Perceptions of Female Students Safety: The Buddy System
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Abstract

• Research Question: What are the factors that effect the perceptions of safety at night of female undergraduate students who live on-campus?
• Purpose: To investigate the perceptions of safety of female undergraduate students living on campus and their relationship to their going out behaviors.
• 84 respondents of the survey → sample size of 37 female undergraduate students who lived on campus.
• 18 item survey, consisting of measures about age, “going out” behaviors, and perceptions of safety.
• Data analysis: running t-Tests to test if walking with a friend or walking alone affects students perceptions of safety and if walking with a male or female friend also has an influence.

Methods

• Recruiting Sample: sending an anonymous link to the survey to private groups and to a resident assistant to distribute to residents of an on-campus dorm.
• IRB approval for this study was obtained through Miami University’s research review board.
• Respondents who were not female undergraduate students who attended Miami University and lived on campus were cleared from the data analysis.
• Likert scales used in this study were adapted from two other studies that included surveys from Ball State University and from Miami University and lived on campus.
• Measures on a five point scale, a rating of “1” indicated “strongly disagree” and a rating of “5” indicated “strongly agree” on perceptions of safety statements (Menning, 2009). Other measures assessed risk perceptions for certain situations “1” indicating “low-risk” and 5 indicating “high risk”.
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• Mean age of female students = 18.95
• Mode number times participants reported going out on average during the week = 2-3 times
• Mode for the average time students leave their room to go out and come back home are: 10:00pm-11:00pm and 12:00pm-1:00am.
• t-Tests were conducted by assigning “1” and “0” to the two independent nominal variable groups and testing them against the interval perceptions of safety variable

Findings

Table 1. t-test Results Comparing Female Students that Typically Walk Home and Those That Do Not On Perceptions of Safety

Findings Cont.

Discussion

The original hypotheses that female students going home at night would feel safer with a friend present is not supported. But the findings from testing the other hypothesis that female students going home at night would feel safer going with a male friend than a female friend, are mixed. While those female students who reported feeling safer walking with a female friend also reported having perception of risk of being sexually assaulted, they had a higher perception of safety at night off campus or uptown.

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The female buddy system provides mixed perceptions of safety at night on or off campus, but also provides an increased perception of risk of sexual assault. The strengths of this study include its specific measures of perceptions of safety and risk, in addition to the mode of transportation for female students. Some of the limitations would include the sample size and the lack of generalizability of this study, which could be due to an unrepresentative sample demographically. Further research, with a bigger sample size should be conducted to investigate the other factors contributing to the many components that make up the perception of safety.