Student Understanding and Navigation Patterns of

Miami University Sexual Violence Webpages

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to gain further insights into student understanding and navigation patterns of Miami University's sexual assault policies, procedures, and resources by examining how students navigate Miami's sexual assault webpages. The study can also provide insights into best practices for website structure based on templates made by researchers that focus on Title IX, the Clery Act, and other laws and/or regulations. The findings can then be shared with Miami's Title IX office to make suggestions, inform them of student understandings and perceptions, and inform them on what is working well. The methods for the study consist of a click experiment to understand user navigation and ease of finding, and focus groups afterwards to understand experiences of navigation (i.e. ease or lack there of and suggestions). By assessing internet navigation, I can gather quantitative data on how people navigate through the webpages and how long it takes them to find information. The addition of the focus groups is significant because that allows me to gather qualitative data to understand people's experiences with the webpages and navigation. This adds another step to the user navigation and gives an all-around better understanding and more holistic picture. The hypothesis is that users may be able to find things in the appropriate number of clicks, three or four, but will not understand the information or can find the exact information they were looking for. As of current, all the materials necessary for completing the study (i.e. response sheet, consent form, etc.) and can all be found in the Appendix. Also, all literature found to be related to study has been read and utilized. The IRB has been submitted and now waiting for approval. The next step will to be begin recruitment of participants through professor and/or classes, student organizations, and social media.

Introduction

Sexual assault response began in the 1970s and there has been little evidence of rates decreasing even with the plethora of laws and regulations like Title IX, the Clery Act, SaVe Act, and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act holding universities specifically accountable (Senn, 2011; Griffin et al, 2017; Richards & Kafonek, 2016; Spencer et al., 2017). Despite this, universities are still not compliant with these laws and regulations online nor is the sexual assault reporting rate high at only 19% (Yung, 2015; Marchetti, 2015). Lund & Thomas (2015) found that campus sexual assault resources are inconsistent with content and availability. By increasing awareness and accessibility to services, in addition to policies and procedures, reporting will increase (James & Lee, 2015). Focusing on the noncompliance of university webpages, in regards to Title IX and the SaVe Act which will be referenced later in the paper, is significant because Americans, especially college students, are more likely to use the internet to find health information than any other source, and college-aged women are among the highest age-related risk group for sexual assault (James & Lee, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2015; Zinzow & Thompson, 2011).

Common themes found during previous research on student understanding of Miami University's sexual violence policies, procedures, and resources were that students were not aware of the different policies, procedures, and resources, nor knew how to access them properly (Daugherty & Mendenhall, 2017). Throughout literature on university website compliance in regards to Title IX, Clery Act, and SaVe, many researchers found that most universities were noncompliant (Lund & Thomas, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2015; Krivoshey et al., 2013; Holland & Cortina, 2017). Those same studies used click experiments or analyzed the university webpages to assess how easily accessible information was and how easy it was to navigate through those

webpages. The difference between those studies and this one is that the researcher will not be participating in the click experiment themselves, but will have other undergraduate students utilize the webpages. Also, this study will be focusing on Miami University to assess how students navigate the webpages, what information they find, and how long it takes them to find the information. This study will be examining how students utilize and understand Miami University's policies, procedures, and resources online through mixed methods. This can be used to assess student ease of navigation of sexual violence webpages, make suggestions to the university through the Title IX office, and further assess and improve student understanding of policies, procedures, and resources. The hope for this study is to bring the issue of sexual violence on college campuses even more visibility through student knowledge of policies, procedures, and resources at Miami University.

Background Synthesis

Reporting and Victimization

College aged women are among the highest age related risk group when it comes to sexual victimization, but they are also among the least likely to report sexual victimization (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). Zinzow and Thompson (2011) examined the frequency of sexual victimization and correlate the barriers to reporting to law enforcement, which could translate to university officials. They based their hypothesis on rape script theory and attribution and schema theories (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). Rape script theory is the idea that lower assault severity, victim substance use, lack of physical injury, minority race, and intimate relationship with perpetrator would be associated with not identifying sexual violence as a crime (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). This defines the expectations for roles, rules, and events in regards to sexual

violence and influences how victims interpret and respond to sexual violence (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). For example, the most frequently observed stereotype of assault is a white woman as a victim being assaulted by force with a weapon by a stranger (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). So, when that does not occur, since most assaults are committed by an acquaintance, victims are less likely to acknowledge is as a crime (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). Attribution and schema theories are the idea that self-blame and negative cognitions about the self and world would be related to barriers like thinking the assault was the victim's fault, shame, and not wanting others to know or get involved (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). After analyzing self-report surveys, Zinzow and Thompson (2011) found that "I handled it myself" and "I didn't think it was serious enough" were the most common reasons for not reporting to law enforcement (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). Other barriers to reporting include: shame, guilt, fear of not being believed, concerns about confidentiality, and not wanting police involvement (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011).

Barriers to reporting such as shame and guilt resulted in Marchetti (2012) studying how regret is linked to decision making during reporting sexual assault to the police. This can also be related to reporting to universities. He sent an online questionnaire to people 18 to 25 years old who had experience sexual assault in the past 5 years (Marchetti, 2012). Regret is defined as a negative emotion that is the result of when one realized that an experience or situation would have been better if another choice was made (Marchetti, 2012). He found that reporting resulted in less regret, which is important to note because by enhancing the user navigation and information on Miami's websites then reporting could be increased which would help both universities and survivors (Marchetti, 2012).

