fell off a table one year so now we have a rule of not standing on elevated surfaces until 12 because social hours go until twelve o'clock. That's the time when our president or our social chair can get sued if something happened. So during that period we have no shots, no double fisting, no elevated surfaces, no going upstairs. After that all hell breaks loose. People are doing all sorts of stuff. They leave and go to another open party. We have more specific rules than some other sororities do. IFC has the rule that you can't leave the frat with any form of alcohol. Sober sisters used to be able to drink beer now we can't drink at all. (I.D. G, p. 2)

ii. Socializing

The “Socializing” variable or sub-theme conceptualizes how Greek members’ views on drinking and hooking up were influenced by the social structure of the Greek community. A frequently and consistently occurring theme throughout the interviewing and coding process was

how the social structure and organization of social events provided members with a variety of pre-planned opportunities for drinking and for engagement in hookups or casual sex.

Interviewees described many of these experiences as playing a role in conveying to them attitudes of the culture of Greek life, as well as serving as a medium for meeting peers who they were interested in romantically and sexually. The sheer amount of structured opportunities to drink and the chance to meet people “purely by numbers” was a common theme.

One sorority woman describes the role of the Greek system in helping her meet people she was interested in romantically or sexually;

Well you definitely are exposed to more guys. I met my boyfriend in a fraternity. You are constantly interacting and mingling with people on a regular basis. You are guaranteed to meet three different groups of guys every weekend which is great. I think as you get older meeting those people turns into actual relationships and other times it's just casual hook ups. (I.D. L., p. 2)

Another sorority member says that she thinks the social structure of Greek life has caused her to drink more than she would have otherwise:

I think that Greek life made me drink more, honestly. It definitely makes you drink more. Because it's just free and it's there. When you go to a frat party freshman year, you have to fight to get like one beer but when you go to a social it's just such easy access, they're pouring it out for you. The sheer amount that's there. I hate when I'm at a frat party jam-packed with people and sometimes I overshoot drinking at a social before that so I don't have to wait in line for a drink at a party later. (I.D. K., p. 2)

She also says that having more time designated to drinking and more options contributes to overdoing it and Greek life has provided her with more opportunities to meet guys:

Girls get excited and take too many shots... In a typical night of Greek life you have three usual settings, like pre-game, social, then party and there's alcohol in each place. Before I was

in Greek life we'd just pre-game in the dorms then go to someplace like the lacrosse house and drink there. First of all the night starts earlier, I just think having a longer period of time and having more options of alcohol... You are meeting groups of guys, like different groups of guys every night, and they're all different. There's differences within frats so you're just socializing with different groups of guys all the time, like you have week longs or like Greek week and stuff. So you just have events where you're paired with a different frat, so you get close with them, and you're always mixing around, always meeting new people. (I.D. K., p. 2)

A fraternity man says,

I mean it definitely helps. If you have 50 attractive females walk into your basement, it gives you better odds of finding someone who might be in your dating capabilities. (I.D. E., p. 2)

Another fraternity man says that the social environment of Greek life contributes to a lot of casual hook ups:

I think it's just the culture. I think it's just how it is here especially with Greek life being so large. In Greek life I have other friends in other fraternities. Most friends, if they're not in your fraternity, but in other fraternities, and you're going out with them to socials, the culture is exactly the same. If you put 60 guys and 60 girls who are all drinking heavily in a large dark room with loud music, I think it's just bound to happen. I think it depends on the brother. There are always guys who are better with girls than others. I think if any guy hit it off with a girl he would try to have sex with her or hook up with her, but there are some guys who go to talk to everyone but aren't as actively pursuing someone to hook up with so nothing pans out. I don't think all 90 guys have sex every night, some don't actively try and others are doing it like almost every social. (I.D. M., p. 2)

Another fraternity brother says Greek life helps him meet girls because the Greek institution at Penn State is so large,

By vast numbers; you can meet thirty girls in one night. But also obviously you have to be interested. There's a certain type of girl that joins a sorority. I'm interested in a girl that's social, and I like girl that has a lot of things going for her, so in every Greek organization there's at least ten girls who have leadership roles and that's something that I'm interested in. Usually it happens at socials, less likely at parties. Socials, there are less people and there's a better opportunity to talk rather than just loud music and dancing. There are activities. (I.D. J., p. 2)

Another fraternity member says,

You're constantly at social events with girls so you can constantly meet girls you're interested in. Every semester there is a formal and you ask a date and usually your date is the girl you've been talking to and interested in and a lot of time relationships continue from it. (I.D. S., p. 2)

A sorority member says,

To be honest, it actually forces you to meet people. You have to be paired with a fraternity for Greek sing and THON. Because social life is a cornerstone of Greek life you meet people all the time and run into these people on campus. Also, it is fairly standard to be a social person if you are joining Greek life. The process of recruitment alone is highly social. Many people use Greek life as a way to make it easier to make friends. (I.D. N., p. 2)

A fraternity member says,

Many social functions revolve around alcohol to a certain degree. I don't think this is any more than your average college student who goes out on the weekend and occasional Thursday. Greek events are just more organized and typically have more people. It was what I expected – I knew that partying was a big aspect of college life, Greek life included. I don't mind it – if I didn't like to drink I wouldn't. (I.D. O., p. 2)

Another fraternity member says that many people join Greek life because of the partying aspect;

Its part of it but it's not the whole picture. I think most people join for the drinking aspect and come out of it knowing they got a lot more out of it than that. (I.D. R., p. 2)

a. Preconceived Notions

Individuals' motivations for joining a fraternity or a sorority and their ideas of the Greek system's social life are classified as the sub-variable "preconceived notions." This sub-variable will encompass the various stories, pre-conceived notions and influences which swayed individuals to enter the Greek system or impacted their decision to join. This category is important to answering the overarching research question of: How do expectancies of drinking and sexual behavior influence the experiences of fraternity and sorority members? It became clear during the interviewing and open coding process that reasons for joining Greek life were related to social behavior at Greek events.

A sorority woman says about her preconceived notion of Greek life,

I definitely had this terrible preconceived notion of Greek life. My first semester roommate was so into it and it was exactly what I didn't want. I thought it was stupid, dumb girls flocking around in groups. Then when I did rush you like walked into their suite and they just seem so fake, so that was what I thought of it. (I.D. K., p. 1)

A fraternity member says that his preconception was the "stereotypical" opinion about fraternities, but his organization became more about friendship,

I did not really know a lot about Greek Life. I had the stereotypical perception that you get from movies until my second semester Freshman year. By that time I had been to enough events at fraternities and talked to enough brothers to realize that at its core, a fraternity was about forging bonds with individuals that would last a lifetime. (I.D. O., p. 1)

Another fraternity member says,

I wanted a full college experience and didn't want to regret not joining one. You can join one and always be involved in all Greek activities but you can't do the reverse. I expected a full

social schedule, a big house where I can live throughout college, a large social group of guys, the parties, and to get involved with THON at Penn State. (I.D. J., p. 1)

Another sorority member says she did not know much about Greek life but expected the social aspect;

I was kind of the person who didn't really know that much about it when I got into it. I expected that I would have to pledge but I didn't really know what that meant. I expected to make friends really quickly which I did. I expected to always have something to do on the weekends because of their social schedule. I was excited to get involved in THON and get involved in philanthropies and be involved in the things I had enjoyed in high school and transfer them to college. (I.D. L., p.1)

