

Concealed Carry and Sexual Assault on College Campuses: Bystander Attitudes on Both

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Abstract: Amid the ongoing debate concerning gun laws in America, the question of whether concealed carry should be allowed on college campuses appears. Currently in the United States, the Biden Administration faces a spate of mass shooter killings that span across the country. There seems to be no end in the near future to these types of mass murders. Indeed, this topic has been discussed for several years now, with incidents like the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, in which a student enrolled at Virginia Tech killed and wounded a total of 49 people with two semi-automatic pistols. On one hand, people believe that arming more citizens will create a type of checks and balances between civilians regarding safety, meaning that if someone who intends to do harm has a gun there will be another individual who is armed to stop any violence from occurring. Conversely, others believe that arming more people will only lead to an increase in violence rather than leading to safer public environments. To answer the question of if we should start allowing concealed carry on campus, it is pertinent to gauge how college students, faculty, and staff feel about the possibility of concealed carry becoming non-restricted to public citizens on campus.

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Sexual Assault, Bystanders, and Concealed Carry Attitudes on College Campuses

Student opinions are always highlighted the most when discussing concealed-carry laws on campus because they are the most abundant population on college campuses and a majority of them either live or spend a significant amount of time there. Patten and Thomas (2013) concluded in their study of 2,100 students, faculty, and staff that 70% of the respondents did not agree with allowing individuals to conceal carry on campus. Cavanaugh and Bouffard (2012) also found that when polling universities in Washington and Texas, both locations were three times more likely to respond that they were not at all comfortable with concealed carry on campus than to respond that they were comfortable with it.

Disagreement from college students regarding concealed carry reflects their greater feelings of safety on campuses with restrictive carry laws than on one that allows concealed carrying. Thompson et al. (2013) found that in their study of 15 colleges, 93% of students felt safe on campus without concealed carrying being legal. This could be in part due to the low violent crime rate among universities. In 1992 and 1995 it was found that the violent crime rate on college campuses is around 2% (Patten & Thomas, 2013) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005) revealed that students were at a lower risk for being victims of violent crimes than non-students around the same age range. Students and faculty alike might feel that the low rate of victimization on university campuses doesn't need to be jeopardized by allowing individuals to conceal carry.

While students are affected more prominently by concealed carrying on campus, the faculty and staff who work there also feel effects. Ward and Nguyen (2018) interviewed 5 residence life professionals whose jobs are to create a comfortable and safe environment for students who live on campus. If the college condones concealed carrying, then the residence life professional faces a new set of issues in regards to their job. For any given person, the idea of rooming with another individual who is concealed carrying might inflict a sense of anxiety or discomfort, for this reason, one professional disclosed that their housing application states if a student becomes aware that their roommate concealed carries and this makes them uncomfortable, they are welcome to contact residence life and request a change of roommate (2018). For the professionals to avoid seeming one-sided for or against the new concealed carry law, they do not directly inform the students on their housing application to request a non-concealed carrying roommate (2018). With this information in mind, it is clear that allowing citizens and students to conceal carry on campus causes new challenges to arise with more than just students. It causes faculty to reevaluate and reimplement regulations that were in place before guns were allowed at universities so these regulations can still maintain the safety and comfortability of everyone on campus.

There has yet to be a positive correlation between allowing concealed carrying on campus and a decrease in the crime rate. Two separate studies, one by Kovandzic and Marvell (2003) and another by Ayres and Donohue (2003) concluded that there was no correlation between allowing individuals to carry on campus and a decrease in violent crime. Conversely, Biastro, Larwin, and Carano (2017) reported that schools which allow carrying on campus have a higher sexual assault rate than those that don't allow carrying.

