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ORIGINAL PAPER

Gender and Risk in Outdoor Adventure Education

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Abstract
We analyze how gender intersects with risk processes and practices in outdoor adventure education. Language, binary logic, and societal norms work together to gender risk and offer three ways that risk may be gendered in the context of outdoor adventure education courses with youth. First, hierarchical language and the gendering practices of order, labeling, and omission place girls and girls' needs as external or additional to a "neutral" masculine norm. Second, adherence to a rigid binary in the definition and conceptualization of risk parallels and perpetuates a gender binary that prioritizes masculinity and boys above femininity, girls, and non-binary youth. Third, societal norms influence stereotypes, assumptions, and expectations that gender risk on outdoor adventure education courses. We conclude by offering practical suggestions for how this research can be applied to outdoor adventure education and youth programming more broadly.

Keywords Led Outdoor Activity · Gender · Outdoor Adventure Education · Risk · Girls · Gendered Risk

Despite the growing inclusion of girls and women as participants in and leaders of youth courses, men tend to dominate leadership of outdoor adventure education (OAE) programs as trip leaders and managers, and boys continue to outnumber girls as participants (Straker, 2018). That the OAE industry is primarily operated by and for men and boys influences how outdoor adventure education is conceptualized, constructed, and conducted (Gray & Mitten, 2018; Mitten, 2018). In this study we analyze how gender intersects with risk processes and practices in outdoor adventure education.

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This work joins a small but growing conversation by examining how risk is gendered in youth OAE. Developing an understanding of how risk is gendered may contribute to the creation of OAE spaces that are more accessible to diverse groups of youth participants and provide opportunities for learning and growth in OAE organizations and environments.[1] We begin with a brief review of the literature about women and outdoor leadership, youth and gender in the outdoors, and the literature on gender and girlhood.

Women and OAE

Most OAE research about gender addresses adult women's experiences as outdoor leaders and educators (Warren, 2015). Beyond women's experiences in "the outdoors" and outdoor adventure generally, most of the literature describes the experiences of, barriers faced by, and challenges overcome by women in leadership positions and as instructors in outdoor education. Scholars have discussed the myths about accessibility to outdoor education leadership, egalitarianism in management, and the outdoor "superwoman" that makes heroes of women leaders. Instead, we need more research about everyday outdoor role models (Warren, 1985), abilities and issues of the feminine body outdoors (Newbery, 2003), technical and interpersonal skills (Shooter et al., 2009; Warren & Loeffler, 2006), the "glass ceiling" of the outdoor industry (Warren et al., 2018), and challenges of motherhood and career longevity, feminist fatigue, and imposter syndrome (Allin & West, 2013; Gray, 2016). While girls and women participate and instruct in outdoor education programs, the literature shows that their presence is recognized in the context of the masculinity of OAE spaces and is "grounded in understandings developed by men" (Little, 2002, p. 57).

For example, leadership skills in outdoor adventure are roughly divided into "hard" and "soft" skills. Hard skills refer to technical and physical skills while soft skills refer to interpersonal skills. While soft skills are not as "easily defined" as hard skills, they are often considered to be "gender-related," in that "women possess a command" of these more "feminine traits of listening, feeling, cooperating, and nurturing" (Shooter et al., 2009, p. 6).

Physical strength is another area in which women's inclusion is sometimes challenged. Hegemonic notions of masculinity uphold physical strength as a vital trait in outdoor adventure, which is rooted in assumptions about natural ability and biological differences (Newbery, 2003). In physical education, as in OAE, hegemonic masculinity works to reproduce gender differences through a focus on "the expectations and competencies of the male students," which "contributes to the marginalisation of girls and to the connection that the female body lacks the skills and qualities that enable boys and men to play sport" (With-Nielsen & Pfister, 2011, p. 651).

[1] We are intentional in our use of language. For example, we refer to the *gendering of risk on outdoor adventure programs* rather than the masculinization or feminization of risk. While girls may be disproportionately disadvantaged by an OAE system that favors masculine qualities, participants of all genders – boys, men, and non-binary individuals – could be affected by the systematic gendering of outdoor adventure education programming.

Youth and Gender in Outdoor Adventure

While the research discussed above thoughtfully provides multiple perspectives on women's experiences as *leaders* in outdoor education, there has been little scholarly work done in the fields of outdoor adventure and experiential education that analyzes how youth outdoor adventure education is gendered.

