

U DTF?: A Study on The Engagement and Affective Responses of College Students in Casual Sexual Relationships

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Abstract

Research shows that hooking up is now part of college life, as young adulthood is where individuals explore. However, most studies tackling hookup culture are Western-centered. This research aims to study hookup culture in Manila universities, describe their possible consequences, determine perceptions, motivations, and affective responses of students who engage in hookups, and provide measures for safe sexual practices. Through narrative research, three males and three females, who were at least 18 years old, Manila college students, and experienced the culture, were interviewed. Narratives' analysis found that students share a common understanding of what a hookup is, factors why they engage in hookup culture were determined, and they experienced emotional ambivalence following a hookup. It is recommended to provide comprehensive sexuality education, safe spaces for students to have open discussions, and competent mental health providers. Future research is needed to address the impacts of technology in spreading hookup culture.

Keywords: Affective response; casual sexual relationship and experience; hookup culture; risky sexual behavior.

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Introduction

First sexual encounters now take place at a younger age (Inchley et al., 2020; WHO, 2016) and today's generation is more open to discussing sex, where participation in casual sex has become normalized (Garcia et al., 2012). In line with this, young adulthood is a developmental stage (Arnett, 2000) where people explore and internalize their sexuality and interpersonal relationships, now including hookups (Stinson, 2010).

"U DTF?" is an abbreviation for "are you down to fuck?", commonly used on online dating platforms to ask if someone is open to a casual sexual relationship, with people often using the term to avoid seeming too crass. But where, exactly, did the term originate? Instead of casual sex, in the early 2000s, the term hookup was used to call casual non-committal sex between two people. However, there is still no distinct and definite definition of hooking up as it varies from kissing to penetrative sex. Hence, for this study, the definition provided by Garcia et al. (2012) will be used, wherein the authors defined hookup as a "brief, uncommitted sexual (encounter) among individuals who are not romantic partners or dating each other." Casual sex or hookup may refer to but is not limited to a one-night stand, fuck buddy, friends-with-benefits, and booty calls (Claxton & van Dulmen, 2013). In line with this, the

study will not specify which type of hookup college students engage with to have a general overview of its prevalence in Manila.

Research and literature available today mainly focus on the experiences of Western college students, specifically in America. College students' engagement in the Hookup Culture (HC) varies from campus to campus, as each institution has its sexual script. Many personal and environmental variables impact youth's sexual activity; holding off, speeding, and changing the early stages of their sexual development (Billari et al., 2007; Caltabiano et al., 2018). For instance, university regulations, the gender makeup of college students, their exposure to and consumption of pornography, and alcohol usage, to name a few, are the reasons students engage in this culture (Heldman & Wade, 2010). In a similar vein, in a quantitative study examining broad causes of hooking up, 89% of the respondents were motivated by physiological pleasure, 54% by "emotional reasons," 8% by the influence of others, 4% said their peers pressured them to hook up, 33% were motivated by alcohol and other substances, and 51% wanted to build a romantic partnership (Garcia & Reiber 2008). The stated reasons are all influenced by personal, interpersonal, and environmental motivations. England et al. (2008; as cited in Thorpe & Kuperberg, 2020), found that by senior year, 72% of students have experienced hooking up.

In terms of affective responses following a hookup, the discrepancy between men and women is noticeable. A poll of 832 college students found that just 50% of men and 26% of women had a good emotional reaction to a hookup encounter (Crawford & Popp, 2003). Conversely, when asked to reflect on the day following a hookup, 82% of men and 57% of women said they were happy they did it (Garcia & Reiber, 2008). Keeping this in mind, there are varying affective responses to hooking up, ranging from regret (Klinger, 2016) to satisfaction (Evans, 2020). Feelings of depression, performance anxiety, pressure, guilt, loneliness, and self-esteem are usually felt by students after engaging in said sexual behaviors (Garcia et al., 2012). In addition, a Padgett and Wade (2018) study concluded that women commonly experience negative affective responses.

Nonetheless, the reasons and affective responses stated came from Western studies. The sociodemographic differences in hookup motivations and responses must be considered as well, especially with the culture that the participants grew up in, as different sexual scripts emerge depending on the location and environment of the university. Furthermore, the gender, sexuality, race, religiosity, class, and age of the participants must be considered when researching this topic. Notably, Wade (2017) also explained that students from a conservative environment often feel pressured to engage in HC, which leads to regret. However, there is still a scarcity of information regarding Filipino college students' motivations for and affective responses after engaging in the culture.

