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## Perceptions of Safety within Residence Halls at a Midwestern College Campus

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Perceptions of Safety within Residence Halls at a Midwestern College Campus

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### Abstract

Sexual violence is a widespread issue in American society. Though sexual violence takes many forms, the topic of campus sexual violence is especially pressing as it has occupied a fair amount of controversy in American media. The experience of sexual violence for college students is often traumatic as they navigate through the administrative systems and criminal justice systems of their respective communities. From a feminist perspective, students that become victims of campus sexual violence are often met with institutional resistance and inadequacies. The purpose of this study was to assess college students' feelings of safety in residence halls. This research surveyed students in introductory-level Gender and Women's Studies courses at a Midwestern college campus and sought knowledge from its students on the topics of campus safety and sexual violence. The findings from this research help to critically address the climate of the college campus from the student's perspective and addresses the intricacies of identities and how those identities shape the experiences of both safety and violence.

### Perceptions of Safety within Residence Halls at a Midwestern College Campus

Residence halls are an important contribution to students' college experience. On-campus living environments can affect students' retention rates, graduation, and overall well-being (Willoughby & Carol, 2009; Yaun, 2013). While living on campus can provide many positive experiences for students, it is important to critically analyze the negative aspects in order create a better learning environment for everyone involved with the university.

Sexual assault has been seen as a pervasive problem on college campuses and often occurs in residence halls. While each college's issues with campus violence are unique, patterns exist in these instances because of the overall shared culture that devalues consensual activities and perpetuate rape myths (Burnett, Mattern, Herakova, Kahl, Tobola & Bornsen, 2009). College campuses can be a breeding ground for sexual violence for a variety of reasons. The pressure to conform to stereotypical tropes of college activities may include but are not limited to general risk-taking, campus housing climate, binge drinking, party culture, and increased sexual activity. Though these factors may be addressed on their own (and may be harmless on their own), it is important to explore possible connections between them. All of these factors may combine to make a complicated situation in which a college community must engage in risk reduction and community building to end sexual violence. This may be difficult, as students may not see the dangers in the potentially dangerous social climates.

### **Background**

In April of 1986, Jeanne Clery was attending college at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (Gross, 1990). After leaving her dorm door open for her roommate, she was awoken by a man and she was subsequently beaten, raped, and murdered (Beyette, 1989). In the days leading up to Clery's death, Lehigh had reported 181 issues with unlocked

dorms (Gross, 1990). The loss of Jeanne Clery inspired what is now known as “The Clery Act,” and a nationwide movement to end campus sexual assault and make dorms safer for students. As a result of this continued campaign for the protection of students and for the justice for survivors, the Clery Act has pushed campuses to be held accountable to their students and the community at large.

The legacy of Jeanne, and the creation of The Clery Act are important to improving the lives of college students across America as activists hope for an end to campus violence. This research, gaining knowledge into the student’s perspectives on safety, violence, and consent, is especially important because it centers the student’s experience. Amplifying the voice of student survivors and the student body at large needs to be the centerpiece in addressing the many issues that contribute to campus violence. Other university and community perspectives must be addressed and involved in the solutions. However, it is important in feminist research and analysis to gain insight into those that are the victims, or those that are at the bottom of the social structures within university systems and the institution of education as a whole.

The purpose of this research was to highlight the voices of the students experiencing violence. Based on the current climate of campus sexual violence, this research gained knowledge from student participants and how their identities interact with their knowledge. In addition to information on student identities, this research addressed which dorms students felt were the least safe at the given university. With the information provided from this research, we hope that we can encourage universities to take student voices seriously and we hope that we can work to improve the student experience. The campaign to end campus violence starts with the initiative to enact change that is ultimately student-informed, student-centered, and student-empowered.

### **Literature Review**

In analyzing the problems of sexual assault, consent, and safety on campus, there are many different contributing factors. Similarly, there are many perspectives that are instrumental to understanding these phenomena. The bodies of knowledge on the topics of college campus housing, gender and violence, and campus sexual violence are vast. The articles selected align with this research in terms of giving precedence to the student's perspective. Themes in the preceding research represent three categories: gender and violence, campus sexual violence, and gender and campus housing.

#### **Gender and Violence**

The topic of gender and violence has been studied for many years and within this body of knowledge, a significant amount of outstanding research has been produced. In defining what constitutes sexual assault, several researchers have found confusion in the general public (Day, 1999; Burnett et al., 2009). Day (1999) found that women's fear of sexual assault do not align with the reality of most cases. Many respondents reported fearing sexual assault by strangers whilst outside. Participants specifically feared men of ethnic/racial minorities with low income, who were engaged in uncivil behaviors. Similarly, Burnett et al. (2009) found that when participants were asked to define date rape, they had trouble doing so, specifically when alcohol was added to the situation. Respondents also had a hard time defining consent in regards to date rape, although most emphasized its importance.

