Hicks, Alexandra: Hook-up Culture Within Greek Life at SUNY Geneseo

Research Proposal

For my research project, I am planning on creating a video based on hookup culture in Greek (for an anthropology project I'd just use the terms sororities/fraternities as of course we are not talking about actual Greeks) life on SUNY Geneseo's campus. I will be conducting studies within sororities and fraternities on campus. In "The Innocent Eye" article by Grimshaw, he stated that Malinowski and Flaherty believe "you should spend as much time with the subjects as possible". I will achieve this goal because all my housemates are in greek life as am I. I also have many close male friends in greek life as well. I plan on doing interviews and studies about how organizations view other organizations hook-up culture and the rumors they have heard about them. Then I will interview those organizations about themselves, seeing if they match up or if they have new aspects to bring up. I plan on keeping names of subjects and names of specific organizations anonymous for certain questions. This is because I don't want organizations getting in any trouble by the school or having a bad reputation due to one person's actions. The questions I plan on asking are going to relate to "has that person's point of view been altered on hook-up culture since joining greek culture?" "If so, why do they believe it has changed?" I also want to see if fraternities tend to have more casual sex or if sororities do? There are issues of reporting related to gender norms here. Basically men may exaggerate and women may downplay... maybe use the scholarly literature here? Seeing if gender roles and gender norms are true in these scenarios not sure exactly what you mean here. e.g. gender norms are not "true" or "untrue"... they are just norms... Also seeing if there are such things as "hook-up challenges", such as gaining your "rainbow" and other kinds of challenges, you'll have to explain these concepts!

This needs to be focused somehow. I'd start looking into the scholarly literature on sororities/fraternities and hook up culture for some ideas. A classic approach would be simply to compare the attitudes of men and women from a range of fraternities about hook up culture and assess how similar or different they are (by gender rather than fraternity/sorority).

Proposal is about 250 words: yes no
Proposal outlines the goals of the project: strong good adequate needs work
Proposal outlines the methods of the project: strong good adequate needs work
Reference to course readings: strong good adequate needs work
Reference to scholarly/peer-reviewed anthropological works: strong good adequate needs work

Final Video

Scholarly Background

Fraternity and sorority life has often has a negative connotation to the public eye. Such viewpoints often stem from topics such as sexual harassment (abuse or rape), hazing, and committing crimes like underage drinking that are associated with these organizations. However, people have misconstrued how hook-up culture is viewed within greek life. Researchers at Harvard University (Roberts, 2017) have pointed out that people between the ages of 18-25 are actually having less causal sex than their parents did during the same age range. Even though people have these preset perspectives on how panhellenic societies affect students and their actions, people might be surprised with the results found within the background research. I have recently joined a Sorority at Geneseo, but there was also a time when I wasn't involved in the organization. I personally have not observed a change in my personality or my own involvement in hook-up culture after joining a Greek organization, but I wanted to know if I was an outlier, or just like everyone else. I feel that my position within the community would allow me to get more of an honest response.

I conducted 10 different interviews from students of different Sororities and fraternities at Geneseo. These interviewees ranged in age and amount of time participating within Greek life. I also interviewed people of different sexualities as well. My interviews last for about 15-30 minutes each because I really wanted to establish a comfortable environment for the person participating. Sex is a personal topic for some people, which is why I wanted them to feel comfortable and safe while talking to me and that I wasn't going to judge them. I found that with certain questions, the answers were very similar and on the other hand there were questions where the answers greatly varied. In the article by (Kiaski, 2017) One of its larger claims was the fact that people engaged in sexual interactions to obtain the social hierarchy that come with it. I found as I interviewed people that certain organizations are more desirable than others. Another major aspect that I found is that the difference in the point-of-view on "hookups" between males and females is different, but not in the way everyone expects. In the article by (Welch, 2017) it states how many people assume that every weekend, men are going out with the intention of "getting laid" whereas there are females who also go out with the same intentions I mentioned in my film two articles that describe the opinions of other students on hook-up culture. In the article by (Total Frat Move, 2013) they describe people based on their body count. This article states that the higher body count for a male is better, and a lower body count for a female is better. My main purpose of my film is to show how fraternity males and sorority females have the same point of view on hook-up culture and casual sex. Students have preconceived thoughts about how both genders react and engage with sexual relations. However, with my interviews I wanted to see if students who are part of fraternities and sororities really do view hook-up culture differently or if they have the same mindset.

The questions I decided to ask are not concentrated on rumors they have heard about other organizations. My questions are more related to finding out how the interviewee viewed sex from their own experience. By doing so I am going to compare the answers and see if they relate or if they are completely opposite opposite to what? Your research? Statement is quite vague. Do their answers prove how majority of people believe fraternity males are only looking for one night stands and casual hook-ups and sorority women are looking for a single person awkward. Or are both parties only looking to have fun?
I used the ethnographic film “Paris is Burning” and “How Gay is Pakistan” as a model for my film. These films involved very personal interviews regarding sex and other physical interactions. I tried to emulate the interviewer from the film by being respectful and showing empathy with the participant. Towards the end of my interview questions, I asked some questions regarding harassment within fraternities and sororities which was a harsh topic they talked about in both films. The difficulty I had while producing my film was steering away from a “voice of God” complex. To keep the anonymity of the people and their organizations, I wasn’t able to film them or capture their voices. By me stating their exact responses, I avoided applying my own interpretations those their responses and actions. As I was interviewing them, I typed the exact answer that they gave me.

