EInstitution: Anglia Ruskin University

Unit of Assessment: UoA 34

Title of case study: Enhancing Policies and Practice in Secondary School Sex Education to Reduce Image-Based Sexual Abuse and Improve Internet Safety for Teenagers

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2004-2020

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Tanya Horeck	**Role(s) (e.g. job title):** Associate Professor in Film & Media	**Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:** 01.09.2001 - present

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017-2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Tanya Horeck's research has produced better understanding amongst sex educators, teachers, journalists, creative practitioners and government officials of how to tackle the problem of image-based sexual abuse. Horeck has assisted the non-profit organisation, the School of Sexuality Education, with the creation of digital resources that educate students about relationships and consent. She is also the co-author of a set of policies that provide guidance for UK secondary schools on how to reduce online sexual harassment and improve internet safety for students. These policies have been utilised by the UK Council for Internet Safety in their official government guidance on how educators should approach the issue of nude image sharing. They have also been endorsed by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), who represent and support over 19,000 UK school and college leaders.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Horeck's research explores contemporary 'rape culture', contributing to an understanding of how digital technologies and communication facilitate new forms of online abuse, while simultaneously being used to challenge sexism, sexual violence, and sexual harassment on and offline.

At the centre of this research is Horeck's monograph, *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film* [R1]. This book is pioneering in its interdisciplinary examination of how political and social conflicts are staged over an image of the raped woman's body. *Public Rape* broke new ground in examining the ways in which stories and images of sexual abuse circulate across multiple media platforms. The book is now referenced as a foundational early twenty-first century feminist text on sexual violence.

Building on the insights of *Public Rape,* Horeck's recent research demonstrates how the notion of rape culture is transmitted across internet platforms and digital technologies. Horeck has published several academic articles on digital manifestations of rape culture, including a co-edited special journal issue in 2018 in *Television & New Media* on women in TV crime drama (with Barbara Klinger, Kathleen McHugh, and Lisa Coulthard). Her essay, 'Screening Affect: Rape Culture & the Digital Interface in *Top of the Lake* and *The Fall*' [R2], demonstrates how ideas about spectatorship, gender roles, and sexual abuse are conveyed through the depiction of digital devices and interfaces which function as sources of both violence and critical detection/resistance.

Further research on digital interfaces and the representation of sexual violence includes Horeck's peer-reviewed journal article 'Streaming Sexual Violence: Binge-watching Rape Culture in *13 Reasons Why*' [R3]. In this work, Horeck shows how the popular teen series encourages audiences to engage with its rape storylines according to a user-directed, video game logic that ultimately undermines its attempt to critique how rape culture normalizes violence against women.

At the same time that Horeck's research explores how networked media propagate rape culture, it also considers how social media platforms open up opportunities for feminist pedagogy and resistance through, for example, hashtag activism. This has been explored in a widely cited article, '#askthicke: "Blurred Lines," Rape Culture, and the Feminist Hashtag Takeover' for *Feminist Media Studies* (2014) [R4], which maps out both the potential and the limitations of Twitter as a site for feminist activism.

Horeck's 2019 book, *Justice on Demand: True Crime in the Digital Streaming Era* (Wayne State University Press) [R5] further explores the spread of societal ideas about crime and social justice in an 'on-demand' networked viewing culture. The book provides an interdisciplinary, transmedia examination of how new digital protocols are reframing media consumption of the genre, providing audiences with the opportunity to become 'desktop detectives' and express their opinions and affective responses to crime narratives across various social media platforms.

Taken together, these outputs are the foundation for Horeck's work with educational stakeholders on digital literacy and better internet safety for young people. They underpin the impact of her research not only on teachers and educators, but also journalists, creative practitioners and government officials.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Horeck, Tanya (2004) *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film* (London/NY: Routledge). It has been reviewed in *Gender & Society* (19; 6, 2005: pp. 862-64), *Feminist Media Studies* (Vol. 4; No. 3, November 2004, pp. 364-368) and *Crime, Media, Culture* (2005; 1, pp. 233-237). Available from the HEI on request.

