

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FEAR OF CRIME ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

by

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## ABSTRACT

### CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FEAR OF CRIME ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

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The purpose of this research study is to examine the perception of fear of crime among undergraduate college students who are enrolled in courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Texas at Arlington. Surveys were administered to 160 undergraduate students enrolled in courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice department at the University of Texas at Arlington. Survey responses of female undergraduate students were then compared male undergraduate students to determine knowledge and perception differences relating to sexual assault. In regards to the survey questionnaire administered to the undergraduate students, there were statistically significant differences in the responses offered by females and males. Overall, both females and males did not respond to feeling completely safe while attending the University of Texas at Arlington. The findings of this research study demonstrate the need for further research to determine how safe college students feel while attending the college of their choice.

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

This research study seeks to examine the perception of fear of crime among undergraduate college students who are enrolled in courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Texas at Arlington. While this study is narrow in scope, it is anticipated that this research will encourage future researchers to perform similar critical analyses, but with a much broader design analysis.

The research that has been performed concerning fear of crime on college campuses in the United States is not limited. However, this does not mean that the current body of knowledge should not continue to grow. This research study was both significant and appropriate because many college campuses are seeing an increase in enrollment on a yearly basis. Increased enrollment can mean that the rate of sexual assault on college campuses can increase at alarmingly high rates if not controlled for early on.

The following table provides definitions that apply for purposes of this research study:

Table 1 Important Key Terms and Definitions

Key Term	Definition
Fear	An unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation of awareness of danger, to be afraid or apprehensive, and a reason for alarm (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2005, p. 198).
Sexual assault	A full range of physically forced sexual acts such as touching or kissing, verbally coerced sexual intercourse, and physically forced vaginal, oral or anal penetration (Zawacki, 2008, p. 1915).
Rape	Vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse that is physically forced or occurs when consent could not be given because of the victim's age, mental impairment, or mental incapacitation due to intoxication (Zawacki, 2008, p. 1916).
Sexual Coercion	Any situation in which one person uses verbal or physical means (including the administration of drugs or alcohol, with or without the other person's consent) to obtain sexual activity against consent (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 91).



Table 1 – Continued

Unwanted Sexual Behavior	Sexual assault or rape but may also incorporate any behavior involving sexual contact experienced as harmful or regretful during or following the incident. This includes unwanted sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal, or genital-oral contact) and fondling (nonpenetrating) behavior is also included under this rubric (Flack, Daubman, Caron, Asadorian, D'Aureli, Gigliotti, Hall, Kiser, & Stine, 2007, p. 140).
Consent	The voluntary approval of what is done or proposed by another; permission; agreement in opinion or sentiment (Beres, 2007, p. 98).

The definitions above relating to fear and various sexual behaviors have been selected based upon other commonly accepted and similar terminology documented by researchers who have conducted studies in the past that were concerned with fear of crime.

Sexual assault victimization of college students is a continuous problem within many college campuses across the United States. Over the past few decades, sexual assault has increasingly been recognized as a critical and persistent problem on college campuses. Numerous researchers have found that the frequency of sexual assault victimization on college campuses is occurring at shockingly high rates. Researchers have consistently found that one fifth to one quarter of college women are raped at some point in their college careers. This estimate is somewhat skewed because sexual assaults are one of the most underreported crimes to law enforcement officials. Not only are sexual assaults occurring at overwhelmingly high rates on college campuses, the actual fear of sexual assault victimization is both significant and widespread among college students. After murder, rape is the most feared crime by college women. Sexual assault victimization research conducted on college campuses is critical and necessary because the education of young individuals is vital for the continued success of the United States.

Highly publicized and discussed sexual assault cases on college campuses are not well known. One highly publicized sexual assault case that occurred on a prestigious college campus was the Duke Lacrosse Team Scandal. This well documented and discussed sexual assault case was important for the body of knowledge concerning college campus sexual

assaults because not only did it occur on a well known and highly recognized university, but the alleged sexual assault was committed by rich, white college men. This case opened the eyes of not only campus administrators, but the eyes of parents that believe their children are safe on campuses such as the Duke campus.

While the body of knowledge is extensive, the prevention methods of curtailing sexual assault occurrences on college campuses are less documented. There are several methods out there in existence, such as self-defense training and educational programs, but the overall success of these prevention methods have not been well studied and those that have do not have a high success rate. Adopting new prevention methods and implementing them on college campuses as well as research their success is imperative in the future. The purpose of this study was to add to the already extensive body of knowledge on sexual assault victimization in hopes to measure the fear of sexual assault victimization among undergraduate college students to see where the level of fear currently stands in the present-day. This objective was accomplished by surveying undergraduate students to measure and compare their perception of fear and overall knowledge of sexual assault victimization while they are attending the University of Texas at Arlington.

Chapter 2 begins by discussing the historical overview of sexual assault victimization and how it has transpired through the 1970s up until the present day. The chapter continues with exploring the behavioral changes college students exhibit in order to avoid becoming a sexual assault victim while on campus. Factors that heighten sexual assault victimization, such as the high rate of revictimization, substance use, and particularly vulnerable groups, are also discussed to detail why certain college students are at a higher risk than their peers. This chapter will also discuss the research that exists that addresses the prevention efforts that have been utilized by college campus administrators as well as if they are proven to curtail sexual assault victimizations. The chapter concludes with research that explains college students are in the age range that includes the most sexually assaulted individuals as well as how campus

administrators are taking action by adopting and implementing sexual assault prevention methods.

In Chapter 3, the researcher will discuss how the data was collected for the research study, which was a quantitative analysis of the significance of perception and knowledge-based differences of sexual assault victimization among undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Arlington. Students who chose to participate in the study were asked to answer several survey questions that addressed their knowledge and perception about sexual assault victimization on the University of Texas at Arlington campus. They were also asked demographic questions in order to compare the survey responses for statistical significance.

Chapter 4 further discusses the analysis of the collected survey data with emphasis on knowledge and perceptions of sexual assault victimization among undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Arlington. The differences demographics play in the survey answers are also discussed. The survey responses of the undergraduate students were compared with each other to determine if the knowledge and perception of sexual assault victimization were statistically significant.

In Chapter 5, the researcher discusses the conclusions reached from the findings of the data analyses and succeeding implications for current and future undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Arlington. The researcher further discusses the concealed handgun laws in current legislation that could allow legal possession of a concealed handgun on college campuses across the state of Texas. The concluding thoughts give suggestions for future research studies.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

Reviewing the literature of sexual assault on college campuses unveiled a considerable amount of information. The urgent and pervasive problem of sexual assaults occurring on college campuses in the United States is increasingly being recognized by policy makers and campus administrators. The literature has expressed the need for sexual assault victimization among college students to continue to be researched. As a result, a historical overview of sexual assault prevalence will first be presented. Behavioral changes, revictimization, and substance use will also be discussed. Also, certain groups who are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault victimizations as well as several prevention methods that aid in lowering the frequency of sexual assault victimizations on college campuses will further be discussed. Finally, the fear of sexual assault possessed by college students will be presented.

The researcher will start by discussing the history of sexual assault. Following the history of sexual assault will be a discussion of the types of behavior sexual assault victims display after being victimized as well as types of behavior individuals exhibit to prevent from becoming a sexual assault victim. Subsequent to the discussion of behavior, the researcher will discuss how revictimization is important in sexual assault victimizations. After discussing revictimization, the researcher will continue by discussing substance use and how drugs and alcohol can play a key role prior to as well as after a sexual assault victimization. The researcher will then discuss how certain groups of people are more vulnerable to sexual assault victimization as opposed to other groups of people. The importance of preventing sexual

assault victimizations will also be discussed by the researcher. Finally, the researcher will discuss the fear of sexual assault among college students on college campuses.

## 2.2 History

Sexual assault is a critical public health problem with detrimental consequences for not only the women who are sexually assaulted, but also for the society in which they live. Only within the last few decades has sexual assault become recognized as a crucial social and scientific issue (Zawacki, 2008, p. 1914). The statistics concerning the frequency of sexual assault in the United States are not unnoticed. Unfortunately, the research on sexual violence has determined that it is a common experience in the lives of women in the United States. Nationally, it is estimated that a woman is sexually assaulted every two to three minutes (Masho, Odor, & Adera, 2005, p. 157). In 2002, it was estimated that more than 247,000 women and men in the United States were sexually assaulted (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2008, p. 600). It has been found that between 18% and 44% of women in the United States report some type of sexual victimization in their lifetimes, and rape rates for women are typically around 15% (Casey & Nurius, 2006, p. 629).

The 1970s was a decade in which sexuality became a central public focus (Sisco, Becker, & Beck, 2008, p. 262). The combination of concerns regarding gender inequality and sexuality helped draw much attention to sexual violence. In 1975, the National Institute for the Prevention and Control of Rape was established (Sisco et al., 2008, p. 262). This was the first federal agency that provided support as well as funding for research that explored sexual victimization. Public awareness regarding sexual violence was increased extensively throughout the 70s. During the 1980s, Mary Koss and Dean Kilpatrick created the first wave of sexual violence research with a specific goal of estimating the prevalence of sexual assault that were and were not reported to law enforcement (Sisco et al., 2008, p. 263). Towards the end of the 1980s, male sexual victimization was starting to be recognized as a reoccurring problem. The first professional conference addressing male sexual victimization was held in 1988 (Sisco

et al., 2008, p. 263). Also, an astonishing number of child sexual abuse victimizations were reported during the 1980s. The majority of research that was conducted in the 80s focused on the victims' experiences, treatment methods, and prevention strategies.