Another study investigating victims of sexual assault and found that men and women experienced sexual assault differently (Kimerling, Rellini, Kelly, Judson & Learman, 2002). Specifically, they found that men who identified as gay or bisexual were more likely than heterosexual men to be victims of sexual violence, whereas women who were of a non-white

ethnicity were more likely to be assaulted than white women. In addition, the researchers found that men were more likely than women to report acute psychiatric symptoms, a history of psychiatric disorder, and a history of psychiatric hospitalization. On the other hand, women were more likely than men to experience vaginal and/or anal penetration, sustain injuries, and make a police report. Overall, one tenth of their population were assaulted by an intimate partner, one third were assaulted by a stranger and one fourth were assaulted by multiple assailants. Within this research, there is a grey area between identifying “intimate partner” and “stranger”. It is not explained if acquaintances are included in the stranger category, resulting in higher numbers.

### **Campus Sexual Violence**

Between 20% and 25% of women are the victims of rape while in college (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Several studies have been conducted to investigate the factors influencing such high rates despite the efforts by universities. Multiple studies have found that students are unable to define sexual violence (Day, 1999; Mayhew, Caldwell & Goldman, 2011; Burnett et al., 2009). Additional research found that students are wary of reporting sexual assault, not only because they have trouble recognizing it, but also because they were uninformed about the reporting process (Burnett et al., 2009). Mayhew et al. (2011) found that the confusion in defining sexual assault was not limited to the students that experience it. Campus stakeholders including student leaders, administration, and community members did not have a consistent definition of campus violence and often restrict it to purely physical violence.

There is even more concerning data addressing college campuses on an institutional level. A study conducted by Yung (2015) concluded that universities are not reporting sexual assaults consistently. This research found that while being audited under the Clery Act, reports of sexual assault increased by 44%. However, once the audit was completed, rates dropped back

down and became identical to those in the pre-audit period. Furthermore, they found no long term improvements resulting from these audits, even when fines were issued for noncompliance.

Other studies reveal that certain campus structures reinforced campus rape culture (Armstrong, Hamilton and Sweeney 2006; Day 1999). Armstrong et al (2006) found in their study that the way dorms are set up for first year students may perpetuate sexual violence. Specifically, because dorms are locked to non-residents, students who wish to party and meet men are forced to turn to frat parties, which then encapsulates the freshman women in a situation with unequal power dynamics. Because the women are expected to be grateful guests, their male hosts are further empowered to take advantage of them.

### **Gender and Campus Housing**

Several researchers are concerned with how students living environments affect them along with their identities. Multiple articles looked at how housing affects risk-taking, retention and graduation rates, perception of their living environment and social adjustment (Willoughby & Carroll, 2009; Yaun, 2013; Jones, 2013; Enochs & Roland, 2006).

One study investigated how living in co-educational halls affected risk-taking among college students (Willoughby & Carroll, 2009). They found that students living in co-educational dorms were more likely than students living in gender-specific housing to binge drink, consume alcohol, have more permissive sexual attitudes, and have more recent sexual partners. Additional research conducted by Yaun (2013) investigated the retention and graduation rates of community colleges with and without on-campus housing. The research found that community colleges with housing had higher graduation rates than those who did not provide campus housing. Yaun (2013) also found that community colleges with housing had lower retention rates, however this goes against the majority of retention research.

Another housing type that was investigated were residential learning communities (Jones, 2003). Depending upon the student's gender and location of their residence hall, their experiences were different. Specifically, those in residential learning communities perceived their living environment to be more citizenship oriented than those living on traditional floors. In terms of gender, female students perceived their living environment to be most competitive yet emotionally supportive than the male students. Research done by Enochs & Roland (2006) also addresses the differences between traditional and non-traditional campus housing arrangements, specifically addressing "First Year Experience" dorms as a non-traditional campus housing style. Regardless of living environment, male students had significantly higher overall adjustment levels compared to female students. Overall, students in first year experience halls had better social adjustment than those living in traditional residence halls.

In looking at lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) students, researchers found several interesting experiences. Research done by Gintoli (2010) discovered that a majority of students were comfortable with both gender-neutral housing and bathrooms. Furthermore, these students understood the importance of such facilities for transgender and non-binary students. It should be noted that a higher percentage of males than females were more comfortable with gender-neutral housing. Another study conducted by Stewart (2015) found that LGBT+ students were more likely to live in on-campus housing than other students. In addition to campus housing, this research expanded on the knowledge of LGBT+ students' overall experience in higher education. LGBT+ students were more likely to use loans to pay for school and be enrolled in fewer course hours, but less likely to have parental support than other students.