Another sorority member said she had a more negative perception of Greek life;

I heard that the girls in them were stupid, that they drink a lot, that everyone's a slut, that it's buying your friends, and that it's a waste of money. I heard it from people within my first couple weeks of school and I developed that perception in high school through TV. I also heard it was a super big bonding experience where everyone loves each other. (I.D. F., p.1)

One sorority member says her opinions on Greek life prior to joining came mostly from the media,

Most of what I had heard about sororities was from the media, from the website juicycampus and before that it was called college ACB, portrayed Greek life as the typical fraternity party college experience. And from TV as well, shows like ABC's "Greek," which show Greek life as the typical college experience and party scene with lots of drinking and crazy stuff going on. (I.D. A., p.1)

Another sorority member says,

I heard it was a really great way to get involved in college. I think there are stereotypes that you like to drink and party and are going to wear short dresses out, none of which I do, but

that was what I heard. I also heard the good, that sororities participate in philanthropies and you meet all these friends. (I.D. D., p. 1)

Another member says that she expected to be close to everyone in her sorority, but this was not possible realistically,

Your expectations are 'we're all gonna be sisters, we're all gonna be best friends,' but at the end of the day, out of 100 girls there are going to be cliques and groups of friends, but there are a handful I've become close to. You find your niche in the sorority. (I.D. H. p. 2)

Another fraternity member says,

Most of my impressions came from the movies. It just seemed like one big party with a bunch of your close friends. I wanted to get the full experience out of Penn State and I thought by joining I would be able to achieve that. (I.D. R., p. 1)

iii. Members Messages

The final sub-theme conceptualizing “institutional attitudes” is the “Members Messages,” variable, which encompasses observations, experiences and stories heard from peers which portrayed certain behaviors that are viewed as normal or acceptable by members within the Greek life community. This sub-theme could include members’ own feelings of what was acceptable behavior in a social setting as well as messages conveyed to them by other members of their organization and other people in the Greek system.

One sorority member describes the messages about going out and drinking that were conveyed to her by older members of her sorority:

There was no hazing in my organization. There was just the feeling from the older girls who made the new girls feel like “we're all going out so of course you're going to go out.” I think a lot of the new girls did expect that but I didn't so I was surprised. (I.D. C, p.2)

A fraternity member said he did not feel that there was a rigid code for drinking behavior conveyed by his fraternity members, and he felt that how much you drank was your own choice. He said he didn't perceive a negative social consequence for choosing not to drink:

I don't think there are really any expectations. If I don't feel like drinking, nobody is mad at me or upset. If I do feel like drinking, it is the same. How much you drink is really up to you. (I.D. O., p. 2)

Another fraternity member says he sees drinking as more of a social norm:

I think I made the choices because I believe that it just takes an edge off and it is socially accepted as a good time. I enjoy the drinking games and other aspects about it that most other people do, but I could also have fun without it. (I.D. P., p. 2)

Another fraternity member says that observing other peoples' behavior and the perception that everyone is drinking heavily perpetuates the culture of heavy drinking,

It's the culture, everyone's drinking a lot but it's hard to tell. It appears everyone is drinking a lot. There's a giant party room with a bar right in the middle, the actual lights are off and it's a lot of black lights and party lights and it seems like a very drinking oriented thing. There are some people who always appear to have a drink in their hand but they might be drinking very slowly and other people are just pounding them and might not think its weird that they're doing that because everyone else has a drink in their hand. (I.D. M., p. 2)

Another sorority member says that the role alcohol plays in Greek life is "a lot," and it's unusual for someone not to partake:

The role alcohol plays is definitely a lot. What Greek life does in general is like based around drinking. I spent the whole semester witnessing it. I realized that that's what they do. There's not a specific group of people that's always a sloppy mess, but I don't think there's anyone that's like 'no I don't drink.' There are some girls who do go out Thursday, daylong

Friday, go out Friday night then daylong Saturday, but I can't keep up with that. I don't black out or get sick often. (I.D. K., p. 2)

Another sorority member says,

Freshmen want to just seem like cool to go drink a lot with everyone and it doesn't work out. Socials can be awkward too if you're not really good friends with the guys in the frat. We've had the reputation of being wild and there are more wild girls than me. I never felt uncomfortable like I was pressured to drink more than I wanted to. (I.D. H., p. 2)

i. Peer Pressure

Peer pressure will be classified as a sub-variable of the theme "Members Messages."

Many participants mentioned that feeling pressure to drink or to get drunk in the social setting of Greek life was an influential component in their behavior in regard to drinking and socializing at parties.

One sorority woman said that there was also a social norm for drinking behavior that was conveyed to her subtly by older sisters in her sorority:

I think it's the peer pressure of social setting. Also, having a great time with friends and dancing and not paying attention to what you're putting back. I doubt that anyone was ever in a situation where someone was like 'you have to drink this', and I don't think the girls I know well would have gone for that. It was more of conveying the attitude of "this is what we're supposed to be doing; this is what everyone does so let's just keep doing it." (I.D. C., p.3)

Another sorority woman agrees that friends and peers have a large impact on behavior;

I think friends have a huge influence and what they do, like they say you become most like the five people you are most often around. I think my group of friends are pretty typical in a college setting, but I think it's just like you're going to do what they're going to do. (I.D. K., p.2)

A fraternity member says,

I think a lot of it is peer pressure. There's always someone to drink with or multiple people to drink with on like a random week night if you don't have anything to do and feel like going out. (I.D. M., p. 2)

Another sorority member says that there can be pressure to go out and drink when living on the sorority floor,

Some nights I'm tired and my friends are like 'no, come out' and beg me to come out and it's still fun. It kills a weekend though, by Sunday you are exhausted and have homework to do. Living on the floor was hard for me to get up for my class Monday and get my work done. It's a balancing act. (I.D. G., p. 2)

In the next chapter, we will see the results of the second major theme, "Mixing Alcohol and Sex."

Chapter 3

Mixing Alcohol and Sex

Grounded theory was used to analyze personal interviews conducted with fraternity men and sorority women regarding the overarching question: How do expectancies of drinking and sexual behavior influence the experiences of fraternity and sorority members? The second major theme which surfaced during open coding of the interviews is “Mixing Alcohol and Sex.” This main theme also has several sub-themes, including “Motivations,” “Alcohol Expectancies,” and “Consequences.” Sub-themes classified under “Mixing Alcohol and Sex” were also interrelated to other themes. For example, the sub-theme “Altered Perception,” a commonly referenced alcohol expectancy, is related back to “Hooking Up,” another major theme. The sub-theme “Consequences,” is also conceptualized as connecting “Mixing Alcohol and Sex,” to the core variable “Negative Sexual Experience” (see Figure 1-1 on page 48). Consequences of mixing alcohol and sex, provided by interviewees in terms of both emotional and physical consequences, can be seen to connect “Mixing Alcohol and Sex” to the core variable “Negative Sexual Experiences.” Motivations for mixing alcohol and sex as well as expectancies of alcohol’s impact on behavior will also be discussed in this chapter.

i. Motivations

Several common motivations were given for getting drunk and having sex. The most frequently-occurring motivations included, to alleviate awkwardness, drinking as an excuse for behavior, drinking to boost self-confidence, or because it is fun and exciting.

a. Alleviating Awkwardness

A sub-variable of the “Motivations” category is “Alleviating Awkwardness.” Many interviewees spoke about drinking to alleviate the tension or awkwardness of socializing or hooking up with people they did not know very well, or trying to “escape,” unpleasant situations.