The beginning of the 1990s marked a time of skepticism regarding sexual victimization (Sisco et al., 2008, p. 264). However, research conducted on sexual assault peaked in later years. From the established empirical research surrounding sexual assault victimizations, came new policies that provided a helping hand to studies conducted by researchers and victims of sexual assault. In 1990, Congress passed the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 (Sloan, 1994, p. 51). This act required colleges and universities that participated in federal financial aid programs to publish their campus crime statistics starting in September 1992 (Sloan, 1994, p. 51). The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed in 1994 (Boba & Lilley, 2009, p. 168). Under VAWA, more than \$1.6 billion has been dispersed to a wide variety of programs and research to help reduce violence against women.

Later in the 90s, the Campus Crime Disclosure Act, which was later named the Clery Act in 2000, amended the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 with new provisions that mandated schools to report hate crimes in addition to crimes that already had to be reported (Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2007, p. 222). This act also required schools to include crimes that occurred on property not owned by the school, but was contiguous to the campus, and if schools did not cooperate with the new rules, then they would be punished (Wilcox et al., 2007, p. 222). The 90s was a busy time for policy implications as well as research for sexual assault crimes.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has been greatly influenced by the previous three decades. The VAWA of 2000, which reauthorized funding for programs that existed under the original VAWA through the 2005 fiscal year as well as the creation new programs (Boba & Lilley, 2009, p. 169). Also, President George W. Bush signed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) into law on September 4, 2003 which mandates a zero tolerance policy for sexual assaults within

correctional systems (Moster & Jeglic, 2009, p. 66). PREA has major implications for both the discovery and the prevention of prison rape and sexual assault. The knowledge now known about sexual violence today has been greatly influenced by scholars from many different fields. Feminist scholars are among the individuals who have greatly enhanced the body of knowledge surrounding sexual assault victimization (Sisco et al., 2008, p. 265). The foundation of the social movement against sexual victimization focused mainly on the victimization of women, but research has turned to focus on the sexual victimization of men as well.

The available research continuously demonstrates that sexual assault has been a serious problem on college campuses for at least the past fifty years. Sexual violence is a distressing problem in the United States, but it is particularly a problem on college campuses (Voller & Long, 2010, p. 457). Unwanted sexual behavior remains an all too common experience among college students (Flack, Daubman, Caron, Asadorian, D'Aureli, Gigliotti, Hall, Kiser, & Stine, 2007, p. 140). In the United States, rape is considered by many college students to be the most severe and underreported crime across ethnic groups (Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, & Rheinboldt, 2005, p. 177).

Despite the efforts of past policies, funding for prevention programs, and the large body of knowledge that surrounds sexual assault victimization amongst college students, the incidence of sexual assault has changed little if at all over the last several decades (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 94). Researchers would certainly like to report that sexual assault victimization among college students has continuously fell over the past few decades, but unfortunately the history of sexual assault victimization reveals that sexual assault remains a frequent occurrence among college students today. The following section will discuss how fear of sexual assault victimization can play a role in how an individual acts before and after a sexual assault victimization occurs.

### 2.3 Behavior

When individuals are fearful of becoming a victim of a criminal offense, they will more than likely exhibit certain and abnormal behaviors to try and avoid certain places and people in order to lessen their chances of becoming victimized. Although both men and women are typically afraid of becoming a victim of criminal offenses, women particularly carry a superior burden of fear and its associated lifestyle restrictions than men despite the fact that they are less likely to be victims of most crimes (McDaniel, 1993, p. 37). Fear of becoming a sexual assault victim is both widespread and significant on college campuses in the United States, and after murder, rape, which is a very extreme form of sexual assault, is the crime that is feared most by women (Day, 1994, p. 743).

The difference between being fearful of sexual assault and being fearful of other personal crimes is that sexual assault victimization is almost solely experienced by women (Day, 1994, p. 743). Decades of empirical research by sociologists have confirmed this notion. This does not mean that men do not experience sexual assault victimization because they in fact do, however, it is at an extremely smaller percentage than the percentage of women who experience sexual assault victimization. Past research has constantly unveiled that college women typically are more fearful of criminal victimization at night as opposed to their male counterparts (Wilcox et al., 2007, p. 227). Also, college women have expressed heightened levels of fear, despite the time of day, across an array of spatial domains, including campus jogging paths, campus parking lots, and libraries (Wilcox et al., 2007, p. 226).

Being fearful of sexual assault has detrimental effects for women because it increases women's level of worry, often forcing them to adopt numerous precautionary measures and to curtail their activities and behaviors (Day, 1994, p. 743). Women routinely employ precautionary behaviors to avoid criminal victimization in their every day lives, but men rarely take such precautionary actions (Callanan & Teasdale, 2009, p. 363).



There is sufficient evidence from several academic disciplines that supports a significant association between particular features of the immediate physical environment and crime-related fear (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 303). Several cues have been noted in the literature that typically make college students avoid certain places and people simply for the fact that the area and the people occupying that area look suspicious and . Visibility of an individual's immediate surrounding is an important component for measuring fear of that particular area.

Studies have researched lighting on college campuses as a possibility of invoking fear in college students have found that students will avoid places that have lower lighting levels because they are fearful of what they cannot see (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 304). For example, when a college student is walking through a dimly lit parking lot on campus, they are more than likely going to experience a higher level of fear of crime as opposed to walking though a parking lot that is extremely well lit. College students often find areas that are not well lit as extremely unsafe. The core concept of lighting is the notion that college students will not be able to see potentially threatening and dangerous situations, which include seeing a potential perpetrator as well as seeing a hiding place for that perpetrator (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 304).

Foliage also heightened college students' fear of crime. Foliage, such as flowers, grass, bushes, and trees, are generally planted to provide aesthetic beauty to college campuses, but the growth and density of foliage can also obstruct visual views of certain areas as well as provide hiding places for potential perpetrators; thus, creating heightened levels of fear of crime because college students cannot see what awaits them beyond the foliage (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 304). Furthermore, an increase in the amount of foliage is correlated with an increase in college students' perception of victimization (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 304). Research suggests that criminal offenders typical favor places that allow them to conceal their presence from view of their likely victims in order to maintain control over a situation (Nasar, Fisher, & Grannis, 1993, p. 164). College students most often choose poor lighting and places for

attackers to hide, such as behind trees and overgrown bushes as reasons to explain why they feel an environment is unsafe.

Another fear provoking cue is when groups are loitering in a particular area. Not only do physical cues provoke fear in college students, but social environments provide signals that individuals incorporate into their assessment of a particular area and how safe the area really is. Not only have loitering groups been linked to fear of victimization by females, but it has also been linked to fear of victimization by males as well. The presence of individuals who indicate that possible dangerous elements are present, such as a group of young individuals gathered in one particular area, is consistently linked with heightened fear of victimization among college students (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 305). Groups who particularly provoke fear are groups composed of young individuals. Much of past research supports the notion that signs of social incivilities, particularly youths congregating and exhibiting rowdy behavior, provoke high level of fear in individuals (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 305).

There are many reasons why college students exhibit precautionary behavior to avoid becoming a victim of sexual assault. Several factors including low self-esteem, assertiveness deficits, prior victimizations, and lack of skills in avoiding or escaping dangerous situations can all cause individuals to engage in self-protective behaviors (Messman-Moore & Long, 2003, p. 550). According to past research, college students do in fact exhibit a heightened level of fear that ultimately affects their lifestyle and reduces their quality of life while attending college (Nasar et al., 1993, p. 161).

The overall quality of college students' life, particularly college women's lives, is very much reduced when they feel they have to engage in necessary habits and behaviors in order to avoid becoming a victim of a sexual assault. The loss in work, educational, social, and leisure opportunities are among the activities that college students would miss out on because of their fear of sexual assault (Day, 1994, p. 743). Minor adjustments and modifications of

physical features on college campuses could most certainly have a positive effect on the level of fear experienced by college students.

A decrease in fear of rape would lead to a decrease in fear of other crimes college students associate with sexual assault (McDaniel, 1993, p. 42). A reduction in level of fear of sexual assault will also lead college students to have more freedom because they would not engage in precautionary behavior as often, which would lead to more opportunities for social and leisure activities (McDaniel, 1993, p. 42). Fear of sexual assault victimization proves to provoke negatively on college students. Campus administrators should strive to do what they can in order to help lessen the fear of college students attending their university. Since the 90's, there has been a growing involvement on the part of campus administrators to acknowledge and seek to prevent not only sexual assault, but other personal crimes as well on their campuses (Day, 1994, p. 744). As noted above, fear of sexual assault can have a detrimental affect on a person's life by causing them to act abnormal. The researcher will further discuss how revictimization is a frequent occurrence in sexual assault victimizations.

#### 2.4 Revictimization

Prior rape history is one of the strongest risk factors for subsequent sexual assault victimizations that might occur later on in adulthood. The literature continually demonstrates that there is a problem of repeated sexual victimization (sexual assault revictimization) among individuals who experience child sexual assault victimization. Revictimization is defined as the experience of sexual victimization in both childhood plus adulthood (Campbell, Dworkin, & Cabral, 2009, p. 236).

Evidence of individuals who have been victims of sexual assault revictimization has been found among different populations of women, which also include college students. Past research has indicated that 23% of rape victims experienced more than one rape during an academic year (Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2008, p. 164). In particular, women that exhibit histories of sexual victimizations are especially vulnerable for future sexual assault

revictimizations (Barnes, Noll, Putnam, & Trickett, 2009, p. 412). Past research has identified that two of every three women who have reported sexual victimization had been sexually assaulted more than once (Campbell et al., 2009, p. 236).