Much of the literature that does consider adolescent girl participants in outdoor, adventure, and experiential programming focuses on program benefits and their empowering effects. Scholars claim that adventure therapy increases trust, empowerment, teamwork skills, and "recognition of personal value" among at-risk girls (Autry, 2001), that adventure education improves interpersonal skills and promotes non-aggressive relationships between girls (Sammet, 2010), that experiential programming empowers girls (Galeotti, 2015), and that adventure programming addresses "stereotypical gender roles, lack of access and opportunity, peer and family expectations, self-concept, lack of competence, and material and social barriers" (Whittington, 2018, p. 668). Language that points to outdoor adventure education's ability to "empower," "promote resiliency" (Whittington et al., 2011, 2016), and "inspire courage" (Whittington & Mack, 2010) in girls assumes that disempowered feminine youth require outside (and outdoor, specifically) intervention to help them "become" self-actualized youth. Furthermore, in these studies, the focus seems to be on what girls can gain through their outdoor experiences, portraying them as outsiders to adventure education who may benefit from inclusion in the space or as vulnerable and needing help. They do not explore how their presence in the space is conceptualized or affected by gender.

Gender and Girlhood

This study is, in part, framed by the notion that gender is socially constructed. This idea refers to processes whereby ideas about gender are created rather than innately determined, to ways in which gender expression is learned and performed, and to the fact that notions about gender vary between cultures, geographies, and temporal periods (Geller, 2017; Paechter, 2007, 2012). Understanding gender as a social construction also allows for differentiation between gender identity and expression and biological or chromosomal sex: gender as plural, performed, and intersecting (Burman, 2005). Gender is a consequence of systems of power and adherence to a collective "fiction" rather than a natural set of human characteristics around which to organize society.

With the aforementioned scholarly work in mind, we ask: How is risk gendered in youth outdoor adventure education? More specifically, how is risk procedurally gendered and how does gendered risk operate on outdoor adventure education courses?

Methods

We adopted Howard Becker's (1998) analytic induction (AI) as the method of analysis. As Becker explained, AI is useful for unpacking "how" questions and furthering an understanding of how systems or organizations operate. Becker introduced AI as a method suited to topics that concern only one specific outcome, to address practical and important societal concerns, or to pursue particularly interesting theoretical questions. As Pascale (2012) writes, the "strength of analytic induction [is] its ability to provide a rich understanding of complex social contexts" (p. 40).

Data Collection

We collected publicly-accessible documents produced by youth outdoor education programs as the first step. By way of context, such programs provide a range of activities (snowshoeing, hiking, canoeing, etc.); multi-day OAE tripping is the unifying factor. The distinguishing feature between "outdoor education" and "outdoor adventure education" is risk. That is, "adventure" begins when there is risk involved in the experience—when the possibility of danger is present. Most typically, this means that trips are conducted in the "backcountry" or away from convenient or quick access to hospitals and other emergency services (Boniface, 2006; Little, 2002). For this study the data selected were eleven packing lists created by youth OAE programs in British Columbia, Washington, Colorado, Montana, and Vermont. These lists were available on the organizations' websites and provided pre-departure information to teens participating in multi-day wilderness trips on land and water in the summer months (May through September, typically).

The second set of data were seven semi-structured interviews with professionals who work as OAE course instructors or in administrative leadership roles. Participants were selected on the following criteria: They are or have been a field guide, a program coordinator, or a person in organizational leadership who advises in the development of curriculum and policy. Each interviewee had direct experience with students on single and/or mixed gender trips. Six of the seven interviewees had worked for multiple organizations during their careers. Of the seven participants, five held some level of administrative role in an OAE organization and had also previously guided courses (two of these were still actively guiding, in addition to their administrative duties), and two were course instructors with no organizational leadership or administrative roles. The seven individuals worked for four different organizations and had collectively held positions with three dozen different organizations. Additionally, three interview participants worked or had worked for at least one of the organizations whose packing list we used. Three participants identified as women, three as men, and one as male-presenting genderqueer.

Procedure

We analyzed the OAE packing lists using textual content analysis, attentive to language that categorized gender, mandated rules based on gender, or made distinctions

between "gendered objects" as sources and sites of regulation. We defined "gendered items" as items that are ostensibly used by one sex such as hygiene products for menstruation and sports bras. Items not considered gendered are those that have the same name, function, and/or purpose, regardless of the gender of the user such as t-shirt, pants, socks, etc. Gender "neutral" terms such as "underwear" versus boxers, panties, etc. are notable choices of wording. They may indicate the conscious decision not to alienate one or more genders.

