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DePaul University

College of Education

CONSENT AROUND THE GLOBE:

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMING THAT RESPONDS TO THE

NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A Dissertation in Education with a Concentration in Educational Leadership

by

Michael Blackman

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Education

June 2020

We approve the dissertation of Michael Blackman

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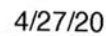
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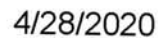
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Certification of Authorship

I certify that I am the sole author of this dissertation. Any assistance received in the preparation of this dissertation has been acknowledged and disclosed within it. Any sources utilized, including the use of data, ideas and words, those quoted directly or paraphrased, have been cited. I certify that I have prepared this dissertation according program guidelines, as directed.

Author Signature ___*Michael Blackman*_____

Date___4/21/20_____

ABSTRACT

International students are a growing presence on college campuses across the United States. However, despite their increased numbers on college campuses, they have been overlooked in analyses regarding subgroups and sexual violence prevention. This qualitative, phenomenological study sought to describe the lived experiences of East Asian international students as they travel to the United States and learn about sexual violence. Interviews were conducted with eight East Asian international students studying at a public university in the Midwest. Themes emerged from the interview data describing the lived experiences of these students. These themes were (1) navigating a more open society without preparation, (2) feeling pressure and choosing silence, (3) searching for meaning and learning through example, and (4) developing knowledge through interactions. The themes led to recommendations for best practices for sexual violence prevention educators. The study also called led to recommendations for further research, (1) expanding the target population to more institutions, (2) controlling for specific countries of origin, (3) quantitative analyses of program success, and (4) quantitative analyses of learning outcomes.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I started my doctoral journey four years ago, I could never have conceived of all the new connections that I would form along the way. Countless people offered their thoughts on my research and connected me with others who also were passionate about the topic. In an exhausting and isolating national climate, I stayed energized by the care exhibited by all of the individuals who bolstered my work and me. I humbly put forward this dissertation and acknowledge the extensive support of those whose names do not appear on the cover page.

I have had the pleasure of working under a brilliant committee of hardworking individuals who challenge me in an especially caring way. Dr. Rebecca Michel, I am grateful for your candor, thoughtfulness, and leadership. You deeply contributed to my growth as a researcher. Dr. Sunny Park-Johnson, your practical advice on the research process helped me avoid redundant efforts and prepare for contingencies I would not have imagined. Dr. Kimberly Sluis, your perspective as a practitioner always helped me think through how my study could have the strongest impact on the field. Throughout this process, I most looked forward to moments that invited rigorous committee dialogue, a testament to the open and reflective environment my committee created.

I was amazed when I first met with the head of Hart University's International Affairs office. I asked for your assistance with the study and what I could do for you in return for your support. Your one request (besides a lunch down the line) is that I "pay it forward" to a future doctoral student. To the gatekeepers at Hart University, I am grateful for the extensive amount of volunteered time you gave purely out of your support for me and a belief in the importance of the research.

In meeting with the student participants, I immediately observed a profound reflectiveness that the rest of the study relied upon. Speaking about sexual violence requires a

level of vulnerability and courage that I tried never to take for granted. Your narratives transformed my thinking and I hope will do the same for others who come across my findings. Thank you for your bravery and willingness to put forth your lived experiences in the hopes that it may help others.

It's not easy to return from your wedding and immediately have your husband begin years of night classes and dissertation writing. With each passing year, I become more impressed with my wife's patience, strength, and selflessness. Kathleen, you have been my champion from the moment I met you, always telling me to persevere through this doctoral journey even when it was most difficult for you. You and your family (Loretta, Jim, Matt, Meaghan, and Andrew) have maintained a seemingly never-ending interest in my studies. It is hard to believe that I started this when we had just been married and am ending it with our daughter, Nora, turning one and a half. Nora, even though you won't be able to (and probably won't want to) read this for a very long time, thanks for always making me laugh even when my commitments were the most overwhelming.

Mom and Dad, attempting to contain decades of unyielding dedication and advocacy into a single note within this manuscript would be a total disservice. In short, you have taught me to love learning, fight to improve myself, put others first, and advocate for equity and justice among a host of other less applicable values. I recognize that the flurry of sacrifices I saw you make for me are only a fraction of the overall whole. Thank you for always keeping me in the center of your hearts (at least until Nora arrived).

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fostered a passion for this topic area and doing right by students. Debbie, you and your team shared your own experiences with research and gave incalculable amounts of time to free up bandwidth so that I could dedicate the time necessary to write this dissertation. I'm forever grateful.

To all of you, I am deeply indebted, gracious, and impressed. You all mean so much to me and are the lifeblood of this study. Thank you.

Mike Blackman

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

One in five women and one in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college (M. C.

Black et al., 2011). More than 90% of sexual assault victims on college campuses do not report

the assault (Fisher et al., 2000). Beyond the sheer prevalence of these incidents, the impact on

victims includes deleterious physiological and psychological effects (Trickett et al., 2011;

Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2014) and academic attrition (Duncan, 2000; Jordan et al., 2014). The

devastation caused by sexual violence on college campuses has compelled researchers to better

understand what types of educational and prevention efforts are most effective at reducing sexual

violence, encouraging bystander intervention, and increasing reporting of sexual violence

(DeGue, 2014; Gidycz et al., 2011).

As sexual assault reports on U.S. college and university campuses have been increasing,

the number of international students on college campuses in the United States has also continued

to rise. In 2006, nine times as many students worldwide studied in a foreign country than was the

case in 1963 (Varghese, 2008). Due to several factors discussed more extensively below, the

number of international students studying in the United States has increased fairly consistently

since the mid-20th century (Bhandari & Chow, 2008; Davis, 1997). In light of these trends,

researchers have sought to understand the unique needs and characteristics of international

students. For example, international students in the United States face higher levels of stress

(Misra & Castillo, 2004) and have more difficulty adjusting to English-speaking institutions

(Andrade, 2006). International students struggle to manage language barriers (Pedersen, 1991;

Wu et al., 2015) and face racial discrimination and prejudice (Hanassab, 2006), including when

serving in leadership roles such as teaching assistantships, even when their language skills are

completely standard (Rubin, 1992). Finally, certain groups of international students are less

likely to seek help in the face of personal or academic difficulty (E.-J. Lee et al., 2014; N. Zhang

& Dixon, 2003). Certainly, international students can also be victims, perpetrators, or bystanders of sexual assault on college campuses (Dussich, 2001; Postmus & Ah Hahn, 2007). As such, it is crucial that educators understand the unique needs of international students in order to tailor sexual violence prevention education to address them. This study seeks to shed light on the experiences of international students to give educators the information they need to ensure that their sexual violence prevention efforts are culturally responsive and effective.

As will be discussed below, sociocultural identity and personal experience have an impact on the effectiveness of an educational initiative. Researchers have demonstrated this phenomenon in general (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nasir & Hand, 2006). It has also been demonstrated specifically around sexual violence prevention education efforts (Morrison et al., 2004; Vladutiu et al., 2011). For example, educational efforts focused on having empathy for victims are particularly effective at changing the knowledge and attitudes of fraternity students (Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). Bystander intervention efforts are particularly effective at changing the behavior of men (Gidycz et al., 2011; Salazar et al., 2014). This research demonstrates that, to maximize the effectiveness as sexual violence prevention, educators must tailor their efforts to the sociocultural identities and personal experiences of their participants. Given the aforementioned rise in international students and the barriers they face, it seems likely that this group would benefit from tailored prevention efforts. In order to do that, educators must better understand the experiences of these students and this study seeks to do that.

My involvement and interest in this study stems from my background. Giving voice to the marginalized has been a central tenet of my work since I entered the field. I remember as a young professional feeling that my employers could have better structures in place to support marginalized individuals. I remember being surprised by how intolerant my supervisors were of

different working styles that were often influenced by sociocultural background. I remember being frustrated at the lack of sociocultural diversity among institutional leadership. I am exploring international students' experiences learning about sexual violence and consent in the United States because, in many areas, institutions do not make sufficient efforts to address personal challenges that these students face (Andrade, 2006; Misra & Castillo, 2004). I think it is irresponsible to reproduce content built for domestic students, deliver it to international students, and expect that these initiatives will be equally effective for this population. My hope is that educators would be able to use my research to understand the need for culturally sensitive educational initiatives and as a foundation for developing those initiatives in an evidence-based way.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to ascribe meaning to the experiences that East Asian, international students have when learning about sexual violence in the United States. *Learning about sexual violence* can be described as the experiences that international students have inside and outside of their Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) that shape their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors around sexual violence. The body of research on sexual violence prevention education is predominantly quantitative in nature (see Morrison, Hardison, Mathew, & O'Neil, 2004; Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2011). The lack of qualitative research illuminates a need to better understand and explain the lived experiences of students who learn about sexual violence (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In addition, the voices and experiences of international students is noticeably absent in the literature on sexual violence prevention. Although researchers have advocated for tailored approaches to sexual violence prevention based on certain sociocultural identity markers, such as race and gender (DeGue et al., 2014;

Newlands, 2016), little qualitative research has been conducted to connect the experiences of these students to how educators may develop tailored education. Further, of the small amount of research that exists on these experiences, almost none focused on international students. Therefore, my research seeks to uncover the experiences of these international students who have, historically, been absent from the literature.

Research Questions

Sexual violence prevention programming on college campuses is intended to change the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of students towards the overall goal of reducing the prevalence of sexual violence (DeGue et al., 2012). By exploring how coming to the United States influences how students understand sexual violence, educators may better address the needs of these students, reduce sexual violence prevalence, and increase rates of seeking help within this population. Specifically, this study aims to explore how international students learn about and make sense of sexual violence while in the United States. Following recommendations outlined by Creswell (2012), the research question has two components - a central research question and sub-questions that address facets of the central research question. These questions are open-ended and reflect the exploratory, emic spirit of qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2015).

Central Question

How do East Asian international students attending an urban college/university in the U.S. describe the experience of learning about sexual violence during college?

Sub-questions

1. What are the different settings in which international college students learn about sexual violence in the United States?

2. How does the experience of learning about sexual violence in college differ from the experience of learning about sexual violence prior to coming to the United States?

3. What strategies and resources do international college students use to navigate cultural differences when learning about sexual violence?

Overview of Methodology

Phenomenological research emerged from the philosophical work of Edmund Husserl (Moustakas, 1994). As a philosophy, phenomenology has evolved over time as Husserl and his students, most notably Martin Heidegger, have continued to develop its conceptual underpinnings (Farina, 2014). Broadly speaking, phenomenology is the study of how individuals experience and are conscious of the world around them (Moustakas, 1994). Emerging in contrast to scientism or objectivism, Husserl's phenomenology begins with a worldly phenomenon and then extracts the essence of how individuals experience that phenomenon. Phenomenology asserts that consciousness is not an independent phenomenon. Consciousness always focuses on a worldly object and, therefore, reality is constructed by the interactions between subjects and objects (Creswell, 2012; Crotty, 1998).