The reason for this is may be due to information on youth's sexuality being relatively uncommon (Billari et al., 2007). While some Western and Northern European nations have an extensive history of studying the subject (Wellings et al., 2006; Kontula & Clifton, 2023), several nations have only fragmented research studies (Kontula & Haavio-Mannila, 1995). Furthermore, for religious or cultural factors, sexuality is regarded as too delicate in certain economies to be explored through surveys or interviews (Caltabiano et al., 2020). In a collectivist and Catholic-dominated country like the Philippines, sex before marriage, especially when not in a committed relationship, is frowned upon. A research about attitudes toward nonmarital sex in 24 nations found that the Philippines presents shallow acceptance of teenage sex (Widmer et al., 1998). In the same study, the majority of Filipino participants said it is always wrong to engage in premarital sex (PMS) (60%), sexual intercourse before 16 years old (77%), extramarital (88%), and homosexual sex (88%).

However, those days are seemingly gone, as it is becoming normative for Filipinos to engage in casual sex. A study by Crisostomo and Jimenez (2009) revealed that Filipino youth now consider PMS and other sexual activities typical and expected. In other information, the Demographic Research and Development Foundation & University of the Philippines Population Institute (2014; as cited in Cordero, 2018) found that one out of three 15-24-year-old Filipinos has engaged in PMS already. Although Wade (2017) discovered that students from conservative backgrounds tend to be remorseful and regretful after participating in HC, the affective responses of Filipino youth after engaging in PMS vary as well, depending on why they did it. In line with this, respondents in Cordero's (2018) case study did not regret having sexual intercourse with their partners. Nonetheless, the presented studies did not provide diverse affective responses and could not wholly represent Filipino adolescents' affective responses in hooking up. Studies about PMS can be used to understand the prevalence of HC in the country, as hookup is a type of PMS. However, it is not guaranteed to holistically explain the culture since PMS can also indicate sexual activities between couples.

Although the participants in Cordero's (2018) study felt positive about their decisions, PMS has also been linked to teenage pregnancy and unsafe sexual practices. Early sexual initiators were more vulnerable to teenage parenthood, failing to utilize a condom during their initial intercourse, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), according to studies. In the country, there were 1,454 new cases of HIV-positive individuals in January 2023 reported to the HIV/AIDS & ART Registry of the Philippines (HARP) (DOH, 2023), and there are 14,637 active cases of HIV in the country as of the end of 2022 (Balita, 2024). The country also had one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates among the ASEAN nations, with over 500 adolescents falling impregnated and delivering newborns daily (Pelegriño, 2021).

The presented literature shows that even in the country, PMS has become common, and there are more possible negative affective responses than positive affective responses after engaging in HC. The students' motivations for HC vary, affecting their perception, engagement, and affective responses. Researching HC in the Philippines is critical since the matter is timely and relevant. Various articles (Ilaya, 2020; Gavin, 2019; Philstar, 2021; Liv, 2014) are available tackling HC in the country, but empirical research is still scarce. While the culture has been investigated in other nations, it is essential to understand how it prevails in the Philippine setting and how it influences college students' views and actions. Hence, the objective of studying the culture at college settings, specifically in Manila, is to understand how these students perceive "hookup", identify the factors affecting why they engage in this culture, and determine the students' affective responses after engaging in HC. Through this, readers acquire a deeper understanding of the culture and its possible consequences for the students and society. It can also provide measures for encouraging safe sexual practices. In addition, the limited availability of data regarding the prevalence of the culture in the Philippines indicates how essential this study is, especially in psychology and sex research. Through this research, our understanding of reproductive health, psychological well-being, and safe sex will be enriched.

Method

Design

A qualitative design, specifically narrative research, was used to understand the participants' experiences. Qualitative research is a form of study that investigates and delivers a more in-depth understanding and in-depth knowledge of social phenomena in their natural context (Tenny et al., 2022). Narrative researchers work with only a handful of individuals to collect abundant speech and perform comprehensive investigations of the meanings people attach to their encounters (Ntinda, 2018).