Interviews with OAE professionals were conducted between September 2017 and February 2018 and were between thirty minutes and an hour and a half in length. One interview was conducted face-to-face; the other six were conducted over the phone. All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed, along with handwritten notes taken at the time of interview. In following AI's process of allowing preceding interviews to guide the questions of subsequent interviews, the first author had both a list of scripted questions—that shrunk and grew throughout the process—and also followed conversational pathways that emerged during each interview. We attempted to move the conversations towards youth participants by speaking with leaders about their courses, students, and risk management.

Results

In an effort to identify how risk in youth outdoor adventure education programming is gendered, the packing lists–which are designed for "safety"–provided two clues. First, girls' items were sometimes omitted from packing lists, were included as an addition or an aside, and/or were separated from the "normal" needed items. Second, risks disproportionately experienced by girls were not always included as risks faced by participants more generally. Their risks were not considered "neutral" or "normal" enough to be included in the rest of the typical list and within the same categorization structure as other needed items.

Nine of the eleven documents studied describe the packing list as essential for ensuring students' safety and comfort. This explicit mention of safety inferred risk or risk prevention and management, the implication being that without the items on the list, students' experience on the trip may be unsafe or uncomfortable. By extension, only those items listed were considered as contributing to students' safety and comfort and unlisted items were considered nonessential to this goal.

Required—Or Not

Each of the eleven packing lists had four categories of need: required, optional, if necessary, and girls. "Required" items made up much of each packing list and were not listed with any additional comments, annotations, parentheses, or quotation marks. This category included items such as rain gear, wool socks, and quick drying, non-cotton t-shirts and long pants. For six of the eleven lists, this category was implicit, with the other five explicitly heading the section as "Required" or directly instructing that "uncategorized" items were required.

"Optional" items were more relevant to participants' comfort or preferences than their safety. This category included objects such as cameras, journals, and travel towels. The "if needed/necessary" category consisted of items that are necessary for the safety of some but not all students such as prescription eyewear and medications. The fourth and final category of "girls" (or "females") included such items as sports bras and period products.

Objects are gendered by categorizing them as for "Girls," explaining the object's need as related to gender or attaching "feminine" to the objects (as in the case of "feminine hygiene products"). Gendered objects included bras, period products, and swimsuits. Every document except for two (for a program that serves exclusively girls) gendered sports bras and period products. Swimsuits were gendered particularly when instructions were given to girls that were ladened with assumptions and expectations related to sexuality, sexualized risks, and the responsibility of girls to manage these risks through choice of clothing. The connection between "Female," a term identifying sex rather than gender, and "feminine" reinforced the common conflation between sex and gender, wherein gender is assumed by sex. Objects that have been gendered by words such as "feminine," "ladies," and "girls" were listed within the category "Female."

Girls and Girls' Objects as Separate A hierarchy of need genders risk, with the "normal" required list containing all of the "neutral" needs and girls' needs separated from and treated as additional to that norm. By virtue of items being necessary for some students but completely irrelevant to others, "if needed" items and "for girls" items could be listed in the same way. Only one list had "tampons and/or pads" in the toiletries section, followed by "(if applicable)." Two documents' inclusion of "Female" and "Women" as categories suggested that the items they described existed in a class of their own, beyond the realm of "optional" or "if necessary," even though their use by the group as a whole was similar to other items in this category. However, one document's use of "(if applicable)" indicated the possibility of listing period products without assigning gender to the object. Prescription glasses/contacts and medications, for example, appeared as required "if needed" items without assigning physical or mental ability or health to these objects. Further, including a "for girls" section on the packing list created a distinction that perhaps assumes that students may not be able to assess whether they need pads, tampons, or a sports bra, as they must with other "if necessary" items.

The separation of "feminine" objects excludes students who do not fit neatly in the gender binary. Labeling period products as "feminine hygiene products" instead of "menstruation" or "period" products—or, more simply, pads and/or tampons, as they appeared in two documents—gendered the objects and identified them as distinctly for females, again excluding other persons who may menstruate but who do not self-identify as girls. Kelly et al.'s (2005) work on the gendered space of skateboarding culture suggests that these packing lists could be seen as preparing students to enter a masculine space where the boys' experience is considered to be the neutral norm and the female experience as a gendered deviation, with girls' needs as additions to that norm.