In the spirit of this philosophy, the goal of phenomenological research is to understand the experience of a phenomenon, typically through the lens of multiple individuals (Goulding, 2005). As a form of qualitative inquiry, phenomenology seeks to understand a phenomenon rather than generalize a finding (Creswell, 2012; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). As discussed in more detail below, a key aspect of phenomenological inquiry is the process of the researcher *bracketing* their previous experiences in order to focus on the lived experiences of the participants (Flood, 2010; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological researchers assume that there is no single reality. Rather, there are multiple realities as experienced by multiple individuals

(Giorgi, 1997). Phenomenological researchers know what they know by getting as close as is possible to participants and finding themes within their shared experience of a single phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). By bracketing their own experiences and exploring the shared phenomenological experience of others, researchers can better understand the collective lived experience in relation to a single phenomenon.

Role of the Researcher/Positionality

In phenomenological research, bracketing the researcher's past experiences through discussion and examination is crucial because these experiences can profoundly affect one's ability to deeply understand others' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). In my current position, I have been responsible for, among other duties, working directly with victims and perpetrators of sexual misconduct. In this role, I have heard students discuss the cultural influences that have prevented them from seeking help and normalized the behaviors of perpetrators. Because of this, I believe that cultural differences influence students' understanding and definition of sexual violence and that institutions should be tailoring their educational initiatives to address this. However, I had not yet known how this phenomenon manifests itself, thus my motivation for doing this research.

I was born and educated within the United States. I have not studied abroad and I hold significant privilege in my Whiteness and masculinity. As a result, I inherently bring what Johnson and Christensen (2016, p. 306) term an "outsider's view" to the research process. Some scholars present arguments that researching outside of an identity group is an insurmountable barrier (Stanley & Wise, 1983). Though I agree that researching outside of one's identity groups is a problematic task requiring careful and intentional work, I disagree with the premise that it should be strictly avoided. Limiting researchers to their own identity groups closes the door to a

vast body of knowledge. In addition, it proves to be an almost impossible task given the increasing complexity and intersectionality of sociocultural identity. As such, I believe that outsider research is not impossible. However, we must infuse our research with a deep cultural awareness that establishes inside-outside legitimation (Johnson & Christensen, 2016).

There are other aspects of my identity that could influence my positionality within the research. First, I assume that all forms of sexual misconduct (including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape) are a problem and merit significant institutional resources to preventing and addressing. As such, I have a strong aversion to rape-supportive attitudes and this aversion may complicate my ability to listen objectively to them. If such aversion occurs, inside-outside legitimation becomes all the more important (Johnson & Christensen, 2016). The idea behind inside-outside legitimation is to move fluently between the world of the participants and the world of the objective observer. As a researcher, I must remind myself that entering the world and perspective of the participant is a necessary process when conducting the study. However, this process assures the researcher that entering the world of the participant does not mean adopting their views as the researcher. Second, I am cisgender and male-identified. Occupying this position of power across, arguably, the most salient identity in relation to sexual violence (gender identity) presents complications in creating a safe and comfortable environment for participants and analyzing the data in a culturally informed way. Researchers have already asserted that certain cultures that more predominantly feature traditional gender roles might unintentionally suppress reporting through reinforcing the idea that women should be submissive and silent about sex (K. B. Anderson et al., 1997; Nayak et al., 2003). I must be careful not to expect that new sojourners to the United States would speak openly about sex to a relatively unknown cisgender male.

My hope is that by reflecting on my personal experiences, I will be better able to authentically tell the stories of the participants (Creswell, 2012).

Rationale and Significance

Through this study, I hope to better understand the experiences of a subset international students as they learn about sexual violence while in college in the United States. In doing so, I hope to provide educators with evidence-based justification for doing tailored programming for international students. Additionally, the study may generate useful information for educators as they consider what learning outcomes and pedagogical techniques they should consider when developing these programs. Research has not yet explored the interactivity between a student's status as an international student and how they learn about sexual violence in the United States. Findings may inform educators as they seek to continue to develop initiatives that are responsive to the unique needs of their students. Findings suggest that sexual violence prevention initiatives have varied effectiveness based on the unique identities of participants (Morrison et al., 2004; Vladutiu et al., 2011). Researchers have begun to explore how certain sociocultural groups such as male-identified individuals (e.g., J. Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2012; Stewart, 2014) or Greek-letter students (Lenihan & Rawlins, 1994) respond to certain types of violence prevention initiatives. As a large and growing population on college campuses in the United States (Farrugia, 2015), international students deserve this level of attention.

There are reasons to believe that international students may have unique needs regarding violence prevention initiatives. Although there is no research on violence prevention initiatives targeting international students, a limited body of research has explored how individual differences may affect attitude towards rape. In particular, individuals with views that women should be submissive, are more likely to be accepting of rape (K. B. Anderson et al., 1997). At

least one additional study showed differences in views about female submissiveness based on an individual's country, suggesting there may be a link between country of origin and rape acceptance (K. B. Anderson et al., 1997; Nayak et al., 2003). Although international students' attitudes may differ from individuals who did not leave their home country, this research suggests that sexual norms differ by country and may demand culturally responsive educational initiatives to address these norms. Research also suggests that certain international students face unique barriers when seeking help (Flum, 1998; E.-J. Lee et al., 2014) or intervening when a bystander in a sexual violence situation (Fujimori, 2010). Encouraging victims to seek help after experiencing violence and bystanders to intervene during a sexual assault situation are key goals for contemporary violence prevention educators (DeGue et al., 2012). If international students reporting behaviors may differ from their domestic counterparts, prevention initiatives should specifically address the roots of these differences so that international students can access the support and resources that they need.

Understanding how international students learn about sexual violence can also benefit sexual violence educators because it may illustrate that certain types of learning areas are not universally effective as contemporary research has led us to believe. Currently, it appears that certain types of sexual violence prevention education are more effective at changing students' knowledge, attitude, and behaviors. In particular, areas such as rape myth acceptance and bystander intervention education seem to be more promising at having a long term impact on students' knowledge and attitudes (DeGue et al., 2014; Vladutiu et al., 2011). However, unless they target a specific population, these initiatives do not tend to control for sociocultural identity such as international status. As a result, it is hard to say if these learning areas are universally more effective at changing knowledge and attitudes, or if their effectiveness is contingent on the

sociocultural identity of the participants.

International students may also benefit from reviewing the findings of this study. Being exposed to the themes within the lived experiences of their peers may help students understand that they are not alone in their transitions to the United States. In particular, being averse to seeking help when victimized may stem from a mistaken belief that a student's experience of victimization is unique (Flum, 1998; N. Zhang & Dixon, 2003). Understanding that other students also experienced violence and have similar aversions to reporting may help empower students to access resources and normalize help seeking behaviors.

Through my research, I hope to refocus sexual violence prevention educators in all arenas on the systematic reasons why violence occurs. As research regarding college sexual violence emerged, the profile of perpetrators became a focal point (Lisak & Miller, 2002). Though this data has assisted in predicting and combating perpetration, it can obscure the reality that sexual violence perpetration is not isolated to a group of problematic individuals and is, instead, influenced by a "rape culture" that normalizes aggressive sexual behavior (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005, p. 9; Burnett et al., 2009, p. 456). The knowledge that sexual violence stems, in part, from its cultural acceptance demands that educators make efforts to address these cultural perceptions in their prevention efforts. For example, researchers have found that implementing educational initiatives that focus on addressing cultural rape myth acceptance is among the most effective ways of changing the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of students (DeGue, 2014; Hockett et al., 2016; J. Lee et al., 2012; Morrison et al., 2004). If it is known that cultural norms influence attitudes about sex, it would follow that cultural difference may complicate our ability to address these norms. Educators need to thoroughly understand cultural influences on their students, and institutions of higher education need to be held responsible for delivering culturally

relevant education that combats sexual violence.

Throughout my time in Student Affairs, I have been given the responsibility of supporting students during their darkest moments of loss, suicidality, and sexual assault. The academic and professional knowledge that I have access to in this support role has grown with each passing year. Researchers demonstrate and disseminate best practices, form knowledge communities, and work collaboratively in a way that gives educators and administrators a breadth of information to assist in the process of serving students. I want to contribute to this knowledge by giving voice to an often overlooked community (international students) around a pervasive and critical issue (sexual violence). This is the foundation that my study has been built upon.

Definitions

In order to effectively review the literature, a common understanding of several key terms is crucial. The following definitions primarily draw upon language distributed by major organizations in the field that are often responsible for shaping higher education policy.

Sexual Violence. The World Health Organization (WHO) (Krug et al., 2002) defines *sexual violence* as follows:

> *any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or*
> *advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality*
> *using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any*
> *setting, including but not limited to home and work.* (p. 149)

This includes *rape* (intercourse without consent), *sexual assault* (contact or intercourse without consent), and *sexual coercion* (sexual contact through use of pressure or force). Though definitions of *consent* may vary, the Center for Disease Control (Basile, Smith, Breiding, Black,

& Mahendra, 2009, p. 9) defines consent as "Words or overt actions by a person who is legally or functionally competent to give informed approval, indicating a freely given agreement to have sexual intercourse or sexual contact."

    International Students. In the United States, an *international student* is anyone who is enrolled in courses at institutions of higher education who is not a U.S. citizen, an immigrant (permanent resident), or a refugee (Davis, 1997). Though there are broader definitions (see Andrade, 2006; Carroll & Ryan, 2007), the difference between these definitions typically affects a small percentage of the total international student population. Research on international students rarely addresses differences in data based on grade level or degree type. A few studies address differences based on field, such as medical students (Chew & Yazid, 2008; Park et al., 2015). Some studies attempt to address differences in international students based on their *country of origin*, the country from which they traveled from to attend college in the United States. However, many studies do not differentiate based on country of origin. Conversely, at times I will use *American* as an adjective to describe something or someone from the United States. I will specifically clarify if I am using "American" to refer to a broader demographic (e.g. North American and/or South American).

    Despite the broad assertions that researchers and practitioners sometimes may make about international students, in discussing these sojourners, researchers must be conscious not to generalize. In the United States, the international student population comes from a range of countries and regions, all with their own unique cultures (Bhandari & Chow, 2008; Davis, 1997). For example, the GLOBE study of 62 societies identified nine different cultural dimensions to analyze 10 country "clusters" (e.g., Germanic, Southeast Asian, etc.) in order to assert that leadership effectiveness is contextual and embedded within cultural norms (House et al., 2004).

