

Manufacturing Gender Hierarchy and Sexual Violence in Dating Relationships

A Qualitative Study of University Men in Vietnam

Kathryn M. Yount, Patricia Lewis, Irina Bergenfeld, Trang Thu Quach,
Tran Hung Minh, Jessica Sales



Problem and research question

Problem: Sexual violence is a global problem for adolescent girls. For girls 15-19:

Forced sexual debut (15%)

Partner sexual violence (2-7%)

Research question: How do Vietnamese college men's perceptions of gender norms influence their understanding of sexual consent and coercion in dating relationships?

Background

Manufactured age and gender hierarchies within families

Normalized violence within families

Legal efforts to reduce gender-based violence

Gendered ambivalence about sexual consent in dating relationships

Study sites

UNIVERSITY 1

100 year-old public university
Health professions
1000 enrolled students per year
40% men

UNIVERSITY 2

24-year-old private university
Diverse programs of study
7000 enrolled students per year
45-50% men

Data collection

Eligibility

- 18+ years
- Current, prior dating relationship
- Able to give consent

Recruitment

- Conducted through student affairs personnel
- Interested students selected for diversity in living situation, major, year of study, sexual experience

Interview guide

- Gender roles
- Dating/sexual relationships
- Negotiating consent in dating relationships
- Perspectives on rape and sexual violence

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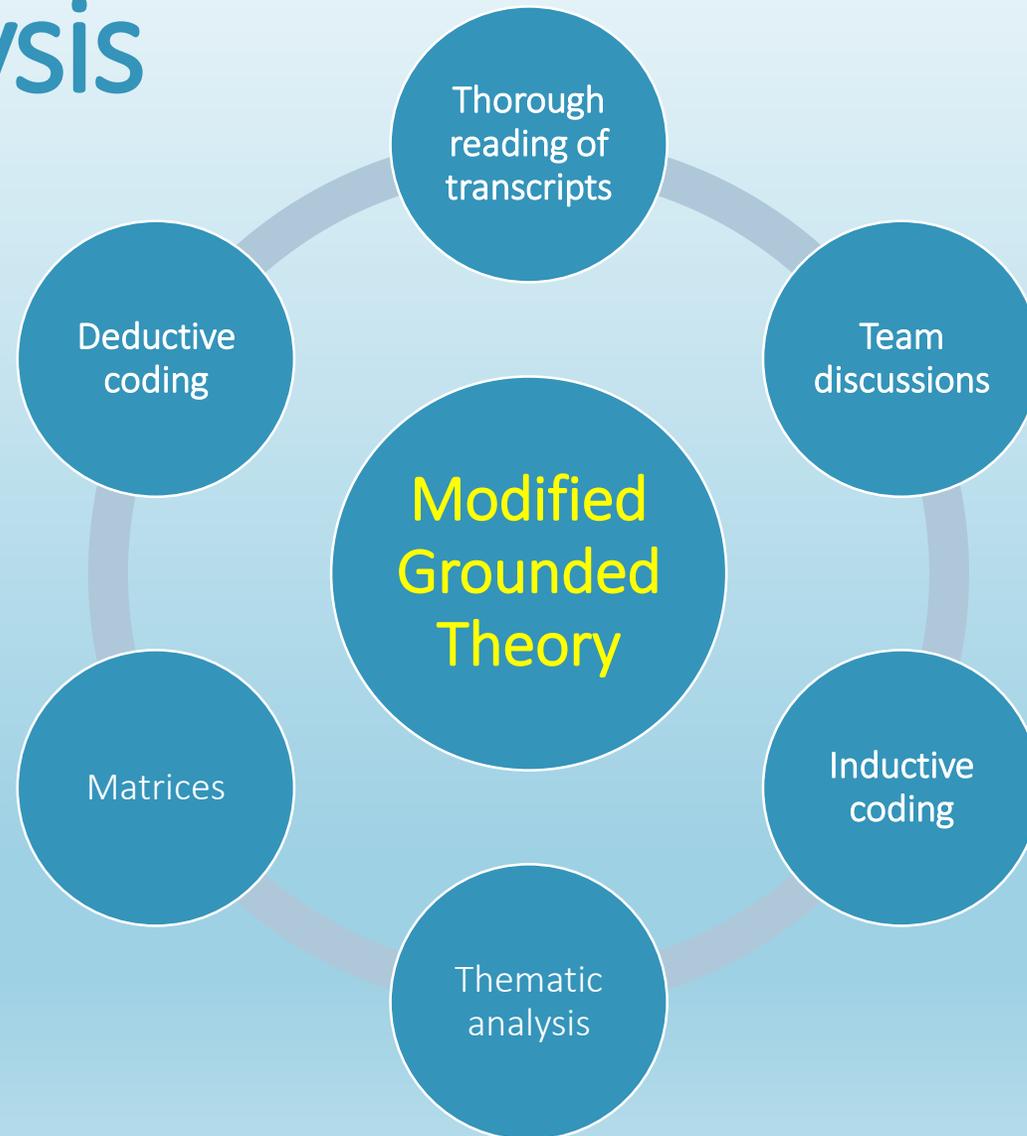
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Data analysis



