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DETERMINANTS OF HOOKING UP ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS

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Abstract

The current research focuses on hooking up in a convenience sample of 355 undergraduate students at one large Eastern University. Findings show there is not a consistent definition of hooking up. Men were significantly more likely than women to have both vaginal and oral sex with someone they did not know well. There was also a significant relationship between frequency of alcohol and having vaginal or oral sex with someone not well known. Interestingly, religion had no effect upon hooking up. Findings also demonstrate that women are more likely to feel guilty or regretful about a sexual experience. Implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: hooking up, alcohol, gender, religion

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Introduction

Sexuality and relationship development has seen a significant change in the last few decades. As the norms and customs of courting have been nearly forgotten, pre-marital sexual experiences, popularly referred to as hooking up, have become the first step in developing potential relationships, especially on college campuses. Hooking up is now a normative part of campus culture that is frequently practiced and accepted. Researchers have focused on hooking up in an attempt to determine what behaviors constitute hooking up and the causes and effects of hooking up. The present study focuses on hooking up in a convenience sample of students at one Eastern University during the fall of 2009. The research focuses on definitions of hooking up held by students and predictors of hooking up including gender, class rank, and religiosity.

Literature Review

Definitions of Hooking Up

The first step of understanding hooking up is defining the phrase, which has been a difficult task for most researchers. Hooking up has many different definitions, all of which are equally ambiguous. In a study conducted by Paul and Hayes (2002) of hooking up among college students, hooking up is “defined herein as a sexual encounter (that may or may not involve sexual intercourse) between two people who are brief acquaintances or strangers lasting only one night with the expectation of developing a relationship” (p.640). Throughout my research, I found that most definitions were similar to this one; very open and including a diverse set of activities.

Lambert, Kahn, & Apple (2003) conducted a study investigating hooking up and pluralistic ignorance among college students. In this study, hooking up was defined as the point in time when “two people agree to engage in sexual behavior for which there is no future

commitment” (p. 129). Bogle (2007) was somewhat more specific in defining hooking up in her research. Bogle (2007) explained that when college students use the phrase hooking up they are typically referring to “a man and woman pairing off at the end of a party or evening at a bar to engage in a physical/sexual encounter. The hookup can involve anything from kissing to sexual intercourse or anything seen as falling in-between” (p. 783). Although all of these definitions are similar with a few minor differences or specifications, the difficulty of defining the phrase of hooking up also causes problems when trying to conduct a research study based upon such an idea. There is no one definitive or clear definition for the term and so for each individual it may mean something very different. Also, researchers, to a large extent, have not focused on student definitions of hooking up, but instead have focused on a definition based on common knowledge.

Alcohol Consumption

There is a tremendous amount of empirical evidence that shows that college students drink, including binge drinking. Weitzman, Nelson, and Wechsler (2003) in a random sample of full-time undergraduates, found that students who were on campuses where alcohol was permitted, if you were legal drinking age, were more likely to drink than their counterparts. These students were also more likely to favor a lower drinking age and to have inaccurate ideas about the drinking of their college peers.

In addition to examining predictors of alcohol use, researchers have also examined the relationship between alcohol use and risky sexual behavior. Cooper (2002), using a meta-analysis technique of all articles published on drinking and sex over a ten-year period, found that drinking was strongly related to the decision to have sex and participate in risky sexual behavior.

Sexuality

There has been an astounding increase in teenage premarital sex, which has also led to an increase in the average number of sexual partners and the average age at first intercourse (Koyle, Jensen, Olsen, Cundick 1989). Koyle et al. (1989) used the 1979 National Survey of Young Women and the 1979 National Survey of Young Men in order to investigate the age of first intercourse and how it is associated with number of sexual partners and other causes and effects of sexual behavior. The study found that women were more likely to have their first intercourse between the ages of 17-19, while men were more likely to have their first intercourse between the ages of 6-14. Both men and women were more likely to have more partners in the last four weeks if they had their first sexual intercourse between the ages of 6 thru 14. Respondents were asked how many sexual partners they had in the last four weeks. White women were more likely to have more sexual partners than black women, but the opposite was found for men.

The increase of sexually experienced adolescents has led to an increase in casual, random sexual experiences. College environments are believed to encourage sexual permissiveness among young adults. Paul and Hayes (2002) investigated the ways in which college students view hooking up, for example their idea of a good and/or bad hook up through a survey of 187 college students at a large Northeastern University. Paul and Hayes (2002) found that 78% of college students claimed that they had ever engaged in a hookup, some of which included vaginal intercourse and others that did not. Findings also showed a relative uniformity in the way the students explained what transpired during a hookup, but there were gender differences in the descriptions of what was felt after a casual sexual experience. Women were more likely to feel regretful about a casual sexual experience or hookup and men were

more likely to feel satisfied. Paul and Hayes (2002) also discussed the double standard, where hooking up “is a reinforced aspect of masculinity, but a violation of acceptable female sexual behavior” (p. 642). With this double standard also comes the feeling of regret or satisfaction by the young men and women.