Though there are criticisms of the GLOBE study methodology (Javidan et al., 2006) and feminist criticisms of categorizing (Stanley & Wise, 1983), studies such as the GLOBE study illustrate the sheer vastness of our global diversity and how careful researchers must be about making generalizations about "international students." The following review distinguishes findings based on country of origin wherever possible.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review focuses on three primary areas of literature. First, literature regarding college primary prevention efforts focuses on IHE's efforts to educate students about and prevent sexual violence. Primary prevention, unlike secondary or tertiary prevention, refers to initiatives that aim to prevent sexual violence from happening, as opposed to working with a victim directly after being victimized (secondary) or helping them manage the lasting effects of victimization (tertiary). Second, literature regarding factors in the educational experiences of international college students broadly documents the experiences of international students in the United States and the factors that influence their academic and personal success. Finally, literature regarding international students and sexual violence is the body of research at the intersection of both areas. Though the amount of research in this area is small, a few studies help illuminate how college students from different countries conceptualize sexual violence and how they seek help for themselves or those they know. Each section will begin with a brief historical analysis, a review of the literature broken down by key criteria, and a summary. The review closes by discussing the findings, describing gaps in the literature, and identifying implications for further research.

College Primary Prevention Efforts

Although, today, researchers understand that sexual violence affects those of all gender identities (Black et al., 2011), in the United States, the feminist anti-rape movement of the 1970s is often seen as the genesis of the battle against sexual violence. This movement arose from a long period of violence against female-identified individuals and advocacy to reform cultural and patriarchal norms (Matthews, 2005). For centuries, violence against female-identified individuals remained acceptable due to women's status as second-class citizens (Gornick & Meyer, 1998). As early as the late 18th century, though, women were raising awareness about the problems with

traditional gender roles and the failure of the education system to serve young women (Rendall, 1985). As the 19th century progressed, women's liberation movement leadership united with the anti-slavery movement, hosted the Women's Right's Convention, and successfully fought for women's suffrage (Matthews, 2005). Advances in the 20th century included the Educational Amendments Act of 1972. This Act contains Title IX, a section prohibiting discrimination based on sex in any educational program receiving federal financial assistance. Following these centuries of advances in women's rights, activists built on the energy of the civil rights revolution in the mid-20th century to demand attention to the systematic subversion of female-identified individuals and the violence they experience (Matthews, 2005). Given the role of rape as one of the most powerful methods of subversion and control, this period gave rise to the anti-rape movement. As the *Chicago Women Against Rape*'s 1970s statement of purpose indicated:

> *Rape violently reflects the sexism in a society where power is unequally*
>
> *distributed between women and men, black and white, poor and rich* (Schechter,
>
> 1982, p.15)*.*

The initial sexual violence prevention efforts during the 1970s anti-rape movement focused on awareness and changing public perception (Gornick & Meyer, 1998). Survivors of rape shared their stories, found support in each other, and attempted, often successfully, to educate others about the damage caused by rape. This movement generated sexual violence crisis lines, nonprofit organizations, and policy changes all intended to support victims and deter future violence. Due to perpetual underreporting, measuring any reduction in the number of rapes in the decades following the 70s is nearly impossible (Fisher et al., 2000). However, the tangible effects of this movement can be seen in the number of rape crisis centers across the nation (over 1,000), the establishment of national organizations dedicated to prevention that emerged

throughout the 80s and 90s, and legislative action such as the 1990 Clery Act and the 1994

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) (Gornick & Meyer, 1998).

Through the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century, prevention efforts became

more specific, intending to correct misconceptions about victims, perpetrators, and the

circumstances of sexual violence in order to assist in its overall prevention (M. C. Black et al.,

2011). For example, researchers dispelled the myth of stranger rape and asserted that most

victims know their aggressors (Lonsway, 1996). M. C. Black and colleagues (2011) discovered

college-aged students are at an increased risk of sexual assault likely due to misconceptions

about consent and the prevalence of alcohol use. Finally, non-profit advocates and policy

lobbyists emphasized that male-identified individuals and transgender individuals are also at risk

of sexual violence (M. C. Black et al., 2011; Mezey & King, 1989). These new understandings

served as examples of how knowledge transformed prevention efforts and legislative action. As

an example, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA, 1994) addresses the investigation,

prosecution, and prevention of sexual violence. Because of new research regarding sexual

violence among college students catalyzed by focusing events such as media coverage of high

profile college sexual violence cases, VAWA reauthorizations in 2000, 2005, and 2013 focus

more extensively on college campus compliance and now include protections for male-identified

individuals (Stylianou, 2016).

This contemporary research exists within a cultural moment where national attention is

focused on sexual harassment and violence in an unprecedented way. First used in 2006 by social

activist Tarana Burke, the phrase "Me Too" rose to prominence in 2017 when American actress

Alyssa Milano tweeted the phrase and encouraged others to join her in order to illuminate how

widespread of a problem sexual misconduct and violence had become. The movement has had a

substantial impact including several high profile resignations or terminations of individuals accused of sexual misconduct, the introduction of numerous bills addressing sexual harassment, and increased awareness of how pervasive sexual misconduct has become. At the same time, in September of 2017, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced a plan to revise how IHEs address sexual misconduct, withdrawing the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter and the 2014 questions and answers guidance related to Title IX, signaling an increased focus on the rights of those accused of sexual misconduct and away from victims. This moment may be a pivotal one for educators with extensive opportunities to shape the future of sexual violence prevention. The Me Too movement has provided victim advocates with an unprecedented level of community support and solidarity. At the same time, those focused on protecting the accused are receiving government support in a way that has not been present in the 21st century. During this crossroads, it is especially important that higher education leaders understand that preventing sexual violence and providing due process are not mutually exclusively endeavors. In the current context, it is as important as ever to deliver evidenced-based violence prevention initiatives that can withstand public and legislative scrutiny. As such, researchers have drawn upon the vast history of violence prevention efforts to better understand what is effective at changing students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

Today, researchers take advantage of this more developed understanding of sexual violence, and examine a number of studies that analyze the success of primary prevention efforts. Success in these studies is usually measured through analyzing the participants' change in attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. Though there are many ways to classify these studies, in the following review they are grouped based on the area of intended learning for participants. Adapting the classification used by Morrison et al. (2004) for their meta-analysis of primary

prevention efforts, the review utilizes five areas of learning intended to categorize the body of literature: (1) providing information on prevalence and effects; (2) challenging rape myths; (3) identifying risk-related behaviors; (4) increasing empathy for victims; and (5) bystander intervention. Some studies that focus on more than one area of learning will fall into more than one category. Studies that fit in more than two categories are placed in the two most salient categories based on areas of learning driving the study. The vast majority of the studies in all of the learning areas were quantitative in nature with researchers collecting data by means of questionnaire prior to the intervention, directly after the intervention, and/or significantly after the intervention to test for long-term effect.

Providing information on prevalence and effects. Many primary prevention programs deliver content intending to inform participants about how frequently sexual violence occurs and what the negative effects are in the hopes that this education will encourage students to make safe choices for themselves and others (DeGue et al., 2014; Morrison et al., 2004). Interventions of this nature are structured in many different ways. The majority are one-time programs or workshops (L. A. Anderson et al., 1998; Breitenbecher & Scarce, 2001; Gidycz et al., 2011, 2015; Rowe et al., 2012). Program implementers utilize different forms of educational techniques such as theatrical techniques (B. Black et al., 2000), film screenings (Linz et al., 1990), and self-defense workshops (Hollander, 2014; Rowe et al., 2012). In some cases, multiple interventions are used to help reinforce the learning process (DeGue et al., 2014; Harrison et al., 1991; Lonsway & Kothari, 2000; Newlands, 2016). With limited exceptions, researchers seemed to identify positive short-term outcomes (L. A. Anderson et al., 1998; B. Black et al., 2000; Frazier et al., 1994; Gidycz et al., 2015; Lonsway & Kothari, 2000; Rowe et al., 2012). However, the studies either did not retest for long-term effects (B. Black et al., 2000; Harrison et al., 1991)

or, when they did re-test after a significant time period, found that the effectiveness of the program was not sustained over time (L. A. Anderson et al., 1998; Frazier et al., 1994). Studies that only measured long-term effects showed the programs to be ineffective at changing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (Breitenbecher & Scarce, 2001; Gidycz et al., 2011). The interventions that seem to distinguish themselves as showing signs of long term effects were programs that bolstered information on prevalence with a focus on women's empowerment through self-defense or sexual assertiveness (Hollander, 2014; Rowe et al., 2012). However, active programs such as these overlap with other learning areas. Aside from these types of women's empowerment programs, only one study documented long-term success (Lonsway & Kothari, 2000). This study focused on the success of FYCare, a mandatory program for first-year students at a large research-based IHE. Through questionnaires and phone calls, researchers found that knowledge-gain from FYCare was maintained even 4-6 months after the program took effect. The researchers found that stronger results coincided with students who participated in multiple interventions which suggests that repeated educational interventions foster stronger program success.

Overall, with few exceptions, programs in this learning area are generally ineffective at creating long term change, perhaps in part due to their reliance on one-time educational interventions. It is also difficult to find more contemporary examples of these programs, most likely because their lack of documented effectiveness has caused educators to favor other learning areas. There is some indication that these types of interventions were more effective with male-identified individuals (Harrison et al., 1991; Linz et al., 1990) and were more effective both short-term and long-term if multiple interventions were utilized (Lonsway & Kothari, 2000). In general, though, the data show that interventions focusing predominantly on providing

information were ineffective at creating long-term change.

        Challenging rape myths. Primary prevention efforts have long focused on the idea of correcting misperceptions about sexual assault (DeGue et al., 2014; Morrison et al., 2004; Newlands, 2016). The long history of this type of intervention is also the reason for the number of older citations in this section. *Rape myths* typically refer to misperceptions about the reasons for sexual assault, often in the form of prejudicial beliefs about victims that result in blaming these individuals for being assaulted (Hockett et al., 2016). Although some of these interventions overlap with the previous category of literature aimed to provide information (e.g., Breitenbecher & Scarce, 2001; Gidycz et al., 2015, 2011; Linz et al., 1990), new trends do emerge in education focused on rape myths. In the past, researchers have highlighted the need to adjust sexual violence education based on the sociocultural demographics of the participants (DeGue et al., 2014; Morrison et al., 2004) and the literature supports this assertion. Rape myth education programs have been shown to be particularly effective at changing male-identified individuals' attitudes (DeGue et al., 2014; Foubert, 2000; Heppner et al., 1995; Morrison et al., 2004). Thus, rape myth education initiatives often target male-identified individuals (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Marriott, 1997; McMahon et al., 2014; Stewart, 2014) and, at times, have utilized all-male peer educators to deliver the education to male-identified individuals specifically (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Marriott, 1997). Several studies, though, focused on mixed gender audiences and showed participants of all genders benefited from the intervention, suggesting that rape myth education is simply effective in general, not necessarily just for one gender (Baldwin-White et al., 2016; Heppner et al., 1999; Palm Reed et al., 2015). In fact, one study showed that female-identified individuals more readily changed their attitudes compared to male-identified individuals when both groups participated in a rape myth education program (Lenihan, 1992).