These barriers and the study of regret resulted in Muldoon et al. (2016) finding the master narrative in sexual assault which offers insights into how and why survivors react. Reactions to trauma are different for each person, and some make survivors seem disorganized when reporting, which to those untrained makes it seem like the survivor is lying (Muldoon et al., 2016; Gleckman-Krut & Bedera, 2017). They also found that many survivors are initially stunned with an inability to believe what happened, which then results in them possibly convincing themselves it did not happen (Muldoon et al., 2016). There is also the possibility of fear, anxiety, embarrassment, disgust, hate, depression, and mental illness (Muldoon et al., 2016). These differences in reactions could be the result of the actual behavior in the assault, personality, personal resources, responses of police or university (Muldoon et al., 2016). There is also a unique loss of trust when it comes to survivors because sexual assault is seen as a private trouble, not a public issue in many cases (Muldoon et al., 2016). This can change through the language online, structured and enforced requirements for websites, and the campus culture.

Like Zinzow & Thompson, Spencer et al. (2017) looked at barriers to reporting, but spoke to survivors of sexual assault to analyze the reasons for not reporting to university officials. They use feminist standpoint theory to help their analysis, which is the idea that disempowered individuals have a double consciousness where they see the world from their own perspective along with their oppressor's (Spencer et al., 2017). They apply this specifically to a university campus context because the power is male-identified, male-centered, and male-dominated, so survivors may not report because speaking out against a male means risking blame, scrutiny, and disbelief (Spencer et al., 2017). Spencer et al. (2017) found that 95% of the survivors in the sample did not report because they did not see it as a big deal, didn't know who to report to or how to report, they were afraid, too ashamed, did not want to get him in trouble,

and there was a normalization of sexual violence. The rape culture at universities lead to a tolerance and normalization of sexual violence through shifting the blame from the perpetrator to the victim (Spencer et al., 2017).

There is an idea in society, specifically rape culture, that women lie about sexual assault and target innocent men, so Weiser (2017) sought to rid society of these myths to allow for more and better dialogue about how to address assaults. False reports account for less than 10% of reports, yet when interviewing police officers, they placed the false reporting at 30% or more than 50% (Weiser, 2017). This disbelief of women is deeply rooted in patriarchal social norms because in American culture women are expected to decline a man's advances to conform to sexual mores even if she wanted to participate in the advances (Weiser, 2017). This is clearly not the case when it comes to studying false reports. False reports are considered untrue if the reported incident does not meet the legal definition of sexual assault or in the individual reporting decides to report the incident to the best of his/her knowledge, but then confirms later that the assault did not happen (Weiser, 2017). They are grouped under 'unfounded' in the justice system, meaning 'false' or 'baseless' (Weiser, 2017). Typically, people suspect a false report if a victim does not cooperate with the police, alcohol was involved, the victim and accused are known to each other and have had a previous relationship, the victim does not seem emotional enough, there are no signs of physical injury, or the victim did not report right away (Weiser, 2017). Sometimes victims lie about the circumstances of an assault because it doesn't fit the stereotypical assault, which is why it is important to emphasize what is considered an assault on university webpages (Weiser, 2017). President Obama enacted that universities only need a preponderance of evidence, 51%, to be sure that an assault occurred (Weiser, 2017).

In reference to false reporting, Betsy DeVos, who is the head of the Department of Education under President Trump, decided to replace President Obama's guidelines from the Dear Colleague Letter on how universities handle sexual violence and misconduct reports (Gleckman-Krut & Bedera, 2017). The Dear Colleague Letter was released by President Obama in 2011 stating that all universities that receive federal money were to use a preponderance of evidence, accelerate their adjudications, and discouraged cross-examination of accusers (Johnson & Taylor, 2017). Gleckman-Krut and Bedera (2017) ask the important question of: "Do survivors of rape or those accused of rape get to define campus assault?" DeVos believed that the Obama administration was using "intimidation and coercion" to force universities to take up disciplinary procedures that strip the accused of their rights (Gleckman-Krut & Bedera, 2017). While, in reality, President Obama's suggestions created a better environment for victims to come forward because all that was needed was a preponderance of evidence, which is survivor-centered (Gleckman-Krut & Bedera, 2017). Her beliefs of this came from Candice Jackson, who after one hearing of campus sexual assault said that 90% of accusations are because both people were drunk or had just broken up, and the girl decided that their last sleeping together was not okay (Gleckman-Krut & Bedera, 2017). So, the implication is that alcohol-facilitated sexual violence is not real or harmful enough to require disciplinary action even though research has shown that false reports are very rare (Gleckman-Krut & Bedera, 2017).

Federal and University Policies

Because of the victimization felt by college-aged women and the rates of reporting, the federal government implemented laws and acts to help universities keep their students safe and informed. Title IX was introduced in 1972 at universities and prohibits sexual harassment (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). Specifically, colleges and universities that receive federal funding

have a duty to investigate and properly address any allegation of student sexual violence

(Richards & Kafonek, 2016). This is to ensure equal educational opportunities between males

and females at universities (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). The federal government does not have

required practices, but a list of minimum standards that universities must maintain (Richards &

Kafonek, 2016). These minimum standards include: definitions of various forms of sexual

misconduct, role of Title IX coordinator, and proper immediate, interim, and long-term measures

the university should take for survivors whether or not a full investigation takes place (Richards

& Kafonek, 2016). There is also a recommendation of campus climate surveys, which are sent

out to students and faculty to assess the safety and diversity of campus (Richards & Kafonek,

2016).

Richards and Kafonek (2016) conducted a content analysis identifying themes regarding

legislative aims from the proposed sexual assault legislation in the 2014-2015 legislative cycle.

They were identifying the best practices for universities and the points of caution at seventy

universities in the United States (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). At those universities, 86% had

agreement with federal minimum standards (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). The Clery Act was

named after Jeanne Clery who was raped and murdered in her dorm room in 1986 ("Clery Act").