### **Methodology**

To obtain data we handed surveys out to three classes with traditional classroom settings. Recruitment of participants was done in person during class time, and permission was obtained through contacting professors and the faculty mentor for this research. Each course participating in this research was available for General Education requirements as set out by the university system. Participants in this research were enrolled in Introduction to Gender (GWS 110), Violence and Gender (GWS 120), Introduction to LGBT Studies (GWS 225).

The participants were asked to fill out a survey that consisted of fourteen questions, which would take about ten minutes to complete. Three different types of questions were asked in our survey: open answer questions, multiple choice, and opened-ended questions. We used the open answer (fill in the blank) questions to gather data pertaining to participant demographics. This allowed participants to label their own identity, as they wished. Based on the answers provided, non-heterosexual identities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, asexual, pansexual, and queer) were synthesized into the LGBT+ acronym. For answers on the participant's gender, identities 'male' and 'female' were used. Though the researchers recognize that these labels align more with terminology for sex, participants used this terminology to identify their gender. The multiple-choice questions in this survey assessed the participant's feelings of safety on campus, knowledge about sexual assault, and knowledge about consent. Finally, participants were asked to define consent in their own words for the open-ended part of the survey.

### **Data Analysis and Coding**

Once we collected the data from the participants we began to synthesize and analyze our findings. Because our research consisted of quantitative and qualitative data; we used a multi-system approach to analysis. Answers from quantitative questions were placed in an excel

spreadsheet and then into the SPSS statistics system, where we then ran frequencies (see Tables 1.1-4.1) and compared responses from multiple choice questions to demographics answers. In addition to obtaining information on frequencies, we also used SPSS to find statistical significance based on quantitative data.

Quantitative questions were analyzed using open coding. The researchers went through every survey and created a memo for each answer from each participant. Codes were then collected and arranged into 7 categories. Following the collection of 7 categories, we then went through each survey and tallied each component that every survey mentioned. The seven components include: (1) Agreement, (2) Verbal/Non-Verbal, (3) Repeated Behavior, (4) Coercion/Altruism, (5) Affirmative/Negative, (6) Violence, and (7) Inhibition. The number 0 was used for participants who did not provide a definition.

Coding and memo collection for this research adopted a hybrid of language used by participants and language of the researchers (see Appendix B). For this purpose our original coding sheets contain the “open code” section (labeled 0-7) in language provided by the researchers. Terminology used by the participant is located in the section labeled “Example of Participant’s Words.” The first component participants addressed was what we have coded as agreement. The second component references use of verbal or non-verbal consent. This component uses language that was from both the participants and the researchers. The third component uses wording from the researchers. For the concept “repeated behavior,” participants stated that consent was not a one-time or catch all agreement. Consent is considered a process that should be repeated. Coercion is also given by the researchers. Participants answering this component mentioned the words “willful” or “pressured.” Affirmative and negative components address consent ideology that is more commonly referred to as “yes means yes,” and “no means

no.” Participants using the word ‘yes’ used affirmative consent, and participants who used ‘no’ used negative consent. Participant definitions using both yes and no were included in both columns. Definitions that used any kind of statements regarding the implications of sexual activity without consent were added into the violence component. Similarly, if definitions provided addressed the use of alcohol, drugs, or any other kind of power differential, they were added to the inhibition component.

### **Feminist Theoretical Framework**

The framework for methodology and analysis in this study is centered on feminist theory. More specifically, this research uses feminist concepts including reflexivity and intersectionality. Each of these components is essential to consider when engaging in feminist research because it is qualitatively different than other procedures for collecting and analyzing data.

Reflexivity may be one of the most important concepts of feminist research because it provides a methodological framework for the interaction between the researchers and their participants. As defined by Hesse-Biber (2014), reflexivity is the process by which researchers recognize, examine, and understand how their social background, location, and assumptions can influence the research. Assumptions about a participant’s knowledge can be made in any type of data collection, and both limiting and being aware of this helps to ensure the clarity of the participant’s responses. Limiting a researcher’s personal agenda(s) works to ensure that the research is the least biased it can be.

Intersectionality is a theoretical basis created by Kimberle Crenshaw and other Black Feminists in the second wave of feminism from the 1960’s through 1980’s (Adewunmi, 2014). This theory addresses the “complications of multiply situated identities and the social contexts associated with them” (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Intersectionality is the concept that our identities are

collective; that you cannot separate one identity from another for any of your personal experiences. For example: a participant who is white and male cannot separate his experiences as a white person from his experiences as a man. However, there are also intricacies in experience of privilege and oppression that are also intersectional (based on multiplicity of identity). What this means for feminist research and methodology is that the researcher(s) must again be cognizant of the participant and their social environment. This theory was directly involved with the foundations of this research because we used intersectionality to address topics of dorm safety, sexual violence, and consent.