Students, faculty, and staff have yet to show overwhelming approval for the motion to allow concealed carrying on college campuses, and often feel more comfortable if there is no carrying. There is also a lack of conclusive evidence pointing towards concealed carrying reducing crimes on campuses, rather there have been studies that point in the opposite direction, showing that carrying on campus can cause an increase in the violent crime rate. Many areas of this dilemma, such as the effect of carrying on students' feelings of safety and the effect on crime rates need to be studied further to create a broader scope of the issue. Sexual assault has been an issue in colleges and universities across the United States and other

countries. Particularly, in recent times, the scandal of sexual misconduct and sexual violence have gained attention among the public, as well as college and university administrators due to high profile cases. For example, University of Southern California's gynecologist scandal, University of Michigan's doctor sex scandal, and Penn State University's sex scandal of a former assistant football coach. The incidents of sexual violence were not only happening between university employees and students, but also amongst students themselves.

Sexual assault can include a wide range of sexual victimization, such as rape, sexual coercion, incapacitated or alcohol-related sexual assault, and unwanted sexual contact (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2016). The Campus Sexual Assault Study (CSA) defines sexual assault as "unwanted sexual contact due to force and due to incapacitation, but excludes unwanted sexual contact due to verbal or emotional coercion" (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007). Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) also defines sexual assault as "a wide range of victimizations, separate from rape or attempted rape. These types of offenses include attacks, or attempted attacks, generally involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender. Sexual assaults may or may not involve force and include such things as grabbing or fondling. It also includes verbal threats" (BJS, n.d.).

According to the U.S. Department of justice, college-aged females (age-18-24) are the most likely group to become victims of sexual assault. The rate of sexual victimization of this group was approximately 4.3 per 1,000 (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). A study by Association of American Universities (AAU) in 2015 found that almost 12 percent of students experienced nonconsensual sexual contact, and approximately 23 percent of undergraduate women were sexually assaulted (AAU, 2015). These findings were very similar to the report by National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which revealed that approximately 25 percent of female undergraduate students were sexually victimized (NIJ, 2016). When examining the sexual assault prevalence based on gender identity, a study found that sexual assault was highest among transgender students (20.9%), followed by cisgender women (8.6%). Furthermore, this study revealed that based on sexual identity, sexual assault was highest among bisexuals and people unsure of their sexual identity, followed by gays/lesbians. For race, sexual assault was greatest among black students and lowest among Latinos and Asian or Pacific Islander students (Coulter, Mair, Miller, Blosnich, Matthews, & McCauley, 2017). It is very important to note that victims of sexual offenses are less likely to report crimes. Therefore, these numbers likely underestimate the real problem. A study reviews that fewer than 5 percent of campus sexual assault victims report their victimization to police or campus authorities, and approximately one in ten disclose the incident to their relatives (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Walsh, Banyard, Moynihan, Ward, & Cohn, 2010).

Bystander Intervention

The prevalence of college and university sexual assault situations is gaining attention at the national level. In April 2014, the White House launched a national campaign called "Not

Alone” to provide a comprehensive set of recommendations to colleges and universities for responding to sexual assault. One of the recommendations for preventing sexual assault on campus is the bystander intervention program. Bystander intervention is based on the social psychology theory, which identified factors related to individuals’ willingness to become involved in emergency situations. Examples of these factors include size of the group, fear of physical harm, fear of embarrassment, ambiguity of the situation, and self-efficacy of the individual (Darley & Latane, 1968; Tice & Baumeister, 1985).

The sexual assault prevention programs, or trainings, are traditionally focused on how to prevent audiences from potential perpetrators or sexual victimization. Unlike those traditional programs, the bystander intervention program teaches audiences how they can intervene to prevent sexual assault as potential bystanders (Banyard, 2008). The techniques included in bystander training may include training people to interrupt a sexual assault or situation that may lead to sexual assault, teaching people to speak out against social norms supportive of sexual violence, and preparing people to provide support to victims of sexual assault (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007).

The bystander intervention program is considered one of the most promising prevention strategies for campus sexual assault. Several studies have consistently found the bystander intervention program to be an effective means to preventing sexual assault. A study by Banyard et al. (2007) presented that undergraduates, athletes, and fraternity groups who participated in bystander training have increased bystander self-efficacy, bystander (attitudes) intentions, and bystander behavior. Moreover, some studies found that the bystander intervention program can improve rape knowledge attitudes, and enhanced students’ readiness to change (Banyard et al., 2007; Banyard, Exkstein, & Moynihan, 2010). Senn and Forrest (2016) examined the effectiveness of the bystander program, and found the workshop was effective when included as part of the undergraduate curriculum. Therefore, the program is a valuable resource that could reduce the prevalence of sexual assault on campuses (Senn & Forrest, 2016).