Norms of Masculinity and Femininity

SUB-THEME

He is independent; she is obedient

QUOTE

My parents expect me to be independent. Men should have capacity to manage their own life.

- Danh, 3rd year social sciences student

Norms of Masculinity and Femininity

SUB-THEME

He is a financial provider;
she is a suitable wife

QUOTE

I understand that my mom doesn't have high expectations [of a] daughter such as having good-paid job or something. She often told us that it is important for a woman to find a suitable partner in her life, who loves and cares about her. She expects her daughter to be a dutiful (hiếu thảo) child who will have a good life.

-Chi, 3rd year marketing student

Hierarchies in Dating Relationships

SUB-THEME

Men 'Lay the Bait' /
Women Respond

QUOTE

There is no any specific signal to know it, we just follow our instinct. Just do the next steps. We stop if the girls swipe our hands off and fierce resist. It is so simple. If I kiss a girl and she dislikes it, she will definitely stop it. If I sexually touch her and she doesn't want to have sex, she will swipe my hands off.

-Phuc, 1st year tourism student

Hierarchies in Dating Relationships

SUB-THEME

Men are sexually free

QUOTE

[Friends-with-benefits have] no string attached...If I consider it a lover, I will publicly introduce her. But regarding a sexual partner, it should be more secretive to avoid problems.

-Ngai, 3rd year social work student

Hierarchies in Dating Relationships

SUB-THEME

Women face sexual restrictions

QUOTE

I think for girls in my school it's [one night stand] probably not too common; and usually they rarely talk about it, they'd feel shy because the stereotype is that girls have to keep their virginity.

-Khan, 2nd year social work student

Implications for consent and sexual violence

SUB-THEME

Dismissing non-consent and normalizing coercion

QUOTE

She might say “I don’t want it” but she says it very softly, and if we keep doing it she won’t say anything, or say it very softly. Then it means she agrees...Because they are girls. They always says “no” even when they actually mean yes.