One study determined that women who experienced childhood sexual abuse were two to three times more likely to experience revictimization during their adolescence or adulthood than women without this history (Macy, 2007, p. 178). Although it should be acknowledged that males also experience childhood sexual abuse, both sexual violence and child sexual abuse occur at higher rates among females than males (Macy, 2007, p. 178). The statistics are worrisome considering the serious consequences of sexual victimization on women's well-being (Macy, 2007, p. 178).

Early childhood as well as prior sexual assault victimization experiences have both been predominantly compelling predictors of later adulthood sexual assault victimization (Franklin, 2010, p. 150). Over the last few decades, there has been an increasing amount of research to uncover the prevalence and later consequences of childhood sexual abuse (Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey, 1997, p. 789). The research has unfortunately established that exposure to some form of unwanted sexual behavior during childhood is not uncommon among children in the United States today.

Childhood sexual abuse rates show that 12% to 53% of girls will experience childhood sexual abuse (Macy, 2007, p. 178). Childhood sexual abuse is not only detrimental for victims immediately after it occurs, but it is also detrimental for victims later on when they are adults. Widespread empirical evidence suggests that childhood sexual abuse survivors are at a great risk for sexual assault revictimization in adulthood (Messman-Moore & Long, 2003, p. 537). It has been found that between 33% and 68% of all child sexual abuse victims were subsequently raped as adults, compared to only 17% of women who did not have a history of sexual assault victimization (Fergusson et al., 1997, p. 790). Females that experienced childhood sexual abuse have reported rates of subsequent sexual victimization that are three to five times higher

than females who do not report histories of sexual victimization (Barnes et al., 2009, p. 412). Childhood sexual abuse is undoubtedly a problem that can have detrimental effects to the victim as well as society if it is not dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Child sexual abuse survivors will more than likely experience serious short as well as long term psychological consequences (Gold, Sinclair, & Balge, 1999, p. 457). Child sexual abuse is a criminal act that has the potential to present serious damage to an individual's sense of self and ability to relate to others. Revictimization does not only occur simply because an individual experienced sexual assault at a young age. The adverse side effects that follow early childhood victimization also add to the reasons why revictimization is experienced.

Alcohol, drug use, sexual behavior, self blame, social withdrawal, posttraumatic stress disorder, and poor risk recognition are a few among the many detrimental side effects experienced by sexual assault survivors (Messman-Moore & Long, 2003, p. 537). These harmful outcomes may increase a victim's vulnerability to additional sexual assaults. For example, the damaged sense of self and others together with difficulty in interpersonal relationships may endanger an individual's ability to form healthy attachment relationship, particularly those relationships that require a considerable degree of intimacy (Gold et al., 1999, p. 462). Also, women who have been victims of sexual assault consumed more alcohol as opposed to women who were not sexually assaulted (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 112).

Multiple sexual assaults may have a collective effect that strengthens the severity of psychological consequences with ensuing sexual assault victimization. Furthermore, sexually assaulted women see themselves as more vulnerable to a future sexual assault than women who do not experience sexual assault victimization (Brown, Messman-Moore, Miller, & Stasser, 2005, p. 972). The evidence that has been found to support the notion of revictimization is overwhelming and supports the necessity to help curb sexual assault revictimization in the future. In the following section the researcher discusses how the use of drugs and alcohol can

heighten the risk of becoming a sexual assault victim as well as how it affects an individual after sexual assault victimization occurs.

### 2.5 Substance Use

Alcohol use is consistently linked with an extremely large portion of crime, especially violent crimes that include aggravated assault and rape (Seto & Barbaree, 1995, p. 545). One of the most consistent findings throughout the research is the role alcohol and drug use plays in sexual assault victimizations. Drug facilitated or alcohol facilitated sexual assault occurs after the perpetrator deliberately either gives the victim drugs without permission or tries to get the victim drunk (Fisher et al., 2008, p. 165). Incapacitated sexual assault occurs after the victim voluntarily uses drugs or alcohol (Fisher et al., 2008, p. 165). In either case, the victim is unable to give consent.

Alcohol has been estimated to be associated with sexual assault victimization at alarming rates. Some studies have found that alcohol is present in an estimated 80% of all sexual assaults (Nurius, 1999, p. 71). Across various samples of adults, adolescents, college men, community men, and incarcerated perpetrators, research has repeatedly found that alcohol consumption is positively related to sexual assault perpetrators as well as their victims. In sexual assault cases that involve alcohol, typically both the perpetrator and victim have been drinking. In addition, alcohol serves as a common tool among sexual predators because of its effects on the proposed victim and how it often reduces the perceived responsibility of violation by the perpetrator because he was also intoxicated at the time of the sexual assault (Minow & Einolf, 2009, p. 836).

Alcohol and drug use among college students has been well documented in the literature. The prevalence of sexual assault occurring through alcohol and drug use has become a more common occurrence on college campuses primarily because of the party culture (Franklin, 2010, p. 152). Not only is alcohol and drug use generally linked to sexual assault victimization on college campuses, but binge drinking is also of particular importance.

Binge drinking is defined as a pattern of drinking that corresponds to consuming five or more drinks for males and four or more drinks for females within a two hour period (McCauley, Calhoun, & Gidycz, 2010, p. 2). Binge drinking and its relationship with sexual assault is of particular interest to researchers because of the supportive evidence that high rates of binge drinking occur within the college population (McCauley et al., 2010, p. 2).

The particular role alcohol and drug use plays for males and females in a sexual assault is complex. Alcohol's pathways, causal relationships, or temporal links are not fully understood (Fisher et al., 2008, p. 165). The literature has identified several ways that alcohol and drug use may be related to sexual assault victimization. One possibility is that drinking and drug use may contribute to sexual assault victimization by increasing an individual's contact with motivated perpetrators and risky situations (Ullman, 2003, p. 473).

Women who drink at bars or parties could be at a greater risk of sexual assault victimization because sexually aggressive men may target them since they are drinking. Some research has shown that women are more at risk of sexual assault victimization if they frequent the bar environment, but how much they consumed was not associated with a heightened risk of victimization (Ullman, 2003, p. 473). Simply the party atmosphere that some college campuses expose could heighten the risk of individuals being sexually assaulted because of the frequent exposure to bars, parties, alcohol, drugs, and strangers.

A second possibility is that alcohol and drug use inhibits an individual's capability of accessing a dangerous situation as well as makes an individual unable to protect himself if a dangerous incident arises. Alcohol and drug use impair problem-solving and self-protective behavior, which can account for some of the relationship between sexual assault and alcohol or drug use (Messman-Moore, Ward, & Brown, 2009, p. 501). As an individual becomes more intoxicated, the ability for him to process information from the surroundings depreciates, and attention becomes more focused on salient cues (Davis, Stoner, Norris, George, & Masters, 2009, p. 1108). Numerous research studies have shown that moderate to high levels of

intoxication hinder the ability of an individual to evaluate the consequences of high risk situations (Davis et al., 2009, p. 1108).

Alcohol and drug use also reduce an individual's feelings of tension and anxiety. Alcohol's relaxing effect causing people to put their guard down and trust people more than they would normally if they were had not been drinking. A major factor affecting an individual's ability to resist sexual assault lies in the cognitive appraisal processes he must initiate before he engages in a behavioral response (Nurius, 2000, p. 72). The reduction of cognitive and motor functioning skills caused by alcohol inhibits an individual's ability to verbally or physically resist rape (Fisher et al., 2008, p. 165). A woman's inability to physically resist rape leads to a higher possibility she will experience completed rape as opposed to attempted rape.

A third possibility is that alcohol and drug use also affects how some men perceive women who drink. Gender role norms about dating and sexual behavior and stereotypes about women who drink alcohol typically influence men to view these women as more vulnerable targets and sexually available (Fisher et al., 2008, p. 165). The view men have of women who drink is typically that they are more sexually promiscuous and available as opposed to women who do not drink (Messman-Moore et al., 2009, p. 501). Even more damaging is some men are less likely to think that forced or coerced sex with an intoxicated woman is rape (Messman-Moore et al., 2009, p. 501). Men who have been drinking are more likely to ignore a woman's cues of opposition and more apt to infer her friendly and vague cues as a gesture for sexual interest and intent. Also, women who smoke marijuana are deemed to have a deviant lifestyle, which can ultimately increase their likelihood of encountering deviant men who are also sexual perpetrators (Messman-Moore, Coates, Gaffey, & Johnson, 2008, p. 1742).

Alcohol's role in sexual assault has been recognized as both proximal and distal risk factors. Alcohol's presence does not necessarily mean that it is a causal factor in the occurrence of sexual assaults (Ullman, 2003, p. 477). It is important to note that the presence of alcohol or drug use in any given situation does not mean a sexual assault is going to occur.



Alcohol is best described as a risk factor for sexual assault to likely occur. Enough research has been conducted to safely conclude that alcohol is a risk factor that contributes to the heightened risk of being sexually assaulted. Future research is needed to determine how alcohol interacts with other situational and behavioral variables (Ullman, 2003, p. 482). Not only do alcohol and drugs play a particular part in sexual assault victimizations, but certain groups of people are more vulnerable than other groups.

### 2.6 Vulnerable Groups

A considerable number of intricate variables impact a given individual's sexual experiences and behaviors. Sexual experiences come in all shapes and sizes as a consequence of gender, relative power, and age (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 91). Sexual experiences and behavior are undoubtedly inseparable from mortal and ethnic values, gender roles in a given society, and beliefs concerning heterosexual relationships (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 91). As with all crime, certain groups and individuals are more vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime when compared to other groups and individuals. Past research has revealed many groups that are more vulnerable to sexual assault victimization. The vulnerable groups range from prisoners to married adults to gays and lesbians to college students who are members of sororities and fraternities. Each group possesses their own unique traits that make them particularly vulnerable to sexual assault victimization.

