

CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT 1

Campus Sexual Assault: Analyzing its Racial Implications

8-Week Summer Research Project

Ariana Gambrell '23

Psychology and Critical Black Studies

Faculty mentor: Dr. Bill Flack

Psychology Department

wflack@bucknell.edu

Signatures: _____

Ariana Gambrell

Student

W. Flack

Faculty Mentor

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A: The research question, problem, or creative undertaking.

Interpersonal violence is a prominent issue on university and college campuses within the United States. Interpersonal violence is defined across four measures: sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and stalking (Klein et al., 2021). Historically, minoritized students who are most affected by campus sexual assault (CSA) are not prioritized within this area of research. Historically, there has been prevalence on researching CSA against heterosexual white women at predominately white institutions (Klein et al., 2021). "Members of minoritized groups (racial/ethnic minority women, people with disabilities, and transgender individuals) are at a higher risk of experiencing campus interpersonal violence than are white women, people without disabilities, and cisgender individuals (Klein et al., 2021)." In addition, being apart of a minority social group, such as being non-white, is associated with a lower likelihood of reporting (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011).

A large contributor to the issue of minority students' relationship to CSA victimization is the existence of well-known stereotypes. The Jezebel stereotype characterizes black women as promiscuous, seductive, sexually insatiable which has caused detrimental consequences on black women's sexual health and relationships (Jerald, 2019). The hypersexualization of Black women may cause campus staff to be less likely to believe their stories of victimization or blame them for it (Klein et al., 2021). This is a result of the historical impact of institutional racism, which causes black women to be more reluctant to report physical abuse to police or social service agencies than their White counterparts (Hampton, Oliver, Magarian, 2003).

Historically, colleges and universities underreporting crime has been a focus of social movements during the 1980's-1990's, which resulted in the passing of the Jeanne Clery Act (Kiss, Feeney White, 2016). Although this act has changed the prevalence of reporting crimes at colleges and universities, CSA is still underreported. Previous research has been conducted to find that individuals report their victimization the least to campus authorities (Fisher et al., 2003). Characteristics of the victim, characteristics of the incident, and the victim's psychological response to the incident are the most cited factors that affect the decision to report (Moore, Baker, 2018). These characteristics include, but are not limited to, the victims age, income level, education, race, and the victim's characterization and memory of the incident (Moore, Baker, 2018). Understanding why CSA is underreported in minority groups is of utmost importance to changing campus climate statistics and reporting rates. Within my research, I intend to utilize measures that will explore the intersectionality of four demographics (race, gender, social class, and sexual orientation) in relation to the risk of sexual assault victimization.

The first stage of research will be analyzing and interpreting the two data sets from the Campus Climate surveys conducted during the spring 2022 semester by the Bucknell student-faculty research team. Separate surveys were distributed to randomly selected halves of the on-campus undergraduate population. In both surveys, the research team has asked for participants to volunteer to take part in an interview project on campus sexual assault. Between both data sets, there will be plenty of data to work on over the course of this research project. With the specific focus on the four demographic variables the two surveys will be interpreted to discover the intersectionality of these variables as data was collected on race, gender, social

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class, and sexual orientation within these surveys. Both of the surveys data will be measured across the four categories of sexual violence (contact, attempted rape, rape, and attempted rape or rape)(Flack et al., 2016). Within my research I will be specifically looking at the combination of different demographics leading to different risks across these categories. Specifically, I anticipate finding members of minority groups to have a higher risk of sexual violence victimization.

I also anticipate finding black women reporting their victimization to authorities less likely to their white counterparts. This finding stems from stereotype threats including the perception of African American women as strong, domineering and matriarchal being contrary to disclosure of victimization as it may be seen as weakness, which is derived from images of lower and working class black women (McNair, Neville, 1996). This stereotype also relates to another stereotype of black women, typically those of poor and working class backgrounds, as promiscuous (McNair, Neville, 1996). Lastly, when the perpetrator is an African American male, black women may feel conflicted to disclose to others their assault based on the feeling of "allegiance" to protect black men against the stereotype of the black male rapist (McNair, Neville, 1996).

B: Research Value.