- Vien, 2nd year dental student

Implications for consent and sexual violence

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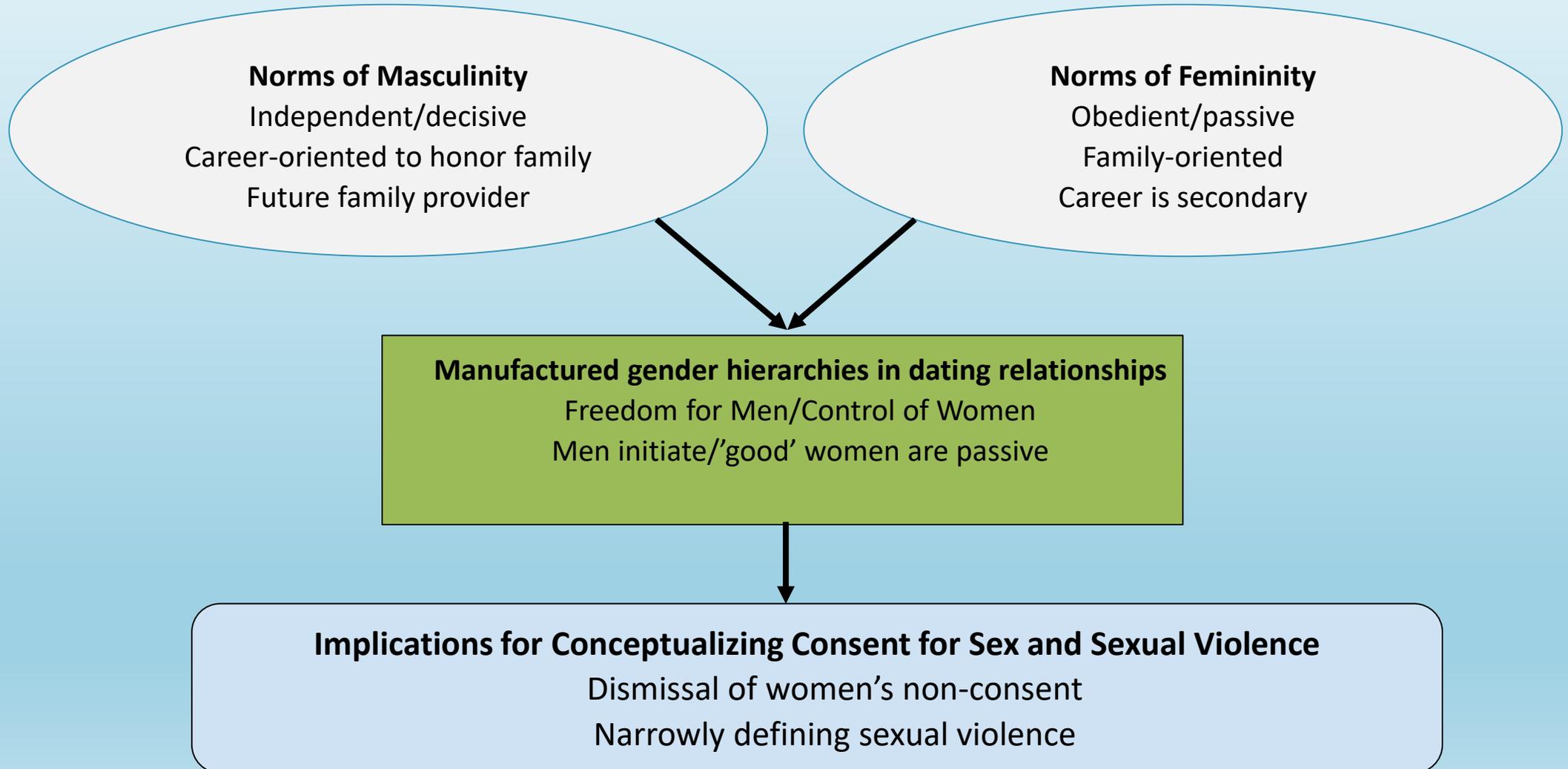
Narrowly defining sexual violence

QUOTE

'Forced sex' is when two people have had sex with each other before, it's only that one doesn't want to but the other one still does it. "Forced sex" sounds lower than "rape" in intensity.,, "Rape" is between two people who don't know each other. For "forced sex" they know each other before.

- Tuan, 1st year medical student

Conceptual framework



Implications

Interventions to reduce sexual violence in college students should:

Address harmful gender norms and rape myths

Define and build skills to support active consent

Limitations

LIMITATIONS

Purposive sample

Social desirability bias affecting reports of sexual/violent behavior

Use of translated data

MITIGATION STRATEGY

Recruitment of a diverse sample

Interviewer experience and rapport building

Verification against original transcripts

Acknowledgements

Anonymous funder for financial support (PI Yount)

Dang Hong Linh of CCIHP and Ilyssa Tamler of Emory University for comments

Study participants, without whom this research would not have been possible

Thank you

Questions?