Eshbaugh & Gute (2008) also focused on the levels of regret and satisfaction of participating in the hookup culture among college students. The findings indicated that 74% of respondents reported some regret in regards to their sexual past. Hookups were a predictor of sexual regret among college women.

Gender differences found among young adults about feelings after a casual sexual experience has often been linked to the expectations of what kind of relationship will develop out of a hookup. Manning, Giordano, and Longmore (2006) investigated the hopes and expectations that were linked to hooking up by conducting a stratified random sample of more than 1,316 adolescents in grades 7, 9, and 11 in Lucas County, Ohio. Manning et al. (2006) found that nearly one-third of the adolescent respondents who had ever participated in a hookup claimed there was hope or expectations that the sexual relationship would lead to a more conventional dating relationship.

With such a large number of young adolescents and young adults participating in random sexual encounters, the use of protection among these individuals has been topic of interest among researchers. Baldwin & Baldwin (1988) sent questionnaires to a random sample of students at one University in order to determine if students were engaging in behaviors to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. The majority of the students were not engaging in any type of protective behavior, including condom use. Those students who were more cautious

tended to be older in age the first time they had sex, had fewer partners, and were female.

Religiosity

Baldwin and Baldwin (1988) also examined religion's influence in risky sexual behavior. Despite the teachings of many religions against premarital sex and promiscuous behavior, findings of Baldwin and Baldwin (1988) demonstrated sexual behavior and safe sex practices were not influenced by religiosity. Those students with higher levels of religiosity compared to those students with lower levels of religiosity were not more likely to engage in safe sex practices.

Burdette, Ellison, Glenn and Hill (2010) investigated whether religion, both institutional and individual, played a role in women's choice to participate in the hookup culture in college. This study used both in-depth interviews and phone surveys of 1000 college women. Findings showed that Catholic women are more likely to have hooked up while at college when compared to women who claimed no religious affiliation. Protestant women, who attend church regularly, were less likely to have participated in random sexual behavior when compared to women of no religious affiliation. Finally, women at Catholic universities and colleges were more likely to hookup when compared to their counterparts at secular schools. As found in Baldwin and Baldwin (1988), although most would tend to believe religiosity would predict more conservative sexual behavior, this is not supported by research focusing on students on college campuses.

Hypotheses

A series of hypotheses are tested in the current research. These hypotheses are based on the findings of past research on hooking up and also on issues, which have not been adequately examined in the research literature.

Hypothesis 1: Controlling for gender, respondents who consume alcohol frequently or sometimes are more likely to participate in hookup behavior when compared to respondents who never or hardly ever consume alcohol.

The findings from Cooper (2002) support my first hypothesis. The findings from this research show that drinking and alcohol consumption were strongly and significantly related to sex and risky sexual behavior. Risky behavior in this study included protection use, number of sexual partners, and casual sex partners. The findings in Bogle (2007) also helped to support my first hypothesis because the findings revealed that most students that were interviewed believed that drinking alcohol made hooking up possible because of the way it lowered their inhibitions. Bogle (2007) stated that based on the interviews with college students “alcohol use and alcohol-centered events (e.g., campus parties) play a critical role in making hookup encounters possible” (p. 777).

Hypothesis 2: Respondents who say religion was not at all important or not too important are equally as likely to participate in hookup behavior than those who say religion is somewhat or very important.

The findings in Baldwin and Baldwin (1988) lend support to the hypothesis that religion would not have an effect on hookup behavior because the findings demonstrated that sexual behavior was not influenced by religiosity. Those students with higher levels of religiosity compared to those students with lower levels of religiosity were not more likely to engage in safe sex practices or more conservative sexual behavior. Burdette et al. (2010) also helped to support this hypothesis with their findings that state that Catholic women are more likely to have hooked up while at college when compared to women who claimed no religious

affiliation. Finally, women at Catholic universities and colleges were more likely to hookup when compared to their counterparts at secular schools.

Hypothesis 3: Respondents who are female are more likely to say they have ever felt regretful or guilty about a sexual experience when compared to males.

Eshbaugh & Gute (2008) support my third hypothesis because the findings from this study indicated that 74% of participants, who were all college women, had felt either few or some regret about their sexual past. Hookups, including intercourse, resulted in regret felt by the female participants. The research by Paul & Hayes (2002) also supports this hypothesis because the findings show that female respondents were more likely than the male respondents to feel regretful or disappointed. Female respondents were also more likely to feel greater shame and self-doubt following the sexual experience. Dickinson, Paul, Herbison, & Silva (1998) also found that women wished they would have waited longer before having sex and felt more sexual regret than male respondents. Lastly, Sawyer & Smith (1996) conducted a survey to study the sexual regret among college students and found that while 38% of women reported sexual regret only 20% of males reported sexual regret.

Hypothesis 4: Respondents who are females are more likely to say they want to be in a relationship in college when compared to males.