It requires universities to report crimes that occur on campus and the safety policies at the

university ("Clery Act"). This information can be found within a university's Annual Security

Report and Daily Crime Log, both of which can be found on a university's website ("Clery

Act"). It also requires universities to notify students of public safety warnings, disclose

educational programming, campus disciplinary processes, and victim rights ("Clery Act"). As an

amendment to the Clery Act, the Sexual Assault and Violence Education Act (SaVe) was signed

into law by President Obama in March 2013 (Griffin et al., 2017). It [SaVe] enhances the

existing aspects to the Clery Act by increasing the transparency in reporting, guaranteeing rights for survivors who report, setting the standards for disciplinary proceedings, and requiring universities to provide campus-wide prevention and educational programs (Griffin et al., 2017).

By looking at the strengths and weaknesses of other university policies across the nation, we can see how Miami could better their own policy. Universities, like Miami, should always reevaluate policy to be sure they are looking at for the safety and health of their female students the best they can. There is evidence to increasing the awareness of school policies and reporting regulations has in turn increased reporting rates (Streng & Kamimura, 2015). The federal government has minimum standards that universities are supposed to follow (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). These standards include: definitions of various forms of sexual misconduct, the role of the Title IX coordinator, and proper short-/long-term measures (Richards & Kafonek, 2016).

A popular policy universities are implementing is mandatory reporting regarding sexual violence. Mancini et al. (2016) conducted the first study on mandatory reporting student perceptions because these laws are new and controversial (Mancini et al., 2016). A major problem on university campuses is underreporting of sexual assaults (Spencer et al., 2017; Mancini et al., 2016). The belief is that mandatory reporting would increase reporting among campuses, which would increase universities accountability (Mancini et al., 2016). Federal statistics show that reporting among college students is even lower than the general population (Mancini et al., 2016). California was the first state to introduce mandatory reporting into law and it has measures to protect the identity of the victim (Mancini et al., 2016). Virginia has a law that requires all "responsible employees" to disclose reports to a university official like a Title IX coordinator (Mancini et al., 2016). Reporting would be required even if it is against the wishes of

the victim, which is where criticisms of mandatory reporting come in (Mancini et al., 2016).

Mandatory reporting has the possibility of decreasing victim autonomy, but one of the most

popular reasons for declining to report is fear of retaliation from the perpetrator because 80% of

victims know their attacker (Mancini et al., 2016). This study attempts to look at an oversight

which is understanding student perceptions of the policies, mandatory reporting specifically, that

affect them (Mancini et al., 2016). Mancini et al. (2016) found that most students believed

mandatory reporting would increase university accountability and reporting, yet they were not

sure if they would be comfortable reporting under the new laws (Mancini et al., 2016).

Best Practices

Throughout the literature, many researchers provided their insight on suggestions and/or

best practices for universities to follow. Many of the suggestions and/or best practices revolved

around policy changes and how to increase reporting. This is because approximately 25% or one-

in-four women will experience an attempted or completed rape during their college careers

(Ashworth et al., 2015). Amar et al. (2014) examine the barriers to reporting and the policies and

procedures put in place at universities across the country. To adequately fix the problem, we

must also look at the perspective of the administrator. The low reporting rate affects survivors

and administrators, just in different ways (Amar et al., 2014). In regards to administrators,

reporting rates help to identify and sanction the perpetrator which then ensures campus safety,

but when the assault isn't reported, the administration cannot do that (Amar et al., 2014). There

has been much research done on the individual factors that hinder reporting, but not on the

institutional factors. A suggestion made is that students should receive more education about

sexual violence and campus resources, which can be done via the website, because survivors

frequently disclose to friends (Amar et al., 2014). This is proven by Sabina and Ho (2014) who

examined how victims seek assistance through formal and informal disclosures. They found that informal disclosures are higher than rates of formal disclosures (Sabina & Ho, 2014). Informal disclosures meaning that a victim is telling friends or family instead of a formal disclosure which is a victim telling a university official or law enforcement (Sabina & Ho, 2014). Disclosing to female friends is the most common type of informal disclosure, and some victims will report to a formal entity, but it may be up to 2 years later (Sabina & Ho, 2014). So, it's important to make sure everyone is on the same page and knowledgeable. Also, websites should provide faculty or staff step-by-step guide if someone discloses to them since they are most likely mandatory reporters (Amar et al., 2014). A major way to educate students is freshman orientation since they are all in one place (Amar et al., 2014). But, there is a downside to this because they are bombarded with so much information that the information they receive about sexual assault may be lost amongst them (Amar et al., 2014). So, the recommendation is that education should be constant and on-going whether that be through the website, classes, or online education (Amar et al., 2014).

Worthen and Wallace (2017) also examined student perceptions of policies, procedures, and resources by analyzing responses of different people from diverse backgrounds. They found that privileged groups, like heterosexual white men, are less informed and less supportive than others (Worthen & Wallace, 2017). So, they found that perceptions surrounding sexual assault on campus are often associated with lived experiences, like their gender identity, sexuality, race, and other structural forms of oppression and privilege (Worthen & Wallace, 2017). A main suggestion that Worthen and Wallace (2017) gave was that programs should use gender-neutral language and scenarios to get privileged groups to listen more closely along with incorporating

student voices in formulating and evaluating things like programs and even the websites (Worthen & Wallace, 2017).

Streng and Kamimura (2017) examined the correlation between attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of sexual assault on campus and the perceptions of the policies among college students. They used the Not Alone guidelines introduced by President Obama's White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault ("Fact Sheet"). The guidelines suggested broad topics such as a climate survey, bystander intervention, how to respond effectively to assaults, and improving transparent federal enforcement efforts ("Fact Sheet"). Streng & Kamimura (2017) narrowed in on the broad topics and made a template of five specific aspects that universities should adhere to. They include, outlining the procedure for reporting and the investigation afterwards, grievance and adjudication, prevention and education efforts, and student assistance (Streng & Kamimura, 2015). This provides clarity for students who are reporting without adding emotional distress (Streng & Kamimura, 2015).