This finding could also be explained through other research which shows that, prior to any intervention, male-identified individuals tend to have more rape-supportive attitudes than female-identified individuals. These attitudes are defined by having an inclination to blame victims for sexual violence and believing that female-identified individuals should be submissive (W. P. Anderson & Cummings, 1993). Regardless of gender differences, programs that challenge rape myths do seem to have stronger long-term success rates than other learning areas (Bailey et al., 2017; DeGue et al., 2014; Morrison et al., 2004) even when the programs are one-time interventions (Heppner et al., 1999). One study demonstrated that, out of several learning outcomes including rape empathy and rates of sexual aggression, rape myth acceptance was the only learning area that remained affected nine weeks after an intervention (Gidycz et al., 2001a).

Rape myth acceptance is not a panacea, though, as many programs still prove ineffective at achieving both short-term and long-term gains (Breitenbecher & Gidycz, 1998; Breitenbecher & Scarce, 2001). Historically, programs with multiple interventions are the most successful long-term (Gilbert et al., 1991; Lonsway et al., 1998). For example, participants in an intensive peer education program that met regularly over the course of a semester were less accepting of cultural rape myths two years after the program ended (Lonsway et al., 1998). Additionally, it is challenging to assess more contemporary programs that focus on rape myth acceptance because they often view rape myth acceptance as a learning outcome rather than a learning area that is built into the intervention. For example, several modern programs have been highly focused on bystander intervention, but then assess levels of rape myth acceptance to determine the program's effectiveness (e.g., Bailey et al., 2017; Palm Reed et al., 2015). This makes it challenging to isolate if the focus on debunking rape myths has any impact on the success of the program. Most contemporary studies that put rape myth acceptance at the forefront of the

research focus on environmental or sociocultural factors that influence rape myth acceptance rather than programs designed to challenge rape myths (Canan et al., 2016; Hust et al., 2015).

Overall, addressing rape myths seems to be one of the more effective means of changing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, particularly when targeting male-identified individuals. However, few contemporary initiatives have content that specifically addresses rape myths. They, instead, measure rape myth acceptance as an outcome for an initiative that focused more on a different learning area, such as bystander intervention. Though programs focused on reducing rape myth acceptance seems to be an effective prevention strategy, its efficacy is not universal and educators have strayed from implementing programs that directly address it.

Identifying risk-related behaviors. In light of data proving that the majority of sexual assault victims know their attacker (Lonsway et al., 1998), a body of prevention programs attempt to prevent acquaintance rape. These programs focus on reducing risk-related behaviors such as alcohol use and frequent partying, while increasing protective factors such as situational awareness and self-defense ability (DeGue et al., 2014; Morrison et al., 2004; Vladutiu et al., 2011). Risk-related behavior education typically targets female-identified individuals (Gidycz, Lynn, et al., 2001; M. D. Gray et al., 1990; Marx et al., 2001) though some programs seek to reduce risk factors for perpetration in male-identified individuals (Earle, 1996; Foubert, 2000). For the female-identified individuals, generally, programs that focused more heavily on risk-related behaviors did not have a measureable effect on preventing victimization (Gidycz et al., 2001b; Hanson & Gidycz, 1993). However, these programs seemed to be particularly effective at reducing revictimization of previous victims (Gidycz, Lynn et al., 2001; Hanson & Gidycz, 1993; Marx et al., 2001). For male-identified individuals, one set of studies indicated that programs of this nature are only effective when male-identified individuals are placed in small

single-gender learning groups, led by peer facilitation, and guided interactively (Earle, 1996). For example, in one study, the likelihood of committing rape did not appear to be reduced long-term, but rape myth acceptance was reduced (Foubert, 2000). Contemporary examples of these types of programs typically focus on protective factors rather than risk-related factors and these seem to have more promise (Vladutiu et al., 2011). Multiple studies seem to indicate that, for female-identified individuals, programs that focus on sexual assertiveness and situational awareness reduce the chances of victimization, even for individuals who have not been victimized in the past (Gilmore et al., 2015; Rowe et al., 2012; Senn et al., 2015)

Overall, programs that focus exclusively on risk-related behaviors do not appear to be particularly effective and may actually perpetuate false narratives about sexual violence. One researcher noted that these types of interventions predominantly utilized date-rape scenario videos (Lanier et al., 1998). Although their findings suggest that these videos are effective at positively changing attitudes, there is concern that, when not used carefully, these videos can actually increase aggressive behavior by demonstrating methods for violent acts (DeGue, 2014). In general, although some programs in this learning area proved immediately successful, the long term effects were not measured (M. D. Gray et al., 1990; Lanier et al., 1998; Vladutiu et al., 2011). Where long-term outcomes were measured, it seemed that these programs were not effective at changing the behaviors of participants. The one exception seemed to be that programs focused on identifying risk-related behaviors may be effective for female-identified individuals who are previous victims of sexual assault (Morrison et al., 2004). Even so, implementers delivering risk-identifying programs should proceed with caution as they have the potential to reinforce the idea that only female-identified individuals are victims and male-identified individuals are perpetrators of sexual assault. The contemporary approach of focusing

on protective factors seems to have more promise, but more research is needed especially as it relates to interventions focused on potential perpetrators (DeGue et al., 2014; Newlands, 2016; Vladutiu et al., 2011).

Increasing empathy for rape victims. Rather than delivering facts or dispelling myths, programs intended to increase empathy for victims attempt to help potential perpetrators understand the experience of being sexually assaulted (Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). This has been attempted in a variety of ways. One subset of programs has helped participants try to imagine the experience of being raped (Paludi, 2016; Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). Another common approach includes facilitated discussion combined with video presentations (M. J. Gray et al., 2016; Harrison et al., 1991; Heppner et al., 1995). Many of the interventions focused on increasing empathy specifically targeted male-identified individuals as potential perpetrators (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Marriott, 1997; M. J. Gray et al., 2016; L. A. Lee, 1987; Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). Further, many of the programs drew upon the Rape Empathy Scale, a tool used to quantify how much someone can understand the experience of being sexually assaulted (Deitz et al., 1982). Unfortunately, generalizing from these studies is difficult because the researchers failed to use a control group (L. A. Lee, 1987), coupled the intervention with other educational methods, such as challenging rape myths (Breitenbecher & Gidycz, 1998; Lenihan, 1992; Lonsway & Kothari, 2000), or failed to perform a follow-up assessment in order to measure long-term effects (Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). As a result, either the researchers expressed that their intervention was ineffective (Breitenbecher & Gidycz, 1998; Lenihan, 1992) or, because of the aforementioned reasons, the success of the program was difficult to align with the learning outcome of increasing victim empathy.

One study that utilized a control group, focused purely on victim empathy, and involved

an expert on empathy education achieved positive outcomes (Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). Although the study did not retest for long-term outcomes and only focused on high-risk males (as determined by self-reported likelihood of committing sexual abuse) there does seem to be hope that properly administered victim empathy programs could result in long-term behavior change. Further research is needed to determine whether empathy-focused interventions are effective at changing knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors, especially in the long-term. Most contemporary research on victim empathy analyzes predictive characteristics of perpetration related to victim empathy rather than programs that seek to increase empathy (Diamond-Welch et al., 2016; Osman, 2016). Additionally, empathy-based programs are typically gender and hetero-normative when implemented and, as a result, contemporary educators have appropriately eschewed them in favor of other alternatives including bystander intervention programs.

  Bystander intervention. Although IHEs have been utilizing peer education programs as a means of addressing sexual violence for decades (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Marriott, 1997), the act of explicitly teaching bystander intervention techniques is a newer phenomenon (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011). Bystander intervention in the context of sexual violence refers to the act of intervening during a situation that could result in sexual violence in order to prevent sexual violence from occurring. Bystander intervention education has become increasingly popular for IHEs due to a number of factors including gender neutrality, empirical support for its effectiveness, and because--due to the nature of the interventions--these programs resonate with all students, not only those who believe themselves to be at risk for perpetration or victimization (Banyard et al., 2007). In part fueled by the establishment of the Green Dot Bystander intervention program, a popular, international program dedicated to reducing power-based violence by training participants on how to employ proactive and reactive bystander intervention

techniques (Coker et al., 2011). Bystander intervention education has been recommended as a preferred means of prevention through legislative action and recommendations from national organizations (Korman & Greenstein, 2016).

Earlier bystander intervention programs solely targeted male-identified individuals (Berkowitz, 2002; DeKeseredy et al., 2000), but more contemporary interventions have been broadly delivered to students regardless of gender (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; Coker et al., 2011; Gidycz et al., 2011), though male-focused bystander programming still occurs (Salazar et al., 2014). Several researchers have put forth frameworks for evaluating bystander behaviors (Berkowitz, 2002; McMahon et al., 2011). Although the researchers have reported positive results, some did not use a control group (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; Coker et al., 2011) or did not test for long-term effects (Gidycz et al., 2011). However, one group of researchers studied a program that utilized a control group and found positive long-term improvements in participant attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge around identifying potential sexual violence situations and intervening in those situations (Banyard et al., 2007). There seems to be promise in the bystander intervention approach, confirmed by the pervasiveness of bystander intervention research in contemporary literature. It is nearly impossible to find a contemporary research study on an IHE sexual violence prevention educational intervention initiative that does not contain some kind of bystander intervention component. More research is needed to establish the long-term effectiveness of bystander intervention education as a violence prevention strategy. In particular, experimental research may assist scholars in continuing to assess individual programs, as not all bystander intervention programs are built the same. Additionally, the dearth of qualitative research exploring sexual violence prevention indicates that more inquiry of this kind may assist in understanding the lived experience of those students who are being targeted for

education.

Summary. In general, primary prevention efforts have varied widely in their effectiveness (DeGue et al., 2014; Morrison et al., 2004; Vladutiu et al., 2011). Few approaches to sexual violence prevention and education are universally successful, particularly in the long-term. Unsurprisingly, knowledge and attitudes seem to be much easier to change than behaviors (Morrison et al., 2004). Interventions that focus on challenging rape myths seem to include the most evidence-based information of the learning areas (Foubert & Marriott, 1997; Hockett et al., 2016; Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). However, bystander intervention education is a highly promising new area that is gender neutral and focuses on behavior change rather than attitude change (Coker et al., 2011; McMahon et al., 2011). Interventions that focus on specific populations have potential, but are not universally effective. It seems that certain learning areas are more successful when used on specific populations (e.g., identifying risk-related behaviors for previous victims and increasing victim empathy on fraternity students) (Gidycz, Lynn, et al., 2001; Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). Although more resource-intensive to implement, programs that feature multiple interventions are shown to be more successful at achieving long-term success (DeGue et al., 2014; Newlands, 2016). In general, more experimental, long-term research is needed particularly on bystander intervention and victim empathy as learning areas to understand the effectiveness of individual initiatives.