### **Results**

For this research, the answers from 69 participants were analyzed. 71 surveys were originally collected but 2 surveys were withheld because students provided incomplete information, and were thus unable to answer certain sections of the survey. Results from this survey are broken down by question groups: demographics, dorm safety, sexual violence/assault, and consent.

#### **Demographics**

The demographics for this research were fairly diverse and in some cases, this sample was more diverse than the university's total population. Participants ranged from 18 to 25 years of age. 13 participants were age 18, 23 participants were age 19, 20 participants were age 20, 8 participants were age 21, 2 participants were age 22, 2 participants were age 23, and 1 student was age 25 (see Table 1.1). Participants in this survey identified as either male, female, or non-binary in terms of gender. 11 identified as male, 52 identified as female, and 2 identified as non-binary (see Table 1.2). For race/ethnicity, participants answered White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, and multiracial. 51 identified as White, 11 identified as Black, 3 identified as Asian, 1 identified

as Hispanic, and 3 identified as Multiracial (see Table 1.3). In terms of sexuality, participants were identified as heterosexual or LGBT+. 49 identified as heterosexual and 20 identified as LGBT+ (see Table 1.4). Participants in this survey represented 32 different undergraduate majors. 54 participants were in their first Gender and Women's Studies Class, and 15 had taken two or more GWS classes (see Table 1.5).

### **Dorm Safety**

Participants in this survey completed one section with questions on dorm safety. 35 participants currently live in the dorms and 34 participants lived in the dorms before the academic year (see Table 2.1, Figures 2 and 3). 13 participants currently live on an all-female floor, 22 participants currently live on a co-educational floor, and no participants currently live on an all-male floor. 15 participants previously lived on an all-female floor, 13 participants previously lived on a co-ed floor, and 6 participants lived on an all-male floor (see Table 2.2, Figures 2 and 3). One participant answered that they lived on more than one type of floor. Following answers on floor composition, participants answered if they felt safe or not. 20 participants felt unsafe in the dorms, 47 felt safe in the dorms, and 2 participants answered 'other' (see Table 2.3). 10 of the 13 Females currently living on an all-female floor felt unsafe, and 5 of 15 former dorm inhabitants felt unsafe. 6 of 22 current co-ed dorm participants felt unsafe and 5 of 13 students that had lived in co-ed dorms before felt unsafe. 1 participant who had previously lived on an all-male floor felt unsafe. Addressing identity and safety, 15 out of 18 participants of color felt safe and 3 of 18 felt unsafe. 32 out of 51 White participants felt safe, while 19 White participants felt unsafe. 14 out of 20 participants that felt unsafe were heterosexual and 6 of 20 participants that felt unsafe were LGBT+.

Within questions of dorms and safety, there were some correlations that were found to be statistically significant. The correlation between gender and living in the dorms was significant (.039), as well as gender and feeling unsafe (0.53). Currently living in the dorms and thinking sexual violence is a problem was also statistically significant (.006).

### **Sexual Violence**

For the topic of sexual assault participants answered 3 questions on sexual assault or sexual violence, and participants had mixed reactions to this section. 33 participants answered that sexual violence was a problem on their campus, 13 answered no, and 23 answered that they were unsure (see Table 3.1, Figure 1). Participants had the opportunity to rate the severity of sexual violence on their campus and the mean for this was a 6 or a 7 on a scale of 10. Following this question, participants were asked if they knew someone who has experienced sexual violence. 29 participants knew someone who has experienced violence, 31 did not, and 9 were unsure (see Table 3.2). Following this, participants answered whether they knew the difference between consensual and nonconsensual acts. 52 participants completely understood the difference, 13 mostly understood, 2 somewhat understood, 1 did not understand, and 1 was unaware of this topic (see Table 3.3).

In correlations regarding sexual violence, there were many statistically significant events. Thinking sexual violence is a problem and the age of the participant was statistically significant (.006). Knowing someone who's experienced sexual violence and gender of the participant was statistically significant (.063). Thinking sexual violence is a problem and the participant being in their first GWS class was significant (.057). The correlation between knowing someone who's experienced sexual violence and thinking sexual violence is a problem was statistically significant (.028). In addition to these, the correlation between a participant's sexuality and

knowing the difference between consensual and nonconsensual acts was statistically significant (.033).

### **Consent**

Two questions answered by participants fall into the category of consent, and the results for this section gained contradictory results in comparison to the topic of sexual violence. Participants were first asked if they had previous education on the concept of consent. 65 participants answered that they had received previous education on consent, 3 answered that they had not, and one participant was unsure (see Table 4.1). Following this question, participants were asked to define consent in their own words. 62 participants provided a definition and 7 left this section blank. From the 62 participants that provided a definition, 7 categories emerged in their answers (see Table 4.2). On average, participants answered 3.25 of these 7 categories. Participants in their first Gender and Women's Studies class answered an average of 3.4 and students with previous Gender and Women's Studies experience answered an average of 2.7. All 7 participants that failed give a definition of consent answered that they knew the difference between consensual and nonconsensual behavior.