Girls and Girls' Objects as Additional Just as listing items separately shows hierarchy, so does the *order* in which these objects appear. In only one document were sports bras and menstruation products listed within the clothing or toiletries categories, respectively, with no distinction or order change; the list was created for an all-girl program so this is not surprising. For the mixed-gender programs and the one program sampled that has single-gender courses with one packing list for all, these items were sequentially positioned at the end of their category: Menstruation products followed all other hygiene items, and sports bras appeared at the end of the clothing list rather than with underwear/socks/long underwear where they might logically and categorically belong. On lists that explicitly emphasized that they were intended to ensure the safety and comfort of youth participants (all but two), the safety requirements appeared to position masculine needs as the gendered norm or as "gender neutral" and feminine needs as additional to or a deviation thereof.

Left Out: Girls and Girls' Needs as Unaddressed While sports bras and tampons/pads were found at the end of packing lists, were buried in the list description, or had "Females," "girls," or "ladies" labels attached to them on some lists, the other lists left them off the list entirely. Interestingly, every list that did not mention sports bras at all did list underwear as required. This is worth mentioning, because it suggests that there was no categorical avoidance of addressing and detailing students' undergarment needs; the omission, then, of the complete set of underwear seemed to overlook students' needs. It could be argued that the packing lists that omitted sports bras did so under the assumption that girls would be able to discern that, for them, "underwear" meant both bras and underwear.

Similarly, the six lists that omitted menstruation products as necessary items ignored and excluded a need of some students. By not including items that some participants would need on a list explicitly designed to prepare students for the course, the students whose needs were excluded not only were othered as atypical students but also could face additional risk by not bringing the relevant objects. For those needing sports bras and/or period products unlisted on some program packing lists, the implication was that those items were not needed for their comfort and safety—or at least, that they were not needed by the typical student which, in this case, might be assumed to not be them.

Risk is Gendered by Binary Logic

Interview participants defined risk as the "chance that there would be an incident or an injury based around the activity" (Participant 2), when "you don't know that everything is going to be okay" (Participant 3), the "possibility of an unfavorable outcome" (Participant 4), and the "unknown" (Participants 3, 4, 5, and 7). Three participants mentioned assessing risk tolerance as an organizational tool to define risks that leaders should be willing to take with students. The tolerance assessment tools discussed included red/yellow/green risks which indicated the severity and degrees of tolerance—stop, proceed with caution, go (Participant 2); comfort circles that

defined the limits and kinds of risks (Participant 3); and a risk matrix stipulating the likelihood and consequence of a potential risk (Participant 6). Three other interviewees mentioned actual and perceived risks, with actual risks referring to instances when the chance of incident or injury was a likely possibility, and perceived risk referring to situations when possible risk was largely mitigated but students benefitted from being challenged or pushed by a perceived risk, or by the belief that the risk was still present or likely to occur.

Invariably, interview participants' definitions of risks included or were clarified by using couplets that suggested a conceptualization of risk as a series of dichotomous binaries. These dual conceptualizations, in addition to actual/perceived risk, included risk as objective/subjective, environmental/behavioral, as characterized by the use of hard/soft skills, and, most frequently, as physical/emotional. Participants identified and provided examples of the actual, objective, environmental use of hard skills, and physical risks such as physical injury, inclement weather and other environmental hazards or common-sense rules such as gravity causing rockfall. It seemed more difficult for participants to identify and provide examples of the perceived subjective, behavioral, soft skills, and emotional risks, given that the discussion of these risks tended to be briefer or they were constructed as secondary to the other categories of risk. Some examples of these risks included homesickness, vulnerability, fear of failure, fear of success, fear of injury, and fear of rejection.

Boys as Physically Risky, Girls as Emotionally Risky Binary constructions of risk parallel the normative gender binary, with soft-skills, subjective experience, and emotional risk associated more frequently with girls and feminine characteristics. Hard-skills, objective experience, and physical risk were associated with boys and masculine characteristics. Interview participants explicitly and implicitly connected physical and emotional risks to students' genders. Explicitly, participants linked boys to physical risk, stating that they "charge ahead" into physical risk (Participant 1), were more likely to engage physically, and needed more supervision (Participants 2 and 5). They described girls as being "quicker to come to" emotional vulnerability and risk-taking (Participant 3) and as more likely to think through risk, ask questions, and be engaged with the risk process (Participants 1 and 4).