Bogle's (2007) study supports my fourth hypothesis because the study found that women in particular have expectations of something further developing out of a hookup (i.e. romantic relationship or date). Manning, Giordano, & Longmore (2006) found similar results among high school students. The findings in this study show that nearly one-third of adolescents who participated in non-dating sexual partnerships, also known as hookups, said they had hopes and expectations of a more traditional dating relationship developing. Finally,

Hamilton and Armstrong's study (2009) also helped to support my fourth hypothesis because the findings from this study stated the college women who were interviewed revealed that they internalized their desire to be in a relationship because of the difficulty of establishing a relationship when men prefer hooking up instead.

Hypothesis 5: Respondents who are male are more likely to say they will go further sexually with someone they just met when compared to the respondents who are female.

Fisher's (2007) research supported my fifth hypothesis. The results showed that men reported more sexual experience and more permissive sexual attitudes when compared to women. These results would suggest that because men are more sexually experienced and permissive than they would be more apt to participating in random sexual encounters or hookups than women. Eisenber, Ackard, Resnick, and Neumark-Sztainer's (2009) study also showed that casual sexual partnerships were more common amongst men than women (29% vs. 14%).

Hypothesis 6: Respondents who had vaginal sex with someone they considered random or someone they just met are more likely to use condoms as a form of contraception than those who did not participate in random vaginal sex.

Paul, McManus, and Hayes's (2000) investigation of hookup on college campuses helped to support my sixth hypothesis because they found that 81% of their respondents who had experienced at least one hookup, which included vaginal sex, used condoms as protection. However, the Baldwin and Baldwin (1988) study did not support this hypothesis. Their findings showed that condom use was generally low in their sample of college students. Nearly 66% of students reported never using a condom and the numbers were unaltered by the increase of sexual partners, as would be suspected.

Hypothesis 7: Respondents who had their first sexual experience at the age of 16 or younger are more likely to say they have participated in hookup behavior when compared to those who had their first vaginal sex experience at age 17 years or older.

Findings from the Koyle et al. (1989) research are consistent with this hypothesis. They found that women were more likely to have their first intercourse between the ages of 17-19, while men were more likely to have their first intercourse between the ages of 6-14. Both men and women were more likely to have more partners and more sex in the last four weeks if they had their first sexual intercourse between the ages of 6-14. “The findings are considered important for they suggest that early sexual behavior does have an enduring effect and that there is a relationship between early initiation into sex and later promiscuity” (Koyle et al. 1989: page 473).

Methods

Sample

The data that I am using for my research were gathered from a non-random convenience sample at a large Eastern University in the fall of 2009. The sample consisted of 355 undergraduate students from Sociology and Criminology classes. Instructors gave permission for data to be gathered in their classes. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete and was approved by the Institutional Review Board; participation was completely anonymous and voluntary.

Survey

The questionnaire was administered in three different classes and consent was indicated by the completion and return of the survey. The purpose of this research study was to explore if the act of hooking up had replaced traditional dating on college campuses. The study also

sought to further identify who is likely to participate in these acts and the factors that lead one to engage in hooking up behavior. The survey included questions about the respondents' demographics, their sexual attitudes, behaviors, and experiences, as well as, personal relationships and alcoholic drinking behaviors.

Of the 355 respondents, 60% were male and 40% were female. In terms of race, 77.5% classified themselves as Caucasian, 7.9% as African American, 3.7% as Hispanic, 6.8% as Asian, 3.1% as multi-racial, and 1.1% as other. Also, all classes were represented in this study; 30 were freshman, 133 were sophomores, 117 were juniors, and 64 were seniors. Only 3.7% of the 355 respondents claimed that they had a sexual experience with someone they did not know well or just met, but 39.3% of respondents responded that they had experienced vaginal intercourse at least one time with someone they just met or did not know well.

Independent Variables

The independent variables that are hypothesized to affect college students' hooking up behavior are gender, the importance of religion in the respondents' life, rank within the family amongst siblings, alcohol consumption and frequency, first vaginal sexual encounter, whether the respondent was exposed to some sort of sexual education by parents, pressure felt from friends and peers, views on premarital sex, and current relationship status.

Gender was measured in two categories (1=male, 2=female). The importance of religion was measured on a 5-point scale asking respondents how important religion was in their life (1=not at all important, 2=not too important, 3=somewhat important, 4=very important, and 5=I don't know). Respondents were also asked if they had siblings and if they did then where did they stand amongst them (1=youngest child, 2=a middle child, 3=oldest child, 4=twin). Alcohol consumption and frequency was measured by four different questions. Respondents were asked