To understand how international students describe the experience of learning about sexual violence during college, educators must understand the unique factors to consider when developing initiatives that target them. The unique needs of international students provide critical context for anyone seeking to understand their experiences in the United States and tailoring interventions to address those unique needs.

Factors in the Educational Experiences of International College Students

The current expansion of the international student population in the United States has its origins in the mid-20th century (Olson & Banjong, 2016). In the period following World War II, the United States embarked upon an effort to help rebuild war-torn nations while promoting the U.S. educational system (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998). This movement led to several domestic legislative achievements that facilitated foreign students traveling to the U.S. for their education (Burn, 1980). In particular, the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act, the Foreign Assistance Act, and the Peace Corps Act all directed additional resources that, among other ventures, incentivized potential international learners (Olson & Banjong, 2016). In the subsequent decades, the globalization movement took hold as flying became more accessible to the middle class and IHEs increasingly articulated the importance of developing global scholars (Vestal, 1994). Today, IHE mission statements frequently emphasize the value of multiculturalism and the importance of developing global scholars (Stromquist, 2007). Currently in the United States, the countries of origin that send the most international students, in order, are China (31.5% of total international student population), India (15.9%), Saudi Arabia (5.9%), and South Korea (5.8%) (Farrugia, 2015). California (149,328 international students), New York (114,316), and Texas (82,184) top the list of U.S. states hosting international students (Farrugia, 2015).

There are many bodies of literature on international students including those that examine the economic impacts of international students (Chevalier, 2014; Edelstein & Douglas, 2009) and their behaviors post-graduation (Han et al., 2015; B. McCormick & Wahba, 2001; Sun, 2013). For the purposes of this review, the studies below focus on factors in the educational experiences of international students in the United States as this seems to the most salient area in developing

an understanding of how IHEs can most effectively deliver content about sexual violence to students from outside the United States. The literature identifies five factors intended to categorize the literature: (1) stress; (2) discrimination; (3) mental health concerns; (4) acculturation and cultural variation; and (5) language barriers and learning blocks. As was the case in the sexual violence prevention literature, there will be some overlap, but all of the relevant studies are placed in one, or at most two, categories in this review. Through developing an awareness of the factors in the educational experiences of international students, educators can begin to tailor sexual violence prevention efforts accordingly.

Stress. Isolating stress as its own category proves challenging because stress among international students is frequently a result of some additional barrier such as discrimination (Wei et al., 2008) or acculturation, defined as assimilating to a new culture (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015; Won Ho Kim & Young-An Ra, 2015). However, because it is such a dominant theme, particularly when discussing East Asian students, it deserves its own category. Researchers use various methods to measure student stress such as Gadzella's student-life stress inventory (Gadzella, 1994) and the Social Identity / Self-Categorization Stress Model (Haslam et al., 2005). These models typically rely upon self-inventories that illuminate signs of stress and consistently identify high rates of stress among international students, particularly from countries of origin such as China and South Korea (Ryu et al., 2016; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015; Won Ho Kim & Young-An Ra, 2015). The most commonly cited causes of this stress are acculturation issues (Y. Cho, 2003; Ryu et al., 2016), lack of social and family support (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; J. Cho & Yu, 2015), and discrimination (Wei et al., 2008). This stress can lead to negative coping strategies such as binge-drinking (Sa et al., 2015) and self-harm (Y. Cho, 2003). Additionally, East Asian students at times describe stress as stemming from pressure from their

families regarding positive academic and social outcomes (e.g. Chiu & Ring, 1998; Y. Cho, 2003; Quach, Epstein, Riley, Falconier, & Fang, 2015).

Overall, most of the studies about international students and stress only survey international students and not their domestic counterparts (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015; Wei et al., 2008; Won Ho Kim & Young-An Ra, 2015). This makes it difficult to say that being an international student creates stress, particularly when stress is on the rise among *all* college students (Beiter et al., 2015; Landow, 2006; Sax, 1997). In fact, one study that surveyed both domestic and international students in two Midwestern universities showed that domestic students reported higher levels of academic and self-imposed stress than international students and greater behavioral reactions to these stressors indicating that perhaps being an international student is not a predictive factor of stress (Misra & Castillo, 2004). Finally, the concept of stress itself could be considered a social and cultural construct (Loriol, 2010) and the data gathered by these surveys - frequently designed and conducted by Western researchers - could be influenced by Western cultural definitions and norms. Although stress is, perhaps, the most common barrier in the literature, deficiencies in the studies make it difficult to draw comprehensive conclusions about the target population. However, knowing the adverse effects of sexual violence on victims (Duncan, 2000; Trickett et al., 2011), one can imagine how any existing stress experienced by international students can only compound the devastation associated with sexual violence. Further, the negative effects of transition stress may make it difficult for international students to effectively process information related to sexual violence prevention. If international students have difficulty processing sexual violence prevention initiatives, this may also lead to some added risk of perpetration. Finally, given that binge-drinking is both a negative coping strategy for stress management (Sa et al., 2015) and a potential risk factor for sexual violence (Gilmore et

al., 2015), it seems that stress management education may indirectly reduce sexual violence risk. This suggests programs intended to help educate international students on sexual violence should contain elements that address stress management.

Discrimination. Discussions about prejudice and discrimination transcend international student populations. Students from many marginalized backgrounds experience discrimination, defined as negative behaviors directed at a specific group of people because of an aspect of their sociocultural cultural identity (Nieto, 2010). In general, discrimination against individuals in any group can have detrimental effects on academic success and psychological wellness (Paige, 1990; Schram & Lauver, 1988). Researchers have sought to investigate if international students experience this discrimination and what, if any are the effects. Unsurprisingly, international students experience both overt (e.g., physical assault and name calling) and subtle (e.g., unintended marginalizing comments) discrimination (Hanassab, 2006; Noh et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2015). The most frequently cited effects are related to personal wellness such as depressive symptoms and suicidality (Hanassab, 2006; Noh et al., 2007). One group of researchers found that overt discrimination was associated with negative affect while subtle discrimination was associated with depressive symptoms (Noh et al., 2007). As previously discussed, drawing universal conclusions regarding international students is problematic given the vast cultural differences between cultures of origin. Early conclusions indicate that students from the Middle East and Africa experience more discrimination than other regions (Hanassab, 2006). More research is needed to understand these differences. Educators designing sexual violence prevention initiatives may consider that perceived discrimination may be a barrier to students seeking help or trusting peers and school employees. Through displaying cultural competence, discussing intersectionality, and taking a strong anti-discrimination stance,

educators may begin to build trust among international students and help them believe that they will not be treated differently due to their country of origin when seeking help.

Mental Health and Help Seeking. Research indicates that international students' mental health and help seeking behaviors differ from other domestic racial and ethnic groups (Cha & Sok, 2014; Y. Cho, 2003; Nilsson et al., 2004). International students experience higher rates of mental illness such as anxiety and depression (Noh et al., 2007; Y. J. Wong et al., 2014). At the same time, many international students have increased negative perceptions about counseling that are most often explained through cultural norms in their countries of origin (Yoon & Jepsen, 2008; N. Zhang & Dixon, 2003). For example, adherence to Asian cultural values such as humility and self-control is connected with both depressive symptoms and diminished help seeking behaviors (Y. J. Wong et al., 2014). More generally, international students are less likely to access counseling and stay connected to counseling (Mitchell et al., 2007; Nilsson et al., 2004). Some studies showed fewer differences in help seeking and mental health concerns between international and domestic students, but acknowledged limitations such as convenience sampling and Westernized models of analysis (Flum, 1998; Suh et al., 2017).

In light of these concerns, researchers have sought to identify factors that cause international students to be more open to help seeking. These factors include increased acculturation (Y. Cho, 2003), stronger supportive attitudes towards help seeking from a student's family and/or social circle (Y. Cho, 2003; Flum, 1998), and being exposed to efforts to destigmatize counseling (E.-J. Lee et al., 2014). More research is needed to understand best practices for developing outreach programs to promote help-seeking behaviors among international students. This is particularly crucial knowing that being a victim of sexual violence often triggers negative psychological effects often mitigated by seeking help (Trickett et al.,

2011). Additionally, help seeking extends beyond getting mental health support. These factors indicate that international students have an even more difficult time reporting sexual violence than a general population that already struggles to report such violent acts (Fisher et al., 2000). Based on this literature, normalizing help seeking seems to be an important aspect of any sexual violence prevention initiative that addresses international students.

Acculturation and Cultural Variation. Many minority students navigate the acculturation process; blending cultures and engaging in intercultural contact, as they are exposed to individuals from different cultures with increased frequency and proximity (Berry, 2005). This process can bring about stress and adaptation issues (Berry, 2005; Thorstensson, 2001). International students, much like their domestic minority peers, experience the acculturation process (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Ryder et al., 2013), take steps to facilitate it (M. Z. Li & Stodolska, 2006; Ryu et al., 2016), and cope with its effects (Heo & Lee, 2007). The negative psychological effects of acculturative stress is well-documented (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015; Won Ho Kim & Young-An Ra, 2015). Additionally, newer research investigates connections between acculturation and social support, defined as having meaningful social connections in the United States. In particular, international students with a social support network are better able to navigate the acculturation process (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Ryder et al., 2013). Further, domestic students with international friendships undergo positive life changes such as being more open-minded (Williams & Johnson, 2011). Unfortunately, due in part to previously mentioned concerns about prejudice (Hanassab, 2006; Noh et al., 2007), international students may find that they have a harder time developing these friendships (Williams & Johnson, 2011). Researchers have begun to make recommendations for promoting international and U.S. student friendships (Williams & Johnson, 2011), but more research is needed to

determine if these friendships help international students manage the acculturation process.

Many researchers developed scales or developmental models to describe the acculturation

process (e.g. Gim Chung, Kim, & Abreu, 2004; Landrine & Klonoff, 1994; Marin, Sabogal,

Marin, Otero-Sabogal, & Perez-Stable, 1987). These models suggest that East Asians who spend

extended time in cultures different than their own, like those from other cultures, navigate

through a series of stages that explain how they incorporate a new culture into their lives (Gim

Chung et al., 2004).