Rape has been a problem within prisons as early as the 1930s, but only within the last decade has it become a widely recognized issue to legislators. President George W. Bush signed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) into law on September 4, 2003 which mandates a zero tolerance policy for sexual assaults within correctional systems (Moster & Jeglic, 2009, p. 66). PREA has major implications for both the discovery and the prevention of prison rape and sexual assault.

Although the research on inmate fear of sexual assault is minute, there is a common perception that prison rape is widespread and underreported (Moster & Jeglic, 2009, p. 65).

Current research on prison rape estimates that rape ranges from 0.3% to 14%, but it is hypothesized that this low rate is because of how often rape is not reported by victims in prisons (Moster & Jeglic, 2009, p. 65). While actual sexual assault victimization has been found to occur at low rates in prisons, the fear of sexual assault is without a doubt present. Fear in and of itself may prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy (Tewksbury, 1989, p. 63). Perhaps inmates are fearful of sexual assault because it has been found that over 95% report knowing of at least one sexual assault that has occurred in the previous calendar year, and overwhelmingly 37% have been found to report knowing of an average of one sexual assault per week (Tewksbury, 1989, p. 63). Typically overweight and shorter inmates are more fearful of sexual assault in prison as opposed to an inmate who exhibits a “meat head” appearance (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2005, p. 199).

Race has been found to be the most significant factor between victims and nonvictims. White inmates are mostly the victims of sexual assault while blacks are the sexual assault perpetrators (Tewksbury, 1989, p. 63). Not only does fear of sexual assault in prison inmates generate greater psychological reactions, it also affects the daily routines of the correctional institution as well (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2005, p. 199). Sexual assault victimization can seriously impede efforts of rehabilitation and community reintegration because of the psychological and psychical trauma that follow.

Another group that is vulnerable to sexual assault victimization is women who are in relationships. As a general rule, women tend to fear stranger rape more than they do acquaintance rape (Gidycz, McNamara, & Edwards, 2006, p. 449). When individuals think about a rape being committed, they typically think that a masked stranger hides behind bushes and jumps out to sexually assault a woman walking by (Pazzani, 2007, p. 717). This stereotype could not be further from the truth. These types of sexual assault do in fact occur, but at a much lower rate than acquaintance sexual assault.

Sexual assaults are more often committed by people the victims know, such as boyfriends, husbands, friends, and family members (Pazzani, 2007, p. 717). The research has estimated that acquaintance rapes make up approximately 80% of all sexual assault victimizations (Pazzani, 2007, p. 717). The relationship a woman has with an acquaintance can impact her ability to perceive and respond to potential sexual assault threats, which makes her vulnerable to becoming a sexual assault victim (Gidycz et al., 2006, p. 449). It is not unreasonable to say that the closer a woman feels to a man the less she would expect him to assault her. Past research has found that as a woman's level of intimacy increases with a man, her judgments that the man poses a severe threat to her essentially decrease (Davis et al., 2009, p. 1109). Also, women in an established relationship express less discomfort overall with men as opposed to women who did not have an established relationship with a man (Davis et al., 2009, p. 1120).

Marital rape is an all too common problem in the United States that is overlooked with research estimating that 10% to 14% of married women are raped by their husbands (Ferro, Cermele, & Saltzman, 2008, p. 765). Marital rape is problematic because many people believe marital rape is not a criminal act at all because a husband has full access to his wife's body with or without consent (Ferro et al., 2008, p. 765). Since there has not been a large amount of research done on marital rape, it is not known if marital rape is part of an ongoing domestic violence or if the rape is an actual isolated incident, but is without a doubt a unique and different sexual assault than other known forms (Ullman, Filipas, Townsend, Starzynski, 2006, p. 815). This notion is potentially hazardous to all married women in the United States. Women who are raped by acquaintances are also less likely to view their sexual assault as a legitimate rape and in turn do not officially report it, which just adds to the percentage of rapes that are already not reported to law enforcement officials.

Gays, lesbians, and bisexual college students are also vulnerable to becoming sexually assaulted. In particular, the lifestyle that is associated with the gay community

contributes to their heightened risk of becoming sexually assaulted. High rates of alcohol and other drug use exists among college students, but such use has been found to be greater among gay, lesbian, and bisexual college students as opposed to their heterosexual counterparts (Reed, Prado, Matsumoto, & Amaro, 2010, p. 168). Research that has been done targeting the alcohol and drug use by gays, lesbians, and bisexual college students has been limited, but the findings suggest that gay, lesbian, and bisexual college students experience sexual assault at a higher rate than heterosexual college students (Reed et al., 2010, p. 168).

One study found that compared to heterosexual college students, gays, lesbians, and bisexual students reported feeling less safe on campus because they experienced more threats and victimizations (Reed et al., 2010, p. 170). Gay, lesbian, and bisexual college students have been found to experience hate crimes on the college campuses they attend. The fact that they are a sexual minority contributes to their vulnerability for sexual victimization. For example, the literature has consistently noted that gay men and women are targets for hate crimes because of their lifestyle difference to heterosexual men and women (Otis, 2007, p. 213). Lesbians' vulnerability to threats of sexual victimization may be magnified by their devalued status both as women as well as sexual minorities (Otis, 2007, p. 213). Furthermore, the early stages of "coming out" for gays and lesbians is typically linked to an increase in attending bars and clubs which heightens their risk of becoming a sexual assault victimization (Otis, 2007, p. 213).

As previously noted, this research study seeks to examine the perception of fear of crime among undergraduate college students who are enrolled in courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Texas at Arlington. College students are considered to be a vulnerable group to sexual assault victimization. The Greek community is the last vulnerable group that will be discussed. Research has found a moderate relationship between sorority participation and sexual assault victimization (Franklin, 2010, p. 151). Typically women who are part of a sorority are more vulnerable to sexual assault than men who

are part of a fraternity. Fraternity members characteristically have hypermasculine attitudes and influence competition, athleticism, heavy drinking, sexual domination of women, and sexism amongst other fraternity members. Men are clearly the ones in control on campuses that are dominated by fraternities (Flack et al., 2007, p. 154).

Most parties held in fraternity houses are not open for just anyone to attend. The fraternity brothers are the ones who pick and choose which women and men will be allowed to attend the party (Flack et al., 2007, p. 154). The women who are chosen are typically done so by what they look like as well as how revealing their clothes are that they wear. While the selected women are attending the fraternity party, they are often supplied with sweet-tasting drinks that can quickly and easily lead them to be intoxicated, which heightens their risk of sexual assault victimization. Fraternity men often supply the college women with large amounts of alcohol and drugs (Harkins & Dixon, 2010, p. 89). One study found that membership in a sorority greatly increased the likelihood of a college woman being sexually assaulted while she was intoxicated (Minow & Einolf, 2009, p. 837).

Since the Greek community tends to be tightly woven, this typically puts sorority members at a higher risk of sexual assault as opposed to non-sorority members. Fraternities and sororities have a family-like relationship between each other that can often reduce college women's fear of being sexually assaulted by their "brothers" (Minow & Einolf, 2009, p. 837). Furthermore, research has found that when sorority members attend events where alcohol is not served are less likely to be sexually assaulted. A combination of alcohol, reduced fear of sexual victimization by fraternity brothers, and exposure to potential perpetrators all contribute to a sorority member's risk of becoming a sexual victim (Franklin, 2010, p. 156). Since college students are a vulnerable group to sexual assault victimization, the researcher will next discuss various prevention methods of sexual assault occurrences will be discussed.

## 2.7 Prevention

Public health officials and legislators need to work diligently to raise the public's awareness of sexual assault and train human service providers to recognize and prevent sexual assault (Masho et al., 2005, p. 164). Prevention efforts for sexual assault victimization are difficult considering the substantial amount of assaults that are not reported. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that only 36% of rapes, 34% of attempted rapes, and 26% of sexual assaults are reported to the police (Masho et al., 2005, p. 157). It is hard for programs and prevention strategies to be developed to help deter sexual assault crimes because they typically go unreported. Several intervention methods and programs can be implemented on college campuses that collectively can help lower the frequency of sexual assault victimization. Methods from keeping the landscape of the campus well maintained and programs that teach self-defense mechanisms are among the few ways college campuses to help lower the fear of sexual assault possessed by college women as well as college men.

As previously discussed, proximate physical cues can provoke fear of sexual assault victimization among college students. There is a plethora of evidence that suggests a significant association between specific features of the immediate physical environment and crime-related fear (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 303). The design and maintenance of the physical environment influence the level of fear possessed by college students while on campus. Poorly maintained foliage and dim lighting are most often chosen by college students as reasons to heighten their level of fear while on campus (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 303).

Research advocates that perpetrators often choose places that provide them concealment from the view of their potential victims because it allows them to control the situation (Nasar et al., 1993, p. 164). Campus administrators should pay particular attention to the foliage that surrounds campus and make sure it is well maintained and cannot potentially hide a perpetrator that could harm a student while they were walking on campus. College students' consistently state that they are fearful of campus at night as well as areas that are not

well lit (Fisher & May, 2009, p. 304). Campus administrators should also pay particular attention to the lighting on campus. Adding more light to poorly lit areas and making sure lights are not burnt out in parking lots and walk paths are a few precautionary tasks they could take to help lower the level of fear of their students. Campus aesthetics are only a minor adjustment that could potentially lower the fear of sexual assault among college students on campus.