Guns Attitudes

One interesting topic that is unique to the United States is gun rights and gun ownership, which is protected by the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The United States is the number one country in the world for gun ownership. Americans own approximately 390 million guns or about 120.5 guns per 100 residents (BBC, 2019). The national poll in 2005 shows that about 67 percent of gun owners indicate self-defense as a purpose for owning their guns (Gallup, 2005b). The idea that guns make them feel safer is asserted by a majority of Americans (Kleck, 1997). The survey found that around 71 percent of gun owners in the U.S. believed their guns made their household safer (Gallup, 2004a). The criminological explanation of gun ownership and self-protection derives from the fear of crime, or perceived risk and victimization. This view describes defensive gun ownership

as an individualistic psychological coping mechanism for dealing with the threat posed by crime that can be actual, perceived, or emotional (Cao, Cullen, & Link, 1997; Reid, Roberts, Hilliard, 1998). Therefore, fear of crime and victimization could encourage gun acquisition.

The current literature on attitudes towards guns and bystander intervention is still lacking. Based on the belief that guns make the owner feel safer, it will be interesting to investigate whether gun owners will be more or less likely to intervene in some exigent situations, particularly in the sexual assault cases.

Concealed Carrying

Amid the ongoing debate concerning gun laws in America, the question of whether concealed carry should be allowed on college campuses appears. This topic has been discussed in greater length recently due to the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, in which a student enrolled at Virginia Tech killed and wounded a total of 49 people with two semi-automatic pistols. On one hand, people believe that arming more citizens will create a type of checks and balances between civilians regarding safety, meaning that if someone who intends to do harm has a gun there will be another individual who is armed to stop any violence from occurring. Conversely, others believe that arming more people will only lead to an increase in violence rather than leading to safer public environments. To answer the question of if we should start allowing concealed carry on campus, it is pertinent to gauge how college students, faculty, and staff feel about the possibility of concealed carry becoming non-restricted to public citizens on campus.

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Current Study

This study tries to examine the current rape myth acceptance and bystander attitudes among college students. Moreover, it identifies the effect of bystander trainings on rape myth acceptance and bystander attitude. Lastly, the correlation of attitudes toward guns and rape myth acceptance and bystander attitude is investigated.

To measure rape myth among college students the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) is employed. It is composed of 22 Likert-type scale items, which range

from 1 to 5. 1 being less rejection of rape myths, and 5 being most rejection of rape myths. IRMA has 4 subscales: 1. she asked for it; 2. he didn't mean to; 3. it wasn't really rape; 4. she lied. The range of summed scores for the IRMA is 22-110, with the higher score indicating greater rejection of rape myths (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). The Bystander Attitude Scale-Revised (BAS-R) is utilized to examine bystander attitudes of participants. BAS-R includes 16 Likert-type scale items, which range from 1 to 5; 1 being less willing to intervene, and 5 being most willing to intervene. The range of summed scores for the BAS-R is 16-80, with the higher score indicating more likelihood to stop their own or someone else's sexually violent behavior (McMahon et al., 2014). To determine participants' attitude toward guns, six Likert scale items were created. It ranges from 1 to 5, in which 1 presents the least supportive attitude toward guns and 5 represents the strongest supportive attitude toward guns. The range of summed scores is from 6 to 30.

The participants in this study are college students who were enrolled in two universities in the South. The size of the universities and towns are similar. There are total of 202 participants

Findings

From table 1, female participants represent about 70 percent in this current study. When looking at gender identification, the majority of students who participated in the study identify themselves as straight (84.7%), and almost 9 percent identify themselves as bisexual. Gay, lesbian, and other gender identity consist of about 6.5 percent, combined. About half of the participants are white (53%), followed by black (30.2%), and Hispanic (12.4%), respectively. When looking at college classification, seniors represent about 36.1 percent, followed by juniors (23.8%), and freshmen (17.8%). Sophomores and graduate students equally represent around 11 percent.