A small number of researchers have investigated East Asian perceptions about sex and

relationships in the United States. Chinese college students in the United States who report

higher feelings of acculturation also report increased sexual permissiveness and experience

(Huang & Uba, 1992). This seems to be the case for East Asian participants from other countries

as well (Okazaki, 2002). As will be discussed later in the review, cultural differences around

gender norms and sex are salient for international students (K. B. Anderson et al., 1997; Nayak et

al., 2003). Although more research is needed to establish this connection, these cultural

differences may also contribute to challenges establishing a social network. Finally, the

previously described help-seeking reluctance (Flum, 1998; Yamawaki, 2007; N. Zhang & Dixon,

2003) would also seem to indicate that international students might be less likely to report crimes

such as sexual violence to the police. However, more research is needed to demonstrate this

connection. Many institutions attempt to build connections between international students and

domestic students through programming. These social connections seem to play an important

role in assisting international students navigate the acculturation process (Baba & Hosoda, 2014;

Ryder et al., 2013; Williams & Johnson, 2011). This assistance is crucial because negative

experiences navigating the acculturation process causes other challenges for international

students including stress (Y. Cho, 2003; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). By creating opportunities for international students to connect with domestic students, educators may be indirectly assisting with challenges related to sexual violence such as reluctance to report and assisting a friend in need.

One source of cultural variation is differences in pedagogy at the college level. Much research has focused on East Asian students' learning styles and contend that classrooms in East Asia are more teacher-centered (Hong & Suh, 1995; Ladd & Jr, 1999; J. K.-K. Wong, 2004). At the same time, although much research focused on the learning styles of these students, it is hard to say with certainty if there are any inherent cultural differences in this area (Kennedy, 2002). In particular, researchers have yet to agree upon a best practice that correctly identifies the learning styles of a group of students.

Language Barriers. Unsurprisingly, students who travel from other countries where English is not the native language face the additional challenge of developing English proficiency when taking classes in an English speaking institution. The fact that these language barriers exist is well-documented (Andrade, 2006; Jin & Liu, 2014; Kuo, 2011; Ramsay et al., 1999). More recent research focuses on determining how these language barriers may differ across identity groups such as country of origin. Students traveling from Europe have fewer challenges related to language than students traveling from Asia, Africa, or Central/Latin America (Yeh & Inose, 2003). International students who stay in the United States longer or who have arts-related majors seem to develop higher rates of English proficiency and, as a result, also experience lower rates of language anxiety than their colleagues (Cheng & Erben, 2012). Within the studies, the effects of gender are mixed. There is some evidence that gender plays a role in determining language anxiety levels (Cheng & Erben, 2012) and evidence to the contrary (Yeh

& Inose, 2003). The research is limited on this front, though, and the discrepancy could be explained, in part, by different measures being used to describe language acquisition.

The findings of studies that investigate the effects of these language barriers are consistent. Students with less English mastery face more academic issues (Gang Li et al., 2010; Kuo, 2011), experience higher acculturative stress (Andrade, 2006; Cheng & Erben, 2012), and struggle to find social support (Yeh & Inose, 2003). It seems that research has been limited on helping international students manage these language acquisition concerns, perhaps because it is expected that international students in the United States demonstrate English proficiency. However, the research demonstrates that English-proficient students for whom English is not their first language still face barriers that their colleagues who are native English speakers do not. These barriers extend beyond struggling with the language to include negative perceptions from other students (Rubin, 1992) and have demonstrable negative effects on academic and social success. In particular, knowing the isolation that sexual violence victims already feel (Averill et al., 2007; Mezey & King, 1989), further challenges developing a support network due to language barriers can only further feelings of marginalization. Further, if sexual violence prevention initiatives have mixed success rates in general (Morrison et al., 2004; Vladutiu et al., 2011), when not effectively tailored and constructed, language barriers likely reduce the already limited chance for a positive effect.

Beyond the stress that accompanies language barriers, the challenges associated with understanding social and language cues in a new country is well-documented (Furnham & Bochner, 1982; Michie, 2014; Owen et al., 2017; Wall et al., 1991). In many contexts, foreign travelers struggle to understand social cues (Furnham & Bochner, 1982; Gunn, 2017), and notice English language subtleties that are difficult to teach in language courses (Hinkel, 2016; Kuo,

2011). Navigating sex and relationships is a complicated, ongoing process of noticing subtle behaviors and language that indicate willingness and enthusiasm. This process is complicated in general, whether it be regarding developing online relationships (Whitty & Gavin, 2001) or flirtation (Farley, 2014; Givens, 1978; N. B. McCormick & Jones, 1989). More recent research has focused on flirting styles and have demonstrated connections between flirting style choice and sociocultural identity factors such as gender (Hall et al., 2010; Hall & Xing, 2015). Given differences in gender norms across cultures (as will be discussed more extensively below), it seems plausible that flirting styles and nonverbal relationship cues may differ across cultures.

Further, foreign travelers are often at heightened risk for crime victimization (Forbes-Mewett et al., 2015; Marginson et al., 2010). This research suggests that language and social barriers do more than create stress for international students. These barriers may make the complicated world of initiating sex and relationships even more confusing. International students may also be less confident in their belief that a situation is dangerous or inappropriate (Yamawaki, 2007). As will be discussed below, international students are less likely to exhibit bystander behaviors than domestic students (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; Fujimori, 2010) and this may be as much about barriers to perceiving danger as it is about reluctance to seek help.

Summary. In the United States, several factors influence the educational experiences of international students. Although the literature supports the notion that each of the five aforementioned factors are real, challenges with stress and mental health are the best documented. These challenges also seem to have the clearest overlap with the challenges faced by sexual violence victims who also often experience stress and mental health issues (Trickett et al., 2011). Further, given the vast cultural differences among international students depending on what area of the globe they travel from (House et al., 2004), more research is needed to

understand how these barriers may vary depending on country of origin. Preliminary research seems to indicate that these barriers do vary based on country of origin (Hanassab, 2006; Y. J. Wong et al., 2014). For example, students from Africa and the Middle East seem to experience more discrimination than other international student populations (Hanassab, 2006) and East Asian cultural values seem to be a factor in determining willingness to seek help (Y. J. Wong et al., 2014). Without more research that controls for country of origin, though, it is difficult to develop targeted interventions to support international students.

Overall, research demonstrates that international students face a variety challenges in the United States and, interestingly, many of these challenges seem to connect to the areas of learning around sexual violence outlined earlier in this chapter. International students struggle to seek help and, while prevention education often reinforces the importance of reporting and help seeking, culturally sensitive educational techniques may be necessary to increase program effectiveness (Morrison et al., 2004). International students struggle with language, and prevention programming is often focused intensively on providing facts and information that could be difficult to understand if there are language barriers (Morrison et al., 2004). These connections raise questions about how being an international student may compound the negative effects of being a victim of sexual violence. It also suggests these students may have challenges identifying what behaviors may constitute sexual violence. More research is needed to evaluate these concerns and see how they may differ based on the country of origin of the international student. In particular, seeking to understand the experiences of international students going through a sexual violence prevention program in the United States could illuminate how these barriers not only impact academic and personal success, but also the success of achieving the goals of the sexual violence prevention program. Given the unique

experience of international students, it is imperative that sexual violence prevention educators develop prevention and response initiatives that address the particular needs of this population.

International Students and Sexual Violence

There are a few studies at the intersection of research on international students and research on sexual violence, however, studies that focus on international students in the United States are virtually non-existent. As such, other research has been included to supplement the review including studies regarding college-aged students in other countries and studies about international students enrolled in schools outside of the United States. The discoveries on these fronts have predominantly focused on the (1) attitudes and beliefs of international students towards sexual violence, (2) barriers to reporting, and the (3) bystander intervention behaviors of these students.

Attitudes and Beliefs. Attitudes and beliefs towards sexual violence and female-identified individuals differ by country (Nayak et al., 2003; Oh & Neville, 2004). Nayak et al. (2003) sampled undergraduate students from India, Japan, Kuwait, and the United States and found differences in attitudes by country of origin and gender. The fact that male-identified individuals displayed more rape-supportive attitudes is well-documented, particularly in studies within the United States (K. B. Anderson et al., 1997), but the finding that rape-supportive attitudes varied by country was newer information (Nayak et al., 2003). Undergraduate students in Kuwait displayed more rape-supportive attitudes than India and Japan while students from the United States have the least rape-supportive attitudes of the four countries (Nayak et al., 2003). These differences stem from cultural beliefs about traditional gender roles (W. P. Anderson & Cummings, 1993) or an adherence to conservative cultural ideology (K. B. Anderson et al., 1997), both of which are correlated with rape acceptance. Researchers have asserted that

countries such as India, Japan, and Kuwait often foster gender normative views (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Kozu, 1999) and have hierarchical, conservative sociocultural structures (Nayak et al., 2003) which may result in an inherent normalization of rape-supportive attitudes. For example, Chinese students were less likely to view abusive acts as constituting intimate partner violence than their United States counterparts (Lin et al., 2016). In another study, Korean male-identified individuals were more tolerant of rape accepting attitudes than Korean female-identified individuals (J. Lee et al., 2007).

The role of gender and rape myth acceptance seems to be a common theme in studies investigating the perceptions of college-aged students in countries outside of the United States. These studies also benefit from, in many cases, utilizing scales that are specifically designed to analyze students from a foreign country rather than a scale developed with students from the United States in mind (J. Lee et al., 2010; Oh & Neville, 2004). Despite these advances, there are limits to what can be learned from these studies for several reasons. First, these studies were not designed to investigate differences between domestic and international students in the United States and, thus, only focus on international students, not domestic students, for comparison. Second, while researchers may draw conclusions based on the behaviors and beliefs of college-aged students in other countries, more research needs to be done on international students' attitudes and behaviors in the United States. Despite these shortcomings, some common threads emerge. First, programming on rape myth acceptance might be effective with international students from countries where rape accepting views are more prevalent. Second, consent education is crucial as the concept of consent does not seamlessly translate across cultures. Finally, cultures that feature traditional gender roles might unintentionally suppress reporting through reinforcing the idea that female-identified individuals should be submissive and silent

(K. B. Anderson et al., 1997; Nayak et al., 2003). Overall, because changing attitudes and beliefs are a central learning outcome for sexual violence prevention efforts (DeGue, 2014), educators must familiarize themselves with potential differences in the baseline attitudes of their participants and tailor their efforts accordingly.

Barriers to Reporting. Primary prevention efforts should consider the fact that a different country of origin, may mean a different set of norms and values related to sex and relationships. For example, norms in Asian culture influence choices to remain silent about sex (Dussich, 2001; Pines et al., 2003) and accept sexually violent behavior (J. Lee et al., 2005; Yamawaki, 2007) due to cultural values that include restraint and privacy. These values can stand in the way of international students identifying and reporting instances of sexual violence. Students from foreign countries experience other personal barriers to reporting sexual violence, including feelings of shame, negative attitudes towards mental health counseling, and concerns about confidentiality (Dussich, 2001; Yamawaki, 2007). At least one researcher found that international students who did not report sexual assault did not perceive the situation to be sexual assaults (Fujimori, 2010).