Participants

According to Sarfo et al. (2021), the quantity of participants differs throughout qualitative research approaches, with narrative research comprising an average of 1-52 individuals. To have comprehensive data, the participant count of Tholander and Tour's (2019) narrative study, which focused on Swedish women's lessons in casual sex, was adopted. As the study is aligned with theirs, having at least four participants validates the study's credibility. In line with this, three (3) females and three (3) males were interviewed about their experiences in HC. Specifically, the participants were at least 18 years old, college students at any institution in the City of Manila, and have participated or are participating in the HC. Out of the six (6) participants, only three (3) of them are actively engaging in HC.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Participants

Code Name	Age	Sex at Birth	College Year Level	Sexuality
F1	21	Female	3rd year	Bisexual
F2	22	Female	3rd year	Questioning
F3	21	Female	3rd year	Heterosexual
M1	21	Male	3rd year	Heterosexual
M2	22	Male	3rd year	Bisexual
M3	21	Male	3rd year	Gay

Instrument

This study used two measures: a demographic questionnaire, which contains age, sexuality, current year level in college, and sex at birth, and an interview questionnaire, which the researchers made. The interview questionnaire contained fourteen (14) main items and twelve (12) possible additional questions, wherein the questions answered the stated research questions. The following are the sample questions asked to the participants: In your own words, what does it mean to have a hookup?; Is there anything you wish you had known before engaging in hookup culture for the first time?; How did you get first drawn to the hookup culture, and what has your first experience been like?

Data Gathering Procedures

As sex-related matters are still taboo in Filipino culture (Jaymalin, 2019), HC is considered as a controversial topic. Keeping this in mind, locating participants keen to speak freely about their experiences may be challenging. In line with this, purposive snowballing sampling techniques were utilized to gather participants. Kirchherr and Charles (2018) defined snowballing sampling method as when an interviewee endorses at least one more possible participant to the researcher. In turn, the endorsed interviewee will refer another possible participant, and so on until the participant sample is reached. This method is appropriate for connecting and orchestrating participants who are likely to have pertinent experiences (Johnson, 2014).

Before any interview began, the instruments were validated by board-certified guidance counselors to check the contents' sensitivity and appropriateness. In addition, pilot testing was conducted to observe how the participants would react to the questions and check if any revisions were needed. After the research mentor and adviser approved the instruments, the researcher started gathering data through face-to-face one-to-one semi-structured interviews. Participants answered in their preferred language, whether English, Tagalog, or Tag-Lish, as long as the researcher could understand their responses.

Data Analysis

After all the needed information was acquired, the researcher analyzed the data through inductive narrative analysis. Narrative analysis refers to “the process of analyzing stories gathered from various sources to gain insight into the storied nature of human experience” (Wright, 2017). First, the researcher transcribed the audio data to text to be familiar with and examine the responses. Then, the researcher did restory the participants’ stories, which included “gathering stories, analyzing them for key elements of the story, and then rewriting the stories to place them within a chronological sequence” (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2000). Once the narrative of each participant was made, the researcher asked each of them to read and validate their respective narratives to make sure no biases were made, and then the researcher revised accordingly. After that, the researcher asked their research adviser and mentor to validate the initial themes they found in the data collected.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was completely voluntary, wherein rewards or coercion never occurred, and the participants could withdraw at any point during the data-gathering procedure with no repercussions. In addition, before the commencement of the interview, the participants filled out the informed consent form, wherein the purpose, procedure, duration, voluntary participation, risks, benefits, confidentiality, and contact information were explained, and they were given a chance to ask any questions or clarifications regarding the study.

Following the Data Privacy Act of 2012, the confidentiality of the audio data was handled with utmost care and maintained at all times, wherein only the researchers, adviser, and mentor accessed the audio files. This includes the identity and any information given by the study participant. Afterward, all the audio data was deleted permanently from the gadgets used by the researchers, such as their cellphones, laptops, and computers.

As the study requires participants to talk about their experiences in an in-depth manner, beneficence and non-maleficence are paramount. To manage and preserve the stated ethical principles, the researcher followed debriefing protocols and offered the services of a board-certified guidance counselor to ensure any adverse effects on their well-being were addressed and processed.

Result

The research aims to explore the engagement of Manila college students in HC. In line with this, analysis of the data yielded seven core themes, which answered the research questions.