When speaking of physical and emotional risk, participants often suggested that physical risks were an external factor that happened *to* a student, whereas emotional risks were something a student actively *did*. Physical risk might result in an injury that occurred as a result of risky behaviour or as a consequence of factors out of the students' control, like the weather. Conversely, participants described emotional risk as *risking*, *being* vulnerable, or *sharing* when there was a risk of rejection. Emotional risks seemed to be perceived as positive actions, whereas physical risks were seen as harmful or negative consequences of an action or inaction, whether negligent or ignorant. Participants described vulnerability, speaking up, and taking risks within the group as actions that emotionally adept and mature students undertook, whereas the physical risk of injury was seen as something that happened *to* a student—perhaps because of poor judgement but due to external factors nonetheless. In this way, participants assigned more agency, but also more adult-like responsibility, to girls.

The notion that girls are seen as more able to take risks emotionally is consistent with Boniface's (2006) findings that women are not more fearful than men but are "more willing to admit their fears" (p. 15). Boys are permitted to be less "in control" of their risk environment than girls, who are expected to engage with risk actively and with care. In the context of youth OAE courses, however, girls seemed to be given more responsibility for their and others' actions, and were perceived as subjects *risking* positively, whereas boys were seen as finding themselves in situations where risk was thrust upon them, were perceived as less responsible, and were excused for their risky behaviours.

Either/Or; Limiting Risk to a Binary There is a contradiction in understanding risk as either physical *or* emotional when OAE leaders use actual and perceived risk as a learning tool. As one participant suggested, instructors minimize actual physical risk to a great extent on adventure education trips, with the knowledge that "perceived (physical) risk can still have the same results for the participant as actual (physical) risk without actually putting them in actual risk" (Participant 3). However, with reference to vulnerability or emotional risk, the same participant noted that while instructors "attempt to create this space in which there isn't danger, there isn't risk from the group […] there isn't risk of judgement," there was something innate about vulnerability's internal risk that "we (instructors) can't mitigate." She concluded that emotional risk is a "wilier" risk than physical risk and one that students "are going to have to embark upon without us able to preemptively mitigate anything" (Participant 3).

With most actual risk replaced by perceived risk, the risk students experience with physical challenges and obstacles may be more of an unrecognized emotional risk. Participant 3 discussed a student who thought he was experiencing physical risk on a steep trail; however, as an instructor, she knew that the risk of falling was quite low (and injury in the chance of a fall even lower). What he experienced was primarily fear, or an emotional response to a perceived physical risk.

Assuming that risks are either physical *or* emotional and attributable to boys or girls, respectively, may limit risk awareness and management. Given *how* risk is gendered, with boys as seemingly "detached" from emotional risk yet confronting actual or perceived physical risk via emotion, boys may be disadvantaged in their ability to acknowledge their experience with risk. It may be no wonder that girls are seen as "doing risk better," because girls are associated with emotional risks, and most of the risks experienced are emotional—whether through actual emotional, or perceived physical risks.

Non-Emotional, Not-Physical Risks Unrepresented Understanding risk as existing on a spectrum like gender identity and expression may allow for a more fluid understanding of what interview participants presented as strictly *either* "physical" *or* "emotional" risk and for breaking down the mutual exclusivity of physicality and emotionality as risk characteristics. Yet this dichotomy may also exclude other risk

characteristics. Defining risk as either physical *or* emotional or even as somewhere on a continuum between the two limits the definitional possibilities of risk and creates the potential for risk situations of multiple kinds to be misinterpreted or made invisible. Risk can be multi-dimensional and can change over time or in different circumstances. As one participant noted, "homesickness… in itself is a risk that can lead to more physical risks, and then endangering the group" (Participant 6).

All the interview participants across every level of leadership named physical risk as an "obvious" risk, and expressed the idea that it had a "softer," non-physical opposite. However, this "not-physical" risk, while unanimously present, was not consistently labeled. The "physical/other" risk binary was also identified as: physical/mental, physical/mental health, and physical/socio-emotional. Each of the "not-physical" risks identified by participants did not necessarily equate to emotional risks. However, while mental health, emotional, behavioral, and socio-emotional risks may not be interchangeable, they were all categorized as a "not physical" opposite to physical risk, and five of the seven participants categorized them solely as "emotional" risks. In this way, "emotional risk" had a working definition of all risk that was *not-physical.*

If, as suggested above, not-physical risk must not always and necessarily mean emotional risk but could also include mental health, sexualized, racialized, socio-cultural, or socio- emotional risks, the trick is to conceptualize the physical and emotional as two, non-mutually exclusive characteristics that could describe risk. That is, rather than consider risk as either physical *or* emotional in a dichotomous manner, the two categories could be seen as two (of many) possible properties of risk. In this way, physical or not-physical, emotional or not-emotional, and any number of attributes X or conversely not-X could be attached to risk. This model allows for an expansion of risk characteristics that, rather than being classified as non-physical and therefore emotional, could be seen as having their own unique attributes, outcomes, and implications.