Another way for universities to assess their compliance through a template is to use the template created by McMahon (2008), the Model Policy for Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault, which helps universities be in policy compliance with federal laws and regulations. Conforming to this template not only provides and ensures compliance with federal law, but shows that the university is actively working towards a campus climate that does not tolerate sexual violence (McMahon, 2008). The parameters of the template include: definition of sexual assault with verbal and behavioral definitions of consent included, specifies a sexual assault policy, who is to be trained to respond, methods for students to report, prevention efforts and resources, review for methods or policies that prevent reporting, implementing methods or policies that encourage reporting and investigating and punishing perpetrators, and an area that

contains the methods to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies (McMahon, 2008). With regards to definitions, there should be descriptive scenarios involving sexual assault with non-strangers (McMahon, 2008). Also, a lack of reporting is shown to be correlated with victims not having clear definitions (McMahon, 2008). A lack of reporting is also correlated with not knowing how to report or the process after reporting (McMahon, 2008).

Some researchers have done case studies of universities to test compliance. The Richards & Kafonek's (2016) study mentioned earlier did this and at the universities studied, 86% had agreement with federal minimum standards. One suggestion Richards and Kafonek (2016) had was that universities should implement a comprehensive and sustained sexual assault education program. This means they should disseminate information regarding the prevalence and context of sexual violence among students both generally and at the individual campuses, if there are regional campuses (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). This information should include: reporting process, investigation process, and disciplinary process, along with on- and off-campus resources (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). This can be done through a university website. Also, universities should provide trauma-informed training for campus faculty and staff regarding their reporting responsibilities under Title IX along with sensitive response strategies for student disclosures (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). Richards and Kafonek (2016) found that many universities sampled in previous research lacked student and employee training in regards to sexual assault response. Along with mandatory reporting options, universities should provide confidential and anonymous reporting options to increase reporting (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). This is so survivors can still have access to services and support without having to report a formal complaint to the university before they are ready (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). Richards and Kafonek (2016) state that after survivors receive that initial, confidential support, they typically

decide to continue with a formal report or cooperate in a university investigation. Those services should include, crisis counseling, victim advocates, and SANE nurses, all of which should be available 24/7 (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). Another best practice for universities would be to introduce amnesty policies with regards to the use of drugs and/or alcohol during an assault or witnessing an assault to protect survivors and bystanders (Richards & Kafonek, 2016).

A specific case study focused on Yale University and how they used a bottom-up effort to create their new sexual violence webpage (Bagley et al., 2012). They decided to change their site and policies after there were several serious incidents of misconduct that begun to overshadow what they perceived to be their community values (Bagley et al., 2012). It was spearheaded by the WFF, which is the Women Faculty Forum at Yale and formed in 2001 (Bagley et al., 2012). They, along with the University-Wide Committee on Sexual Misconduct created a website specifically for all the resources, policies, and procedures related to sexual misconduct (Bagley et al., 2012). They implemented the Yale Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Education Center, which allows students to report anonymously and is staffed 24/7 with mental health professionals (Bagley et al., 2012). Before this implementation, Yale did not have a university-wide definition for sexual misconduct, uniform adjudication procedures for handling complaints, difficulty locating policies and procedures, and no agreed-upon procedure for evaluating policies (Bagley et al., 2012). They made a map of the procedures, much like the map made for this study. After this implementation, they had a clear definition of consent, almost all communications with SHARE were confidential, those communications were still told to the Title IX coordinator but without names, the formal process is sixty days, there is outside help to investigate complaints to ensure fairness, both parties are not forced to be at the hearing at the same time, and a two-year statute of limitations (Bagley et al., 2012). Also, every member of

their academic community receives training on policies with refresher courses every year, and these trainings are taught by legal counsel, mental health professionals, and other experts (Bagley et al., 2012). Their recommendations for other schools include: an articulation of policies and procedures, establishing reporting mechanisms, creating fair informal and formal resolutions, widespread communication, adequate training, adoption of institutional crisis-management protocol, and ongoing data collection with assessment of effectiveness (Bagley et al., 2012). They also suggested the addition of anonymous and third-party reporting because individuals are thirteen times more likely to tell a friend than to file a report, so many instances go unreported (Bagley et al., 2012). This case study shows how universities are quickly changing policies. Universities are looking to update and clarify policies to prevent future terminations, lawsuits, and to provide better services to victims (Lang, 2015). Lang (2015) specifically examined why it is crucial to have inclusive language in policies and for officials to incorporate the victim's bill of rights, responsibilities of the university, and confidential resources (Lang, 2015). This can help students understand the policies, procedures, and resources and realize what is available to them (Lang, 2015).

Degue et al. (2012) zooms out to focus on community level strategies. He further points out the need for the social-ecological model when it comes to successfully implementing sexual violence policies and changing campus, and community, culture. The article demonstrates research that shows the lack of community level strategies (Degue et al., 2012). By introducing the social-ecological model, there is a greater potential for reducing prevalence of sexual violence (Degue et al., 2012). It points out specific challenges to implementation such as: limited knowledge of community level and societal level risk factors for sexual violence, a lack of theoretical or empirical guidance in sexual violence literature for identification of promising

community-level approaches, and in evaluating sexual violence outcomes at the community level (Degue et al., 2012). They conclude that the development and evaluation of community-level approaches to sexual assault prevention represent a logical next step toward the implementation of effective and multilevel prevention efforts and population-level reduction in sexual violence prevalence (Degue et al., 2012).