Because speaking about sex is viewed as taboo in some cultures (Dussich, 2001), individuals from these cultures may hesitate to come forward regarding sexual assault. These cultural influences may also make primary sexual violence prevention education a challenge. As stated earlier, negative attitudes towards mental health counseling is a common theme in the literature on international students (Mitchell et al., 2007; Y. J. Wong et al., 2014) and research indicates that international students seek help and intervene less frequently in sexual assault situations (Yamawaki, 2007). Further, significant research asserts that East Asian countries are lacking in fundamental sex education efforts at any educational level (e.g. Cernada, Chang, Lin,

Sun, & Cernada, 1986; Wang, Hertog, Meier, Lou, & Gao, 2005; L. Zhang, Li, & Shah, 2007).Though this research helps educators begin to understand the barriers faced by these students, more research is needed. This research should focus on understanding the attitudes and behaviors of international students in the United States and, also, analyzing the attitudes and behaviors of students across other variables such as gender, age, country of origin, and length of time spent in the United States. Because cultural influences seem to prominent in the literature, advocates may consider leveraging these cultural influences in a positive way. For example, in cultures where collectivism is more prominent (Hofstede, 1986), advocates could draw upon this community orientation to encourage bystander behaviors.

Bystander intervention. Although limited, researchers found that the same barriers preventing international students from reporting their own victimization stand in the way of them reporting or preventing another individual's assault. The same researcher who found that international students often did not perceive sexual assault situations at the same rate as domestic students, showed that this perception also led to international students not feeling responsible for intervening in situations that involve sexual misconduct or not knowing how to intervene (Fujimori, 2010). There appears to be a clear connection between rape accepting attitudes and a failure to exhibit bystander intervention behaviors. In particular, if an international student bystander does not perceive a sexual assault situation to be as problematic as their domestic counterparts (Lin et al., 2016; Nayak et al., 2003), they would be less likely to intervene and attempt to prevent the situation from happening (Fujimori, 2010).

Overall, although specific research related to the experiences of international students learning about sexual violence in the United States is lacking, certain bodies of literature including research on sexual violence prevention and factors in the educational experiences of

international students provide insight into these experiences. This literature creates a foundation upon which the study can be built. In addition to understanding the relevant research, building the study requires the use of conceptual frameworks that will inform the design and data analysis.

Conceptual Frameworks

It is important to establish the key theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. First, I describe the social constructivist ontological and epistemological assumptions used in the research process. Second, I describe a new primary prevention framework used to implement and assess sexual violence primary prevention initiatives. Finally, I will describe the cultural framework used to understand the experiences of international students.

Social Constructivism. Constructivist philosophies have existed for centuries. Though philosophers were likely challenging the notion of a fixed reality for longer, it was in response to Descartes (1641) that constructivism in its current sense began to form. Descartes' epistemology centered on the pursuit of truth through rigorous theory testing (Davidson, 1991). "I distinguish the two as follows: there is conviction when there remains some reason which might lead us to doubt, but knowledge is conviction based on a reason so strong that it can never be shaken by a stronger reason," (Descartes, 1984, p. 147). Doubt stands in contrast to certainty and, notably, objective truth can be pursued by reducing any possible doubt in one's convictions. In many ways, the Cartesian theory of knowing serves as the basis for modern objectivism, the belief in an objective reality that can be discovered (Davidson, 1991). However, according to constructivists, reality and knowledge form as humans experience the world around them. Although Jean Piaget is often described as the founder of contemporary constructivist epistemology (Staver, 1986), philosophers such as Edmund Husserl and Immanuel Kant had

challenged the notion of objective truth independent of human experience centuries ago (Davidson, 1991). These philosophers assert that all knowledge of the world is contingent upon human experience. As Piaget puts it, "Intelligence organizes the world by organizing itself," (Piaget, 1937, p311).

The term "social construction" was first introduced by sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). In their work, Berger and Luckmann assert that individuals in a social system construct concepts or ideas to describe others' actions within that social system. Over time, these "constructs" become embedded into the fabric of that society and become reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). For example, the concept of "race" is often described as a social construct (Stanfield & Dennis, 1993; Sue, 2016). In making this claim, writers will often point to historical documents displaying that individuals of Irish, Jewish, Italian descent were not considered "White" when classified by various private and government institutions in the early 20th century (Ignatiev, 2008). This differs from current racial identification systems that largely consider these individuals to be White (Ignatiev, 2008). The concept of "Whiteness" is not a fixed, objective reality, but rather a concept that has changed over time. This is not to say that the experiences of individuals marginalized by their race are not real. Rather, people have constructed the systems and concepts that have led to this marginalization. As James Baldwin states, "Colour is not a human or a personal reality; it is a political reality." (Baldwin, 1992, p. 139). A social constructivist worldview can help explain the process of how concepts are constructed and change over time more elegantly than a perspective that asserts objective truth.

As an epistemological perspective, social constructivism, or interpretivism, is a worldview that, like reality, knowledge is constructed from interactions between subjects

(individuals) and objects (the world around them) (Creswell, 2012). Further, this knowledge is influenced by the social context within which it emerges (Crotty, 1998). An individual's interactions with the world allow them to make meaning of phenomena in the world around them. Social constructivist assumptions frequently underpin phenomenological inquiry, a methodology that focuses on how individuals experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). A social constructivist study assumes that there are multiple realities experienced by each participant and that these realities may differ from the realities of other individuals in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). This study focuses on the individual experiences of international students in an attempt to understand how these experiences may differ from those of their domestic counterparts. In particular, the study focuses on the phenomenon of international students learning about sexual violence in the United States. This exploration is best achieved by describing the experiences that multiple international students have in engaging with the phenomenon; learning about sexual violence.

Practically, researchers who hold a social constructivist worldview must accept that the social context of the study influences the meaning making process (Creswell, 2012; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Further, the relationship between the researcher and the participants is influential, dynamic, and interactive (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). The purpose of interpretive research is not to discover an objective truth, but to understand an experience. Interpretive researchers must accept that, by the end of their work, they are not proving a generalizable truth about the world, they are telling the story of a specific phenomenon. This approach is best suited for the phenomenological exploration.

Ecological Approach to Primary Prevention. There are many goals of sexual violence programming including increasing knowledge of resources and providing individuals with tools

to support victims. However, few would dispute that the ultimate goal of programming is to reduce the occurrence of sexual violence. To do this, educators have emphasized the need to understand the factors that influence violent behaviors. The most prominent framework to understand these factors is the ecological model (or social-ecological model) for prevention (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; DeGue et al., 2012).

Social-ecological models have been used to explain human behavior long before they were applied to sexual violence prevention (Fleury & Lee, 2006). Emerging from the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1977) in the field of human development, the ecological model asserts that humans develop according to their environment. Usually these models take the form of concentric circles (see figure 1) where the center is the individual and each larger concentric circle moves to a broader ecological system (e.g., individual, family, community, culture) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).
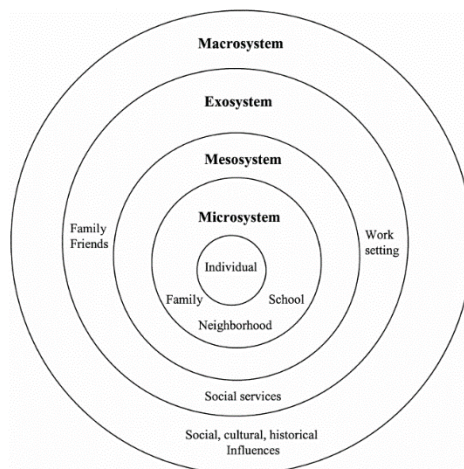
Figure 1. Ecological social theory diagram. Reprinted from "Toward an experimental ecology of human development." by U. Bronfenbrenner, 1977, *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 513–531.

The ecological system shown in Figure 1, grounded in human development theory, illustrates four levels of context that affect individual human development: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems. The individual appears at the center of the system.

The microsystem contains environmental interactions in the individual's immediate social and physical spaces including their family, neighborhood, and school. The circles imply that larger contextual influences are all filtered through the small contextual influences. In this case, all "outer levels" are filtered through the individual and their immediate context. The mesosystem refers to interactions between the microsystems such as interactions between teachers and family. The exosystem refers to influences that the individual is not involved in, but that have a direct impact on the individual's network. For example, the media that an individual's parents are consuming or political stressors on the individual's school environment are all part of that exosystem. Finally, the macrosystem refers to broad societal institutions, such as the economy and the government that broadly influence the inner levels and, thus, the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding how multiple levels of context influence an individual's development.

In sexual violence prevention, the ecological model takes the form of concentric circles moving from individual to relationships to community to society (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009) (see figure 2).

Figure 2. Social-Ecological Model. Taken from the CDC's violence prevention approach. Image found at https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html.

Advocates who view the model as a useful framework in understanding sexual violence prevention utilize a developmental approach to describe each level's influence on an individual.

As shown in Figure 2, advocates seek to understand how these levels influence the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals towards sexual violence. An individual's immediate *relationships* could, for example, influence their attitudes depending on how sexually aggressive their friends are or if they live in a highly patriarchal home environment. Their *community* could influence their behavior if they live in an environment where the police are not respectful of victims or where their school does not take sexual harassment seriously. The *society* could influence their attitudes if their culture holds rape-supportive attitudes or adheres to traditional gender roles. Each level provides context for understanding the individual's development and, as was the case with Bronfenbrenner's original model, "outer levels" are filtered through "inner levels," (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; DeGue et al., 2012)

The model is useful in a few different ways. First, it emphasizes that behaviors such as violence perpetration or risk exposure are influenced by many different factors, and these factors operate at different environmental levels (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009). To address these behaviors, advocates need to think beyond programming or interventions that only target the individual. Initiatives can target the "outer levels" of ecological influence either directly (interventions that are broadly accessible) or indirectly (interventions that draw an individual's attention to how they are influenced by these systems). Additionally, these factors influence each other. For example, an individual's personal disposition to violence perpetration will influence the relationships they have and those relationships, conversely, influence the individual's behavior (DeGue et al., 2012). The most successful initiatives look beyond changing the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of a single individual and encourage that individual to be an agent of change since we know that their personal development can influence other contexts such as their school or community.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory. Differences in values, traditions, and behaviors across cultures has been extensively observed and documented (e.g., House et al., 2004; Javidan et al., 2006). Geert Hofstede's (1986, 2003) most noteworthy contribution to this research was to identify a set of *dimensions* that serve to help compare and contrast values across cultures. These dimensions serve as a list of criteria that holistically describe systematic differences between cultures. Each dimension can be conceptualized as a spectrum along which a culture is placed based on how individuals within the culture respond to cultural value questions on a questionnaire built on Likert-scale questions. The number of points on the scale evolved over time. By comparing and contrasting where cultures sit along each individual spectrum, observers can more clearly make meaning about how cultures differ. Hofstede developed these dimensions after extensive survey research. The model has continued to be updated after new findings illustrate new dimensions or needed changes to past dimensions (Hofstede, 2003; Javidan et al., 2006).