Table 1: Demographic Variables (n = 202)

<i>Variable</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender			
	Male	61	30.2
	Female	141	69.8
Sexual Orientation			
	Straight	171	84.7
	Gay	5	2.5
	Lesbian	4	2
	Bisexual	18	8.9
	Other	4	2
Race			

<i>Variable</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
	White	107	53
	Hispanic	25	12.4
	Black	61	30.2
	Native American	1	0.5
	Asian	4	2
Class Standing			
	Freshman	36	17.8
	Sophomore	22	10.9
	Junior	48	23.8
	Senior	73	36.1
	Graduate	22	10.9
	Non-degree	1	0.5

Table 2: Demographic Information (N = 202)

<i>Variable</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Residence Hall			
	No	136	67.3
	Yes	66	32.7
Living Situation			
	Alone	40	19.8
	With students	79	39.1
	With non-student	11	5.4
	With parents	37	18.3
	With spouse	35	17.3
Fraternity/Sorority			
	No	182	90.1
	Yes	20	9.9
College Athlete			
	No	193	95.5
	Yes	9	4.5
Previous Rape Ed			
	No	66	32.7
	Yes	136	67.3
Know Someone Sexually Assaulted			
	No	78	38.6

<i>Variable</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
	Yes	124	61.4
Own a Gun			
	No	151	74.8
	Yes	51	25.2
Attend Bystander Training			
	No	123	60.9
	Yes	79	39.1

When looking at the living situation of participants, more than half (67.3%), live off campus and about 32.7% percent live in dormitories on a college campus. Approximately four in every ten students have other students as their roommates, and about one in five students live alone. About 10% of participants are members of fraternity or sorority organizations, and about 4.5% of them are student athletes. About 67.3% of students in this study indicated that they had some type of rape/sexual assault education in the past, and roughly three in every five students know someone that has been sexually assaulted. About a quarter of students are gun owners. Approximately 39.1% of participants attended bystander trainings that were provided by this study.

Table 3: Bystander Attitude Scale-Revised (BAS-R)

<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ask for verbal consent when I am intimate with my partner, even if we are in a long-term relationship.	202	4.09	1.2
Stop sexual activity when asked to, even if I am already sexually aroused.	202	4.78	0.67
Check in with my friend who looks drunk when s/he goes to a room with someone else at a party.	202	4.69	0.63
Say something to my friend who is taking a drunk person back to his/her room at a party.	202	4.72	0.58
Challenge a friend who made a sexist joke.	202	3.68	1.28
Express my concern if a family member makes a sexist joke.	202	3.91	2.91
Use the word “ho,” “bitch,” or “slut” to describe girls when I am with my friends.	202	2.28	1.34
Challenge a friend who uses “ho,” “bitch,” or “slut” to describe girls.	202	3.19	1.3
Confront a friend who plans to give someone alcohol to get sex.	202	4.57	0.85
Refuse to participate in activities where girls’ appearances are ranked/rated.	202	4.07	1.25
Listen to music that includes the words “ho,” “bitch,” or “slut”*	202	3.46	1.32
Confront a friend who is hooking up with someone who was passed out.	202	4.76	0.62

<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Confront a friend if I hear rumors that s/he forced sex on someone.	202	4.63	0.74
Report a friend that committed a rape.	202	4.67	0.65
Stop having sex with a partner if s/he says to stop, even if it started consensually.	202	4.86	0.44
Decide not to have sex with a partner if s/he is drunk.	202	4.5	0.85