Perceptions of Manila College Students Regarding Hookup

The first theme explains how the status of participants’ households affected their introduction to sex. When it comes to the participants’ concept of sex, they attributed their families’ conservativeness with their household’s openness to discuss sex at home, with two of the participants adding religion as a factor for their family’s conservativeness. Aside from being conservative, they also explained that sex is a taboo topic in their household, with one further explaining that it was antagonized before.

F2 shared how her family views sex in general:

“We simply don’t talk about sex in our household. My parents never opened the topic because we’re Catholics. We’re just taught that premarital sex is a sin.”

Awareness and Understanding of Hookup Culture

The second theme describes the participants' understanding of hookup with the narratives providing their definition of hookup and its each type. All participants have a common understanding of what defines a hookup, explaining that it involves sexual activities with no emotional attachments. Casualness is also observed in hooking up, with three of the participants adding short-term.

As F1 explained:

"A hookup is to have intercourse or, no matter how, the base as long as it's casual and there are no emotions involved."

F3 further explained the difference between a hookup and romantic intercourse in the interview:

"I think the difference is that when you do hookups, you usually do it with someone you are not familiar with or you are not in a relationship with. Whereas when you are in a relationship, sex is different because it's with intention or emotions involved."

Normalization of Hookup

While the third theme explains the participants' perspective on whether HC is already normalized and whether it should be normalized. Despite engaging in hookup, two of the participants think it's still not normalized, citing that it is still a taboo topic. The majority of the participants, however, think that the culture is already normalized, especially among younger generations.

As M3 explained in the interview:

"I think it's normalized, especially with our generation in Manila. I think it's not something that's taboo anymore. I think it's something that people speak freely about, especially with our generation. Based on experience also, I know people who aren't ashamed to talk about their sexual experiences, even if it means it reveals that they've been sleeping around with a lot of people. Really, it's not something that people judge you for any more at this day and age."

However, when asked the same question, F1 said:

"Although I believe it is more prevalent these days, I don't think it has been "normalized." It is still a taboo topic. It's something that I would not bring up unless I trust the person I'm talking to. It's still something that triggers judgment from a lot of people."

Regarding the normalization of the culture, two of the participants are in favor of normalizing the culture in our country, while the rest are against it.

M2 said in the interview:

"I think, yeah, we should normalize hookup culture. Especially in our generation, or in our age, it's an age of exploration. It's something that we should normalize. So that there's also an ongoing discussion on what to do, and what not to do, instead of it being something so taboo that we refuse to talk about it. And in turn, people's mindsets become more open on what to do and how to go about hookups. So yeah, I think normalizing it would really open up meaningful discussions in our generation."

F1 explained her stance, stating that:

"I do not support normalizing hookup culture. There is a difference between normalizing and destigmatizing; I think that the latter is more appropriate for hookups since normalization might entice those who wouldn't have otherwise engaged in it. Casual sex is not for everyone because it comes with plenty of risks. That being said, I do believe that hookups should not remain a taboo or shameful topic."

The Factors Affecting Why College Students Engage in This Culture

The fourth theme explains the factors affecting the participants' decision to engage in HC. The narratives identified three motivations, namely personal, interpersonal, and environmental. The participants had personal motivations ranging from boredom, and stress, to curiosity. In addition, the participants explained how their peers influenced their decision to hookup, with two adding that their access to the internet and social media made them engage in the future. Lastly, one of the participants explained how alcohol consumption made them want to hookup. The participants also highlighted that bars, parties, and places away from home increase their chances of hookups.

M1 shared that it was mainly personal motivations that pushed him to participate in HC:

"Boredom, I guess, because sometimes, as much as you want to be alone, there's this void that something has to fill. Sometimes, I just want something that I can get when I'm in a relationship, but I would not like the relationship itself. So, technically, it's a half-assed commitment."

While F2 explained that it was due to environmental motivations:

"I used to frequently visit bars when I was in Senior High, and when I'm under the influence of alcohol, my sex drive increases. So, there's this need to get the steam off, I guess."

M2 shared how peer influence encouraged him to participate in the culture, expressing:

"There's also peer pressure, but not in the sense that my friends coerce me into doing it. But because it's normalized already, you're hearing about people doing the deed on a regular basis. So, in a way, I'm being affected as well. I get curious on how it is to do things the way they do it. Also, I'm pressured into thinking that my sex life's been so dry and that I'm supposed to find hookup also."