When presented as a "risk table," as in Table 1, risks can be seen as defined by their characteristics. A risk represented by the first row would have physical and emotional qualities, but would not include mental health, whereas a risk represented by the sixth or seventh row would be exclusively emotional or mental health related, respectively. The final row, negative for each of the given characteristics, allows for the development of a new risk characteristic, if needed.

This analysis uses Becker's (1998) "trick" of thinking about concepts as relational, in that considering something to be one thing necessitates that it is not its opposite. Physical risk cannot simultaneously be "not physical risk." However, the mistake comes from equating not-physical risk with emotional risk, wherein the conclusion could be that the presence of physical risk means the absence of emotional risk. Thinking about risk as either/or, and especially as either physical or emotional, excludes all other definitional possibilities of risk. If emotional risk and "not-physical" risk are seen as synonymous, and physical risk is prioritized over emotional risk, then the range of risks seen as important is limited. Then, when adding the idea of the physical boy and emotional girl, the needs of and risks experienced by girls are secondary to the needs of and risks experienced by boys; if not actually, then symbolically and procedurally.

Table 1 Multi-characteristic Risk Table

	Physical (P)	Emotional (E)	Mental Health (M)
Risk 1	+	+	+
Risk 2	+	+	-
Risk 3	+	-	+
Risk 4	+	-	-
Risk 5	-	+	+
Risk 6	-	+	-
Risk 7	-	-	+
Risk 8	-	-	-

Risk is Gendered by Societal Biases and Beliefs

Interview participants' explicit reference to societal or external influences that shaped students' experiences as well as their own implicit gendered assumptions and expectations also pointed to how risk may be gendered on course. Participants acknowledged a structural system or societal influence at play both in their own decision-making and guiding processes, as well as in how and with what beliefs students arrived to and participated on course. Participant 5 admitted that his personal identity as a white, cis-gendered, straight man matching dominant systems of power could result in perpetuating gendered biases. Another participant asked, "what is my bias, and what is my actual observation?" (Participant 4). Others mentioned a history of not seeing girls as capable and of caretakers/parents having "trepidation" about "young women and risk" (Participant 3). Participants spoke about the "boxes" into which boys and girls are placed, stating how external social expectations may have more to do with boys' lack of emotional risk engagement than an innate lack of emotional skill and that girls are "taught early on as to what your role is, what your place is, what you can do, what you can't do" (Participant 1). These examples indicated participants' self-reflexivity with respect to gender biases and suggested that risk may be gendered by adherence to or by challenging dominant social biases within the micro-environment of an OAE course. Leaders' awareness of their own biases, assumptions, and investment in societal expectations may offer a space to interrupt situations where risk is gendered to match societal expectations.

"They're the Same / They're Completely Different;" Stereotype and Gendered Experience Participants who named stereotypes that students face and enact on courses also critically analyzed why those stereotypes exist and how to address them as an organization or as leaders. During the interviews participants may have been conscious of using words or providing examples that might highlight gender differences, particularly as they pertained to girls. Eliminating stereotypical language in order to present a neutral or "politically correct" stance does not necessarily mean that participants did not believe in the validity of stereotypes or the gendered practices based on them. One participant spoke explicitly of the use and veracity

of stereotypes, saying that "The reality is that stereotypes come from reality. They wouldn't exist otherwise. And the danger is in too broadly applying them.... But, a stereotype wouldn't be a stereotype if there wasn't some basis in reality" (Participant 4).

Participants were not consistent in how stereotypes should be dealt with, which may be indicative of industry-wide inconsistencies and tensions, manifested routinely on courses. When asked directly about differences between genders, participants responded by stating that it was difficult to generalize, or that they saw everyone as individuals and distinct from groups. For example, one participant shared that: "There really isn't a divide between genders, it's more, how they've been raised, and what their experiences are in the past" (Participant 3). Often, participants' answers that "there is no difference" was in direct response to a question about girls, specifically; this type of question seemed problematic, whereas the same participants offered multiple ways that girls and boys interacted with risk differently. The juxtaposed ideas of "they're the same" and "they're completely different" shows a tension in how participants conceptualized students in relation to gender.