2. Horeck, Tanya (2018) 'Screening Affect: Rape Culture & the Digital Interface in *Top of the Lake* and *The Fall*', *Television & New Media*, (Volume 19 Issue 6, September, pp. 569-587), DOI:10.1177/1527476418768010. Journal article, peer-reviewed. In REF2.

3. Horeck, Tanya (2019) 'Streaming Sexual Violence: Binge-Watching Rape Culture in *13 Reasons Why*', *Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies*, November, https://www.participations.org/Volume%2016/Issue%202/contents.htm
   Journal article, peer-reviewed.

4. Horeck, Tanya (2014) '#askthicke: "Blurred Lines," Rape Culture, and the Feminist Hashtag Takeover', *Feminist Media Studies*, (Vol. 14, no. 6, pp. 1105–1107). DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2014.975450. Journal article, peer-reviewed.

5. Horeck, Tanya (2019) *Justice on Demand: True Crime in the Digital Streaming Era* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press). Monograph written for academic press, peer reviewed. In REF2.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Horeck's project has helped a range of beneficiary groups including secondary-school teachers and educators, journalists, and creative practitioners in dealing with issues that arise from image-based sexual abuse by the development of teaching and education resources that help tackle the issues. The project has led to the development of a set of policies which have been

adopted by the Association of School and College Lecturers and which have informed UK government guidance.

Since 2019, Horeck has worked as an advisor for the School of Sexuality Education (henceforth SSE) (formerly Sexplain). An educational charity, SSE works with schools and colleges to provide sessions on sexual education. Horeck's media expertise on rape culture and digital technologies have informed SSE's lesson plans with young people, as well as their staff training workshops.

SSE used Horeck's research in their sessions with teenagers on digital defence and self-care throughout 2019-2020. The co-director of SSE credits Horeck's research around "rape culture, image-based sexual abuse, Netflix culture and binge watching" as being "instrumental in informing their education programmes on teen digital cultures" [S1]. Lesson plans based on her research on rape culture have been delivered to over 1,000 young people across 15 different schools since 2019 [S1].

Horeck's research has also informed how SSE deliver workshops and their training of school staff. School staff in particular have expressed a lack of confidence in dealing with cases of online sexual abuse and Horeck has helped to advise them on the language they need to use to discuss such sensitive matters. In November 2019 Horeck's talk, 'Reframing "Revenge Porn" as Sexual Violence' changed perceptions of attendees at the annual SSE conference which was attended by over 60 teachers, sex education facilitators, and students. 100% of respondents of the post event survey said they think differently about issues of revenge porn/image-based abuse, feel better equipped to reframe revenge porn as sexual violence, and will change the way they talk to young people about revenge porn/image based abuse. One teacher observed they feel "*equipped to help young people/people learn that this is never the victim's fault*;" another said that they will "*focus more on responsibility, empathy and wider social issues*" when speaking to young people about image-based sexual abuse [S2]. The feedback demonstrates teachers' increased confidence in finding ways to handle issues of image-based sexual abuse in their schools.

In spring 2020, Horeck enabled SSE to increase their online offering by creating 'Teachable Moments' worksheets that address key learning points on sex and consent. The resources supported teachers and parents in helping young people gain vital knowledge about consent and image-based abuse in line with the new compulsory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum. The official launch of the new RSE curriculum was delayed by COVID-19 and these digital resources therefore served to fill an important gap in sex education for parents and schools. By 31/12/2020, these digital worksheets had been accessed by 232 people. 100% of survey respondents said that the worksheets aided students' learning in RSE [S2]. One parent said the worksheets contained: "*Really useful advice and guidance for anyone who engages with children, including parents and teachers.*" [S2].