An example of a community level strategy would be the work done by Senn (2011) who focused on a specific theoretical and conceptual base of feminist thought with a combination of social psychological theories. By having a feminist base, it can enhance social change by having policies made by women for women. She found struggles during her journey and speaks about those, which can help policy making since she gives a possible solution. Her struggles were: keeping responsibility on male perpetrators while designing and offering programs for women, making male responsibility and female empowerment palatable to young women, facing limitations of an individual approach to a social problem, and making the research conform to granting agency expectations. She suggested that the universities should teach the three A's, which are: assess, acknowledge, and act (Senn, 2011). Assess meant to assess the risk for sexual violence in different situations and in men's behavior, acknowledge meaning to acknowledge the problem, and act meaning to change the problem (Senn, 2011). Instead of calling a program "risk reduction" it would be "rape resistance", and would successfully decrease rape myths and beliefs (Senn, 2011).

Similar Studies

Ensuring that university sexual violence webpages are easy to navigate and have the appropriate information is vital to student understanding because college students use the internet more than any other source to find information (Griffin et al., 2017). Also, 61% of American

adults find health information the internet (Schwartz et al., 2015). But, sexual violence

information at many universities is difficult to find or lacking in information (Lund & Thomas,

2015). So, many researchers have decided to analyze university webpages to assess compliance

and user navigation. This is important to understand because many will stop looking for

information if they cannot find it (Lund & Thomas, 2015). So, ensuring that a university sexual

violence webpage is accurate, easy to navigate, and up-to-date is vital because of the prevalence

of students using the webpage to find out information. Sexual assault researchers have advocated

providing online resources because single-session psychoeducational programs, like orientation

or HAVEN, may not have a lasting impact on student knowledge (Lund & Thomas, 2015). This

exposure to accurate and accessible information also allows for the decrease in rape myths and

rates of sexual assault which help combat rape culture on university campuses (Lund & Thomas,

2015).

Lund and Thomas (2015) examined 102 US university websites examining the

availability, location, and content of sexual assault information. They looked specifically for

topics such as: date rape, consent, victim blaming, university policy, contact for law

enforcement, and resources (Lund & Thomas, 2015). They found that 88.2% had sexual assault

information, 83.3% had a university policy, 72.2% had contact for law enforcement, 56.7% to

82.2% had other resources (Lund & Thomas, 2015). But, most webpages failed to discourage

victim blaming and encourage affirmative consent (Lund & Thomas, 2015). Only 35.6%

discouraged victim blaming and 30% encouraged affirmative consent (Lund & Thomas, 2015).

Also, two-thirds of the universities had information located in multiple places, which could make

it difficult for students to efficiently locate information because of a lack of centrality (Lund &

Thomas, 2015). Lund and Thomas (2015) found that many universities posted their university

policies, but not much beyond that. With that, the policies were typically located within a policy document, which is unlikely for a student to search through especially if in crisis (Lund & Thomas, 2015). They hypothesized that many universities are doing the bare minimum to be in compliance with Title IX and the Dear Colleague Letter (Lund & Thomas, 2015). Lund & Thomas (2015) suggested that information should be coordinated across departments so that everything can be found in one location, is consistent, and easy to find to increase student accessibility, knowledge, and understanding.

Schwartz et al. (2015) and Krivoshey et al. (2013) analyzed university sexual violence webpages to determine what information is found online and if universities are following federal suggestions. Schwartz et al. (2015) focused on twenty-eight four-year universities in New Jersey and used a checklist to document the presence and extent of information found online. The ease of navigation was measured by the number of clicks it took to find information where they started at the home page and used keywords in the search bar (Schwartz et al., 2015). They found that most of the information was found within two clicks, but not all universities had the same extent of information (Schwartz et al., 2015). Eighty-six percent provided a definition of sexual violence, but only 61% provided a definition of consent and what acts are considered assault, both of which are essential in knowing an assault took place (Schwartz et al., 2015). They also found that only 61% had the prevalence of acquaintance sexual assault, which is more common than stranger sexual assault (Schwartz et al., 2015). This is important knowledge for students to understand because the stereotype of sexual assault is that a stranger attacks them (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). Also, 68% had information about how to help a friend, which is important to include on a sexual assault webpage because survivors are more likely to disclose to a friend before a university official or the police (Schwartz et al., 2015). Eighty-nine percent of

universities analyzed provided some information on reporting and 88% had information on what would happen after the report was made (Schwartz et al., 2015). Regarding the information on reporting, this specifically meant they included information on anonymous reporting, of which 52% had, or confidential reporting, of which 80% had, or how to make a report on campus, of which 96% had (Schwartz et al., 2015). This is important to note because having confidential, anonymous, and mandatory reporting options for students along with a place on campus to make a report allows for survivors to have a choice of how they wish to report, which would increase reporting on campus (Schwartz et al., 2015). Regarding the information on what would happen after a report, 82% included the procedures of a report and the process afterwards (Schwartz et al., 2015). It is vital to include the process of a report, so survivors understand what will happen by reporting officially to the university (Schwartz et al., 2015). Only 21% had a department, office, or center focused on sexual assault and those webpages took three or more clicks to find (Schwartz et al., 2015). If a university is to have such a place, which is recommended for all universities, then it should be easily accessible to survivors online (Schwartz et al., 2015). Schwartz et al. (2015) also found that sexual assault information is found in a variety of places online. Forty-four percent is found within student services, 19% within campus safety, and 7% within the health center (Schwartz et al., 2015). This goes back to Lund and Thomas (2015) concluding that all sexual assault information should be found within one location to ease accessibility and knowledge.

Krivoshey et al. (2013) focused on four-year universities in Ohio to examine the availability of sexual assault policies and if universities are providing enough and the correct information to survivors. They found that 66% of universities had a sexual assault university policy online and of those universities they all included on-campus resources where a survivor

could go to report (Krivoshey et al. 2013). Of the 105 universities in the sample, only .04% had a

reporting procedure found online, which is essential for encouraging sexual assault reporting

(Krivoshey et al. 2013). In regards to specific reporting options, 38% had 24/7 reporting, 20%

had third-party reporting, 48% had confidential reporting, and 13% had anonymous reporting

(Krivoshey et al. 2013). Again, giving survivors different reporting options is vital in increasing

reporting on campus (Krivoshey et al. 2013; Schwartz et al., 2015). Krivoshey et al. (2013)

contributes to existing knowledge on reporting procedures by concluding that policy should

mention all types of sexual assault with exact definitions along with clear outlines of the

university's procedure and protocol for reporting.