### **Discussion**

After analyzing the results of this research we can conclude that the students who participated in this research generally feel safe on campus, but at the same time they believe that sexual assault is a problem on campus. Through this research we also found that a number of students think they are able to define what consent to sexual activity is. However, in looking at their definitions, they are missing large components for consent as the average participant could only answer half of the components. This may indicate two things; first, that students may still believe in "stranger" rape myths to some degree and second, that students do not know as much

as they think that they know, and that the messages they are receiving about consent may be contradictory or unclear.

One hypothesis for this research was that students that lived in coeducational dorms would feel less safe than those students that lived in All Male or All-Female dorms. Students from this research who currently live or previously lived in coeducational dorms did in fact feel less safe than the other dorms. However, participants who live or lived on All-Female floors were a very close second for feeling unsafe. As stated in previous literature, college students living in co-educational dorms were more likely than students living in gender-specific housing to binge drink, consume alcohol, have more permissive sexual attitudes, and have more recent sexual partners (Willoughby & Carroll, 2009). In addition to this, students that live in co-ed dorms could potentially feel that they have less support (Jones, 2003). The higher level of risk taking and real or perceived lack of support could have some connection to why students who lived in coeducational dorms felt less safe.

Student identities also played a role in how safe students felt while living in the dorms. Heterosexual white females are reported to feel the most unsafe living in the dorms. This is an outcome that was not anticipated, especially in addressing race or sexuality and feelings of safety. There also was a high correlation between the number of students that think sexual assault is a problem and the amount of students who know someone who has been sexually assaulted. This could suggest that the students who have been affected in some way by sexual assault are more aware of how prevalent of a problem sexual assault can be on a college campus. Another hypothesis that was made was that students who identify within the LGBT+ community on campus would feel less safe than students who did not identify as LGBT+. This was not necessarily found to be true with this sample. The majority of LGBT+ students represented in

this research felt safe while living in the dorms. Our results follow similar findings to the literature that we reviewed. Most LGBT+ students have a positive overall experience while living on campus, and this could be contingent on student body attitudes.

It cannot be overlooked that many students do not feel safe while living in the dorms even while the majority do feel safe. There are many intersecting experiences that have the potential to make students feel unsafe. It is important to look into the factors that make students feel unsafe to see if there is an overarching theme to why there is this feeling of unsafety. These issues then need to be addressed by the university to begin the healing process of student survivors, and to prevent future instances of campus violence.

### **Limitations & Future Research**

While there are various limitations involved in this research, there are many solutions to the issues that could be changed in further research. It's fairly easy to get carried away with specific issues within every piece of the research. Thus, we have condensed the most noteworthy limitations in this research to this section. Notable limitations include classes surveyed, demographics, and small sample size.

First, collection of this data was done from three lower-level Gender and Women's Studies classes. There are many pieces to this specific limitation in our research. At the time participants were surveyed, they all had some education directly from their Gender and Women's Studies classes on the survey topics. However, this also provides a venue for participants to give nuanced answers, as they were mostly non-Gender and Women's Studies students. These participants had been educated within the class they were surveyed on the topics our research addresses. One class, GWS 120: Violence and Gender, is specifically centered on the intersections of gender and violence. An argument could be made on whether the on-campus

student body was knowledgeable or not, complicating the validity of surveying Gender and Women's Studies classes. There are many places where our research is able to refute this. First, the classes our sample comes from are not restricted to Gender and Women's Studies majors and minors. These classes fulfill general education. Second, many of the students were in their first Gender and Women's Studies course. Finally, participants in this survey indicated mixed results in regards to competency with these topics. These topics were concepts that were provided to all students in these classes, and participants showed very mixed levels of understanding in regards to sexual violence and consent.

A second limitation in this research relies on the demographics of the university surveyed. Most of the information regarding the identities in this college's demographics is available through separate websites, rather than the university itself. Demographics available for the university participants attended included race/ethnicity, and gender (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Students of color are around 15% of this university's population. Comparing to our sample size, this is one area where we are more diverse than the university population. For gender of students, our sample was a majority female, while the university is approximately 52% female from recent data. It is important to note, however, that having an exact replication of the population does not mean that the research would be an accurate depiction of student's beliefs about these topics.