Self-defense training is also another prevention method that has been widely used on college campuses to lower fear of sexual assault. The strategy behind self-defense training is that increasing an individual's sense of physical competence may reduce their fear of crime (McDaniel, 1993, p. 37). Self-defense training is as much a physical training as it is a psychological training. Self-defense classes teach various forms of kicks, punches, and releases. Not only do such classes teach individuals specific skills to prevent an assault, but the idea is that if students learn self defense mechanisms then they will more than likely gain self-confidence, which will in turn lower their fear of crime because they are better equipped to take care of themselves (McDaniel, 1993, p. 37).

Women have reported greater feelings of power and confidence and decrease feelings of helplessness (McDaniel, 1993, p. 43). Research suggests that successful individuals who have successfully resisted rape are more confident, assertive, and perceive more control over their lives when compared to individuals who were raped. Forceful physical resistance is more effective in preventing a completed rape than a lack of resistance (Fisher et al., 2008, p. 166). It should be noted that some literature has found that while self-defense training may prevent the sexual assault of one woman, such classes will not solve the larger problem of sexual assault (Pazzani, 2007, p. 743). Nevertheless, self-defense training courses are a great way to help college students be better prepared in the future if they were to become a victim of sexual assault.

Alcohol education and the risks it poses for heightened sexual assault victimization is particularly important on college campuses considering the frequency of its use. One of the

most consistent findings throughout the research is the role alcohol use plays in sexual assault victimizations. As previously mentioned, some studies have found that alcohol is present in an estimated 80% of all sexual assaults (Nurius, 1999, p. 71). This fact cannot and should not be ignored by campus administrators. The unambiguous relationship between alcohol use and sexual assault has even led some authorities to support the notion that alcohol be banned from college campuses (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 112).

In recent years, alcohol has in fact been banned from student housing and sanctioned social events by many colleges and universities (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 112). Alcohol education classes that teach students about the adverse side effects and how alcohol can lower one's ability to assess a dangerous situation could possibly cause college students to think twice before they consumed alcohol. Women need to know that drinking can reduce their ability to detect risk, make them more vulnerable to being sexually assaulted, and reduce their ability to defend themselves if they are attacked (Ullman, 2003, p. 483). Sexual assault risk reduction programs do in fact face challenges in addressing alcohol's role in sexual assault victimizations because of the extremely strong correlation between the two variables (Davis et al., 2009, p. 1123).

The importance of educating men on sexual assault is also crucial to the prevention of sexual assault victimization. Since sexual assaults are substantially underreported, early identification and treatment of sexually aggressive men may be the most realistic approach to reducing future sexual assaults (Stander, Merrill, Thomsen, Crouch, & Milner, 2008, p. 1650). Research suggests that programs that are designed and implemented to men and women separately are more effective than programs that are presented to coeducational audiences (Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2009, p. 4).

Student athletes as well as fraternity men have been shown to benefit from programs strictly aimed at educating men. Research has suggested that social context may influence a nonviolent man to commit sexual assaults (Minow & Einolf, 2009, p. 849). Heavy alcohol



consumption and peers supporting sexual activity are a few social contexts that can influence a man to commit a sexual assault. It should be noted that social contexts themselves cannot turn a man into a rapist, but it can influence out of character behavior for that man (Minow & Einolf, 2009, p. 849). Sexual assault prevention programs should also address cognitive-behavior approaches toward shifting ideas about sex, intimacy, relationships and risky behaviors so that men are well aware what does and does not constitute forced sex (Franklin, 2010, p. 156). Attitudes, norms, and beliefs about sex and women are deeply culturally embedded, and in order for prevention programs to be effective they need to respond to localized worldviews (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009, p. 100).

Although sexual assault prevention programs have been increasingly successful at improving knowledge about sexual violence and decreasing rape supportive attitudes, reducing sexual assault itself remains an illusory outcome. The reduction of sexual assault frequency will not happen over night and patience as well as future research is needed to test the effectiveness of prevention programs. Particularly, even if an effective program was developed and implemented on a college campus, more than likely attendance will not be made mandatory, which would allow college women to still come into contact with college men who have not attended a sexual assault prevention program (Yeater, Naugle, O'Donohue, & Bradley, 2004, p. 610).

It is necessary for campus administrators as well as legislators to continue to develop sexual assault prevention programs that are able to not just educate college women and men about sexual assault, but that are able to actually show they are working to deter and minimize the occurrence of sexual assault victimizations on college campuses. The final section will discuss the fear college students have about sexual assault victimizations on college campuses.

## 2.8 Fear of Sexual Assaults on College Campuses

In general, crime on campus and fear of crime on campus are major concerns for college students, their parents, campus administrators, and policymakers alike (Lane, Gover, & Dahod, 2009, p. 172). Parents of students want the campus their children attend to be safe, and students in return want to feel comfortable while on campus. Unfortunately, sexual victimization continues to be a pervasive problem on numerous college campuses across the United States (Banyard, Ward, Cohn, Plante, Moorhead, & Walsh, 2007, p. 52). Undoubtedly, college populations are typically at a higher risk of sexual assault than the general population because the age group that experiences the most sexual assaults is comprised of many college students (Lane et al., 2009, p. 172).

Women between the ages of 16 and 19 have the highest risk of being a sexual assault victim (Hilinski, 2009, p. 85). Women who have the next highest risk of sexual assault victimization fall between the ages of 20 to 24 (Hilinski, 2009, p. 85). The typical age range of undergraduate college students are between the ages of 18 and 24. College populations definitely fall within the typical age range of highest risk of sexual assault victimization. Estimates of rape rates for college campuses have suggested that between 35 and 40 per 1,000 students have been sexually assaulted (Hilinski, 2009, p. 85). Even more alarming is the fact that 73% of rapes and sexually assault that occur on college campuses are committed by offenders who know their victim, and this estimate might actually be conservative (Hilinski, 2009, p. 85).

Recent years have seen a growing involvement on the part of campus administrators to acknowledge sexual assault is a pervasive problem on college campuses and seek to implement prevention programs and various strategies to prevent sexual assault from occurring in the future (Day, 1994, p. 744). College campuses have chosen to adopt sexual assault prevention strategies that have focused on the modification of the physical, social, and organizational environment of the campus. They also provide educational prevention programs

to teach their students about sexual assault and all the variables that it is negatively associated with.

College students tend to limit their time on campus because of the direct threat of sexual assault victimization at a particular time and place (Day, 1994, p. 747). These limitations can cause college students to not get the full experience of campus life and to cause them to miss out on important events that occur on campus. Preventative strategies are more apt to create an environment that is more secure for campus life and at the same time also promotes students' participation in activities that are occurring on campus.

The reasoning behind researching sexual assault victimization rates on college campuses is very important. The negative psychological and physical effects that follow sexual assault victimization are not only detrimental immediately after the assault, but have lasting effects that stay with the assault victim. Depression, heightened level fear, sexual dysfunction, problems with social adjustment, low self-esteem, post-traumatic stress disorder, and alcohol and drug addiction are among the many negative side effects that can follow a sexual assault victimization (Zawacki, 2008, p. 1918). Furthermore, all of these adverse side effects in turn can severely alter the education a college student obtains. The college student might not be able to go to class in fear of becoming a sexual assault victim again or they might not be able to study and do homework because of the psychological trauma the sexual assault victimization has caused. Sexual assault victimization prevalence among college students is essential because of the growing knowledge that suggests the ensuing negative side effects can produce consequence long term, life altering effects on assault victims.

For the past 20 years, researchers and sociologists from various fields have contributed extensively to the large and growing body of knowledge that surrounds the prevalence, risk factors, and consequential side effects of sexual assault victimization. However, many knowledge gaps in the literature still remain. Therefore, the purpose of this research will be to to examine the perception of fear of crime among undergraduate college students who are

enrolled in courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Texas at Arlington. The objective will be accomplished by measuring the responses from undergraduate students of perception based and knowledge based questions as they relate to fear of sexual assault on the University of Texas at Arlington campus. Further analysis of demographic variables will be performed to determine if significant differences exist between the undergraduate students.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This research study seeks to examine the perception of fear of crime among undergraduate college students who are enrolled in courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Texas at Arlington. In order to evaluate the significance of knowledge-based differences and perception-based differences as they relate to sexual assault victimizations among students attending the University of Texas at Arlington, a cross-sectional design was utilized.

#### 3.1 Survey Instrument

For the current research study, the researcher developed the survey questions. After development of the survey instrument, the researcher obtained approval from each of the professors of the Criminology and Criminal Justice courses that were surveyed. Approval from the Internal Review Board was approved before the current study began. In the present study, three key variables were measured: perception of sexual assault victimization, knowledge of sexual assault, and demographic information. The perception of sexual assault victimization section contained questions 1-13, the knowledge of sexual assault section contained questions 14-20, and the demographic information section contained questions 21-34. A survey using quantitative methodology was used to measure the three key variables.

The researcher developed the questions in the questionnaire based on the literature review. The sections that were highlighted most in the literature review were used by the researcher to develop each of the survey questions. The first set of questions measured the study subjects' perception of sexual assault victimization on campus. These questions were not concerned with past sexual assault experiences, but were more concerned with the students'

current perception of how they feel about sexual assault victimization on the University of Texas at Arlington campus. The second set of questions measured how much knowledge the study subjects possessed about sexual assault victimization on campus. These questions particularly dealt with how much the study subjects knew about how often sexual assaults occur on the University of Texas at Arlington campus. These questions were always interested in knowing if the study subjects knew where to find information concerning sexual assaults on campus, if they knew how to get help if they were a victim of sexual assault on campus, as well as where they usually received their information concerning sexual assault victimizations on campus. The study subjects were asked to rate each questions appearing in these two categories on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

The last set of questions identified the demographic information of the study subjects. These questions asked the study subjects to record information including but not limited to their age, gender, race, student status, and major. These questions were used to compare different groups of study subjects to see how their answers compared and contrasted with each other. The survey instrumentation can be found illustrated in the Appendix after the conclusion of Chapter 5.