Griffin et al. (2017) conducted a combination of a click experiment and university

compliance, specifically with the SaVe Act at 435 universities. They did this by examining the

university websites to look at what type of programs were offered for prevention and the

accessibility of the information (Griffin et al., 2017). The accessibility was determined by the

number of separations, or clicks, from the main webpage (Griffin et al., 2017). They used a

checklist to see in schools were following best practices and suggestions (Griffin et al., 2017). Of

the 435 universities, there were only 11% that were fully compliant with SaVe, 72% had a public

safety website, and 56% made a reference to the Clery Act (Griffin et al., 2017). On average,

each school met ten of the eighteen criteria for compliance (Griffin et al., 2017). Most resources

were found within three to four clicks from the main site, and the public safety webpage was

typically found within two clicks from the main page (Griffin et al., 2017). But, Griffin et al.

(2017) states that this should be easier to navigate (Griffin et al., 2017). They also found that

schools with a women's center were more likely to offer programs on sexual violence (Griffin et

al., 2017). Also, those with ROTC programs and larger student populations were positively

associated with compliance, whereas being in the southern United States was negatively associated with compliance (Griffin et al., 2017).

Web Design

A university website is an important tool for disseminating information to both current and future college students along with being supportive of the universities activities (Han et al., 2015). But, websites are beginning to house more and more information to the point that the design is becoming more complex and making it difficult for users to find information (Han et al., 2015). This can result in low accessibility for students (Han et al., 2015). Han et al. (2015) analyzed the navigation path of university websites to see how usability and comfort level could be increased. They used a mining technique to analyze log data and indicate which page was accessed and how those users navigated through the site (Han et al., 2015). Ease of user navigation is especially important to female users compared to male users (Page et al., 2012; Ramakrishnan et al., 2014). Females are at a higher risk of sexual assault, so this vital to implement to sexual assault webpages at universities.

Organization of information on a university website is crucial for users to accurately and effectively retrieve information (Alkindi & Bouazza, 2010). Specifically, search engines are a fundamental element in effective user navigation because it provides an opportunity for users to dive into the site instead of wasting their time through a hierarchy of menus (Alkindi & Bouazza, 2010). This is because that hierarchy of menus could be difficult to understand because users are not sure where things are located, so a search bar on the webpage is necessary (Alkindi & Bouazza, 2010). This means that university webpages must implement a search bar and make sure it is accurate when gathering data specific to sexual violence (Alkindi & Bouazza, 2010). In reference to site organization, it is important to not have an abundance of links on the page

because that could also disorient users because of an overload of information (Chen & Ryu, 2013). This is especially true for victims of sexual assault because of the trauma they are already experiencing. A fewer number of links is important especially if users are searching from their mobile phones (Garcia-Lopez et al., 2017). Suarez (2015) found that it is important to include colors and graphic to webpages because it evokes positive feelings when browsing. This is crucial for sexual assault webpages because of the trauma users may be experiencing, so calming colors are especially vital.

Methods

Participants

Undergraduate students from different majors and years in school participated in this study at Miami University, a midsize university in the Midwest United States. The participants were diverse in ethnicity gender, and sexual orientation and ranged from the ages of 18 to 22. Some participated for extra credit, while others did not. All responses were confidential.

Materials

Consent forms (see Appendix A) were given to inform participants about the study including the procedure, benefits and risks to participating, voluntary participation, and contact information of the researcher and advisor. All participants received one of three different vignettes detailing an assault or harassment (see Appendix B). The participants thought of this man/woman as a friend of theirs that asked for help finding out information about Miami's sexual assault policies, procedures, and resources.

The click experiment required a response sheet which was given to participants as they began the experiment (see Appendix C). The response sheet allowed for structure to participants' responses and consisted of fill-in the blank options to list the titles of the webpages they find. At

the top of the page, there was a space to write out what the participant searched in the search bar and a space to tally the amount of clicks it took them to find the information they wanted along with which vignette scenario they received. At the end, the participants rated the difficulty of navigation on a 10-point scale and if they found the information they were searching for. The participants followed along with the sheet to list where their searches took them through Miami's webpages.

Participants also responded to a background questionnaire (see Appendix D) in regards to ethnicity and/or race, gender, sexual orientation, major, and year in school. The researcher also asked participants about their experiences while navigating the webpages at the end of the experiment, which was audio recorded (see Appendix E).

Procedure

The experiment occurred in a computer lab in the main library on campus, which was reasonably distraction-free. Upon arrival, participants completed consent forms and were reminded that participation was voluntary and they could stop at any time. All participants were given the same instructions, which were given orally and included on the response sheets provided to them. Response sheets and background questionnaires were given to participants once consent forms were received. Participants were allotted twenty minutes to complete response sheets along with background questionnaire. After submitting all materials to the researcher, the researcher conducted a short interview of no more than 30 minutes. The interview consisted of questions about their experiences with the navigation, their suggestions for improvements, and praise for what was well done. Finally, the participants had the opportunity to ask further questions to the researcher or exit the experiment. If participants felt discomfort or distress, there were resource sheets (see Appendix F) provided.

Design and Analyses

A website map was made to help understand and visualize the navigation patterns. The map consisted of navigation paths of the participants' responses, which showed which paths were the most common to least common. This was shown by line thickness meaning that the most common had the thickest line and continued down until the least common which had the thinnest line. The number of clicks it took to find the information was recorded on the response sheets and then averaged by the researcher. To verify that the participants found the information they were looking for, they were asked on the response sheet if they found the information. They were then asked again during the interview, and if they did not find the information they were to say what information they were looking for and how they think it could be better located. Participants were given different vignettes to examine how language affected the search terms used. The interviews were transcribed and coded to identify themes to present to the Title IX office at Miami University. The background questionnaires were significant for use to potentially find correlations between responses and demographic information and to ensure there was a representative sample.