In an article by (Skinner, 2016 abstract) it states how “Face-to-face interviews are a fundamental research tool in qualitative research. While this form of data collection can provide many valuable insights, it can often fall short of providing a complete picture of a research subject’s experiences.” I understood that not having footage of the actual interview could burden my film by not having the person’s reaction while answering the question. To compensate for this, during the interview, I would put down note if I noticed any facial reactions or side comments about the questions in my notes. Such notes included signs of mood changes such as nervousness, shyness, or if the interviewee refused to answer the question.

Because I did not have an actual film from interviews, I incorporated pictures and clips from other videos to add visuals to the film. I knew that this would have an effect on people’s perceptions, but I thought this was a necessary element to engage the audience. I also used music that related to the topic. I tried not to use music that would sway the audience’s perceptions.

Appendix A: Interview questions

- When did you join your sorority or Fraternity?
- Did you hear about any pre-construed things about hook-up culture in greek life in college (or Geneseo more specifically)?
- Have you ever engaged in physical/sexual activities before college?
- Have you ever engaged in physical/sexual activities in the time between entering college and joining greek life?
- When you entered college did you have a partner?
- Are you still together?
- Did you break up once you joined your organization?
- Did you have a partner while being in greek life?
- Did you find it difficult or did it make it harder on the relationship?
- Would you consider having a partner while being in greek life (in the beginning or once being in for awhile) or would you find it too difficult?
- Once you joined your organization did you start to have more sexual relations or more sexual encounters before joining?
- Have you been influenced by the people specifically in your organization or by the culture in general?
- Do you feel pressured to engage in hook-up culture?
- Does your organization have “games/competitions” surrounding hooking-up with others?
- Do you know of people who participate in the “rainbow”?
- Do you know or have you heard of any organizations of doing so?
- Do you believe there is a difference in hook-up culture between fraternities and sororities?
- Is there a stigma between males and females on campus revolving around hook-up culture?
- Have you been influenced by alcohol or drugs
- Do you believe this campus has had sexual harassment within greek life?
- Do you believe people within greek life’s view on sex has become more casual?
- Do you or do you believe others get with people in certain organizations on purpose?
- Do you get with more people in a certain organizations on purpose? If it is you sibling organization is there a reason for that?
- What type of person do you usual hookup with? (stranger, friend, Friend with benefits)

Appendix B: Interview Questions and Responses
References Cited

Kilanski, Kristine M, and David Mcclendon
2017 Dating across and hooking up: Status and relationship formation at an elite liberal arts university. *Demographic Research* 37: 1917–1932

Roberts, Deborah

Skinner, Jonathan, and Gerard J Gormley
2016 Point of view filming and the elicitation interview. *Perspectives on medical education*. Bohn Stafleu van Loghum, August 5

Thompson, Bailey A., and Rebecca R. Ortiz not actually cited

Varina, Rachel
2014 Total Sorority Move. *Total Sorority Move*. September 29

Wade, Lisa not actually cited

Welch, Anna, and Ayden Prehara

Approximately 900 words

Yes no

Provides basic background information for the issues

Outstanding Strong Good Adequate Weak should have referenced research more often

Substantial list of scholarly and peer-reviewed References Cited listed

Outstanding Strong Good Adequate Weak only three sources are actually cited and only one (maybe two) appears to be scholarly.

Includes brief discussion of why you chose the format of your video (e.g., narrated or non-narrated, etc) in relation to the course readings.

Outstanding Strong Good Adequate Weak
Reflection on the Final Video

For my final project, I wanted to conduct an interview to expose the truth behind Sorority and Fraternity hook-up culture. A goal of mine was to prove how fraternity and sorority members both have similar outlooks on hook-up culture. When people watched my film, I wanted it to result in them not judging or characterizing others based off of their hook-up interactions.

I believe that I have achieved my goals in proving that Sorority women and Fraternity males have the same views on hook-up culture, even though they are both persuaded by stereotypes to believe otherwise. I had made assumptions about my survey sample however, they cannot be made for Geneseo’s frat and sorority life as a whole. I may have been able to achieve that if I changed my methodology in certain aspects, such as interviewing.

By me having a relationship with my participants it allowed them to feel comfortable when they answered my questions. In my research proposal I stated how (Grimshaw, 2009) stated that Flaherty believed you should have spent a lot of time with your subjects. Being in a Sorority on campus and having numerous friends in other organizations, this allowed me to receive more honest answers because my participants trusted me.

Even though this worked, I wish I could have filmed the participants, or not have used my voice in the actual film. I believed this resulted my film in having a slight “Voice of God” complex. I tried to dimension this by typing the participants actual answers in the film to be displayed. When presenting answers that I narrated, I read them them exactly how they were said to me. My topic did not allow me to film the participants without resulting in getting them or their organization in trouble.

I feel that if I increased my sample size it would have enhanced my research. I interviewed ten people, however if I interviewed 20 or even 30 people I would have received more concrete answers and could have given a confident answers for the campus as a whole.

I also made my film more like a movie rather than an ethnographic film. The music and imagery I used could have influenced or affected the audience's point-of-view. (Heider, 1976) stated that ethnographic films should be using as teaching purposes, I believe my film has accomplished a teaching purpose.

References Cited

Grimshaw, Anna

Heider, Karl G.

Written Reflection on Final Video Rubric (see syllabus p 3-4)
Explicitly reference the course readings (and other resources if you wish).

Outstanding  Strong  Adequate  Weak

Entry is in past tense.

Yes  No