One sorority member says,

It's less awkward. How sober sex is such a big deal. People think sex is such less of a big deal if you were drunk. I think it's the norm to drink a lot and end up talking to a guy and that might happen. (I.D. H., p.2)

A fraternity member says that having a discussion about someone's sexual past is less awkward when drunk,

I often find it is easier to talk about a person's sexual history when drinking because they are not as concerned about what you may think of them. (I.D. O, p. 1)

This same individual says,

I think [alcohol] definitely removes some of the shyness and uncomfortable moments. Alcohol allows people to relax and think less about things. When that happens people behave more freely. (I.D. O., p. 2)

A sorority member says,

When you're feeling awkward in a situation having a shot is just an easy way to socialize. Sometimes it's awkward to socialize with someone you're stuck in a room with. It's just something to get people to socialize... if people are in an uncomfortable situation, like 'my crazy ex-boyfriend's here, get me out of this', I'm gonna go take this shot and next thing you know they are hammered. (I.D. B., p.3)

Another sorority member agrees that people drink too much to cope with awkward situations,

I think if someone had a bad day or maybe they were seeing a guy at a fraternity and they aren't anymore and just drink to alleviate that awkwardness, or maybe they just want to go wild

or can't keep track of what they're drinking. I think it can be a wide spectrum of things. (I.D. L., p. 2)

A fraternity member says,

Alcohol lowers inhibitions for both parties. It might be awkward to start a conversation but after you have a few drinks it's easier. (I.D. J., p. 2)

A sorority member says,

People go to socials and like get bombed, so probably like anywhere from five to ten drinks. I guess you're excited it's the weekend and you're out with all your friends and if you're at a frat and feel awkward you're like 'let's drink a little bit'. (I.D. H., p. 2)

b. Drinking as an Excuse

Within the “Motivations,” theme, the sub-theme of “Drinking as an Excuse” conceptualizes how people drink to behave in a way that is not normally considered acceptable. The sub-theme “Drinking as an Excuse” was mentioned by a few interview participants. Interviewees spoke about how they or their friends used alcohol as an excuse to do something they normally would not do, such as hook up with someone they secretly liked but would not admit to others, or to have sex with someone they just met or barely knew.

One fraternity member says that he thinks being able to use alcohol as an excuse inclines hookups to happen more often when people are drinking,

I think that some people try to have sex with others while they are drinking because it could be looked at as a “drunk decision.”... I believe that people think others are easier to get with and have sex with when drunk, so that could also be why they do it. (I.D. P., p.2)

He says that people mistakenly think that drinking will make hooking up easier,

I think that some people may fall into this false belief because some people may make some rash decisions when they are drunk without thinking twice. (I.D. P., p. 3)

A sorority member says that people will blame having casual sex on being drunk:

You just blame [sex] on that. It's just a norm to be like 'oh she was drunk, so like its fine'. It's easier to convince people to do things, especially have sex when they're drunk. Especially if someone is blacked out and they ended up having sex and the next day they're like I didn't want to do that I was so drunk. (I.D. H., p. 2)

Another fraternity member says that drinking leads to people regretting decisions,
Obviously people get too drunk, they regret their decisions, they tend to regret the next day, so you hear your fair share of, 'Oh I can't believe I did that,' the next day. (I.D. J., p. 3)

Another fraternity member says that being drunk allows people to hook up with someone they don't know;

Yes, I just think people do things when they drink that they normally wouldn't do otherwise. Obviously normally, it would be awkward to hook up with someone you've barely spoken to, but when you're drinking it's not. (I.D. M., p. 3)

c. Boost Self-Confidence

A few individuals mentioned that drinking was a way that some people used to boost their self-confidence or to feel more comfortable and some individuals are motivated to drink for this reason.

One sorority woman says that she is comfortable in her own skin and doesn't drink to improve confidence, but others do,

I think I'm very comfortable in my own skin. I can go out and not drink at all and have just as good of a time either way, and I've proven that to myself. When I drink I just do so to loosen up a little bit, never to deal with anything or to escape my reality. (I.D. L., p. 3)

A fraternity brother says that people who need to get drunk to socialize and try to hook up with girls are often people who lack self-confidence,

I think the guys that need a girl to be drunk to get any do not have the capability to talk to a girl sober and those are people I try not to associate with. The kids that drink to get girls

usually don't have a lot of self-esteem or confidence. If you can't talk to a girl sober, no matter how drunk you get you will never have a sincere interaction. I think they realize eventually that more important than drinking or talking to drunk girls is actually developing social skills. (I.D. O, p. 3)

d. Fun and Exciting

One fraternity member talks about how being drunk led to a fun sexual experience between friends:

I had a friend that once went out to a social event and hit it off with a girl that night. They both got very drunk and ended up going home together. That night, her other friend, who was also drunk, decided to join them as well. The three of them had a sexual experience that night with protection... this was an unplanned event. All three people wanted the experience that night, and talked about it the following days. (I.D.P., p. 2)

Another fraternity member says that alcohol makes sex more fun,

Yes, I think alcohol would make it more enjoyable because you're more easy-going and less nervous and willing to do more... all my friends have said drunk sex is better than sober. (I.D. N, p. 3)

He says that the satisfaction of hooking up with someone motivates people to go out and drink;

I think a lot of the reason people go out is to hook up so when they drink I think they're expecting to hopefully hook up with someone. I think for the most part [expectations] are met. It's not like it happens every night but everyone's usually hooking up with someone so that is satisfying. (I.D. N., p. 3)

Another fraternity members says,

I think only more enjoyable in the sense that if it's someone you don't know that well it's in the less awkward state where you are both more outgoing. (I.D. M., p. 3)

Another fraternity member says that drinking makes the night more fun, even without hooking up,

I don't necessarily think that alcohol makes hooking up easier, but even if you're not then alcohol just makes the night funner in general, more fun I should say. It's not like 'I'm gonna get really drunk and then it'll be easier to talk to girls', but even if you're not talking to girls or hooking up with girls you can still have a really fun night being drunk. (I.D. I., p. 3)

A sorority member says,

I think [drinking] is a big part of Greek life culture and Penn state culture and honestly an important part to me. Everybody wants to go out and have a good time in college. I think I'm in the middle range. I like to go out, drink and have a good time. When I go out to drink it's usually with the purpose of getting drunk. (I.D. F., p. 2)

ii. Alcohol Expectancies

Another sub-theme that conceptualizes fraternity and sorority members' risky sexual behavior is called "Alcohol Expectancies". This sub-theme surfaced regularly in the interviews in the form of three sub-variables which illustrate how Greek members expected that alcohol would alter their behavior. First, fraternity and sorority members spoke about how they thought that alcohol would impact their perception of attractiveness of a person, which will be called "Altered Perception". Many interviewees elaborated on incidences when they or their friends felt that drinking caused them to view someone as attractive or as a desirable partner who they normally were not interested in when sober.

a. Altered Perception

One sorority woman said that drinking caused her to hook up with a male friend even though she did not find him attractive:

Even I have, like I've made out with ugly people, like really ugly and off-putting guys and I was like eww what was I thinking. Like you're too drunk to even notice. And I'm not proud of it

but it happens. There was one of my good guy friends who I hooked up with second semester, who I don't even think is that cute, like he wasn't like off-putting. But then every time I would just get drunk and think I should text him, like I don't know why. I can't think of any bad ones, like really serious ones, but there have been girls who have been like I really didn't want to hook up with him, but I did. (I.D. K. p.3)

Another sorority woman agrees that drinking can impact hooking up with someone a person does not consider attractive:

I think that when you're drunk your perception of reality is a little off. I think people say soberly I would never hook up with them and then they get drunk and wind up doing that. Whether that's because they secretly think the person is attractive and don't have the guts to say it or whether they want to hook up with someone that night and that person is sending out that vibe too and it just happens. (I.D. L., p. 3)

Another sorority member says,

Alcohol affects judgment and people often make decisions they normally would not make. When judgment is impaired during drinking, people tend to seek pleasure regardless of the consequences. If they can't clearly think or even see who it is that they are with, then they are likely to have sex with the person purely for the experience of sex, not for the experience of sex with that person. (I.D. N., p. 2)

Another sorority member agrees and says that girls realize this ahead of time and try to help each other out,

You're less aware and everyone's funnier and more attractive. We have a signal we give to girls when she's dancing with a guy who isn't that attractive when she's drunk and she thinks he is attractive. A sister's woken up the next morning and said stuff like "you won't believe what he looked like." (I.D. A., p. 3)

A fraternity member also says impaired judgment can impact how attractive you perceive someone:

Yes, alcohol can impair judgment. This applies to driving, talking, and selecting sexual partners. The more you drink, if you are seeking to have sex, the less important the person is with. Again, not to beat a dead horse, but it comes down to self-respect if you are selective in your sexual partners. (I.D. O., p. 3)

Another fraternity member agrees that alcohol impacts who people choose to hook up with,

You always tend to see a questionable hook up going on where someone's not in the right mind to be choosing someone to hook up with; just not they're typical girl they'd go after, making them a lot less picky. Obviously people get too drunk they regret their decisions. They tend to regret, so you hear your fair share of, 'Oh I can't believe I did that,' the next day. (I.D. J., p. 3)

b. "Frat Guys Get What They Want"

The sub-variable "Frat Guys Get What They Want," is an alcohol expectancy that was mentioned by a number of interviewees. Individuals described the persona and attitude of some fraternity men they have encountered in the Greek system in this way.

One sorority member says that there is a stereotype about fraternity guys that she considers true:

Well I do think that a stereotype that is kind of true that frat guys have this like persona and expectation; frat guys have an expectation of girls that they can just get with any girl and do whatever they want by the end of the night, (I.D. K., p.2)

Another sorority member says this expectancy is especially pertinent during "Frat Formal Friday,"

There's Frat Formal Friday which is the Friday before finals week and each frat has a formal the same night so it's really easy to get asked and some guys get pissed if the girl leaves at

like 11, because getting invited is like guaranteed you're gonna have sex. Some guys get really salty if the girl leaves because he feels like she should sleep with him. I've known multiple girls who have left at like 11. The guy would be like, "This is my formal, you could have at least hooked up with me." (I.D. G., p. 2)

She also says that dating a guy in Greek life can be difficult because of the attitude she perceives in frat guys,

I tell my friends as a joke that I need to join the engineering club because sometimes frat guys can be really douchey, like all they wanna do is get in your pants. So I want to meet guys outside of Greek life. There's not a lot of dating when they're younger. I think when they're more mature you'll find someone you'll be able to date. (I.D. G., p.2)

A fraternity member describes fraternity men's expectation of women, but says that in reality, the expectation isn't met for most,

I would say only 15 percent are met, if that. Every single guy thinks that a girl wants them, but in reality they don't actually. Alcohol obviously inclines that factor, the more you drink, the more you want to have sex. I think getting drunk takes you back to the primitive ways. I would say most guys get shot down. (I.D. E., p. 2)

Another fraternity member says there are some people like this in fraternities,

It certainly depends on the brother. There are definitely douche bags who are just interested in having sex with a different girl every night, but there are also good guys who have no expectations in that way at all. (I.D. J., p. 2)

Another sorority member says,

You'll hear so many sorority girls say "Oh frat guys suck," after a while. Everyone has their opinions on frat guys. You're always in a situation when you're around guys so you figure out when I'm out with this group of guys do I like being with these guys. (I.D. H., p. 2)

She says that guys typically have different expectations than do girls,

I think with guys it's definitely different. They're drinking with girls with the hope that [hooking up] would happen. I think girls' expectations are a little less typically. I mean guys go out to have fun, but I honestly think a big motive behind drinking with girls is to hopefully, eventually get a girl to hook up with them. (I.D. H., p. 2)

c. "Drunk Girls are Easy"

Another sub-variable of the "Alcohol Expectancies" theme is called "Drunk Girls are Easy." This sub-variable conceptualizes how Greek life members expected drinking to impact the behavior of women in making them more interested and more willing to engage in sexual activities.

A sorority member says,

Some girls definitely do just get way too drunk and do stupid things and that happens, but that's definitely the alcohol playing into it, I don't think girls would do half the things they do if they weren't wasted. (I.D. K. p. 3)

She says that sorority members often have the expectation of getting drunk to hook up as well,

Yeah, people definitely have that expectation, even my roommate liked this guy second semester and was like, 'definitely gonna get drunk at the social and go hang out with Josh' ... Like people say Greek Life girls are slutty and that is true; there are some slutty girls in Greek life, at least in my pledge class, but there are slutty girls outside Greek life as well. (I.D. K., p. 2)

Another member of a sorority says that there are certain girls who engage in casual sex or risky behavior,

It's all people who are known to do stuff like that so it's not a big shocker. They'll say 'Oh you can't believe what I did last night', but I think to myself 'Oh I can'. (I.D. B., p. 3)

Another sorority member says girls get drunk and hook up with people they don't really like, but friends sometimes intervene;

My friend who didn't remember she had sex the next morning. The guy was a douche to her a few days before so I feel like that was unwanted, even though it wasn't rape or sexual assault. I don't think it happens as much, girls are usually smart or their friend will be like 'let's go, you don't really want to hook up with him.' (I.D. G., p. 3)

iii. Consequences

Consequences of drinking and of having sex after drinking or when drunk was also a theme that surfaced during the interviewing and open coding process. The “Consequences,” variable can be conceptualized as interrelating “Mixing Alcohol and Sex,” and the core variable, “Negative Sexual Experiences.” Consequences to individuals’ health, safety and emotional well-being were cited as reasons the experience was negative. Concern about pregnancy and the possibility of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI) were major issues discussed by interview participants. Individuals provided varying degrees of importance to using protection to prevent or reduce the likelihood of these consequences occurring when engaging in sexual activities. Fraternity and sorority members also mentioned consequences which would impact future careers, such as getting cited for underage drinking, as well as consequences to physical health such as alcohol poisoning or becoming physically ill from drinking too much. One sorority woman says that she tries to avoid getting too drunk in order to avoid the potential consequence of being taken advantage of:

You wish everyone in the world was a good and respectful person but they're not and people take advantage of drunk people in more ways than one. You really can only count on yourself to take care of yourself. If you get separated from friends, you want to know how to get home. (I.D., F, p.3)

She also says that many people do not consider seriously the potential consequences of not using protection,