Last, this research has a small sample size. Our sample size was limited to a group of 140 possible participants. The sample size was further restricted due to student absences and the limitations of our research requirements. A small sample size (n=69) as compared to the amount students that lived in the dorms at this university may not accurately reflect student beliefs as a

collective. Furthermore, there is the possibility that the data collected from this sample may underrepresent the amount of violence happening at this university.

This research was presented at the Minnesota State University, Mankato Undergraduate Research Symposium. Like the limitations, there are many different directions for future research. For future research we could also compare rape myths with how safe students feel on college campuses. To increase sample size, research could expand to include people who have visited the dorms to see if their experience is similar or different to those who live in the dorms currently. To draw more connections from the data collected to the participants lived experiences, focus groups could be used. This would expand upon this research and give it more depth than descriptive statistics can provide. While this research explores experiences with safety, sexual assault, and consent on a base level, it would be extremely valuable and powerful for students to claim their own experience.

### **Conclusion**

Sexual violence is an issue that is seen all across America, and severity of sexual assault on college campuses is especially pressing in recent decades. Because the issues of sexual assault and safety on campus are so complex, there are many contributors that complicate understanding, advocacy, and prevention. One of the many complications in the fight to end sexual violence is the issue of conflicting definitions. Thus, sexual violence can be difficult to define and recognize for many individuals, from college students to their administrators. As far as awareness goes, sexual assault and lack of campus safety are not new phenomena. However, the attention that the media and feminist research have given to these issues on college campuses is breaking new ground. Feminist research and advocacy on the behalf of survivors has pushed

for more knowledge and awareness on the part of the public, as well as legislators and school officials.

The experience of sexual violence for college students is often traumatic as they navigate through the administrative systems and criminal justice systems of their respective communities. From a feminist perspective, students that become victims of campus sexual violence are often met with institutional resistance and inadequacies. After surveying undergraduate students in lower level Gender and Women's Studies classes our findings concluded that students have mixed feelings on safety while living in the dorms. However, the feeling of safety has risen through the last five years. In addressing the topic of sexual assault, students are again conflicted in understanding many aspects including consensual activities and whether violence (as it relates to the campus) is a problem in general. This Midwestern College has made strides to improve feelings of safety on the campus. There is always more that can be done, but this research may indicate that the university may be heading in the right direction. With the help of advocacy and activism on behalf of staff, administration, and students this college and colleges across the United States will continue to improve the experiences of living in the dorms and bring an end to an epidemic of sexual assault.

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**Appendix A: Tables & Figures**

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18	13	18.8	18.8
19	23	33.3	52.2
20	20	29.0	81.2
21	8	11.6	92.8
22	2	2.9	95.7
23	2	2.9	98.6
25	1	1.4	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	11	15.9	15.9
Female	52	81.2	97.1
Non-Binary	2	2.9	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

*\*Participants in this research self-identified their gender as 'male' and 'female.' The researchers recognize that the terminology used by the participants themselves aligns with terminology for biological sex.*

**Table 1.3. *Race of Participants***

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
White	51	73.9	73.9
Black	11	15.9	89.9
Asian	3	4.3	94.2
Hispanic	1	1.4	95.7
Multiracial	3	4.3	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

**Table 1.4. *Sexuality of Participants***

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Heterosexual	49	71.0	71.0
LGBT+	20	29.0	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

*\*The term 'LGBT+' includes but is not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, asexual pansexual, and queer.*

**Table 1.5. *Is This the Participant's First Gender and Women's Studies Class?***

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	54	78.3	78.3
No	15	21.7	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Yes	35	50.7	50.7
No	34	49.3	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
All-Female	28	40.6	40.6
All-Male	5	7.2	47.8
Co-Educational	35	50.7	98.6
Multiple Types	1	1.4	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	47	68.1	68.1
No	20	29.0	97.1
Other	2	2.9	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

*Table 3.1. Does the Participant Think Sexual Violence is a Problem?*

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	33	47.8	47.8
No	13	18.8	66.7
Unsure	23	33.3	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