The Students' Affective Responses to Engaging in Hookup Culture

The fifth theme describes the affective responses experienced by the participants after hooking up with the narratives revealing two main types: positive and negative. Feelings of satisfaction, pleasure, a boost of self-confidence, quenching of curiosity, and stress alleviation were experienced by the participants following a hookup. On the other hand, feelings of emptiness, fear, shame, and decreased self-worth were also experienced by participants following a hookup.

F1 revealed her positive experiences, stating:

"Aside from feeling contented afterwards, like happy, I also feel physically tired afterward, but the pleasure was really good. I was never distressed."

While M2 had a more adverse response. sharing:

"I'm not sure if this is a common theme for people who engage in the hookup culture, but for me, every hookup, there's that feeling of emptiness after doing it. Like, I ask myself what am I doing with my life? Because I keep playing around, like when will I be serious about life? That's really what I get after every hookup, especially before when I would go through many guys in one day. It's so tiring."

In contrast, the sixth theme explained how the participants managed the said responses, with the narratives identifying internal and external factors. The participants explained that self-talk, firm boundaries, and self-control helped them manage their affective responses. The participants also explained how their peers and friends helped them with their respective situations, with one highlighting their romantic partner and a non-governmental organization helped them conquer their situation.

M3 shared how he overcame his fears:

“That sex really affected me because afterward, he told me he hoped I’d be positive with HIV. I talked to my best friend and after a month of that incident, I entered a relationship and told my partner as well. They were both understanding and supportive of me. Lastly, I had a consultation with Love Yourself and got tested. They explained what would happen if I tested positive and explained what kind of help they can offer.”

While F3 said that her friends also helped her cope:

“Since I was videotaped without consent, I felt disrespected and felt fear. I was able to manage those emotions because I convinced myself that it was going to be okay. My circle of friends who are also engaging in hook-up were also able to give me comfort that it will be okay.”

Lastly, the seventh theme revealed the participants’ hopes and wishes for the future, naming interventions and support systems to help them better manage their emotions. The participants gave importance to the competence, accessibility, affordability, and flexibility of interventions, such as counseling and psychotherapy. The participants highlighted the importance of having a great support system within their respective universities to promote safe sex, safe spaces, and proper sex education. This can be observed in the narratives of M1:

“Accessibility of counseling is important because talking about major things in your life with someone knowing that they won’t judge you for it helps in managing emotions. If a session wasn’t so expensive, I would have taken the chance. Also, sex education is also important because there should be no shame in telling your experiences.”

M3 is on the same path with his stance, adding that:

“I think in university settings, there should be programs all the time that tackle this matter because I don’t think it’s enough that we only have one event per academic year with regards to HIV. There should be programs as well about hookup culture. These programs shouldn’t be hidden because the more we hide it, there will be more people who will be uneducated about protection.”

Discussion

Concept of Sex

The Manila college students described the state of their household in terms of its openness in discussing sex. The narratives revealed that they did not have a proper introduction and education to sex in their homes, explaining that topics of sex are considered taboo and antagonized, as their households are conservative. This finding is coherent with the previous studies, stating that in the country, parents are hesitant to offer adequate sex education to their children (Delizo, 2019). Hence, they learned the concept during childhood at around eight (8) to eleven (11) years old through various instances, such as accessing pornographic materials, studying the topic at school, and experiencing childhood sexual abuse. It can be assumed that their respective household’s openness to sex affected their likelihood to engage in risky sexual behaviors. This is aligned with Inanc et al.’s (2020) findings, concluding that childhood physical, sexual, or emotional abuse was linked to an earlier age of sexual initiation. Furthermore, the same study stated that use or exposure to pornography has been associated with a variety of risky sexual behaviors, such as a higher probability of having recent sex partners and a higher likelihood of using alcohol or illicit substances at their most recent sexual activity. Sexual media consumption has been shown to influence sexual behaviors such as early sexual initiation age and risky sexual behavior (Lin et al., 2020).

In addition, most participants started their engagement when they were minors, at least 15 years old, despite receiving sex education. This finding contradicts the study of Inanc et al. (2020), stating that

students who received sex education delayed their sexual initiation. The average age of both sexes to initiate sexual activity in the Philippines was 18 (Reyes, 2022).

Awareness and Understanding of Hookup Culture

Similar to how they learned the concept of sex, the college students of Manila learned the concept of hookup during their adolescence to early adulthood after being exposed to media and influenced by peers. Only one learned the topic during childhood, at eight years of age, due to Western novels. However, some have been engaging in the culture long before they discovered it exists.