### 3.2 Research Study Sample

The study sample was chosen based on their enrollment in Criminology and Criminal Justice courses during the 2010 Fall semester at the University of Texas at Arlington. The education level of the six undergraduate classes surveyed included two sophomore level courses, two junior level courses, and two senior level courses. Table 2 below depicts the number of participants from each of the six selected Criminology and Criminal Justice courses.

Table 2 The University of Texas at Arlington Criminology and Criminal Justice Surveyed Courses and Number of Participants

Criminology and Criminal Justice Course	Number of Participants
Criminology and Criminal Justice 2334 Introduction to the Criminal Justice System	39
Criminology and Criminal Justice 2335 Ethics and the Criminal Justice System	33
Criminology and Criminal Justice 3338 Juvenile Justice Systems	33
Criminology and Criminal Justice 3370 Introduction to Forensics	25
Criminology and Criminal Justice 4332 Community Corrections	8
Criminology and Criminal Justice 4333 Institutional Corrections	22
Total	160

The classes selected for the study were selected on the basis of three criteria: size, level of education, and the topics discussed in the class. The courses selected contained the largest amount of students when compared to other courses that were taught in the CRCJ department. Two classes from the sophomore level, junior level, and senior level were chosen to participate in the study. Freshman level courses were not selected for the current study. The topics discussed in each of the six courses also varied. This was done as to gather information from students who wanted to study different aspects of the criminal justice system. The surveys were presented to the students in these courses during the 2010 Fall semester. The courses were offered during the time of the data collection. Also, the professors from each of the courses gave their written consent to allow me to distribute the survey during a selected class day and time.

### 3.3 Sampling Techniques

This study used a purposive sampling technique to gather the cross-sectional data for this study. Because of the type of non-probability sampling technique used, the findings of this study are limited to the sample population and not generalized to the entire population. The surveys were given to a large number of Criminology and Criminal Justice undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Arlington. Criminology and Criminal Justice undergraduate students were chosen as the target population because of their knowledge and interest in crime. One could argue that uniqueness pertains to Criminology and Criminal Justice students because of their interest in the study of crime. All study subjects were assured of anonymity and were made known that their participation was strictly voluntary and did not affect their grade in their current courses.

### 3.4 Total Return

According to the University of Texas at Arlington, the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department had approximately 640 students currently enrolled during the 2010 Fall semester. Also, according to Jacob Cohen, an appropriate sample size based on this information is approximately 130. The total number of participants in the current study was totaled to 160, which is above the standard given by Cohen. The study also excluded freshman level courses which further suggest that 160 total participants is sufficient enough for the current research study.

### 3.5 Limitations

The current research study is not without limitations. One limitation was the how the survey was printed and given to the undergraduate students. The survey was printed on the front as well as the back of the printer paper. This caused some Criminology and Criminal Justice participants to miss answering some of the questions. When the participants did miss answering a survey questions, the researcher indicated the no response as a missing value (-1) when coding the survey using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Also, a few



of the questions were answered twice, which also resulted as a missing value (-1). A second limitation was the participants chosen for the current research study. Only undergraduate students who were taking the courses chosen by the researcher in the Criminology and Criminal Justice department in the Fall of 2010 were chosen to participate. One could argue that Criminology and Criminal Justice students possess a uniqueness because of their interest to study crime.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This research study sought to examine the perception of fear of crime among undergraduate college students who are enrolled in courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Texas at Arlington. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data for the purposes of this study. The survey questionnaire measured responses at both the nominal and ordinal level of measurement. The objective of this study was to compare the responses from the survey questions of undergraduate students currently enrolled in courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice of the University of Texas at Arlington pertaining to their perception and knowledge of sexual assault. The survey responses were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A One Sample *t*-test with *p* set at .05 was utilized to measure the survey responses. The Methodological Objectives in Chapter 3 discussed the reasoning behind the utilization of the *t*-test. Also, the frequencies were computed for the demographical traits.

#### 4.1 Survey Findings

This study surveyed 160 undergraduate students taking courses in the department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Texas at Arlington. While all of the surveys were answered, most of the surveys contained missing or invalid responses.

##### *4.1.1 Demographic Traits*

The demographic questions contained in the survey questionnaire revealed that a majority of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 21 (48.1%), were female (51.2%), identified themselves as White (42.5%), were a junior (40.0%), were employed (62.5%), were enrolled full time (92.5%), were majoring in criminology and criminal justice (61.9%), had a current cumulative GPA between 3.01 and 3.5 (32.5%), were living off campus (77.5%), were

mostly on campus between 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (82.5%), spent an average of more than 4 days on campus (57.5%), were not in a sorority or fraternity (81.9%), and did not play a collegiate sport (90.6%).

#### *4.1.2 Survey Findings of Perception-Based Differences*

In the category of “perception-based” questions, there was a statistical significance of differences between male and female undergraduate students in all thirteen questions. The p-value was .000 for all thirteen questions that pertained to perception-based differences. With regards to the survey question “I fear being sexually assaulted while on campus during the day”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses provided by females and males. The t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses offered by females and males in the survey question “I fear being sexually assaulted while on campus at night”. Also, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses offered by females and males in the survey question “I fear being sexually assaulted while walking alone on campus”.

In regards to the survey question “I fear being sexually assaulted while walking with another individual on campus”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses given by females and males. The t-test also showed a statistical significant difference in responses offered by females and males in regards to the survey question “I take necessary measures to prevent being a victim of sexual assault on campus by utilizing the escort service provided by UTA”. In regards to the survey question “I ask a colleague to walk with me on campus because I fear being a sexual assault victim while walking on campus”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses given by females and males.

When it comes to survey question “I park as close to buildings as possible to avoid being sexually assaulted on campus”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses given by females and males. Also, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses given by females and males in regards to the survey question “I avoid certain buildings/places on campus in order to prevent being a sexual assault victim”. With

regards to survey question “I carry a defense mechanism (i.e. pepper spray) on campus because I fear being a victim of sexual assault”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses provided by females and males.

In regards to survey question “I avoid certain people while on campus because I fear being a victim of sexual assault”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses offered by females and males. The t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses provided by females and males in regards to survey question “I schedule my classes during the day instead of at night in order to avoid being sexually assaulted”. Also, in regards to survey question “I believe my chances of being sexually assaulted are higher on campus than off campus”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses provided by females and males. With regards to survey question “I fear becoming a victim of sexual assault over becoming a victim of a property crime on campus”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses offered by females and males. The t-test analysis for the significance of perception-based differences of female and male undergraduate students pertaining to sexual assault is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 *t*-Test for the Significance of Perception-Based Differences of Female and Male Undergraduate Students Pertaining to Sexual Assault

Statement	Female Means	Male Means	<i>p</i> -values
I fear being sexually assaulted while on campus during the day.	4.29	4.82	.000*
I fear being sexually assaulted while on campus at night.	2.68	4.70	.000*
I fear being sexually assaulted while walking alone on campus.	3.06	4.77	.000*
I fear being sexually assaulted while walking with another individual on campus.	4.37	4.86	.000*

Table 3 – *Continued*

I take necessary measures to prevent being a victim of sexual assault on campus by utilizing the escort service provided by UTA.	3.83	4.55	.000*
I ask a colleague to walk with me on campus because I fear being a sexual assault victim while walking on campus.	4.01	4.81	.000*
I park as close to buildings as possible to avoid being sexually assaulted on campus.	3.17	4.72	.000*
I avoid certain buildings/places on campus in order to prevent being a sexual assault victim.	3.61	4.76	.000*
I carry a defense mechanism (i.e. pepper spray) on campus because I fear being a victim of sexual assault.	3.51	4.74	.000*
I avoid certain people while on campus because I fear being a victim of sexual assault.	3.88	4.74	.000*
I schedule my classes during the day instead of at night in order to avoid being sexually assaulted.	3.68	4.86	.000*
I believe my chances of being sexually assaulted are higher on campus than off campus.	3.99	4.53	.000*
I fear becoming a victim of sexual assault over becoming a victim of a property crime on campus.	3.52	4.86	.000*

\* Statistically significant at the .05 confidence level

#### 4.1.3 Survey Findings of Knowledge-Based Differences

In the category containing questions relating to knowledge-based differences, there were statistical significant differences in three of the eight questions. With regards to survey question “I am aware that sexual assaults occur on the UTA campus”, the t-test did not show a

statistical significant difference in responses given by females and males. The t-test also did not show a statistical significant difference in responses given by females and males in the survey question “I am aware of how often sexual assaults occur on the UTA campus”. With regards to survey question “I am aware I can be a victim of sexual assault during the day while on campus”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses offered by females and males. When it comes to survey question “I am aware I can be a victim of sexual assault at night while on campus”, the t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses provided by females and males.

The t-test showed a statistical significant difference in responses given by females and males in the survey question “I am aware of how to get in contact with the UTA police department in the event I am a victim of sexual assault while on campus”. With regards to survey question “I am aware the UTA police department offers tips and advice on sexual assault on the UTA website”, the t-test did not show a statistical significant difference in responses offered by females and males. The t-test did not show a statistical significant difference in responses provided by females and males in the survey question “I am aware of how to find out how often and where sexual assaults occur on campus”. With regards to survey question “I obtain most of my information about crime on campus from one of the following”, the t-test also did not show a statistical significant difference in responses given by females and males. Table 4 presents p-values for all questions relevant to knowledge-based questions in the survey questionnaire.