how often they consumed alcoholic beverages and this was measured on a 7-point scale (1=every day, 2=2-3 times a week, 3=4-5 times a week, 4=once a week, 5=1-2 times a month, 6=every 6 months, 7=almost never). Respondents were also asked how many alcoholic beverages they consumed when they were drinking, which was measure on a 4-point scale (1=1-5 drinks, 2=6-10 drinks, 3=11 or more drinks, 4=don't know). Respondents were then asked how many times a week did they consume six or more drinks in one seating (1=1-2 times, 2=3-4 times, 3=5 times or more, 4=I don't know). Lastly, respondents were asked how often they drink to become intoxicated (1=always, 2=usually, 3=sometimes, 4=rarely, 5=never). The survey also inquired about the age of the respondent when they had their first sexual experience (vaginal sex) and this was measured on an 8-point scale (1=never had sex, 2=younger than 12, 3=12-14, 4=15-16, 5=17-18, 6=19-21, 7=22 or older, 8=I don't know). To measure parents' involvement in their child's sexual education, respondents were asked how old they were when they were given their first sex talk (1=I never got any talk, 2=younger than 12, 3=12-14, 4=15-17, 5=18-20, 6=21+). Respondents were asked if they ever felt pressure from their friends to participate in a random sexual encounter (1=yes always, 2=yes usually, 3=yes sometimes, 4=no never, 5=don't know). To assess the respondents' view on premarital sex, two questions were asked. The first question asked if in high school did they believe premarital sex to be wrong and the second question asked if in college did they believe premarital sex to be wrong (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know). Respondents were also asked if they were currently in an exclusive relationship (1=yes I'm in an exclusive relationships, 2=yes I'm engaged, 3=yes I'm married, 4=no) and more importantly were asked if they had ever had a sexual experience with someone they did not know well or just met, also referred to as hooking up (1=yes in middle school, 2=yes in high school, 3=yes in college, 4=no).

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this current research are whether or not the respondent had ever participated in hooking up behavior, if the respondent experienced different sexual behavior when at home with parents compared to when at school, reasons for never participating in a random sexual encounter, whether respondent had ever felt guilt or regret about a random sexual encounter, which situations are believed to lead to a relationships, number of vaginal sex partners, choice of contraception, who respondents are more likely to go farther sexually with, and expectations of hooking up behavior.

Findings

Definition of Hooking up

While researchers have defined hooking up as “a sexual encounter between two people who are brief acquaintances or strangers, usually lasting only one night without the expectation of developing a relationship” (Paul, McManus, & Hayes 2000), college students have defined the term in a different manner. Hooking up has been treated both by researchers and others in an ambiguous manner that can hold numerous different meanings. Data from the present study suggest that there is no one way to identify this term. In the past, hooking up would refer to going on a date, but only 2.3% of respondents agreed with this definition. Others have alleged hooking up refers to sexual intercourse, but again only 9% of respondents agreed with this definition. Most respondents defined hooking up as kissing (24.8%) and any sexual behavior leading up to but not including sexual intercourse (37.5%). Another large group (21.1%) defined hooking up as all of the above, which would include dating, kissing, any sexual behavior leading to sexual intercourse, and finally sexual intercourse. A small group (4.5%) defined hooking up as “other”, which mostly included more personalized variations of sexual

activities leading up to or including sexual intercourse. These data give a very clear picture of the uncertain and imprecise definition of the term hooking up. Definitions of hooking up were also examined controlling for both gender and class rank and no differences were found. This lack of clarity about the definition of hooking up exists across gender and class rank.

Predictors of types of hooking-up

Table 1 presents the relationship between gender and ever having a *vaginal* sexual encounter with someone the respondent did not know well. Men were slightly more likely to participate in random vaginal sexual behavior, when compared to their female counterparts. Surprisingly, 50.5% of men and 65.4% of women said they had never had a vaginal sexual encounter with anyone they did not know well. This relationship was statistically significant at the 0.02 level.

Table 1. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the gender of the respondent and the number of random sexual encounters.

<i>Number of Random Vaginal Sexual Encounters</i>	<i>Gender of Respondents</i>	
	Male	Female
none	97 (50.05%)	83 (65.4%)
once	34 (17.7%)	21 (16.5%)
2-4 times	44 (22.9%)	19 (15.0%)
5 or more times	17 (8.9%)	4 (3.1%)

The analysis of the relationship between gender and ever having experienced *oral* sex with someone random or with someone the respondent did not know well is presented in Table

2. The majority of male respondents said they had 2-4 experiences of random oral sex (39.7%), when compared to 30.7% of female respondents. Most of the female respondents said they had never had a random oral sexual encounter (47.4%), when compared to only 38% of the male respondents saying they had never had a random oral sexual encounter. This relationship between gender and random oral sexual encounters is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 2. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the gender of the respondent and the number of random oral sex encounters.

<i>Number of Random Oral Sex Encounters</i>	<i>Gender of Respondent</i>	
	male	female
none	67 (32.8%)	65 (47.4%)
once	22 (10.8%)	18 (13.1%)
2-4 times	81 (39.7%)	42 (30.7%)
5 or more times	34 (16.7%)	12 (8.8%)

Hooking up and Alcohol

Table 3 presents the testing of the hypothesis that while controlling for gender, respondents who consume alcohol frequently or sometimes are more likely to participate in hookup behavior when compared to the respondents who never or hardly ever consume alcohol. Male respondents were more likely to participate in more random *vaginal* sexual encounters if they claimed to consume alcoholic beverages sometimes or frequently, when compared to the male respondents who never or hardly ever consume alcohol. Of the male respondents who consumed alcohol frequently, 26.7% said they had five or more random sexual encounters and 33.3% said they had 2-4 random sexual encounters. Of the male

respondents who said they hardly ever consumed alcohol, 3.3% had five or more random vaginal sexual encounters and 3.3% had 2-4 random vaginal sexual encounters, but 80% had never had a random vaginal sex experiences. This relationship was statistically significant at the .001 level. As for the female respondents, a similar trend can be seen. Of the female respondents who never consume alcohol, 100% of respondents said they had never had a random vaginal sex experience. Of the female respondents who consumed alcohol frequently, 28.6% had never had vaginal sex with someone they did not know and another 28.6% said they had five or more random vaginal sex encounters. This relationship was also statistically significant at the .01 level.