My mind is blown by the amount of people who don't use condoms and are not on birth control. I think alcohol makes it less likely. I think people feel awkward asking a guy to get a condom who they just met, but I mean you're already seeing each other naked so how more awkward can it get? (I.D. F., p. 2)

Another sorority member says,

I think most people are aware that [pregnancy, STI's] are an issue; I don't think anyone's not aware, but they would just make the decision to risk it and hope for the best. (I.D. C., p. 2)

Another member says that although she considers using protection a priority, being drunk makes it less likely;

Some people are all about protection. Personally I am, but even I've found myself in drunken moment thinking 'oh whatever' then I catch myself and I'm like 'wait, this is not okay.' (I.D. K., p. 2)

One fraternity member says he thinks drinking impacts the use of protection because people tend to not worry as much:

You don't worry about catching anything or the repercussions of it since you're not in the right frame of mind and you might not feel anything if you are really drunk. (I.D. E., p. 2)

One sorority woman shares an incident where she witnessed a sister drink too much and she was concerned about her:

Usually just by accident [people drink too much]. Two times this past year I was really concerned about someone; one girl went to a pre-game and was doing a lot of shots and then it all hit her and she got really sick to the point she was throwing up yellow bile. I've never seen that in my life. There are "sober sisters." It's their job to watch out for everyone and take someone home if they need to. (I. D. F., p. 2)

One sorority woman describes how her own knowledge about the physiological effects of alcohol as well as her concern about a future job impacts her choices when drinking:

As a nursing major I won't be able to get a job if get an underage. Normally I can pace myself really well, I know when I can't take that shot or I need to stop drinking if I start to feel nauseous. I've had my share throwing up or I purposely won't eat when I go out or pre-game too hard which is bad. I'm smart about it. There was a girl who went to a "fifth-and-a-friend" party without a friend and she drank the whole fifth by herself and was taken to the hospital and coded. I would never do that because I know the effects of alcohol on the body. I've never really blacked-out or injured myself. My roommate got a concussion this past spring because she fell down the stairs at a frat in heels and was out for the rest of the semester. There have been crazy things. (I.D. G., p.3).

Chapter 4 will present the results regarding the third major theme of "Hooking Up."

Chapter 4

Hooking Up

Grounded theory was used to analyze personal interviews conducted with fraternity men and sorority women regarding the overarching question: How do expectancies of drinking and sexual behavior influence the experiences of fraternity and sorority members? Another major theme, “Hooking Up,” conceptualizes the various aspects, such as opportunities for hooking up, future intentions, and standards for a sexual partner, which impact whether a sexual encounter or “hook up” is perceived as positive or negative. Many fraternity and sorority members spoke about personal values and intentions held by themselves and their sexual partner which impacted how positively they viewed the sexual encounter and what, if any, degree of risk was present in this experience. The sub-theme “Opportunities and Intentions” conceptualizes the level of past interactions an individual had with their partner, the context in which they were able to interact, and each persons’ goals or future intentions for communication. Many participants spoke about having sex with someone who they either had been talking to, were interested in dating, were dating exclusively, or was a completely random person whom they did not know very well. The other sub-theme of “Hooking Up,” called “Personal Standards,” conceptualizes certain qualities Greek members look for in a sexual partner as well as the level of closeness individuals wish to achieve before having sex. “Personal Standards” can also be conceptualized as influencing positive or negative perception of a sexual experience.

i. Opportunities and Intentions

Opportunities and Intentions was a sub-theme which surfaced within the theme of “Hooking Up.” This sub-variable conceptualizes the various opportunities to meet new people or to pursue relationships with persons of interest through Greek life social events. Many interviewees said that whether these sexual experiences were considered positive or negative was often dependent upon how well the two people knew each other as well as each of their future intentions. Degree of risk present in the experience can also be seen to be contingent upon past interactions and context of hooking up. A trend surfaced in conducting research showing an inverse relationship between the degree of closeness with one’s sexual partner and how positively the experience was described by the participant.

A sorority woman said that random sex is common at Greek social functions:

A lot will have sex with random guys at night. I don’t know how they have sex like that just for pleasure aspects. My one friend had four different booty calls with guys in frats. Some people will just hook up with guys and then never see them again. I’m not sure how they don’t get attached, but sleeping around happens a lot more than you would think. (I.D. G., p. 2)

Another fraternity man said that hooking up is often thought of in a general sense instead of with a specific person:

I would say it’s more in general and then once you get to a certain social it becomes specific. Our socials are planned so we know ahead of time what sorority is going to be there so you kind of already know the people in that sorority are. You might think ‘I really like that girl I’m gonna try to hook up with her’. That’s not always the case, you might just not know anyone going in. (I.D. I, p.2)

He says that people often regret these experiences, but it depends on how well the two people know each other as well as their future intentions:

I know of guys the next morning really regretted hooking up with someone and would blame it on how much they drank. And even specifically them talking about not wanting to hook

up with this one girl when they were sober the day before and then complaining about it the next day.... I would say it depends upon the level of communication with that person. If you haven't had that much communication then I would say it's more negative, but if you have communicated with them and plan on communicating with them in the future then I would say it would be good. (I.D. I., p. 3)

Another fraternity member also says that whether these experiences are good or bad may depend on future intentions:

It depends on your view of sex I think. To me – unless I am dating someone or trying to date them, I don't really get attached to sex. I think when people get too drunk they can regret their decisions in the morning. I think people with a great deal of self-respect don't get that drunk in the first place and are usually happy with the decisions they made at night. At least that's how I am. (I.D. O, p. 3)

Another fraternity member also says that he usually will know a few girls at a social or will have someone in mind, but other times people just try to have a sexual encounter with a random girl:

You know a sorority's coming over so you know which girls are coming. You probably have at least one girl in that sorority you've hooked up with before so you're like 'I'll try to talk to her.' Other times you might not know anyone so you just go into the night thinking, 'Let's see what I can do, let's see what magic I can pull.' More often than not there's someone that they know. (I.D. J., p. 2)

A sorority woman says that whether or not you have a sexual encounter depends on how hard you try or how great a priority it is that evening. She thinks the random encounters are usually negative:

People going out not expecting to have any type of sexual encounter are not going to have any because they decide that ahead of time. The people that do expect to have a sexual

encounter are probably the type who are going to do everything they can to have one, so there's a good chance that's probably met. I would assume they are negative, but positive for the people who are having consistent encounters with someone they are with a lot, but if it's just having random encounters with someone, I would think negative because they haven't been happy about it later on. (I.D. C., p.3)

Another sorority member says that many people have the expectation of hooking up with someone by the end of the evening,

People definitely think about who they're going to hook up with at the end of the night which I don't think is just within Greek life. I just think it's that when you're drunk you tend to think about guys, because people are always like who should I drunk text, like when you get drunk you think about all those things. (I.D. K., p. 2)

Another sorority woman says that expectations about alcohol influence who someone hooks up with as well as the intention to just want to hook up in general, drive the social culture of the Greek system:

I think people know that a lot of people go to parties looking for sex and hoping to find someone looking for the same thing they are. I've heard on more than one occasion things like "Yeah, I want to hook up with him but I'd have to be really drunk." I think a lot of times people go out with that intention. I think it's turned into this thing where people go to parties wanting to have sex and other people know that so it continues. (I.D. F., p.3)

This individual says that it is difficult to get to know someone on a deeper level in the usual partying context of Greek life:

Personally, I've met a few really nice, cool guys, but usually it just turns into this drunken festival and I'm like 'please don't talk to me, leave me alone I want to do my own thing'. I think it's hard to get to know someone in that context. I got to know one guy really well who I just happened to run into early on in the night when people weren't so drunk and actually had a

real conversation and we hung out for a couple weeks. That kind of context is so alcohol-and-sex-infused; I think few people are really looking for a relationship. (I.D. F., p. 2)

Another sorority member says that drunken, casual hookups are the norm, and sober sex would rarely happen,

I don't think anyone has sober sex in college unless it's your boyfriend. I just think it's easier. My friend told me she woke up wearing a guy's boxers and she didn't remember what happened and the guy was like, "there's a condom on the floor did we have sex?" And she didn't even remember at all. I think she blacked out. I don't think anyone would have sex sober, maybe partially sober if they are like sobering up. (I.D. G., p.3)

ii. Personal Standards

“Personal Standards” was also a sub-theme that surfaced frequently throughout the coding process of the interviews. Many participants spoke about having high versus low standards for a sexual partner as a major component that influenced whether the experience was perceived as positive or negative and if the experience posed risks to either or both people. Interviewees spoke about how great a priority it was to have sex on any particular night as influencing their standards for a partner that evening. One sorority woman spoke about her experience finding someone with similar values as herself in the Greek system,

I think it's hard in the Greek life social culture for you to hang out with someone who has a real personality and has a brain, rather than just someone to have sex with for one night. I think people who are looking for that and don't have very high standards for conversation, personal values, and looks, yeah they're expectations are met. For me to want to sleep with someone, I have to really like them, they have to be really nice, agree with me on XYZ things and be good looking, that's hard to do. For people who put a little bit more effort into looking who have higher standards and don't just take the first thing that comes, I think it's a little better. (I.D. F., p. 2)

One sorority woman said:

My roommate is gorgeous and she's hooking up with this guy, and I would be like "why are you hooking up with this guy, you're so above him". My friend goes for lower standards so she has more sex, and I have higher standards so I don't have as much sex, so it's kind of how bad you want it. We all come in the same room on the same floor and talk about what happened last night. (I.D. G., p. 3)

Another sorority woman says that she thinks that expectations for having sex can be met by lowering one's standards:

I think if you want to go out, like you really want to hook up with someone, like I need to, then I think you can make it happen. I've had friends who have wanted to hook up with a certain guy and it didn't happen and they were disappointed. I think if you are really seeking it out, I think you can lower your standards and make it happen. (I.D. L., p. 2)

A fraternity member says,

I usually start out the night with someone in mind, like a main target, but then you gradually lower your standards to whoever is left at the end of the night. (I.D. E., p. 2)

Another fraternity member says,

I believe people do have their sights set on someone and plan their night around that one person. (I.D. P., p. 3)

In Chapter 5, the core variable of "Negative Sexual Experiences" will be examined.

Chapter 5

The Core Variable: Negative Sexual Experiences

Grounded theory was used to analyze personal interviews conducted with fraternity men and sorority women regarding the overarching question: How do expectancies of drinking and sexual behavior influence the experiences of fraternity and sorority members? The core variable, which surfaced during open coding of the interviews and became clearer during the process of selective coding, is called “Negative Sexual Experiences.” Individuals brought up unwanted sexual experiences, both in the sense that the experience was consensual but was regretted by one or both people later, or the experience occurred when one person took advantage of another who was too drunk to think clearly and make a coherent choice. Individuals spoke about emotional components such as engaging in unwanted sex or having a sexual experience when afterwards one person was “hurt” and the other felt “indifferent” towards a future relationship or communication with their sexual partner.

One sorority woman talks about a time when she felt that an older member of a fraternity took advantage of her:

There was one time my freshman year and we were having a social at this super cool frat. Everybody has to look really good cause it's such a good frat. I was a freshman so I got more drunk than I usually do, and the social chair of the frat approached me and I was like, oh the social chairs talking to me so I'm like oh whatever. And he's like 'let's go take shots in my room,' and I'm like 'oh okay.' I definitely would not have done what I did in that room if I hadn't been really drunk, and he definitely took advantage. The next day I felt like total shit about it. I mean he was really hot, but such a scummy guy that I was like just another girl to him. I kind of

let myself down if you know what I mean, I'm not that kind of person. I don't want to say I got raped because I knew exactly what was going on and what I was doing, but I got taken advantage of. (I.D. L., p. 3)

Another sorority woman talked about a story she heard from a sister that might have been considered sexual assault,

I think there are some instances where it's probably sexual assault but people don't realize it. I've heard girls say "Yeah, he basically raped me." And I said to her that's not okay, how do you feel about that? The girl said, "I mean whatever, it's not a big deal I was really drunk," and she said "For me it's never really rape" And I'm just like What? (I.D. F., p.3)

A fraternity member also shared a story of a girl who was "blacked out" and engaged in an experience she didn't want,

There's always times where people drink a little too much and make bad judgments. A girl on my floor freshman year blacked out and had sex and woke up and told us she didn't want to do that and I've heard of other instances of the same scenario. (I.D. S., p. 3)

Another sorority member shares a story about a negative experience of a sister who lived on her floor:

There was a girl who would repeatedly have drunken sex and she ended up going to UHS and was diagnosed with two STDs, which both in fact were able to be treated with antibiotics. But she was so distraught about the situation that she ended up getting drunk and having unprotected sex the next night and then she got sick and threw up the antibiotics and was then forced to take the medicine again... I think it's like making some drunk mistakes is needing stitches, but people are just putting a band-aid on it, and you're making a deeper and deeper wound (I.D. A., p. 3)

One sorority member says that drinking can lead to situations where people are too drunk and become "dangerous,"

I just think the negative would be that they regret what they've done because they were just way too drunk, like why did I do that I don't even like him, just because they were like blacked out, you know, I mean situations can happen when guys are dangerous and that's bad because they're too drunk. (I.D. K., p. 3)

One fraternity member said that not knowing a girl very well led to the experience not being perceived as positive:

For me [drunk hookups] are not really good, I don't really enjoy them. Obviously I like having sex but I usually just wake up in the morning and have to give the girl a ride home. If I like the girl I'll talk to her more, but she probably feels the same way and doesn't really want to see me. (I.D. E., p.3)

This same individual says that he thinks this often leads to one person getting "hurt":

From a guy's perspective, maybe it just wasn't good enough for them or it wasn't someone as attractive as they initially felt. Maybe the guy thought the girl was really into them or the girl thought the guy was into them, but in reality one person doesn't care as much and then someone ends up getting hurt. (I.D. E., p. 3)

Another fraternity man expresses a similar opinion:

A lot of the times I think they are negative experiences, like someone you had sex with and not knowing them that well and then you get to know them and just don't like them for whatever reason, like their personality, their looks or just something else about them. I feel like it's a tear between being indifferent and not regretting it, having had fun but nothing really coming of it and those who regret it. (I.D. M., p. 2)

Another fraternity brother says these experiences are often regretted later on,

It depends on your view of sex I think. To me – unless I am dating someone or trying to date them, I don't really get attached to sex. I think when people get too drunk they can regret their decisions in the morning. I think people with a great deal of self-respect don't get that

drunk in the first place and are usually happy with the decisions they made at night. (I.D. O., p.