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Appendices

Appendix A

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

I am conducting a research study to understand student understanding and navigation patterns of Miami University's sexual violence webpages. By understanding student understanding and navigation patterns, we can better understand the way students utilize Miami University's webpages. Participation is voluntary.

All research participants must be 18 years of age or older, and the study will last approximately 1 hour. During the first 30 minutes, will be when instructions are given and participants complete the click experiment and background questionnaire. The second half, 30 minutes, will be when interviews are conducted within focus groups regarding experiences during experiment. The audio will be recorded. Participants will receive a $10 gift card at the end of the study. In order to obtain gift card, participants must participate in both click experiment and focus group interview.

The click experiment will take place on public computers, so IP addresses cannot be traced. Also, no identifying information can be tracked from the computer because all information will be documented on physical response sheets. Names will not be noted in the data nor will their be an option to list the name on response sheets or background questionnaires. All physical papers will be scanned onto an encrypted and password protected computer. All interviews will be audio recorded and all data will be stored on encrypted and password protected computers. The original recordings will be deleted after transcription, and transcripts and other documents with identifying information will be stored on a private Google Drive that only the researcher has access to.

RISKS
- General Confidentiality. Interview data will be referenced as "Focus Group A, B, C…". Participants within those focus groups will have their names and any other identifying information changed to protect confidentiality. Although identifying information will be collected during the study, it will be changed to a fictional or generic version in the interview transcription and all subsequent analysis. The data will NOT be presented in a way that individuals could be identified. Identifying information (e.g., name, organization, university, names of associates, etc.,) will be changed to fictional or generic (e.g., if a participant names a specific organization, this organization will be changed to a generic name like "organization 1" names any quotations sourced from this interview. If obtaining extra credit for participation, the professors have signed a confidentiality agreement that states they will not disclose any names or identifying information with the exception of awarding extra credit.
- Confidentiality on Electronic Platforms.

- All interview audio files, transcriptions, and electronic consent forms will be stored on a secure Google Drive to which only the researcher has access. Once forms and audio files are uploaded, they will be deleted from their respective devices.

- <u>Discomfort or distress due to subject matter.</u> Although participants will not be asked about their own sexual values or behavior, the interview questions about university sexual violence website, and in turn policy, may create discomfort or distress. If this happens, participants can stop the study or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty or explanation. Participants will be searching through Miami's policies, procedures, and resources which could help elevate discomfort. If participants would like to know of resources in the area, the researcher will provide them with a resource sheet. This is to provide helpful information about local and national organizations that provide support for those who are directly or indirectly impacted by sexual violence.

The data collected from this research could be presented at public conferences, published in academic journals, and/or presented in a general summary of findings to Miami's Title IX coordination office to show what is working well about policy implementation and what needs more work. Participation in this research study is completely voluntary.

Participants can withdraw from research at any time without penalty or explanation. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to answer any questions for any reason.

For questions about the research, please contact Emily Mendenhall (mendenem@miamioh.edu or (330) 354-9619) or my faculty advisor Hays Cummins (cumminrh@miamioh.edu). For questions or concerns about the right of research subjects or the voluntariness of this consent procedure, please contact the Research Compliance Office at Miami: (513) 529-3600 or humansubjects@miamioh.edu

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CONSENT SIGNATURE

I have read the above form, understand the information read, and understand that I can ask questions about or withdraw from this research study at any time. By signing below, I certify that I am 18 years of age or older and I consent to participate in today's research study. Please sign below, and give back to researcher. Please keep the information above for future reference.

_____

Participant's Signature   Date

Appendix B

VIGNETTE 1

The scenario below is not based on an actual case, but on research literature.

Instructions:
Please read the following vignette. The vignette is to depict a friend of yours who has disclosed to you and needs assistance.

On a Friday night, your friend goes uptown to go out. After drinking at dancing at New Bar (The Woods), he/she goes to Brick Street. He/she meets someone while in line and they go to the dance floor and start dancing together. The person they met buys them a few drinks. They leave heavily intoxicated and goes back to the other person's apartment uptown. This is where your friend's memory gets fuzzy and he/she cannot remember the exact moments of the time in the apartment. He/she vaguely remembers the person forcing themselves on them. When your friend woke up they felt guilty and ashamed. They come to you for help and tell you about what happened. You want to help your friend understand all of their options, so they can make a decision on how to proceed.

After reading, please go to the "Response Sheet" provided and follow the instructions listed. If you have any questions, please ask the researcher.

VIGNETTE 2

The scenario below is not based on an actual case, but on research literature.

Instructions:
Please read the following vignette. The vignette is to depict a friend of yours who has disclosed to you and needs assistance.

Your friend is in a group project for a class. It was originally them and two other people that they had worked with before in other classes. But one of them dropped the class. So, now it's just your friend and one other person. The group member is always very flirty towards your friend, and at first your friend doesn't see a problem with it. But, then it escalates. The group member starts making inappropriate comments and even touches your friend without he/she wanting them to. It doesn't seem to matter the location of the project meetings; they always make inappropriate comments and touch. Your friend just wants to get through this project, and they come to you

and tell you about what happened. You want to help your friend understand all of their options, so they can make a decision on how to proceed.

After reading, please go to the "Response Sheet" provided and follow the instructions listed. If you have any questions, please at the researcher.

VIGNETTE 3

The scenario below is not based on an actual case, but on research literature.

Instructions:
Please read the following vignette. The vignette is to depict a friend of yours who has disclosed to you and needs assistance.