Table 3. Contingency tables presenting the relationship between the frequency of consuming alcohol and the number of random vaginal sexual encounters, while controlling for gender of the respondent.

Male Respondents	<i>Frequency of Consuming Alcohol</i>			
<i>Number of Random Vaginal Sexual Encounters</i>	never	hardly ever	sometimes	frequently
none	1 (50%)	24 (80.0%)	65 (50%)	7 (23.3%)
once	0 (0%)	4 (13.3%)	25 (19.2%)	5 (16.7%)
2-4 times	1 (50%)	1 (3.3%)	32 (24.6%)	10 (33.3%)
5 or more times	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	8 (6.2%)	8 (26.7%)

Female Respondents	<i>Frequency of Consuming Alcohol</i>			
<i>Number of Random Sexual Vaginal Encounters</i>	never	hardly ever	sometimes	frequently
none	4 (100%)	26 (86.7%)	51 (59.3%)	2 (28.6%)
once	0 (0%)	2 (6.7%)	17 (19.8%)	2 (28.6%)
2-4 times	0 (0%)	2 (6.7%)	16 (18.6%)	1 (14.3%)
5 or more times	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.3%)	2 (28.6%)

The findings in Table 4 are the test of the hypothesis that while controlling for gender, respondents who consume alcohol frequently or sometimes are more likely to participate in hookup behavior when compared to the respondents who never or hardly ever consume alcohol. Similar to Table 3, respondents, who claimed to drink frequently were also more likely to have more random *oral* sex experiences. This pattern is present for both men and women. Of the male respondents who never consumed alcohol, 100% said they had never had a random oral sex encounter. When looking at the male respondents who indicated they hardly ever drink, 57.1% had never had oral sex with someone random, 14.3% had one experience, 22.9% had random oral sex 2-4 times, and 5.7% had five or more encounters. Of the male respondents who drank frequently, only 6.3% had never had a random oral sex experience, 12.5% had only one experience, 46.9% had random oral sex 2-4 times, and 34.4% had participated in random oral sex five or more times. This relationship was statistically significant at the .001 level. As for the female respondents, a similar relationship can be seen and the relationship is also statistically significant ($p < .05$). Of the female respondents who claimed to never consume alcohol, 83.3% had never had a random oral sex experience. When looking at female respondents who drank sometimes, 36.7% had never had oral sex with someone random, 16.7%

had one experience, 35.6% had random oral sex 2-4 times, and 11.1% had five or more encounters. The number of random oral sexual encounters continues to grow when looking at female respondents who claim to drink frequently with nearly 42.9% responding that they had experience random oral sex 2-4 times and 14.3% who claimed they had 5 or more random oral sexual encounters.

Table 4. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the frequency of consuming alcohol and the number of random oral sex encounters, while controlling for the gender of the respondent.

Male Respondents	<i>Frequency of Consuming Alcohol</i>			
<i>Number of Random Oral Sex Encounters</i>	never	hardly ever	sometimes	frequently
none	5 (100%)	20 (57.1%)	40 (30.3%)	2 (6.3%)
once	0 (0%)	5 (14.3%)	13 (9.8%)	4 (12.5%)
2-4 times	0 (0%)	8 (22.9%)	58 (43.9%)	15 (46.9%)
5 or more times	0 (0%)	2 (5.7%)	21 (15.9%)	11 (34.4%)

Female Respondents	<i>Frequency of Consuming Alcohol</i>			
<i>Number of Random Oral Sex Encounters</i>	never	hardly ever	sometimes	frequently
None	5 (83.3%)	25 (73.5%)	33 (36.7%)	2 (28.6%)
Once	0 (0%)	2 (5.9%)	15 (16.7%)	1 (14.3%)
2-4 times	1 (16.7%)	6 (17.6%)	32 (35.6%)	3 (42.9%)
5 or more times	0 (0%)	1 (2.9%)	10 (11.1%)	1 (14.3%)

Religion and Hooking up

These findings in Table 5 present the relationship between the importance of religion in the respondents' life and whether they have ever had a random vaginal sexual encounter. It was hypothesized that respondents who say religion was not at all important or not too important are equally as likely to participate in hookup behavior than those who say religion is somewhat or very important. Of the respondents who said religion was not at all important, 42.6% had never had vaginal sex with someone they did know well or considered random and the remaining 57.4% did have at least one or more random vaginal sex experiences. Of the respondents who responded that religion was very important, 65% had never had vaginal sex with someone random and the remaining 45% did have at least one or more random vaginal sex experiences. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant although it is in the direction hypothesized.