Campus sexual assault is a prominent issue for universities and colleges within the United States. Research on campus interpersonal violence usually prioritizes certain types of well-known establishments; violence; victims, perpetrators and bystanders; and intervention goals (Klein et al., 2021). By prioritizing these institutions, failure to challenge underlying systems of oppression occurs, which creates invisible minoritized students who are most affected by campus interpersonal violence (Klein et al., 2021). Conducting research on this topic will add to a growing body of work on campus sexual assault in a too often neglected area of research on minority populations. Investigating the intersectional factors in the occurrence of CSA against minority populations is essential for universities and colleges, such as Bucknell University to create inclusive, welcoming, safe and supportive environments for all students.

Undertaking research on the intersectionality of minority groups and CSA is of utmost importance to creating inclusive communities by understanding what may be the underlying causation. This research will be paving the way for others within the field to start researching CSA in relation to these factors. For example, to study the desired factor of race in relation to campus sexual assault, I will have to add a measure of racism to the survey. Historically, the research team has used the Administrator Researchers Campus Climate Collaborative (ARC3) Survey. To study the variable of race I have to find a measure of experiences of racism and add it to the ARC3 survey, which will be paving new territory within this field of research.

For me personally, this research will allow me to explore my intellectual interests in critical black studies and clinical psychology. I will be acquiring research skills critical to my success in graduate school. I am particularly interested in continuing research within this field of intersectionality of race in relation to several different facets within psychology. Additionally, this research will also be utilized in preparation for an honors thesis during my senior year, at

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Bucknell University, looking at the intersectionality of minority based violence in CSA victimization experience.

C: Project description, including methods and anticipated outcomes.

The primary goal of the study is to measure the prevalence of sexual assault within minority based populations on campus. The independent research group, of which I am a member of, has designed two surveys that are being conducted during the Spring 2022 semester. These survey intentions are to obtain information on students' social behaviors, norms, and culture. The surveys are based on the Administrator Researchers Campus Climate Collaborative Survey (ARC3; Swartout et al., 2019). The survey's focus on the campus climate regarding sexual assault. Email addresses for the undergraduate population of Bucknell University were obtained through the Office of Institutional Research. The surveys were distributed via email on January 30th, 2022 to undergraduate students.

The surveys are intended to be available for 3 weeks for undergraduate students to complete. Throughout the eight-week research period, I will conduct intersectional analyses of the survey data during the first four weeks. Then I will transition to reviewing the literature in preparation for starting on my honors thesis proposal during the last four weeks. The equipment and materials utilized will be located in the O'Leary building, within the psychology department. Additionally, I will utilize data from previous surveys measuring CSA at Bucknell University, conducted by Dr. Flack and his research teams from 2002-2021. I will also conduct literature review on the prominent issue of minority populations and CSA. I intend to analyze the rate at which CSA is reported within minority populations on campus as well as which conditions create the highest risk of victimization. Overall, I predict that I will find members of minority groups to have a higher risk of sexual violence victimization, as well as, finding less reporting of victimization of black women to authorities than their white counterparts.

D: Sharing the Results.

The findings of our research will be presented at the Kalman Research Symposium. Additionally, the results will also be presented at Bucknell University's psychology poster session in fall 2022. Furthermore, Dr. Flack and I plan to submit the findings from this project to a peer-reviewed psychology journal. Also, I intend to submit a research poster of my findings over the summer to the 2023 Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) Conference. Lastly, I intend to incorporate the results of the study in my honors thesis during my senior year.

E: The Mentoring Relationship.

As a member of Dr. Flack's independent research team, he and I will work closely as I analyze the data collected from the Spring 2022 campus climate survey we recently launched. Dr. Flack will assist me in obtaining a deeper understanding of the issue of campus sexual assault and related problems. Dr. Flack will assist me in obtaining analytical skills critical to conducting ethical research. I will meet with Dr. Flack on a daily basis on campus during the eight-week summer study. Daily meetings will occur to make certain that accurate statistical analyses and interpretations are conducted. Dr. Flack will also advise me on how to submit the study's findings in a peer-reviewed journal of psychology and other avenues of publication.

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