In spring/summer 2020, Horeck joined forces with SSE and feminist academic colleagues and fellow sex education advisors, Professor Jessica Ringrose (University College London) and Dr Kaitlynn Mendes (University of Leicester), to co-produce a set of policies for UK secondary schools. These policies were designed to respond to the lack of coherent guidance in secondary schools on how to tackle cases of online sexual harassment, and to help teachers implement a joined up, whole-school approach to the problem. This set of policies, (published online in July 2020), provide comprehensive guidance for schools on dealing with online sexual harassment [S3]. The policies have been officially endorsed by ASCL, who have promoted them to their members, consisting of over 19,000 school and college leaders in the UK, working across primary, secondary and post-16 education. [S4].

In December 2020, the Government published new guidance on 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' for those working with children and young people in education settings both within and beyond schools, which cites these policies and their insight regarding the importance of using the

terminology of 'image-based sexual abuse' to talk about the non-consensual sharing of intimate images [S5].

In the summer of 2020, Horeck helped SSE to deliver bespoke training sessions on the policies to teachers in three secondary schools in Cardiff, Daventry and North Yorkshire, where assistance was requested on how to deliver digital literacy and the new RSE curriculum. All participants agreed that the training increased their confidence to implement policy and practice to tackle online sexual harassment and they committed to a number of actions suggested in the policy, including sharing learning with key colleagues and reviewing the RSE curriculum, resources, and training [S2].

On 15 October 2020, Horeck and her SSE collaborators held an online training session designed for head teachers and safeguarding leads, to assist with policy implementation, and the event was attended by 25 individuals. Further implementation workshops for teachers were run in November 2020 as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science and were attended by 38 individuals. Following the October and November events, feedback was collated, and of those who responded, everyone agreed that they knew more about the issues covered in the policy and 92% felt more confident handling cases of online sexual harassment involving students [S2]. One Deputy Head (Pastoral) has reported back that since implementing the policy, student wellbeing has improved at his secondary school in Portsmouth, which has seen a dramatic decrease in the sharing of 'dick pics' [S6].

Horeck has also delivered training on digital literacy and internet safety to eight teachers and PSHE leaders, 70 film and media students and 20 progress coaches at Long Road Sixth Form College in Cambridge. The school's Assistant Vice Principal of Student Welfare said the training benefitted the progress coaches who are now more aware of the correct terminology to use when discussing image-based sexual abuse and have learnt new ways of coaching young people in how to stay safe online [S7].

Public perceptions of so-called 'revenge porn' have also been reshaped by Horeck's work with creative practitioners and journalists. In 2018, the youth creative organization Livity produced a documentary on image-based sexual abuse, *Love, Lies and Nudes*. This film was inspired by Horeck's research, with the producer citing *Public Rape* as an influence [S8]. The film has accrued over 3,884 views on YouTube since its release on 4 June 2018 [S9]. A BBC journalist has also drawn on Horeck's expertise for a BBC LookEast feature on young people and image-based sexual abuse on 26 June 2018 and a BBC Newsbeat article on 19 June 2019 about young people and staying safe online [S10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Testimonial from Co-director of School of Sexuality Education (formerly Sexplain).
2. Feedback from SSE (Sexplain) resources events and training sessions.
3. Collation of Online Sexual Harassment Policies.
4. Testimonial from SEND and Inclusion Specialist for the Association of School and College Leaders on their endorsement of the online sexual harassment policies.
5. 'Sharing Nude and Semi-Nudes', The UK Council for Internet Safety, Advice for education settings working with children and young people: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/947545/UKCIS_sharing_nudes_and_semi_nudes_advice_for_education_settings_V2.pdf
6. Testimonial from Deputy Head (Pastoral) on implementation of policy and reduction of negative image sharing.
7. Testimonial from The Assistant Vice Principal of Student Welfare at Long Road Sixth Form College.
8. Testimonial from producer of *Love, Lies and Nudes*.

9. Web link to YouTube where the documentary *Love, Lies and Nudes* is exhibited: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRpNJ3YELJo
10. Testimonial from BBC journalist on Horeck's help with 'revenge porn' news stories.