Table 5. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the importance of religion and the number of random sexual encounters.

<i>Number of Random Vaginal Sexual Encounters</i>	<i>Importance of Religion</i>			
	not at all important	not too important	somewhat important	very important
none	20 (42.6%)	46 (60.5%)	71 (54.2%)	39 (65%)
once	10 (21.3%)	12 (15.8%)	22 (16.8%)	10 (16.7%)
2-4 times	11 (23.4%)	14 (18.4%)	28 (21.4%)	10 (16.7%)
5 or more times	6 (12.8%)	4 (5.3%)	10 (7.6%)	1 (1.7%)

Intercourse and Regret

Table 6 presents the relationship between the gender of the respondent and whether the respondent has ever felt guilty or regretful about a sexual experience. The results indicate that female respondents (74.2%) are much more likely to say they have ever felt guilty or regretful about a sexual experience when compared to males (49.5%). This analysis does support my hypothesis and is statistically significant at the .001 level.

Table 6. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the gender of the respondent and ever feeling guilty/regretful about a sexual experience.

<i>Ever Felt Guilty/Regretful about a Sexual Experience</i>	<i>Gender of Respondent</i>	
	Male	Female
Yes	97 (49.5%)	95 (74.2%)
No	99 (50.5%)	33 (25.8%)

Relationship Desire

The relationship between the gender of the respondent and their desire to be in a relationship while in college is presented in Table 7. It was hypothesized that female respondents would be more likely to say they would like to be in a relationship in college when compared to male respondents. This hypothesis was supported as 92.6% of female respondents said they would like to be in a relationship in college, when compared to 79.7% of male respondents. This relationship was statistically significant ($p < .01$).

Table 7. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the gender of the respondent and the desire to be in a relationship while in college.

<i>Desire to be in a relationship in college</i>	<i>Gender of Respondent</i>	
	Male	Female
Yes	126 (79.7%)	87 (92.6%)
No	32 (20.3%)	7 (7.4%)

Hooking-up and Person Knowledge

Table 8 illustrates the relationship between the gender of the respondent and whom the respondent is more likely to go farther sexually with. The findings in Table 8 supports the hypothesis that male respondents are more likely to go farther with someone random or someone they just met as compared to females ($p < .001$). Both male and female respondents were most likely to say they would go farther with someone they truly had feelings for, but 19.5% of male respondents said they would go farther with someone random when compared to only 4.5% of women who said they would go farther with someone random.

Table 8. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the gender of the respondent and whom they are more likely to go farther with sexually.

<i>More Likely to go Farther Sexually With</i>	<i>Sex of Respondent</i>	
	Male	Female
someone random	33 (19.5%)	6 (4.5%)
someone truly like or have feelings for	123 (72.8%)	122 (91.7%)

known for sometime (friends)	13 (7.7%)	5 (3.8%)
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Condom Use and Hooking-up

Table 9 presents the relationship between ever having vaginal sex with someone the respondent did not know well and whether or not the respondent uses condoms as a contraceptive. It was hypothesized that individuals that had sex with someone they considered random or just met would be more likely to use condoms as a form of contraception than those who did not participate in random vaginal sex behavior. Of those who had vaginal sex with someone they did not know well, 85.8 percent said they used condoms, while 50.6 percent of those respondents who had not had a sexual experience with someone they did not know used a condom. It was much more common for respondents who had sex with someone they did not know well to use condoms when compared to the respondents who did not participate in this hookup behavior. This relationship is significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Table 9. Contingency table presenting the relationship between ever having vaginal sex with someone the respondent just met or did not know well and the use of condoms as contraception.

<i>Use of condoms as contraception</i>	<i>Vaginal sex with someone just met or did not know well</i>	
	No	Yes
No	78 (49.4%)	18 (14.2%)
Yes	80 (50.6%)	109 (85.8%)

Age at first intercourse and future sexual promiscuity

Table 10 portrays the relationship between whether the respondent has ever had a sexual experience with someone they just met or did not know well and the age of their first vaginal sexual experience. It was hypothesized that respondents who had their first vaginal sex experience at age 16 years or younger are more likely to say they have participated in hookup behavior when compared to those who had their first vaginal sex experience at age 17 years or older. Of the respondents who had their first vaginal sex experience at the age of 16 years or younger, 6.3% said they had ever had a sexual experience with someone they did not know well. Of the respondents who had their first vaginal sex experience at the age of 17 years or older, only 3% said they had ever had a sexual experience with someone they did not know well. This relationship did not reach statistical significance, but it was in the direction predicted.

Table 10. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the age of the respondent's first vaginal sexual experience and the number of sexual experiences with someone the respondent had just met or did not know well.

<i>Sexual Experience with Someone just met or did not know well</i>	<i>Age of First Vaginal Sexual Experience</i>	
	16 years or younger	17 years and older
No	105 (93.8%)	163 (97%)
Yes	7 (6.3%%)	5 (3%)

The relationship between whether the number of random vaginal sex partners and the age of their first vaginal sexual experience is presented in Table 11. These findings also relate to the hypothesis that respondents who had their first vaginal sex experience at age 16 years or

younger are more likely to say they have participated in hookup behavior when compared to those who had their first vaginal sex experience at age 17 years or older. Of the respondents who had their first vaginal sex experience at the age of 16 or younger, 37.4% never had vaginal sex with someone they did not know well and 57.9% of respondents who had their first vaginal sexual encounter at the age of 17 years or older had never experience vaginal sex with someone they did not know well. This relationship was statistically significant at .001 level.