3)

One sorority woman describes a negative experience of a friend and her ex-boyfriend,

An experience I can share is one in which a friend engaged in sexual activity with an ex-boyfriend. They did not end the relationship on a good note, so she was very upset that she gave herself up when she felt that he did not deserve it or did not respect her. I am not sure if protection was used. I can't say if he wanted the experience or not, but with the knowledge of male hormones, I would think that he wanted the experience in the moment. She also may have in the moment, but regretted it afterwards. (I.D. N., p. 3)

Now that all of the themes from the qualitative data have been presented, the conclusions from and implications of this study are discussed in the last chapter.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Implications

Grounded theory was used to analyze personal interviews conducted with fraternity men and sorority women regarding the overarching question: How do expectancies of drinking and sexual behavior influence the experiences of fraternity and sorority members? The results of the qualitative analysis are depicted in Figure 1-1 on page 48. The major themes that emerged were “Institutional Attitudes,” “Hooking Up,” and “Mixing Alcohol and Sex.” These were the major influences on Greek Life members that resulted in them having “Negative Sexual Experiences,” which was the core variable.

One of the sub-questions asked: How does gender influence the effect of alcohol expectancies on sexual behavior? Gender differences emerged in the sub-themes of “Alcohol Expectancies,” “Frat Guys Get What They Want” and “Drunk Girls are Easy.” Interviewees described the stereotypical behavior of some fraternity brothers in that they expected to be able to have sex with any girl if they wanted to as well as an expectation that girls who became drunk got “easier” and became more willing and interested in having sex. The motivation of men to engage in sexual behavior, illustrated by prior research which emphasizes mens’ perception that women who are drinking are more sexually desirable and “easier” (George et al., 1995) is supported by findings within the sub-variable “Frat Guys Get What They Want.” Findings of the present study also support prior research exploring the roles of peer pressure and the messages of appropriate behavior conveyed to Greek life members by other members of their fraternities and sororities (Capone et al., 2007; Chauvin, 2012). The present study’s findings provide further support to earlier studies showing that the observation of peers’ behavior and perceptions of peers’ alcohol use and attitudes toward alcohol are influencing components of individuals’ own expectancies (Scheier & Botvin, 1997).

Data were also found that addressed the second sub-question: How do individuals form these expectancies? The major theme “Institutional Attitudes,” which was developed during coding of the interviews, conceptualizes how Greek life members developed their expectancies about drinking and alcohol’s effect on sexual experiences. The sub-themes of the theme, “Institutional Attitudes,” including “Formal Rules,” “Socializing,” and “Members Messages,” illustrate how social norms of Penn State Greek life were conveyed to individuals through formally established positions and rules, organized social events and parties and peers’ actions and messages respectively. Individuals shared how their expectancies about Greek life, drinking and sexual behavior were formed by their experiences at organized social functions, attitudes and messages about Greek culture conveyed to them by their fellow member and by formal rules of the Greek life institution. Findings organized under the theme “Institutional Attitudes” and its sub-themes which address the sub-question: How do individuals form these expectancies, support prior research on the role of peers in influencing drinking behavior and the formation of drinking and sexual behavior expectancies (Barry, 2007; Sheier & Botvin, 1997; Wardell & Read, 2013).

The third sub-question was also addressed by the findings of the study: What are the results of the expectancies? A major result that emerged was the core variable of “Negative Sexual Experiences.” This was influenced by the “Opportunities and Intentions” for “Hooking Up,” as well as the “Alcohol Expectancies” and “Motivations” that lead to “Mixing Alcohol and Sex” and all of the “Consequences” that result from this. Alcohol’s ability to lower inhibition, and Greek members’ expectancy of this phenomenon was mentioned frequently during the interviewing process. Decreased inhibitions can be seen to influence many of the sub-themes, such as “Altered Perception,” “Drunk Girls are Easy,” and “Personal Standards.” Many Greek life members said that they expected alcohol to alter their perception of someone’s attractiveness or cause them to lower their standards for a sexual partner. Previous research findings on the effect of alcohol on sexual expectancies show that alcohol acts to increase sexual risk taking by

activating expectancies about the effects of alcohol (Dermen, Cooper & Agocha, 1998). The present research also illustrated how drinking more caused individuals to think more about sex and how alcohol would facilitate having sex by lowering peoples' inhibitions or making women more interested in engaging in sex.

The sub-theme "Consequences," can also be seen to influence the core variable of "Negative Sexual Experiences," as various consequences to physical health from drinking and engaging in sex, as well as emotional impacts on individuals were described as causing certain sexual experiences to be perceived as negative. The theme "Mixing Alcohol and Sex" conceptualizes several motivations for engaging in sex after drinking, including to alleviate awkwardness, drinking as an excuse for behavior, drinking to boost self-confidence, or because it is fun and exciting, which were also seen to influence how positively a sexual experience was perceived.