*Table 3.2. Does the Participant Know Someone Who Experienced Sexual Violence?*

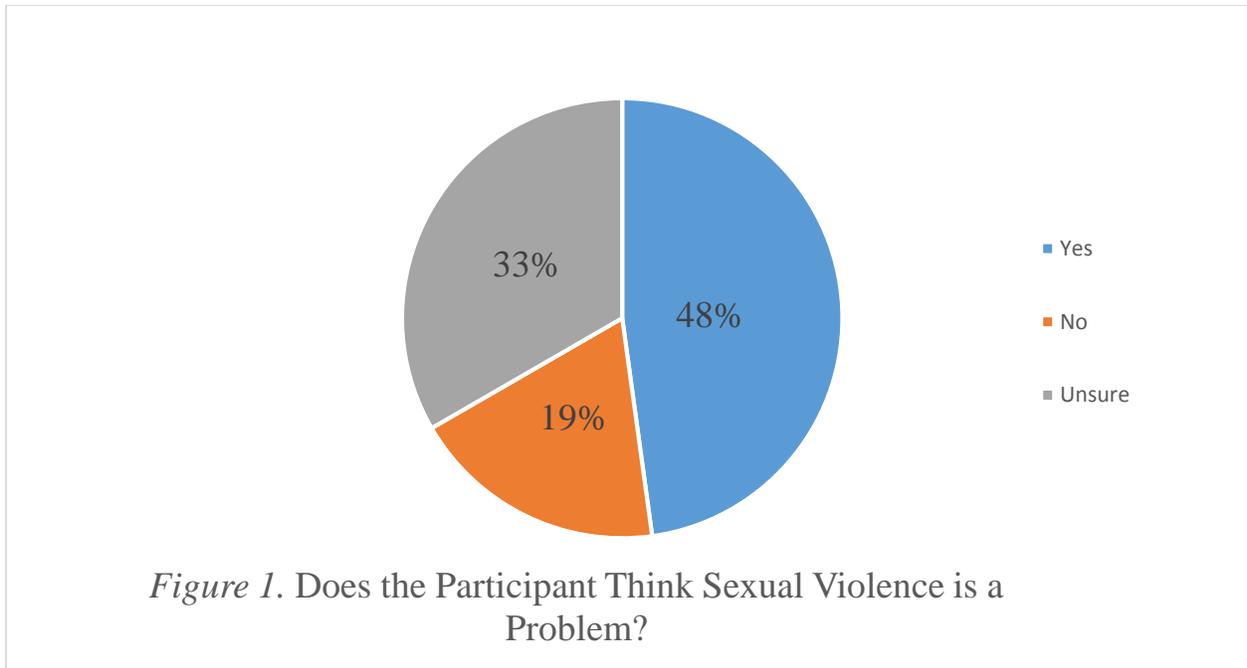
Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	29	42.0	42.0
No	31	44.9	87.0
Unsure	9	13.0	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

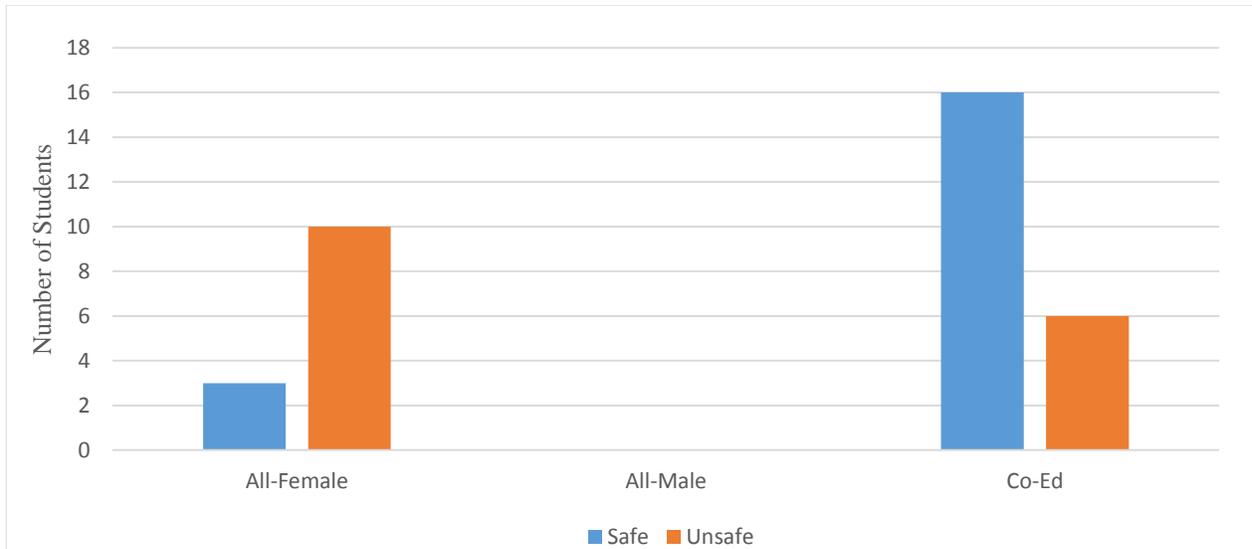
*Table 3.3. Does the Participant Know the Difference Between Consensual and Nonconsensual Behavior?*

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Completely	52	75.4	75.4
Mostly	13	18.8	94.2
Somewhat	2	2.9	97.1
Does Not	1	1.4	98.6
Unaware	1	1.4	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