Table 11. Contingency table presenting the relationship between the age of the respondent's first vaginal sexual experience and the number of random sexual encounters.

<i>Number of Random Vaginal Sexual Encounters</i>	<i>Age of First Vaginal Sexual Experience</i>	
	16 years or younger	17 years and older
none	40 (37.4%)	95 (57.9%)
once	16 (15%)	38 (23.2%)
2-4 times	38 (35.5%)	25 (15.2%)
five times or more	13 (12.1%)	6 (3.7%)

Discussion

This current study aimed to investigate the determinants of college students' decisions to participate in casual sexual behavior, often referred to as hooking up. Although a variety of definitions for hooking up have been used in past research, students in the current research indicated that hooking up can range from holding hands to having vaginal intercourse with someone you do not know well. A number of hypotheses were tested in the current study. First, I investigated the relationship between alcohol consumption and hookup behavior,

hypothesizing that while controlling for gender, respondents who consume alcohol frequently or sometimes are more likely to participate in hookup behavior when compared to respondents who never or hardly ever consume alcohol. This hypothesis was supported by my findings. Prior research demonstrates that the likelihood that an individual has ever consumed alcohol is also associated with the likelihood that the individual has ever had sex (Cooper 2002). Cooper's (2002) findings also stated that alcohol use is associated with risky sexual behavior among college students, which includes the lack of protective behavior and casual sexual partners. Bogle (2007) investigated why college students thought that alcohol would play a large role in hooking up. The findings in this study suggested that many of Bogle's respondents believed that alcohol merely lowered their inhibitions and acted as a "social lubricant", which made it easier to engage in random, casual sexual behavior (Bogle 2007, p. 777).

The relationship between religiosity and hooking up behavior was also examined and has been examined in previous studies with mixed results. The findings indicated that religion did not impact college students' decision to participate in random sexual behavior. These findings do support my initial speculation that religion would have no effect on hookup participation. This speculation was supported by the prior research conducted by Burdette et al. (2009). Findings in Burdette et al. (2009) showed that Catholic women are more likely to have hooked up while at college when compared to women who claimed no religious affiliation. Also, Protestant women, who attend church regularly were less likely to have participated in random sexual behavior when compared to women of no religious affiliation. As found in Baldwin and Baldwin (1988), although most would tend to believe religiosity would predict more conservative sexual behavior this is not supported by research focusing on students on college campuses.

Next, I sought to investigate the relationship between gender differences and the feeling of regret about a sexual experience. I hypothesized that respondents who are female are more likely to say they have ever felt regretful or guilty about a sexual experience when compared to males, which was supported by my findings and the literature. Dickinson et al. (1998) concluded that most women in their study reported they should have waited and felt more regret about their sexual experiences when compared to men. Sawyer et al. (1996) also had similar findings, which found that while 38% of women reported sexual regret only 20% of males reported sexual regret.

I also hypothesized that female respondents would be likely to say they want to be in a relationship in college as compared to males. My findings did support my hypothesis, which was also supported by the prior research. Bogle (2007) found that the women in her study had expectations of something further developing out of a hookup. In a study conducted by Hamilton et al. (2009), findings showed that women in college had a tendency of internalizing this desire to be in a relationship because they believed that men did not share that same desire of a relationship.

Because of this lack of desire by men to want to be in a relationship, it was also hypothesized that respondents who are male are more likely to say they will go further sexually with someone they just met when compared to the respondents who are female. This hypothesis was also supported by the findings from this study. Previous research, such as the study conducted by Fisher (2007), have found that men report more sexual experiences and more sexual permissive attitudes when compared to women.

Due to the belief that college students participate in hookup behavior more than any other population, the use of protection against pregnancy and disease has been a topic of

interest. It was hypothesized that respondents who had vaginal sex with someone they considered random or someone they just met are more likely to use condoms as a form of contraception than those who did not participate in random vaginal sex. This hypothesis was also supported with 81% of respondents who had experienced at least one hookup used condoms as protection.

Finally, I sought to investigate the role that the age of first intercourse played on an individual's decision to participate in hookup behavior. It was hypothesized that respondents who had their first vaginal sex experience at age 16 years or younger would be more likely to say they have participated in hookup behavior when compared to those who had their first vaginal sex experience at age 17 years or older. This hypothesis was supported this research and the findings are consistent with prior studies. Koyle et al. (1989) suggested that early sexuality does have an effect on future sexual behavior, including number of partners and later promiscuity.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that although both young men and women participate in hooking up, there are important gender differences about is the kind of relationship that is expected to develop out of such behavior and the feelings of satisfaction versus regret when participating in random sexual behavior. Women, as most would suspect, are more likely to participate in a hookup in hopes that some sort of traditional relationship may develop. Women are also more likely to feel regretful when hooking up: behavior that has become almost expected on college campuses. Unfortunately, religion has no impact on an individual's decision to participate in the hookup culture. Some researchers have directly attributed this fact to the college environment and campus culture, which sometimes tends to outweigh the morals and religious beliefs that some students bring with them to the college

experience (Bogle 2007). It was also found that hooking up is made possible by the large amount of alcoholic beverages that college students consume, which is also a part of campus culture. As Bogle (2007) explained, alcohol has become a social lubricant which refers to its ability to lower inhibitions of those who consume it.