Your friend and their significant other broke up within the past 3 months. It was not a clean break-up nor was it a mutual agreement. Your friend began going out again and was dancing with other people, until he/she ran into their ex on the dance floor. They were both intoxicated and the ex wanted to dance together. Your friend declines and leaves the bar. On their walk home, they run into their ex again. This time, they are more persistent and get your friend to go home with them. While at the ex's apartment, they try to engage in sexual activity. Your friend is hesitant but, the ex does not give up. Your friend is still hesitant, but this time the ex begins sexual activity without the say of your friend. After a while your friend says it's late and heads home. In the morning, they feel regretful. They go to you for help and tell you what happened. You want to help your friend understand all of their options, so they can make a decision on how to proceed.

After reading, please go to the "Response Sheet" provided and follow the instructions listed. If you have any questions, please at the researcher.

Appendix C

RESPONSE SHEET – CLICK EXPERIMENT

Please list the number located in the top right corner of your vignette on the line provided below.
_____

After reading the vignette, go to http://miamioh.edu and use the search bar in the top right corner of the page. List the search term on the line provided.

_____

Please start tracking each click on the line provided using tally marks. (Your first click should be on a link that is provided after entering in your search term.)

_____

On the lines provided after the numbers listed below, list the title of each webpage you navigate to. If the webpage does not have a title, describe it in a few words.
   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____
   4. _____
   5. _____
   6. _____
   7. _____
   8. _____

If you need more options, please use the back of this sheet.

Were there any other search terms you used? Please list below.

_____

Once complete, please note if you found the information you were looking for below. Circle your response.
Yes   /   No

On a scale from 1 to 10 how would you rate the ease of navigation or how easy it was to find information? 1 being extremely easy and straightforward and 10 being extremely hard and confusing. Circle your response.
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Appendix D

Background Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions by either circling your answer or writing in your answer lines provided.

1. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Non-conforming
   d. Other: _____

2. What is your age?
   a. 18
   b. 19
   c. 20
   d. 21
   e. 22
   f. Other: _____

3. What is your year in school?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Other: _____

4. What is your major(s)?
   a. _____

5. What is your race/ethnicity?
   a. Caucasian
   b. African American
   c. Asian American
   d. Native American
   e. Pacific Islander
   f. Asian
   g. Latino
   h. Hispanic
   i. Other: _____

Appendix E

Interview Questions

Instructions: Please respect the privacy of the other people in this group and do not share information shared beyond this meeting. Also, if you would like to express your experiences beyond this focus group, we could meet one on one after this meeting.

1. If you could use one word to describe your experience navigating the webpages, what would it be? (Examples could include: easy, confusing, long, etc.)

2. Do you know what Title IX is?
   a. Do you know what the Clery Act is?
   b. Do you know what consent is?
   c. Do you know what is considered sexual misconduct?

3. Do you know the difference between mandatory reporting and confidential reporting?
   a. Do you know who is a mandatory reporter and who is a confidential reporter on campus?

4. Do you feel like you found the information you were looking for in an easy and timely manner?
   a. Did you understand the information you were finding?

5. Was there information that you could not find?
   a. What was that information?

6. Do you feel like you could navigate the website easily and properly to find information in the future regarding sexual violence policies, procedures, and resources?

7. Besides the website, where else would you go to report an incident?
   a. Did you know this prior to navigating the website or did you learn this whilst navigation?

8. Do you know of any visual cues that may be helpful in proper navigation? (Examples include: colors, graphics, arrows, drop-down menus, etc.)

9. Do you have any suggestions for how the website could be improved to ease navigation and improve understanding?

10. What did you find that was well-done when it came to easing navigation and understanding?

Appendix F

RESOURCE SHEET

This is a brief list of useful & well-respected resources concerning sexuality.

Sexual Violence/Abuse

LOCAL—Miami University & Oxford, OH

Nora McVey: 513-431-1111
Women Helping Women Sexual and Interpersonal Violence Support Specialist (provides confidential support)

Women Helping Women 24 hour telephone hotline: 513-381-5610
Women Helping Women serves people of all gender identities in Hamilton & Butler County, OH, who need support as survivors of sexual or intimate partner violence or survivors' friends and family. (provides confidential support)

Miami University Campus Safety and Security: https://www.miamioh.edu/campus-safety/sexual-assault/happens-to-you/index.html
Information page on Miami University policy, procedures, and resources concerning sexual violence.

Miami University Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity: 513-529-7157
Miami University student survivors of sexual violence can call this number to report the incident and discuss investigation and remedial actions.

National
RAINN 24 hour online hotline: https://ohl.rainn.org/online/
RAINN 24 hour telephone hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network runs a 24 hour confidential online chat site and telephone hotline to provide support to survivors and their friends/family.

Intimate Partner Violence

LOCAL—Miami University & Oxford, OH
Women Helping Women 24 hour telephone hotline: 513-381-5610
Women Helping Women serves people of all gender identities in Hamilton & Butler County, OH, who need support as survivors of sexual or intimate partner violence or survivors' friends and family.

National
National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

This is a 24 hour, confidential hotline that provides resources to support intimate partner and domestic violence survivors and their family/friends.

Sexual Health

Miami University
Miami University Student Health Services: 513-529-3000
Miami University Student Counseling Services: 513-529-4634

Miami University GLBTQ Services: https://miamioh.edu/student-life/diversity-affairs/glbtq-services/index.html
This office provides a wide range of services to Gay. Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer students, staff, faculty and their allies.

National
US Center for Disease Control Sexual Health Website: http://www.cdc.gov/sexualhealth/
This site provides all sorts of information on sexual health, from pregnancy prevention to health concerns.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays:
http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=194&srcid=-2
The PFLAG website contains many resources for its audience, including those that can help on understand more about sexual orientation and better support their loved ones who identify as GLBTQ. One can also find a local support group, under "Find Local Chapter."