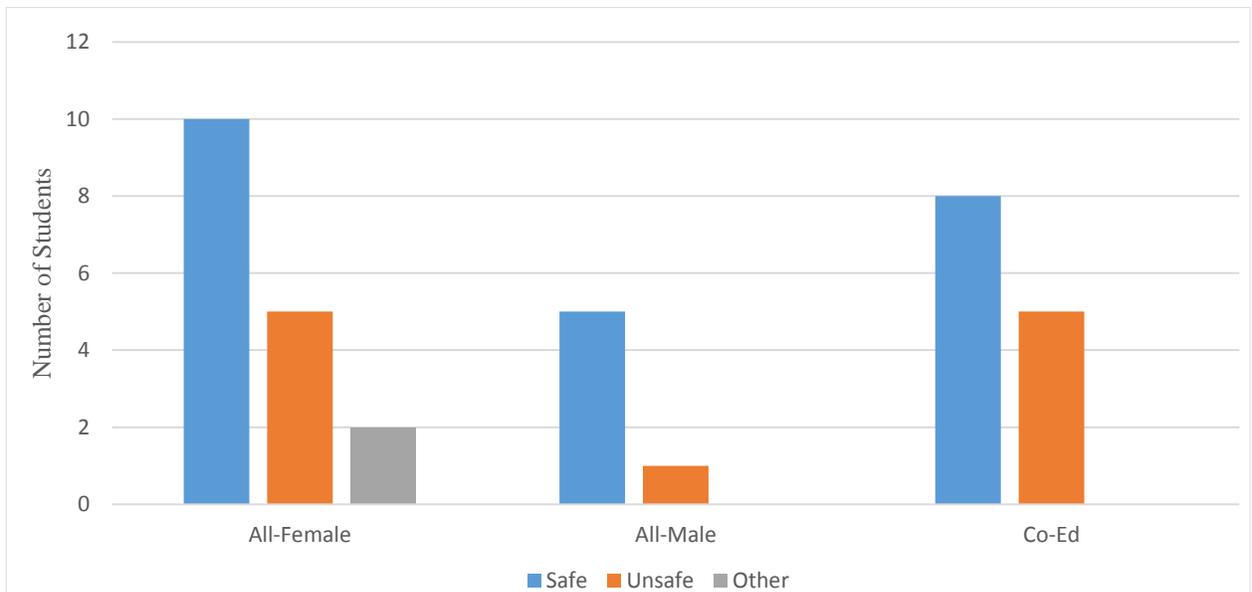
Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	65	94.2	94.2
No	3	4.3	98.6
Unsure	1	1.4	100.0
Total	69	100.0	100.0

Code	Component	Number of Survey Answers	Percentage of Total Surveys
1	Agreement	54	78.3
2	Verbal	39	56.5
	Non-Verbal	7	10.1
3	Repeated Behavior	29	42.0
4	Coercion	28	40.6
5	Affirmative	47	68.1
	Negative	2	2.9
6	Violence	12	17.4
7	Inhibition	6	8.7
0	No Answer	7	10.0





*Figure 2. Feelings of Safety From Students Who Currently Live on Campus*



*Figure 3. Feelings of Safety From Students Who Previously Lived on campus*

**Appendix B: Qualitative Coding**

Open Code	Properties	Example of Participant's Words	Participants Using this Code
Agreement	Mentioning permission, an agreement, or consensus between partners.	"Consent means giving permission/agreeing for something to happen."	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 53, 56, 57, 59, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71.
Verbal Consent	Stating that consent is verbally given or received.	"Telling someone that they're allowed to do something to you."	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 51, 52, 56, 61, 64, 68, 71.
Non-Verbal Consent	Stating that consent can be given verbally or non-verbally.	"Consent is physical or verbal agreement to participate."	5, 53, 55, 57, 58, 65, 70.
Repeated Behavior	Mentioning that consent is a repeated procedure and not a one-time agreement.	"Consent can be given during an act and must be sustained throughout the sexual act."	5, 7, 8, 11, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 35, 40, 42, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 53, 56, 59, 60, 62, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71.
Coercion	Stating that consent has to be willfully given and is not given under pressure.	"A complete, confident, unforced, enthusiastic yes."	7, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 53, 55, 59, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68.
Affirmative Consent	A definition that includes emphasis on "yes."	"Consent means that you have to have said yes to what you are doing."	7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 55, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 64, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71.
Negative Consent	A definition that addresses "no."	"No means no, and the person should stop."	18, 52.
Violence	Definitions that address not gaining consent.	"Knowing the consequences of not getting consent."	13, 18, 19, 27, 29, 31, 36, 39, 55, 58, 59, 62.
Inhibition	Mentioning the instances in which consent cannot be given due to alcohol, drugs, or other vulnerability.	"The person says yes and they are 100% in their right mind. (No drugs/alcohol)"	16, 32, 41, 53, 60, 64.