Although the definition of hookup is broad, the students were able to identify its commonality. The narratives boiled down the definition of hookup to having a sexual activity that is casual and has no emotional attachments. This result corroborates the provided distinction of hookup to PMS by LaBier (2011) and Bogle (2007), stating that a hookup lacks a certain level of sentimental association, emotional attachments, and intimacy. In addition, most students are familiar with the different types of Casual Sexual Relationships and Experiences (CSREs), such as one-night stand, fuck buddy, and friends with benefits. Their definitions of the stated CSREs are in coherence with Claxton and van Dulmen's (2013) definitions, wherein a one-night stand is sexual interactions that happen only once, fucky buddy is more disparaging than friends with benefits (FVB) setup but implies more continuing instances than a booty call, and FVB are sexual interactions that take place between acquaintances who do not deem their setup to be romantic. On the other hand, booty call seemed to be a relatively new term for some. The findings also found that regardless of their understanding and experience in the culture, most college students do not support the normalization of HC.

Motivations

The narratives revealed a wide range of motivations behind engaging in HC. Personal, interpersonal, and environmental motivations were highlighted to affect one's decision to hookup. However, most students' motivations to engage in HC came from personal motivations: boredom, exploration, curiosity, alcohol use, loneliness, stress relieving, wanting to move on from past relationships, and self-identity crisis. The aforementioned personal motivations are aligned with the results of the previous studies, wherein curiosity, stress relieving, wanting to be in a romantic relationship, exploration, and self-identity crisis were mentioned (Jones et al., 2014; Padgett & Wade, 2018). However, this study brought about a new personal motivation: boredom.

On the other hand, societal pressure, and peer influence, influenced their decision to hookup. Others sought emotional connections and intimacy but found it challenging to establish meaningful relationships within casual encounters. Illicit substances and alcohol consumption, as well as having a greater number of sexually experienced friends were linked to a higher probability of having a sexual debut (Inanc et al., 2020). When peer sexual engagement and sexual openness are seen as substantial, it may raise internal pressure to explore sexually (Barman-Adhikari et al., 2014). Furthermore, the result that peers impact sexual behavior is consistent with prior research, which found that teens are likelier to initiate sexual behavior if they perceive their friends engaging in sex (Peçi, 2017).

For environmental motivations, the location of the students, such as attending bars and parties, being on social media, and places away from home, increases their chances of hookups. Off-campus gatherings have a higher risk than other sites for engaging in alcohol-associated sexual activities with a stranger (Hone et al., 2023). This is consistent with the findings of Cho and Yang (2023), who discovered that alcohol use was substantially related to early sexual commencement, implying that a significant number of sexually active young adults in clubs engage in sexual activities following partying

and consuming alcohol. On the other hand, the detrimental effects of media on sexual behavior are well documented (Kirsch & Murnen, 2015).

Emotional Ambivalence and Impact on Well-Being

The participants provided positive and negative affective responses. The narratives found that regardless of assigned sex at birth and sexuality, the students have similar affective responses. Many participants expressed conflicting emotions related to their experiences with HC. While they reported feelings of satisfaction, pleasure, a boost of self-confidence, quenching of curiosity, and stress alleviation, they also expressed feelings of emptiness, fear, shame, and decreased self-worth. The aforementioned affective responses are aligned with the results of previous studies, indicating that engagement in HC may result in both positive (Crawford & Popp, 2003; Garcia & Reiber, 2008) and negative affective responses (Padgett & Wade, 2018). Although Wade (2017) stated that students from conservative nations tend to regret their engagement in HC, the students said that despite the negative affective responses they experienced, they do not regret their engagement in the culture. However, it should be noted that two participants experienced trauma from their engagement, namely being videotaped without consent and receiving messages threatening to be HIV positive, which exacerbated their affective response and impacted their overall well-being.

Although the video has not been shared online, there is still the fear that it might be, as F2 is not certain whether it has been deleted. When publicized, this can already be considered image-based sexual abuse (IBSA). According to the Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2009, anyone who videos a partner while having intercourse without consent constitutes a criminal offense of voyeurism. Research investigations found that IBSA causes anxiety, depression, stress, and PTSD (Bates, 2016; Campbell et al., 2022; Aborisade, 2021; Champion et al., 2022). It is critical to understand that filming someone's intimate activities without permission breaches their privacy and can have serious emotional, psychological, and social ramifications for the victim, even if the footage is never made public.