Participants seemed to understand girls as "different" in traits and in inherent *being* from boys yet "the same" in regards to needs and treatment. This could be the equivalent of recognizing that some students will need sports bras but failing to put them on the packing list. Among participants, there was a neutralizing of gender in that all youth and all risk were seen as similar or the same, or not to be generalized by gender, and to be given equal treatment. However, as in the case of the packing lists, this tendency may more effectively erase or isolate girls' experience by assuming a masculine norm rather than creating an equally accessible environment that seems to be the goal.

Interview participants who articulated stereotypes willingly talked openly about students and even questioned their own biases. However, those who did not want to stereotype along gendered lines did so both subtly and overtly during their interviews, sharing opinions or dominant societal assumptions as fact. Participants' unwillingness to make gendered generalizations may have suggested an unwillingness to navigate the unclear boundary between what *is* and what *ought to be*. Commenting on students' engagement with emotional risk, one participant stated with a sigh, "It skews the way you would assume" (Participant 3), sharing how boys and girls she worked with reproduced the stereotype of girls being more emotional or emotionally-savvy than boys. She went on to say, "but I think that ultimately, everyone has that capacity to get there." Participant 3 acknowledged a reality in which youth perpetuate gender stereotypes while also recognizing what *could be.* While girls may not "have to be" more adept at navigating emotional challenges on course, and boys may not "have to be" quicker at approaching physical risk in the field, they have been socialized to behave in this way. These included calling girls "girly girl," "prissy" (Participant 1), or "indoor Princess" (Participant 3).

Assumptions and Expectations of Ability, Maturity, and Sexuality

Participants did not articulate differences in the risks faced by boys and girls. They did, however, seem to hold assumptions about which risks boys and girls "naturally" engage in, and expectations about how they would do so.

Ability As with stereotypes generally, most participants seemed very reluctant to talk about students' physical ability on the basis of gender. They did mention the assumption that girls' physical abilities were lower than boys'. One stated that physical ability was the "biggest divide between the genders," with girls tending to be "naturally slower" (Participant 3), and another admitted to "struggl[ing]" with a bias "that boys can hike further than girls" (Participant 6). However, the former also attempted to explain her statement by invoking the idea that girls were not "playing sports as much" in school (Participant 3); this created a tension where she acknowledged a gendered stereotype and explained it as such, but also tied it to an assumption stated as fact.

Conversely, participants also expressed frustrations with organizational rules that limited all-girl course itineraries, sharing that the girls' trips were "easier" than the boys' and did not offer girls the same mountaineering opportunities and level of challenge (Participant 5). According to Participant 5, these gendered itineraries and course offerings had been in place "for a long time." She indicated that she had questioned them but was met with administrative resistance; the justification was that this was the way things were and girls were uninterested in more strenuous mountaineering trips, as evidenced by the lack of "sign ups" for those courses.

One of the ways in which assumptions about ability was discussed was through a confidence/competence lens. This refers to situations in which a student's ability to do Physical Thing X is dependent both on competence to complete the task or challenge and confidence to attempt it. Three participants spoke about this relationship, with each stating that girls tend to fall more predominantly into competent/not confident, and boys more frequently into confident/not competent. The competence/confidence grid points to the idea that limiting or lowering the expectations on girls' ability may only confirm or match their confidence levels.

Maturity Most behavioural expectations seemed rooted in the assumption that girls are more mature than boys. Participants' assumption about girls' maturity was ubiquitous. Girls are considered more thoughtful, careful, and intuitive; conversely, boys were described as less willing to talk about emotions and more likely to engage in inappropriate conversations. Participants linked maturity to attentiveness, responsibility, organization, thinking through consequences of actions, and asking questions about activities. One participant described girls as more "willing to express maturity and act in a more mature manner" and stated that girls are more "intuitive" with regard to an "appreciation of risk," whereas boys will ask: "Risk, what risk?" (Participant 1). Another commented that girls are "more mature, just developed more, better behaved, they're easier to talk to," and described boys as being less

"well behaved… they feed off each other, there's more competition… they just don't bother to behave very well" (Participant 3).

There is an interesting contradiction here. The literature supports the idea that the outdoor industry is male-dominated, with girls and women as "invisible" (Gray et al., 2017); this image of girls as outsider does not fit easily with the suggestion that girls are more skilled at risk assessment and management, two skills needed and valued in outdoor adventure.