Table 4 *t*-Test for the Significance of Knowledge-Based Differences of Female and Male Undergraduate Students Pertaining to Sexual Assault

Statement	Female Means	Male Means	<i>p</i> -values
I am aware that sexual assaults occur on the UTA campus.	2.59	2.82	.181
I am aware of how often sexual assaults occur on the UTA campus.	3.67	3.83	.268
I am aware I can be a victim of sexual assault during the day while on campus.	2.31	3.45	.000*
I am aware I can be a victim of sexual assault at night while on campus.	1.54	3.21	.000*
I am aware of how to get in contact with the UTA police department in the event I am a victim of sexual assault while on campus.	2.67	2.32	.045*
I am aware the UTA police department offers tips and advice on sexual assault on the UTA website.	3.02	2.73	.071
I am aware of how to find out how often and where sexual assaults occur on campus.	3.66	3.46	.279
I obtain most of my information about crime on campus from one of the following.	6.00	5.78	.361

\* Statistically significant at the .05 confidence level

A Pearson's R correlation test was done on each of the survey questions to determine if there were any correlations among variables as well as the strength and direction of the relationship. There were many questions that had a significant correlation at the  $p=.01$  level as well as at the  $p=.05$  level. With regards to survey question 2 and survey question 3, the Pearson's R test showed a strong, positive correlation in responses given by females and

males. The Pearson's R test also showed a strong, positive correlation in responses offered by females and males for survey question 1 and survey question 4. With regards to survey question 3 and survey question 7, the Pearson's R test showed a strong, positive correlation in responses given by females and males.

With regards to survey question 2 and survey question 21, the Pearson's R test showed a weak, negative correlation in responses provided by females and males. The Pearson's R test also showed a weak, negative correlation in responses offered by females and males for survey question 8 and survey question 20. With regards to survey question 17 and survey question 20, the Pearson's R test showed a weak, negative correlation in responses given by females and males. The Pearson's R matrix for each question in the survey is presented below in Table 5. The numerical values highlighted in yellow have the most significant correlation to each other. The numerical values highlighted in green have the least significant correlation with each other. The key for the questions is presented in Table 6 following the Pearson's R matrix.

Table 5 Pearson's R Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
1	1	.57 3**	.66 3**	.79 6**	.41 2**	.64 6**	.39 9**	.44 3**	.30 9*	.42 2**	.39 2**	.32 4**	.48 0**	.15 8*	.26 8**	.23 6**	.18 7*	.17 1*	.1 03	.1 17	.06 3	
2	.5 73 **	1	.86 4**	.57 2**	.36 2**	.57 9**	.73 1**	.65 2**	.50 6**	.54 1**	.59 8**	.38 4**	.63 7**	.08 8	.07 3	.29 2**	.47 0**	- .08	- .0	- .0	- .0	.00 3
3	.6 63 **	.86 4**	1	.65 4**	.43 4**	.67 8**	.68 0**	.62 5**	.48 4**	.54 8**	.55 8**	.39 9**	.57 2**	.15 2	.12 7	.37 2**	.46 5**	.05 3	.0 09	.0 01	.0 3	.01 3
4	.7 96 **	.57 2**	.65 4**	1	.41 4**	.66 3**	.45 9**	.53 8**	.45 3**	.49 0**	.41 3**	.31 4**	.50 0**	.14 0	.22 0**	.20 8**	.17 1*	.12 2	.0 46	.0 67	.12 9	
5	.4 12 **	.36 2**	.43 4**	.41 4**	1	.55 5**	.36 2**	.35 9**	.38 6**	.37 2**	.37 2**	.21 5**	.35 0**	.17 6*	.19 7*	.19 7*	.18 9*	.27 8**	.2 09	.1 60	.10 2	
6	.6 46 **	.57 9**	.67 8**	.66 3**	.55 5**	1	.57 7**	.53 6**	.47 3**	.52 6**	.55 4**	.33 6**	.52 3**	.17 9*	.23 8**	.27 3**	.25 6**	.24 0**	.2 06	.1 99	.04 3	
7	.3 99 **	.73 1**	.68 0**	.45 9**	.36 2**	.57 7**	1	.75 9**	.55 0**	.54 7**	.63 7**	.47 0**	.48 9**	.07 4	.09 8	.26 3**	.42 5**	.01 0	- .0	- .0	- .05	
8	.4 43 **	.65 2**	.62 5**	.53 8**	.35 9**	.53 6**	.75 9**	1	.52 5**	.64 6**	.63 4**	.44 3**	.53 1**	.08 9	.14 0	.25 8**	.36 0**	.01 1	- .0	.0 59	.03 9	



Table 5 – Continued

9	.309*	.506**	.484**	.453**	.386**	.473**	.550**	.525**	1	.574**	.465**	.390**	.326**	.148	.179*	.265**	.251**	.134	.053	.095	-.091
10	.422**	.541**	.548**	.490**	.372**	.526**	.547**	.646**	.574**	1	.502**	.334**	.472**	.111	.049	.226**	.297**	.082	.082	.070	.010
11	.392**	.598**	.558**	.413**	.372**	.554**	.637**	.634**	.465**	.502**	1	.414**	.559**	.066	.132	.228**	.324**	.081	.093	.139	.035
12	.324**	.384**	.399**	.314**	.215**	.336**	.470**	.443**	.390**	.334**	.414**	1	.382**	.266**	.269**	.335**	.394**	.084	.093	.076	-.136
13	.480**	.637**	.572**	.500**	.350**	.523**	.489**	.531**	.326**	.479**	.552**	.382**	1	.185**	.111	.304**	.376**	.079	.055	.223	.043
14	.158*	.088	.152	.140	.176*	.179*	.074	.089	.148	.111	.066	.266**	.185**	1	.591**	.446**	.379**	.247**	.292**	.355**	-.031
15	.268**	.073	.127	.220**	.197*	.238**	.098	.140	.179*	.049	.132	.269**	.111	.591**	1	.283**	.187*	.273**	.266**	.332**	.049
16	.236**	.292**	.378**	.208**	.197*	.273**	.263**	.258**	.266**	.228**	.228**	.335**	.304**	.446**	.283**	1	.794**	.072	.128	.130	-.028
17	.187*	.470**	.465**	.171*	.189*	.256**	.425**	.360**	.251**	.299**	.324**	.392**	.379**	.379**	.184**	.794**	1	.099	.150	.107	-.083
18	.171*	-.082	.053	.122	.278**	.240**	.010	.010	.134	.082	.082	.082	.079	.247**	.273**	.072	-.099	1	.542	.509	.093
19	.103	-.098	.009	.046	.209**	.206**	-.052	-.052	.083	.089	.093	.055	.292**	.266**	.128	.059	.542	1	.533	.330	.020
20	.117	-.088	.015	.067	.160*	.197*	-.047	.047	.095	.009	.132	.076	.025**	.395**	.532**	.130	.059	.509**	1	.330	.090
21	.063	.007	.013	.129	.102	.043	-.055	.039	-.091	.035	-.036	.041	-.041	.048	-.048	-.048	.093	.093	.020	1	.090

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 Questions for Pearson's R Matrix

Question Number	Question
1	I fear being sexually assaulted while on campus during the day.
2	I fear being sexually assaulted while on campus at night.
3	I fear being sexually assaulted while walking alone on campus.
4	I fear being sexually assaulted while walking with another individual on campus.

Table 6 – *Continued*

5	I take necessary measures to prevent being a victim of sexual assault on campus by utilizing the escort service provided by UTA.
6	I ask a colleague to walk with me on campus because I fear being a sexual assault victim while walking on campus.
7	I park as close to buildings as possible to avoid being sexually assaulted on campus.
8	I avoid certain buildings/places on campus in order to prevent being a sexual assault victim.
9	I carry a defense mechanism (i.e. pepper spray) on campus because I fear being a victim of sexual assault.
10	I avoid certain people while on campus because I fear being a victim of sexual assault.
11	I schedule my classes during the day instead of at night in order to avoid being sexually assaulted.
12	I believe my chances of being sexually assaulted are higher on campus than off campus.
13	I fear becoming a victim of sexual assault over becoming a victim of a property crime on campus.
14	I am aware that sexual assaults occur on the UTA campus.
15	I am aware of how often sexual assaults occur on the UTA campus.
16	I am aware I can be a victim of sexual assault during the day while on campus.
17	I am aware I can be a victim of sexual assault at night while on campus.
18	I am aware of how to get in contact with the UTA police department in the event I am a victim of sexual assault while on campus.
19	I am aware the UTA police department offers tips and advice on sexual assault on the UTA website.
20	I am aware of how to find out how often and where sexual assaults occur on campus.
21	I obtain most of my information about crime on campus from one of the follow

In summary, after thorough analysis of the data some significant observations can be made. First, female students expressed they felt less safe on campus than their male counterparts. The female undergraduate students who took part in the survey were more likely to fear being sexually assaulted on campus at night than male undergraduate students. Female undergraduate students also were more likely to carry a defense mechanism than male undergraduate students. Second, male undergraduate students expressed they did not need to park closer to buildings or avoid certain buildings or places. Additionally, male undergraduate students felt they would be a victim of a property crime over a sexual assault crime. Overall, female undergraduate students do not feel as safe on campus as male undergraduate students especially at night on the UTA campus.