Moving forward, receiving verbal threats and abuse from someone can also affect one's well-being. Although the participant and his sexual partner at the time were not in a romantic relationship, the situation can still be considered Partner Violence (PV), as the term means an intimate relationship or ex-partner who engages in restricting, coercive, or violent behaviors that harm others physically, sexually, or psychologically (WHO, 2024). In fact, younger men reported experiencing the most emotional abuse (Bushong, 2018). Although M3 did not become HIV-positive, the verbal threats from his sexual partner at the time had a long-lasting impact on his overall well-being.

Management of Affective Responses

Two main factors were discovered to have helped the students manage their emotions: internal and external. Internal factors included self-talk, firm boundaries, and self-control, aided the participants. The importance of internal factors in managing affective responses is well documented (Duckworth et al., 2014). Positive and constructive self-talk can alter perceptions and emotional reactions, leading to more effective methods for coping. Internal factors influence emotional regulation, allowing individuals to successfully moderate and modify their emotional reactions.

On the other hand, external factors such as alcohol, friends, a romantic partner, and a non-governmental organization also assisted them. The narratives revealed the importance of friendship in managing affective responses. This might be due to students valuing the fact that their peers are in comparable circumstances since they believe they would not be capable of truly understanding them

otherwise (Kulcar et al., 2022). Thereby students felt more supported in managing their affective responses as their peers are either aware of the culture or engaging in it as well. Furthermore, friendship and relationships correlate with high life satisfaction because they provide companionship, intimacy, and support (Amati et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the narratives also revealed that external factors would be useless if the students were not open to receiving them. In the end, it still boiled down to the students' willingness to be helped with their situations.

Although not delved into, possibly two of the participants were victims of childhood sexual abuse, and there might be a correlation to what happened to them before with their engagement in HC. Victims of child abuse engage in maladaptive coping (Peltzer & Pengpid, 2016), which involves alcohol consumption and engaging in risky sexual behaviors.

Hopes and Wishes for the Future

The narratives underscored the importance of social support in navigating HC. Students emphasized the significance of compassionate healthcare providers inside and outside their university, having understanding family and friends, having safe spaces, and promoting proper sex education. Whether or not college students will continue engaging in HC, interventions, such as counseling and psychotherapy, and proper support systems from teachers, counselors, and the institution are useful in processing their emotions, which can lead to better decision-making. In fact, feeling cared for by their teachers can also operate as a protective factor, delaying sexual initiation (Inanc et al., 2020). However, the narratives also revealed that despite the students' understanding of the importance of counseling, most are still hesitant to attend a session due to shame and fear of being judged. The students also feel that their concerns will not be given importance as it is not related to academics.

According to UNESCO (2023), 71% of individuals between 15-24 accessed sex education and awareness online. This initiative shall continue, as it enables young adults to make informed choices regarding their sexuality and romantic relationships. However, further programs must be considered regarding this topic, as engagement in risky sexual behaviors does not always imply a dearth of sexual awareness (Rashid & Mwale, 2016). The support system and initiatives shall have reliability, competence, and empathy.

Conclusion

The study shows that Filipino college students in Manila collectively understand what a hookup is, defining it as casual and having no attachments. However, despite engaging in hookups and perceiving the culture as being normalized, the students oppose its normalization. With this, various factors affect the decisions why college students engage in HC, namely loneliness, boredom, curiosity, and stress alleviation in the personal category, the influence of friends, social media, and consumption of alcohol in the interpersonal category, and places away from home, bars, and parties in the environmental category. Due to their engagement, positive and negative affective responses have been experienced, such as pleasure, satisfaction, shame, and fear.

Based on these conclusions, stakeholders must consider providing programs that educate Filipino youth on the concept of sex, especially in tackling how engaging in hookup culture can affect a person's overall well-being. Future research should head deeper into the complexities of HC, studying the significance of technology and dating applications, as well as exploring cultural and personal differences in hookup engagement.

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Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare that this paper has no conflicts of interest.

Author Contribution

All authors have contributed equally to the study's conceptualization, interpreting data, reviewing, and editing the manuscript.

Data Availability

Data can be provided upon request to the author.

Declarations Ethical Statement

The study followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

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