Different Strokes for Different Folks: A Comparison of Heterosexuals and Homosexuals/Bisexuals

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Abstract

"Hooking up" has been defined as 'a sexual encounter, usually only lasting one night, between two people who are strangers or brief acquaintances' (Paul et al. 2000, 79). However, the majority of "hooking up" research only uses samples of heterosexuals. Using data collected from a survey administered to 310 students in the Fall of 2009, an attempt is made to document the similarities and differences between heterosexual and homosexual/bisexual students’ "hooking up" behaviors. A cross tabulation of the data revealed many similarities and differences between the two groups, specifically in regards to the types of sexual behavior engaged in. This study demonstrates that there are separate "hooking up" cultures that influence "hooking up." This data could be used to argue that heterosexual and homosexuals/bisexuals, despite having the same likelihood of experiencing a "hook up" and making out hookup? hooking up because of the sexual liberalness associated with being homosexual/bisexual.  

Research Question

Does sexual orientation affect how a student surveyed would have experienced a 'hook up' and the type of "hook up" that occurred?

Hypotheses

Based on the current literature two hypotheses can be given:

1. If "hooking up" behavior is perceived to happen more than it actually does, and it is determined by peer norms, then the students surveyed, because of their shared environment, would have the same likelihood of experiencing a "hook up" and the types of "hook up" regardless of sexual orientation.

2. If "hooking up" behavior is influenced by the media and a person's degree of sexual liberalness, then homosexual/bisexual students will be more likely than heterosexual students to have experienced a "hook up" because of the highly sexual media portrayal of homosexuality/bisexuality and because of the sexual liberalness that is associated with being homosexual/bisexual.

Methodology and Limitations

• A Pen – and – pencil survey was administered to Concord University students.
• In order to gather a sufficient number of homosexual/bisexual participants, the survey was also administered to the Concord University Gay, Straight Alliance.
• Gay/Lesbian and Bisexual categories were combined into one group in the analysis.
• A crosstab for each question was generated for comparison.

Limitations

• This was not a random sample. 
• Approximately only 295 of the 310 surveyed responded to the questions under study.

Results

• All of the crosstabs excluding the crosstab dealing with have you ever had a making out "hook up" showed no conclusive differences.

Discussion

The research would seem to imply that there does exist a separate set of sexual norms governing the "hooking up" behaviors of heterosexual and homosexual/bisexual students. This could be due to several factors:

• Heterosexual and homosexual/bisexual students are more likely to look to members of their own groups to form their sexual norms concerning "hook ups."
• Because of the sexual liberalness of the homosexual/bisexual culture, this group of students is more likely to experience a more intense "hook up."

Additional Results

The research would seem to imply that there does exist a separate set of sexual norms governing the "hooking up" behaviors of heterosexual and homosexual/bisexual students. This could be due to several factors:

• Heterosexual and homosexual/bisexual students are more likely to look to members of their own groups to form their sexual norms concerning "hook ups."
• Because of the sexual liberalness of the homosexual/bisexual culture, this group of students is more likely to experience a more intense "hook up."

• There is no set of perceived norms on hooking up behavior that is shared by the students surveyed that envelopes both heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals.

• Sexual liberalness could be a determining factor that differentiates hetero's from non-heterosexuals due to the "explicitness" of actions taken.

• Media, too, could possibly influence these behaviors amongst non-heterosexuals.

Conclusions

• The results do indicate that the type of "hook up" that the student experienced can be determined based on his or her sexual orientation.
• Hypothesis 1 was not supported due to the differences between groups, especially in the final three questions.
• Hypothesis 2 was supported based on the disparity in answers between both groups.

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