The Bystander Attitude Scale-Revised (BAS-R) is used to measure students' bystander attitude. The BAS-R total scores can range from 16 to 80. The higher the scores on BAS-R the more likely the student will intervene with sexual assault incidents or inappropriate sexual-related situations. The current study shows the minimum score of 32 and the maximum score of 80. The average score among participants is 66.65, or about 80% of the total maximum score, which can be interpreted as students, on average, have an extraordinarily strong attitude to act as a bystander. When looking at the items in BAS-R, the item "stop having sex with a partner if she/he says to stop, even if it started consensually" have the highest average score of 4.86 followed by the item "stop sexual activity when asked to, even if I am already sexually aroused" that have the average score of 4.78. The item that shows the lowest average score is "use the word "ho," "bitch," or "slut" to describe girls when I am with my friends" (2.28), and is followed by item "challenge a friend who uses "ho," "bitch," or "slut" to describe girls." From this finding, it seems that the negative sexual pronouns are still somewhat acceptable when used among friends. Therefore, it is exceptionally important for school administrators and teachers to educate students on the negativity of those terms and the effect of labeling those words have among female students, particularly.

Table 4: IRMA Subscale I: She Asked for It

	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand.	202	1	5	4.34	1.1
When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble.	202	1	5	2.76	1.66
If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped.	202	1	5	2.68	1.75
If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble.	202	1	5	3.11	1.4
When girls get raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.	202	1	5	2.74	1.73
If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes that she wants to have sex.	202	1	5	3.49	1.41

To measure the rape myth among participants, the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) is utilized. The IRMA is composed of four subscales: she asked for it, he didn't mean to, it wasn't really rape, and she lied. The range of summed scores for the IRMA is 22 to 110, with the higher score indicating greater rejection of rape myths. The current study shows the average score of IRMA at 64.67. When looking at the subscale I: she asked for it, as presented in table 4, the total score can range from 6 to 30. The average score of this subscale in the study equals 3.18, ranging from 4.34 to 2.74. This can possibly imply that the students, on average, feel neutral that sexual assault victims are somewhat responsible for their victimization.

Table 5: IRMA Subscale II: He Didn't Mean to

	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.	202	1	5	2.80	1.38
Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	202	1	5	2.94	1.44
Rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control.	202	1	5	2.65	1.4
If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.	202	1	5	2.86	1.4
It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.	202	1	5	2.81	1.64
If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.	202	1	5	2.95	1.57

Table 5 presents IRMA subscale II: he didn't mean to, in which the total score ranges from 6 to 30. It is especially interesting to see that the average scores in each item in this subscale are clustered between 2.65 and 2.95. The subscale shows the total average score of 2.835. This can be interpreted as students, on average, perceive the excuses that are made by predators of sexual assault neutrally.

Table 6: IRMA Subscale III: It Wasn't Really Rape

	<i>n</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
If a girl doesn't physically resist sex—even if protesting verbally—it can't be considered rape.	202	1	5	2.74	1.79
If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.	202	1	5	2.73	1.83
A rape probably doesn't happen if a girl doesn't have any bruises or marks.	202	1	5	2.68	1.87
If the accused "rapist" doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.	202	1	5	2.65	1.88
If a girl doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.	202	1	5	2.85	1.69

The IRMA subscale III: it wasn't really rape, is shown in table 6. Again, the average scores of each item in this subscale are similar, and fall between 2.65 and 2.85. The total average score of subscale III is 2.73; that can conceivably suggest that participants, on average, are unsure of rape situations.

Table 7: IRMA Subscale IV: She Lied

	<i>n</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.	202	1	5	2.99	1.35
Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.	202	1	5	2.97	1.31
A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often lead the guy on and then have regrets.	202	1	5	2.86	1.35
A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems.	202	1	5	3.04	1.43
Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.	202	1	5	3.05	1.29

The last subscale of IRMA is "she lied" that is presented in table 7. The average score of this subscale is 2.98, in which each item's average score ranges between 2.86 and 3.05. The findings from this subscale can probably denote that students, on average, are still unsure about the accuracy of statements that rape victims claim.