Directions for Future Research

The question that develops out of these findings is if women want a relationship and feel more regret than satisfaction, who is benefiting from these behaviors? It was found that men are more likely to go farther sexually with someone they just met and were more likely to be sexually permissive with more partners than women (Fisher 2007). Are men for the most part benefiting from the hookup culture that has developed on college campuses more than their female counterparts? Also, if women feel so much sexual regret and are hoping for the development of a traditional dating relationship, then why do they continue to participate in hookups? Finally, are hookups worth the risk of unexpected pregnancy and disease?

The questions posed in the previous paragraph are some aspects of hooking up that are in need of further investigation. There needs to be more studies conducted to explore the gender-based double standards and gender differences that exist in hookup culture in general. Another interesting aspect of hooking up that needs further exploration is what happens after college. Presently, hooking up as part of the campus culture, but do these college students then revert back to traditional dating after they graduate or does hooking up continue on? There are many aspects of research on hooking up that have received little empirical attention. Since hooking up is now normative on college campuses, it is important that we have some understanding of the behavior and what it entails. This information is vital as hooking up as a

means of relationship formation may become the norm in high school and after college graduation.

Limitations

The present research had several limitations. First and foremost, merely defining the phrase hooking up is challenging. Each respondent was asked to define hooking up and then to use that definition throughout the survey, which may cause some respondents to answer questions differently than others. Measurement is a very important issues as findings cannot be compared from study to study and policy will be questionable if the measurement of hooking up is not consistent across study.

Also, the data for this study come from a convenience sample of students at one Eastern University. These students may indeed be different than students at other types of colleges in other parts of the United States. A simple random sample survey of students in colleges in the United States would empirically test whether these trends are similar across time and place. Ideally, a longitudinal panel study of students would be conducted. This would answer research questions focusing on how hooking up behavior changes during college and after college.

Conclusion

College students have traditionally been on the fore front of changes in sexual norms. In many cases, this behavior has then influenced the norms for the remainder of society. It is clear that relationship formation patterns have changed over time. At one point in time, hooking up would have been viewed as a deviant behavior. Now it is considered to be normative behavior and is part of the vocabulary and plans of students. Further research needs to focus on the consequences of hooking up for the individual and society.

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Academic Vita

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Education:

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA October 2009
Bachelor of Arts in Crime, Law, and Justice
Schreyer Honors College

- Minor in African and African American Studies
- Minor in Sociology
- Dean's list: every semester

Faculdade Social da Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil May 2009-July 2009
(Completed courses in Tourism and Business in Brazil)

Experience:

Bank of America, State College, PA June 2008-Present
Account manager & Customer Satisfaction Coordinator in the Collections Department

- Assist customers with managing their budgets and credit card payments
- Design payment programs and plans for individuals with financial difficulties
- Provide effective customer service to a diverse clientele on a part time basis while attending college full-time
- Manage and oversee team of twenty associates in accomplishing satisfactory customer satisfaction

The Original Waffle Shop, State College, PA May 2007-Dec. 2007
Waitress and Hostess

- Ensured friendly interaction with a wide variety of customers and completed orders and service in a prompt manner
- Handled financial and credit transactions in a timely and accurate manner

Nordstroms, Costa Mesa, CA March 2005-July 2005
Sales Associate

- Assisted customers with shopping and navigating through the department store
- Collaborated with other associates to meet sale goals set by the corporation

Activities and Honors:

Schreyer Honor Student March 2007-present

- Working on a thesis that examines relationship development among college students

Team Member Sept 2006-Jan 2007

- Intramural volleyball, Penn State University, PA

Member

- National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Penn State University, PA Sept 2007-present
- Golden Key Club, Penn State University, PA Sept 2007-present
- Blue and White Society, Penn State University, PA Sept 2006-present
- Global Medical Brigades, Penn State University, PA Sept 2008-present
- Phi Kappa Phi, Penn State University, PA March 2010-present

Community Involvement

Confirmation sponsor, Huntington Beach, CA Sept 2006-present

- Worked as a confirmation sponsor for two different individuals at my church in California
- Provided spiritual guidance and mentored two 15 year olds through the 2 year confirmation process

Homeless shelter volunteer at Catholic Worker, Santa Ana, CA Sept 2002-present

- Provided the children living at the home with tutoring, reading lessons, and help with schoolwork

Trip to Honduras with Global Medical Brigades

January 2010

- Providing health care and health care education to the local people in Honduras over a 10-day trip.