Additionally, all of the thirteen questions that were in the perception-based category had a significant correlation at the .01 confidence level with each other. This finding is significant because this implies that knowledge of one variable gives you information about what the value of the other variable is likely to be. There was a strong correlation (.646\*\*) among undergraduate students who feared being a victim of sexual assault while on campus during the day who also asked a colleague to walk with them while on campus because they feared becoming a sexual assault victim. Also, there was a strong correlation (.759\*\*) among undergraduate students who parked as close to buildings as possible and avoided certain building and places because they feared becoming a sexual assault victim. One more interesting finding from the data was that male students stated they knew how to get into contact with the UTA police department in the event they were a victim of sexual assault as opposed to their female counterparts. There was only one question, which was how students obtained most of their information about crimes on campus, that did not have a correlation with any of the other twenty questions.

The findings of this study in measuring perception-based and knowledge-based differences of undergraduate students taking courses in the CRCJ department at UTA on

sexual assault victimization are that there are in fact statistically significant differences between female and male students. The data depicts that female students do not feel as safe on campus as male students. Although there are statistical significant differences among female and male students, none of the students responded with being totally fearful of becoming a sexual assault victim on the UTA campus. In addition, the majority of female and male students were aware that sexual assaults occurred on campus as well as how to get into contact with the UTA police department in the event a sexual assault occurred. Further studies involving a broader scope of sexual assault victimizations on college campuses could provide a more in-depth analysis of perception and knowledge college students contain about sexual assault victimization.

In the next chapter, the researcher will begin by discussing in further detail the findings of the t-test and Pearson's R test, policy implications that can be developed from the current research study, and the debate surrounding the decision to allow concealed handguns on college campuses across the state of Texas. The chapter will end with discussing the need for further research on the topic of sexual assault on college campuses as well as how future research will help confirm or deny the perception and knowledge college students possess on the topic of sexual assault.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

After careful analysis of the data received from survey questionnaires given to undergraduate students taking courses in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Texas at Arlington, it can be stated that in regards to fear of crime there is a statistical significant difference between female and male undergraduate students. The research data further revealed that female undergraduate students are more likely to feel less safe on campus than male undergraduate students.

Also, female undergraduate students were more aware that they could become a victim of sexual assault while on campus while male undergraduate students did not express the same fear, however, female undergraduate students were less likely to know how to get in touch with the University of Texas at Arlington police department in the event they were a victim of sexual assault, less likely to know where to find how often sexual assaults occurred on campus, and did not know that the University of Texas at Arlington police department offered tips and advice about sexual assault on the University of Texas at Arlington website. Also, the research data indicated that female undergraduate students felt generally safe on campus during the day, but did not feel safe on campus at night. Male undergraduate students felt safe on campus during the day as well as at night. It is also interesting that both female and male undergraduate students overall felt that they could become a victim of sexual assault more often when they are off campus as opposed to when they are on campus.

The significance of these findings could be attributed to the way females and males are socialized. The responses given by females and males could contribute to the way they were raised within their particular cultural norms. Every culture has different guidelines about what is

appropriate for males and females. Gender roles refer to the group of social and behavioral norms that are deemed to be socially correct for females and males in the context of a specific culture. Gender socialization is the inclination for females and males to be socialized differently. Females are raised to conform and agree with the female gender or role, and males are raised to do the same for the male gender role. Biology, family, and education can all impact how an individual is socialized within a particular culture.

The survey responses as they relate to undergraduate students mirror common themes found in the extensive amount of literature regarding sexual assault victimization on college campuses. As previously stated in Chapter 2, college students tend to limit their time on campus because of the direct threat of sexual assault victimization at a particular time and place. When individuals are fearful of becoming a victim of a criminal offense, they will more than likely exhibit certain and abnormal behaviors to try and avoid certain places and people in order to lessen their chances of becoming victimized. Female undergraduate students stated in their survey responses that they are more likely to avoid certain places, buildings, and people to avoid becoming a victim of sexual assault. Past research has constantly unveiled that college women typically are more fearful of criminal victimization at night as opposed to their male counterparts. This statement was also found in the present research study because the female undergraduate students in the present study were more likely to be fearful of sexual assault at night as opposed to the male undergraduate students in the present study.

#### 5.1 Policy Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications on the overall safety of college campuses throughout the United States. The data reveals that female undergraduate students taking courses in Criminology and Criminal Justice feel safe on the University of Texas at Arlington do not feel as safe as male undergraduate students enrolled in the same courses. Based upon the survey responses offered by females, the first policy the researcher

recommends for college campuses is self training defense courses for female undergraduate students.

Past research has suggested that self defense training courses are not only about physical preparation for an attack, but also a psychological preparation. The physical preparation of self defense training is learning various kicks, punches, and releases. Female students would essentially learn how to protect themselves and defend off an attacker. The idea behind the psychological preparation is that if female students learn self defense mechanisms then they will more than likely gain self-confidence, which will in turn lower their fear of crime because they are better equipped to take care of themselves. Self defense training for females would be especially useful because females are less likely to know how to defend off an attacker than males.

The second policy the researcher recommends for college campuses is ensuring the campus is maintained on a weekly basis. The research data suggested that female students were more likely to choose their classes during the day as opposed to night and one reason for this could be because the campus is not as well lit as it should be or classes that are at night are not being held in well lit areas. Checking for light outages and overgrown foliage should be a weekly occurrence.

Campus administrators need to be aware of how the immediate environment can provoke fear in college students. For example, making sure dim lights are replaced promptly around campus, maintaining foliage around campus to make sure a potential attacker can not hide and stalk their victims without being seen, and holding night classes in areas on campus that contain more light than other areas will help lower the fear of sexual assault. Past literature has stated several times that individuals avoid certain places and buildings because they fear attackers could be hiding behind bushes or other areas near the building. There is a plethora of evidence that suggests a significant association between specific features of the immediate physical environment and crime-related fear.

The third policy the researcher recommends for college campuses is creating sexual assault prevention programs. The programs should be designed to teach females as well as males the facts about sexual assault. The program design for females should be directed towards females and the like should be done with males. The data demonstrates females and males do not have the same fear about sexual assault victimization. Females are more likely to be the victim of sexual assaults, and males are more likely to be the perpetrator of sexual assaults.

Teaching females how to prevent putting themselves in vulnerable situations would be an ideal part of the program. Also, teaching females about alcohol and how alcohol can potentially lead to sexual assault victimization would be beneficial as well. Males would need to be taught how to prevent themselves from becoming a perpetrator and recognizing when a female is unable to coherently decline a sexual act. Males also could be taught about the consequences of being accused or convicted of being a perpetrator of sexual assault. Knowing the facts about sexual assault victimization would benefit students, parents, and faculty alike.

### 5.2 Concealed Handguns on College Campuses

Recently in the media on national news channels, such as Cable News Network (CNN) and MicroSoft National Broadcasting Company (MSNBC), there have been many talks concerning concealed handguns on college campuses in Texas. The Texas Legislature is currently considering several bills that could allow concealed handguns on college campuses across Texas. Concealed handguns on college campuses would not make the campuses any safer than they are now. If this bill passes, then it could cause more harm than good. In regards to the responses from females on the questions from the survey, allowing guns could make females feel less safe on campus than they already do.

Allowing concealed handguns on campus could reverse this finding. Females as well as males could become more leery of other individuals on campus and avoid them even more than they have already expressed they do. Allowing concealed handguns on campus would



significantly increase the potential for members of the UTA community to be injured or killed. The UTA campus is perceived to be safe, but by allowing concealed handguns to be legal on any college campus is blatantly stating that legislators do not believe college campuses are safe. Further research needs to be conducted in order to really determine if college students do not feel safe on campus as well as how they feel about allowing concealed handguns on their college campus.

Several individuals, groups, and institutions within the UT system have expressed their views on this subject. UTA's Student Congress by a vote of 36 to 6 adopted a resolution against the proposed concealed handgun bills that have been introduced in the Legislature. UTA's Student Congress also sponsored a campus forum that had an extremely successful turnout on the issue. UT System Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa sent a letter to Governor Rick Perry strongly communicating the concerns of the many constituents of the UT System institutions. The Texas Council of Student Services Vice Presidents, which comprises 46 public institutions across the state, has expressed in a letter to legislators the serious concerns its members have on this issue. Also Frank Lamas, vice president for student affairs at UTA, serves as chair elect of this group. Many individuals of the UTA system are expressing their concern over this issue. Concealed handguns would only cause more harm than good. The harm could be more injuries and even death to students and faculty attending the UTA campus.

### 5.3 Future Research

While many researchers have studied the area of sexual assault on college campuses, still more research needs to be conducted to ensure college campuses are safe or are not safe. Bills that are currently in legislation prove that more research needs to be conducted. By putting this bill even into consideration, our Legislators are implying that they believe that college campuses in Texas are not as safe as they should be and they think allowing concealed handguns on campus could possibly make college campuses in Texas safer. Research that analyzes how students across many college campuses in different rural and urban areas of the

country feel about safety on their campus would benefit this topic and prove one way or the other how safe students feel on their campus. A follow up study that analyzed how safe students would feel if concealed handguns were allowed on campus could prove if students feel they would be safer with concealed handguns or not on campus.

A continuous reevaluation of knowledge and perception as it relates to sexual assault victimization among college students is necessary to ensure all students feel safe on the campus they are attending because times and students are ever changing. Students who feel safe on their college campus are more likely to do well in school and as well have an overall good experience while obtaining their degree. This in turn will not only help students once they have graduated, but will also help society.

## APPENDIX









30. I currently am living

On Campus       Off Campus

31. I am mostly on campus during

6:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.       5:01 p.m.—11:59 p.m.

32. How many days on average do you spend on campus during one week?

One       Two       Three       Four       More than four

33. Are you currently in a fraternity/sorority?

Yes       No

34. Do you play a collegiate sport for the University of Texas at Arlington?

Yes       No



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