Table 8: Attitude toward Guns

	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The public has the right to own guns.	202	1	5	3.81	1.15
Guns protect individuals from crime	202	1	5	3.45	1.18
Guns do not stimulate or cause crime	202	1	5	2.58	1.33
School teachers/university professors should be allowed to carry registered handguns on campuses.	202	1	5	3.03	1.36
A perpetrator is less likely to attempt a sexual assault if they know people are armed with guns.	202	1	5	3.81	1.16
A gun is an effective defense against sexual assault.	202	1	5	3.46	1.14

Table 8 presents items which are used to measure attitude toward guns, particularly related to sexual assault incidents. The total score can range from 6 to 30, which implies that the higher the score the stronger supportive attitude toward guns. The participants have an average total score of 20.13. Thus, it can be indicated that, on average, students have a somewhat supportive attitude toward guns. When looking at individual items in this scale, the highest average score items are "the public has the right to own guns" and

“a perpetrator is less likely to attempt a sexual assault if they know people are armed with guns,” which both present an average score of 3.81. The lowest average score item is “guns do not stimulate or cause crime”.

Table 9: T-test on Gun Ownership

Variable	<i>Gun Owner</i>						t	df	p
	<i>No</i>			<i>Yes</i>					
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Gun Attitude	151	18.71	4.44	51	24.35	5.79	-7.24	200	0.00
BAS-R	151	67.34	6.71	51	64.63	8.03	2.37	200	0.01
IRMA	151	65.48	25.4	51	62.27	21.59	0.81	200	0.42

When examining the differences between gun owners and non-gun owners as presented in the table 9, it shows that there are statistically significant means between gun owners and non-gun owners in the gun attitude scale and the bystander attitude scale (BAS-R). However, the rape myth acceptance scale (IRMA) does not present statistically significant means between the two groups. As projected, students who own a gun have a stronger supportive attitude toward guns compared to the non-gun owning students. When looking at the bystander attitude scale (BAS-R), it is surprising to find that owning a gun is not a significant indicator that a person is more likely to stop other sexually violent behaviors as a bystander.

Table 10: T-test on Bystander Training

Variable	<i>Bystander Training</i>						t	df	p
	<i>No</i>			<i>Yes</i>					
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD			
Gun Attitude	123	19.81	5.78	79	20.63	4.69	-1.05	200	0.29
BAS-R	123	65.88	7.83	79	67.86	5.77	-1.94	200	0.05
IRMA	123	48.06	13.1	79	90.52	12.83	-22.65	200	0.00

To observe the effect of the bystander training, participants are categorized into two groups, students who attended the training and students who did not attend the training, as presented in table 10. The attitude towards guns between these two groups of students does not show a statistically significant difference. However, there are statistically significant differences of means in the bystander attitude scale (BAS-R) and the rape myth acceptance scale (IRMA). The students who attended the trainings have a higher average score on both BAS-R and IRMA than students who did not attend the trainings. This finding suggests that the bystander training can increase the likelihood of students intervening or preventing sexual misconduct incidents as a bystander. The training also helped students to have a better understanding and perception on sexual violence and victims of sexual assault.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the current study, it can be concluded that students, in general, are more likely to intervene if they observe situations that can lead to sexual assault. However, the perception among students on rape situations and sexual assault victims is still somewhat in the low level, as presented by the rape myth score. Particularly, there is still a remarkably high tolerance among students in using words that have negative connotations, such as “ho,” “bitch,” or “slut,” to describe their peers. Therefore, it is vital for school administrators and teachers to educate and improve students’ perception on sexual assault and the victims. Bystander trainings, as shown from the findings, can be an effective tool to teach students to recognize suspicious situations. The trainings also show students how they can mitigate those types of situations safely. Additionally, the trainings can help students have a better understanding of the rape myth. Thus, the bystander trainings need to be regularly provided to college students.

The correlation between gun ownership and willingness to act as bystander in sexual assault situations has proven to be in a negative direction by the current study. Owning a gun does not increase the likelihood of interposing in sexual misconducts as a bystander. A premise of gun ownership and the self-defense argument is needed to be examined in a future study. Is it possible that gun owners are willing to use a gun to protect themselves, but less likely to use it to protect others? Also, larger sample sizes and more diverse geographical locations are needed to scientifically validate the findings of this study. Moreover, improvement in research methodology can also endorse the effectiveness of the bystander trainings.

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