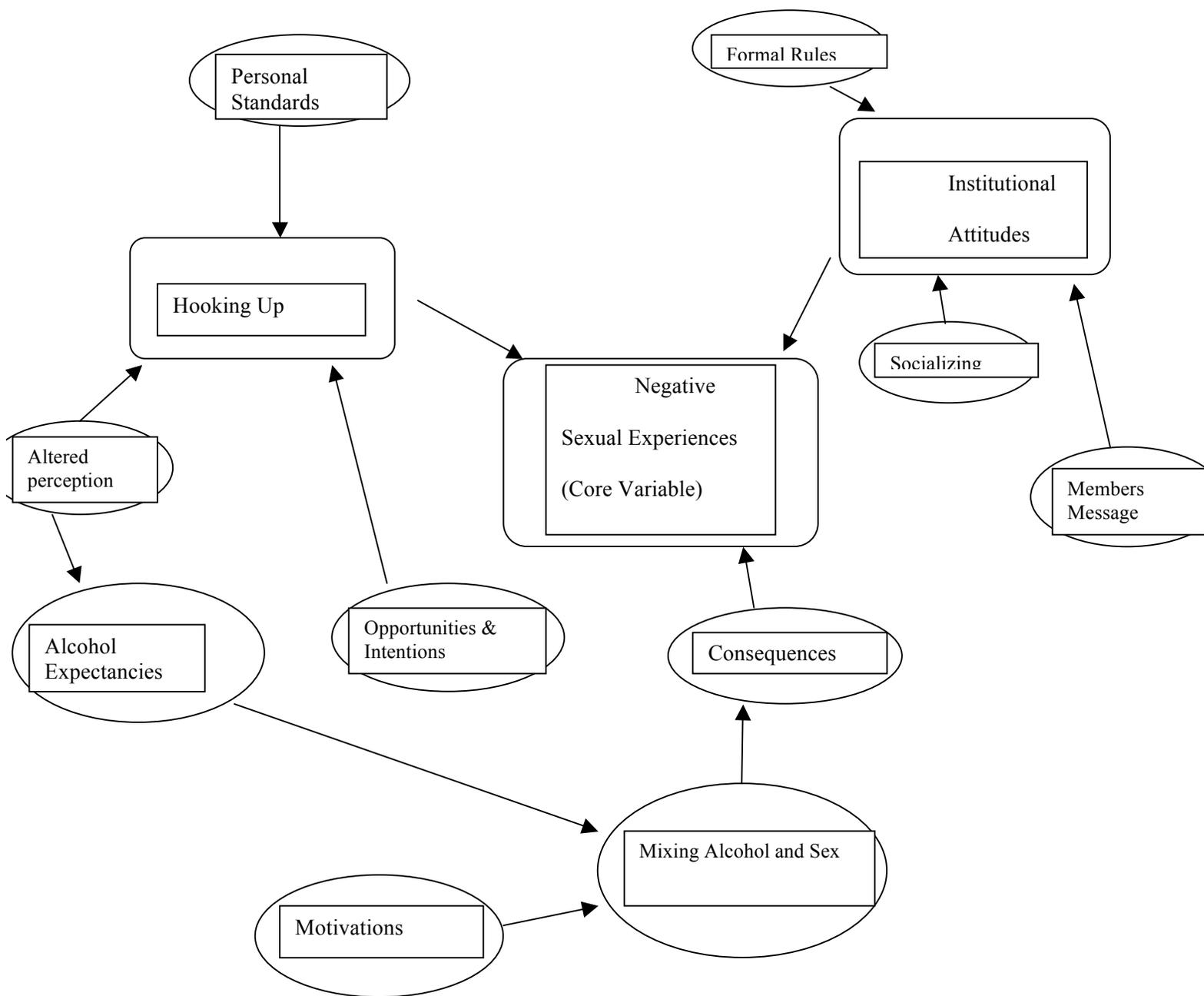
Implications

Qualitative data obtained from the present study may be useful for developing interventions for individuals who engage in risky sexual behaviors following drinking. The comprehensive, qualitative approach to collecting and analyzing data used in the present study may allow for interventions to be developed which focus on the specific reasons why individuals engage in risky sexual behavior, including peer pressure to drink, drinking to alleviate awkwardness or to boost self-confidence and expectancies that drinking will lead to sexual behaviors. The sub-themes "Opportunities and Intentions" and "Personal Standards," illustrated factors such as level of communication with sexual partner, future intentions, and desired closeness to achieve with partner, which may also be important to include in interventions to reduce risky, negative sexual behavior. Interventions might also aim to more effectively communicate to individuals the negative impacts of drinking and engaging in casual sex on health

and well-being as opposed to commonly-held expectancies that alcohol is fun, lowers inhibitions and allows socializing and having sex to be less awkward and more enjoyable.

Interventions that would emphasize the detrimental impacts of risky sexual behaviors on individuals may be useful in reducing and preventing these problematic behaviors. By focusing on Greek life students, who may have more opportunities and expectations to engage in risky sexual behaviors, interventions may be better tailored to the specific environment of individuals who are involved in Greek life. Due to the qualitative nature of this research, it may be difficult to generalize findings to a broader population of Greek life college students, but the comprehensive understanding of alcohol and sexual expectancies gained through this research is useful for developing interventions in the context of Penn State Greek life.

Figure 1-1: The Core Variable and Major Themes



Appendix A

Interview Questions

Preliminary Questions

1. Previous to joining a fraternity/sorority, what had you heard about fraternities/sororities?
2. Where/who did you hear this from?
3. Why did you think you wanted to be a member?
4. What expectations did you have about being in a fraternity/sorority?
5. When did you first join a fraternity/sorority?
6. What was the main reason that you joined the particular fraternity/sorority that you are in?
7. What were all the things that influenced your decision to join?
8. Have your expectations been met? Why or why not?

Social Life Questions

9. What types of things do you do with your fraternity brothers/sorority sisters?
10. How close do you feel to members of your organization? Why?
11. How often do you interact with them?
12. Are there certain brothers/sisters that you are closer to than others? Why do you think this is?
13. Are there certain brothers/sisters that you do not interact much with at all? Why do you think this is?
14. Is this group of people your primary friend group/social network? Why or why not?
15. Do you have any other groups of friends? Who are they?
16. How do you think being in a fraternity/sorority helps you meet people, make friends?

Drinking Questions

17. Describe the role that drinking/alcohol plays in socialization within your Greek organization? Was this what you expected? Why or why not? How do you feel about this?
18. How much is a typical amount that brothers/sisters would drink at a social event within Greek life?

19. Have there been occasions when people know drank more than planned to or more than you/they were comfortable with? Why do you believe this occurred?
20. How do you think that you fit into the drinking expectations or norms for your fraternity/sorority?

Sexual Behavior Questions

21. How does being in a fraternity/sorority help you find people you might be interested in dating? Where and how does this happen? Is drinking usually involved?
22. What do you think your brothers'/sisters' expectations about having sex when they're drinking? Why do they expect this?
23. Do you think their expectations are usually met? What makes you think this?
24. What do you think the sex-after-drinking experiences are usually like? Positive? Negative? What leads you to think this?
25. Can you give an example of an experience like this? (Positive or negative) when someone you know engaged in sexual activity following drinking? Can you describe this incident (was it planned/premeditated, was protection used, did both people want the experience?)
26. Before people start drinking, do you believe that the brothers'/sisters' are thinking about having sex in general or with a specific person?
27. Do you think that your brothers/sisters expect that alcohol would make having sex or having sex with a specific person easier? How did you think that alcohol would make this easier?
28. Do you think that your brothers/sisters expect that alcohol will make having sex or having sex with a specific person more enjoyable? How did you think that alcohol would make it more enjoyable? Have you heard of any experiences like this happening?
29. Do you think that your brothers/sisters expect that alcohol will affect their and their partner's likelihood of using protection? How do you think alcohol would affect discussing and/or using protection?
30. Do you think that your brothers/sisters expect that alcohol will make it more likely that they would have sex with someone that they were not attracted to/not interested in having sex with when sober? How do you think alcohol affects the choice of a sexual partner? Have you heard of any experiences like this happening?
31. Do you think that your brothers/sisters who are more likely to engage in unwanted sex after drinking? What makes you think this? Do you know of any incidences like this happening?

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Education

The Pennsylvania State University, College of Health and Human Development
The Schreyer Honors College

- B.S. in Biobehavioral Health with honors
- Trinity Honors College, Dublin, IE
- Study Abroad Fall Semester Program, coursework in *Human Genetics* and *Psychology*

Association Memberships/Activities

The College of Health and Human Development *Women's Leadership Initiative* (Aug.'11-May'12)

- Selected for Leadership development program through Penn State's College of Health and Human Development
- collaborated with other team members to develop and implement a service-learning Health Promotion program with a Girl Scout troop in State College

Biobehavioral Health Society member (2010-2012)

- Participated in volunteer activities including working with Centre Country AIDS project in Pennsylvania

Penn State's *The Daily Collegian* (Jan- April 2010)

- Arts section reporter on local art and music events for Penn State's student-run newspaper

Professional Experience

Penn State Office of Annual Giving, "Lion Line" Tele-fundraiser (Jan 2011-October 2011)

- Connected with Penn State Alumni affiliated with various colleges and programs within the University
- facilitated with contributions to the Pennsylvania State University and assisted with alumni's continued support to the programs(s) of their choice

Summer Study Programs at Penn State, Health and Wellness - Instructor & Staff Advisor (June-Aug 2011)

- Developed and implemented a 6.5 week course for high school students
- served as liaison between *Summer Study* administration and students
- collaborated with other staff members to create, organize and implement activities for students
- oversaw up to 12 girls at a time in a residence hall community

Morgan Academic Support Center for Student-Athletes (MASCOSA) Tutor (September 2010-May 2011)

- worked as peer tutor with Penn State athletes in subject areas Calculus and Biology