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Introduction

- Sexual assault is notably prevalent across college campuses in the U.S. (Department of Justice, 2020).
- "Among undergraduate students, 26.4% of females and 6.8% of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force and/or violence" (Sinozich & Langton, 2014).
- Despite the perverseness of sexual assault on college campuses, research indicates that there might be a discrepancy when it comes to undergraduates' knowledge of what constitutes sexual assault.
- Men are more likely to have a higher Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) than women (Aronowitz, Lambert, & Davidoff, 2012).
 - Higher RMA = more inclined to believe the victim is to blame for the sexual assault that they have experienced.
- Sexual assault is being defined as, any "unwanted behaviors—up to but not including penetration—that are attempted or completed against a victim's will or when a victim cannot consent because of age, disability, or the influence of alcohol or drugs" (Overview of rape and sexual violence, n.d.).

Methods

Design: Cross-sectional survey

- Online survey distributed across social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and LinkedIn
 - The aim of utilizing social media platforms to **distribute** the survey is to target a specific demographic and allow for a better understanding of the specific strata (Devlin, 2017).
 - Questions answered using a 5-point Likert Scale

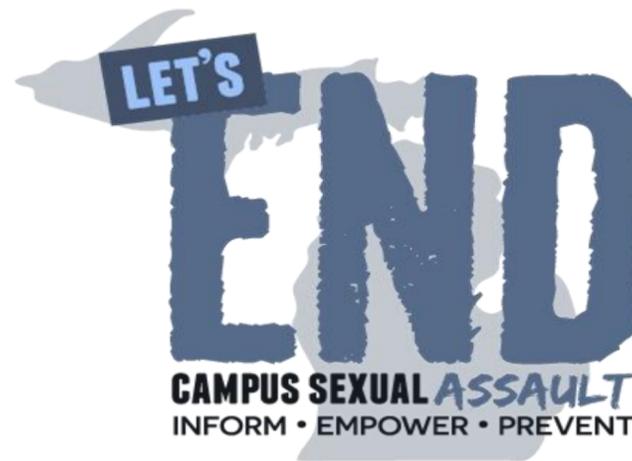
Participants:

- N = 215 undergraduate students
 - 76 males and 139 females
- Completed demographic survey questions and questions specific to understandings of sexual assault.

Example Survey Question

A person is able to consent to sexual intercourse if they are intoxicated.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree



Independent Samples t-test Results

Table 2. Independent Samples T-test Comparing Legal Sexual Definitions Across Gender

| Legal Sexual Definitions | Gender | | | | t-test |
|--|--------|------|--------|------|----------------|
| | Male | | Female | | |
| | M | SD | M | SD | |
| Consent if intoxicated | 3.05 | 1.51 | 2.27 | 1.29 | 3.81*** |
| Not sexually assaulted by partner/significant other | 1.82 | 1.43 | 1.42 | 1.14 | 2.09* |
| Sexually assaulted if coerced into non-consensual oral sex | 4.53 | 0.90 | 4.76 | 0.64 | -2.02* |
| Rape if non-consensual penetration with objects | 4.63 | 0.81 | 4.88 | 0.43 | -2.46* |
| Sexually assaulted if person initially says yes to intercourse but changes mind and the other person continues | 4.49 | 0.95 | 4.85 | 0.54 | -3.08* |
| Sexually assaulted if in a committed relationship but one partner does not consent verbally and other continues intercourse. | 3.99 | 1.11 | 4.46 | 0.87 | -3.45 |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Results

- Ran an independent samples *t*-test
- Five out of six survey questions yielded statistically significant results when performing an independent samples *t*-test, with five of the questions reporting a *p*-value of less than 0.05.
- Five out of the six questions rejected the null hypothesis.
- Overall, the results of the test demonstrate that males had higher levels of RMA in comparison to females.

Discussion

- The results of the survey established that women are better able to and more accurately define sexual assault than men.
- Limitations include the sampling method. Convenience sampling was the method that was used, and it cannot be generalized.
- Future research on this subject would be beneficial toward expanding the scope of this research and can add a wider range of participants.
- Future research could include broadening and diversifying the participants in order to gain a more accurate to the population being studied. In order to do this a different sampling method should be used, such as stratified sampling.
- Additionally, since sexual assault is extremely prevalent today, future research will educate more people on how to be aware of RMA and further their knowledge on rape myths.

References

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