These were described as the negative ways that "young men refer to young women… the slang and the derogatory this and thats" (Participant 1) and "crude" (Participant 4), "sexist" (Participant 3), or "locker room talk, if you will… it's posturing amongst young males, because that's how they think they're gonna gain power amongst their peers" (Participant 6). While participants did often identify this language as sexist, crude, and harmful, only one specifically mentioned the language in relation to "unwanted sexual advances" (Participant 6).

However, the "normal" language participants discussed could be categorized as gender-based harassment, a category of sexual harassment, which is defined as "verbal and non-verbal gender-based hostile/derogatory communication or gender related name-calling" (Kaitiala-Heino & Marttunen, 2016, p. 1193). Participants spoke about the conversations that boys tend to have when in a boys-only group, especially if unmoderated by leaders or by girls on the trip. One participant specifically noted, with reference to "acceptable behaviour" and topics of conversation, that "if the standard is lowered with the boys, it tends to spiral even lower throughout the course" (Participant 2). Girls face (or report facing) sexual and gender harassment more often than boys; this emotional risk is gendered in *who* it affects more often (Kaitiala-Heino & Marttunen, 2016).

Sexuality Barnfield and Humberstone (2008) write about the "heteronormalizing culture" of the outdoor industry. One of the ways in which this culture becomes evident is through language, policies, and procedures that assume students are straight. The mention of pregnancy or sex as a risk associated with mixed gender trips points to an assumption about heteronormative sexuality. Situations may exist where students' sexuality could be relevant for risk management, such as the physical risk of pregnancy, sexual safety, or emotional risks stemming from exclusive relationships forming within the group. However, if these risks are only assessed or addressed based on an assumption about heterosexuality, then—with the exception of pregnancy—those risks not only still exist for non-heterosexual students, but also may go undetected, as not all students' experiences or identities are taken into account. Having safety policies that assume the heterosexuality of all students genders risk. It assumes that only straight students may be at risk of sexual harassment or unwanted sexual advances or could develop exclusive romantic or sexual relationships that pose (physical or emotional) risks to the group.

Discussion

This study builds on the work of critical feminist scholars, including their examinations of language and its relationship to power structures, their exploration of binaries as they relate to gender, and their analyses of socially constructed gender norms and how they limit and marginalize individuals and groups. We focused on the systems and structures that uphold gender and risk, a key instructional and experiential element in the OAE field.

Studying gender in the outdoors goes well beyond thinking about girls and their experiences. Non-binary and queer youth, trans-youth, and feminine boys—or anyone with an identity that does not conform to typical constructions of masculinity—may well experience difficulties in pursuing outdoor education. Beyond gender, though, the idea of "queering the outdoors"—or challenging the industry to think beyond its conceptualizations of the "normal"—might also look at the white affluence of outdoor education. Not only are most leaders and participants men and boys—they are also overwhelmingly white and wealthy or middle-class (Humberstone, 2009).

There are a number of avenues for future research on the topic of gender and risk in outdoor adventure education programming. These could include an examination of additional organizational documents such as risk management policies and instructor training modules. Of critical importance, future research would incorporate youth perspectives on risk and adventure education. Such studies might explore the performances of masculinities and femininities on courses and how gendered roles are enacted and understood by participants and leaders. They would also take into account other intersections that shape the experiences of youth participants, including mental health, non-binary and transgender identities, as well as diverse sexualities and racial and class backgrounds.

A more specific set of recommendations for outdoor adventure educators and organizations include:

1. Training instructors and leaders on gender literacy: Offering strategies for understanding and identifying stereotypes, exploring the ways they show up on courses, and teaching how to name, challenge, and dismantle them;
2. Challenging instructors and leaders to reflect on and understand their role in maintaining gendered expectations;
3. Expanding and creating policies, procedures, and protocols for non-physical risks, giving careful consideration to what/who may be left out;
4. Addressing labels and omissions in written texts: How are youth's specific needs being represented, acknowledged, listed among the overall group's needs?

The theory that risk is gendered through the use of hierarchical language, the perpetuation of binary thinking through a risk binary, and the presence of societal assumptions and expectations may be useful for creating OAE courses that are sensitive to issues of gender and how gender impacts the lives of students and staff alike. Teaching leaders about how risk is gendered could be part of pre-season leadership

training: a model wherein words, assumptions, and expectations are challenged, empowering leaders of all genders to look at their courses through a gendered lens.

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