After the first survey (1986), Hofstede put forth his original list of dimensions; individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity. Later, after subsequent research, Hofstede added long-term orientation, and, even later, he added indulgence-self-restraint (Hofstede, 2003). Individualism-collectivism refers to the degree to which a society operates in groups. Power distance refers to the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept an unequal power distribution. Uncertainty avoidance refers to how much a society embraces the unknown. Masculinity-femininity refers to a society's tendency to favor competition and assertiveness (masculinity) over modesty and cooperation (femininity). Long-term orientation refers to the extent to which a society favors change, pragmatism, and adaptation over tradition. Finally, indulgence-self-restraint refers to the extent to which a society

allows happiness and gratification (Hofstede, 2003). Though criticisms of Hofestede's model exist, most notably McSweeney's (2002) list of limitations including criticism of the gender-normative masculinity-femininity dimension, the model is accepted as one of the most comprehensive frameworks for understanding cultural difference (Javidan et al., 2006).

In using Hofstede's model (2003), it is important to acknowledge that his dimensions are theoretical constructions and are not meant to imply deterministic definitions about an individual's personality. The ecological model illustrates that an individual develops within many contexts and a particular culture's "placement" along a certain dimension should not be thought of as predictive of the personality of any one individual within that culture (Hofstede, 2003).

For the purposes of qualitative inquiry, Hofstede's model is valuable for a number of reasons. First, Hofstede's research illuminates that cultural differences exist, are observable, and are inherent within cultures (Hofstede, 2003). Although most researchers agree that cultural differences exist (e.g., Gunn, 2017; Michie, 2014), it is important to note that illuminating these differences is one of Hofstede's clearest accomplishments. In undertaking this study, the researcher assumes that these differences exist. Second, the model helps researchers understand observable differences in a meaningful way. In particular, as will be discussed more extensively below, for this study I use *a priori* coding methods (Creswell, 2012), drawing on existing literature to inform code development. Hofstede's framework would be relevant to code formation. Beyond coding, the dimensions can help researchers make meaning of observable differences within the data. Participants may reflect on content that speaks to certain dimensions (e.g., individual-collectivism may be a way to understand bystander behavior). Finally, though McSweeney (2002) would suggest that the model's limitations make it unusable in this regard,

researchers can, to an extent, predict and prepare for differences between themselves and the

participants.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the experiences that East Asian, international students have when learning about sexual violence in the United States. Qualitative literature is lacking in the field of sexual violence prevention and questions about lived experience are best answered through qualitative inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Johnson & Christensen, 2016). As will be discussed more extensively below, I interviewed a small group of East Asian international students in order to better understand their experiences transitioning to an IHE in the United States and learning about sexual violence.

Rationale for Research Approach

Qualitative inquiry is most appropriate when researchers are seeking to explore a phenomenon, as opposed to quantifying a problem and generalizing answers to the larger population (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Qualitative researchers uncover shared experiences and seek to deeply understand a particular story, event, or individual, or a set of such phenomena (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research is most appropriate for this study because it addresses a research question focused on the lived experiences of a group of people around a shared event. This study explores how East Asian international students attending an urban college/university in the U.S. describe the experience of learning about sexual violence during college. Qualitative research is also particularly lacking in this topic area. The majority of studies that evaluate sexual violence prevention programs are quantitative in nature (Morrison et al., 2004; Vladutiu et al., 2011). Although this quantitative focus has given practitioners a deeper understanding of which types of initiatives are effective, little is known about why these initiatives are effective. This knowledge gap calls for a qualitative study.

Within qualitative research, phenomenological inquiry seeks to describe the common meaning that a group of individuals ascribe to a shared phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological inquiry is well suited for inquiry where the phenomenon itself is at the center of the inquiry; where the goal is to grasp the "nature of the thing," (Van Manen, 1998, p. 177). The phenomenon in this study is the experience of learning about sexual violence in the United States as an international student. Although humans are a part of the experience, the experience itself is the central focal point.

As institutions have refined their sexual violence prevention initiatives over time, most institutions require all incoming students to attend at least one major training focused on multiple learning areas. Understanding the experiences of students as they go through sexual violence prevention trainings when they first arrive at a higher education institution could illuminate which learning areas are most appropriate. The experiences of new students could shed light on which learning outcomes resonate with them and have the most potential of changing their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors in the long-term. Further, qualitative research is almost entirely absent from the body of literature and would assist in understanding the lived experience of individuals who are attending an IHE.

Research Setting and Context

In selecting the research site, I identified the following criteria. First, I was looking for an institution with a critical mass of international students per capita (at least 20% of the total population). In particular, I was hoping to identify an institution whose international student population includes a large East Asian population, as these students will be the participants in the study. Second, I was searching for an institution with a robust international student services office that could speak about the specifics of the international student population. Third, I was

interested in conducting the research at an urban institution. Being in an urban setting poses unique challenges particularly regarding identity formation (Rodriguez, 2017). The unique characteristics of urban institutions inform how students learn about relationships and meet new people. I believe that my familiarity with IHEs in urban settings makes me best suited to investigate the learning experiences that take place within that type of environment.

The purpose of qualitative inquiry is not to generalize a finding, rather it is to understand a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). As such, even though findings might still be transferrable within large, public, urban universities with similar international student populations, a single site design is appropriate for the study. In order to protect the privacy of participants, I have anonymized details about the IHE, including its name (referred to in this document at Hart University). I have also made inconsequential changes to certain characteristics of the institution to assist with the anonymization. I had chosen to perform the study at one institution due to the small sample and the unique characteristics of that institution.

Hart University is a midsize (20,000) IHE in an urban setting in the Midwest. Hart has a central campus in a busy metropolitan city center. The institution is a public research university with multiple colleges in which students can enroll. Approximately 20% of students at the institution are international. Of that population, 20% are from an East Asian country, the vast majority of which is China. The remaining international student population is predominantly from South Asia or the Middle East. The ratio of male-identified to female-identified students is fairly even. LGBT demographic information about the students was not available. Hart is also racially diverse with only a third of the student body identifying as White and a high Hispanic population (over 30% of the total student population).

Beyond demographic information, Hart has an acceptance rate of 72%. Hart also boasts a

prominent athletics program, operates nine residence halls, and approximately 3.5% of the undergraduate population is involved in Greek life each semester. Though there are no registered Greek-letter residences on-campus, many chapters live together off-campus.

Also in line with the criteria for site selection outlined above, Hart staffs several offices intended to support students from diverse backgrounds. These offices include various cultural centers and offices for students of diverse genders and sexualities. Hart's International Affairs Office provides comprehensive support for their international students. The office is well-staffed given the size of the international student population. Further, Asian American students on campus have a cultural center that seeks to promote engagement between the Asian American and Asian students. This includes providing social events and showcasing relevant off-campus resources. Due to the large Asian American population, Hart has been designated as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution by the Department of Education. This status qualifies Hart to apply for grants specifically to serve Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students on campus.

All of these characteristics make the institution unique, but many of the characteristics make Hart particularly appropriate for this study. In particular, the high population of international students, the high subpopulation of East Asian international students, the substantial support system available for international students, and the comprehensive sexual violence prevention and response program all contributed to my desire to perform this study at Hart.

Hart's Title IX Coordinator and Director of International Affairs are supportive of the study. DePaul University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study. Hart's IRB was notified of the study and ceded approval to DePaul as the lead site.

Research Sample and Sources of Data

International students' experiences were investigated through direct conversations about students' lived experience in relation to the research question. After working with Hart's IRB, the institution's Director of International Affairs, on behalf of the researcher, emailed potential participants about the study. The email described the purpose of the study, the length of the commitment, the token of gratitude, and that participation is voluntary. Outreach targeted all international students from East Asian countries of origin. Students were included regardless of their gender and class and degree standing. Participants were excluded if they were under the age of 18 at the time of the research and if they studied or lived in the United States for more than four of the ten years prior to enrolling at Hart. For the purposes of this study, East Asian countries were defined as China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Mongolia, South Korea, and Taiwan (Kort, 2003; Prescott, 2015). Although North Korea would be considered part of East Asia (Kort, 2003; Prescott, 2015), due to a lack of North Korean international students in the United States, the country is not included in the study. For the purposes of this study, at times, South Korea will be referred to as "Korea" and South Korean as "Korean" due to the omission of North Korea from the study.

The initial outreach email came from Hart's Office of International Affairs, but interested participants were instructed to email my personal email address if they were interested in the study. When an individual emailed me with interest in the study, I sent them an electronic version of the consent form and asked them clarifying questions to ensure that they met the inclusion criteria including their country of origin, age, and the number of years they had been in the United States prior to enrolling at Hart.

In addition to authorization from Hart's IRB, the researcher met with the institution's

Title IX Coordinator and Director of International Affairs to secure support for this study. The

Title IX Coordinator agreed to assist in describing and sharing documentation related to sexual

violence resources on campus. The Director of International Affairs agreed to help provide

international student data and assist with email distribution aimed at soliciting participation in

the study.

Qualitative researchers seek in-depth, descriptive information about a phenomenon. The

number of participants needed in a qualitative study varies depending on the methodology

(Creswell, 2012). Qualitative researchers recruit enough participants to obtain *data saturation,* a

state where additional data collection produces redundancies and when new themes stop

emerging (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). In phenomenological research, Creswell (2012) asserts that

data saturation can occur through interviews with up to 10 participants. Others have advocated

for similar sample sizes including Morse (1994) who suggested at least six participants for

phenomenological inquiry and Guetterman (2015) who, in his review of educational

phenomenological research, found studies ranged in sample size from 8 to 31. Ultimately, eight

students participated in the study. Participants were from multiple countries of origin within East

Asia and were given a $50 gift card to the institution's bookstore as a token of appreciation for

their time.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection occurred through multiple methods. In an ideal phenomenological

inquiry, multiple data sources are present (Johnson & Christensen, 2016; Moustakas, 1994)

including multiple interviews and other data collection methods to help researchers achieve

saturation. In this study, individual interviews were the primary method of data collection.

Seidman (2013) recommends a three-part phenomenological interview process. The first

interview focuses on the participant's life history including experiences with their family, their neighborhood, and their community. The second interview focuses on the details of the lived experience with the topic area itself. The third interview focuses on reflection; participants share their thoughts about the experience and what sense they make of it (Seidman, 2013). For the purposes of this study, these three interviews were condensed into one interview and one optional follow up. The interview focused on the participant's history, their engagement with the experience, and reflection. At the start of the interview, I provided a copy of the consent form, reviewed it with the participant, and asked them to sign it if they still wish to participate. I did not ask demographic questions in the interview. The questions focused on their knowledge of sex and relationships in the United States, where they obtained this knowledge, and how best to educate other East Asian international students on these topics. After the interview, I emailed the participants thanking them for their time and offering for them to encourage any other individuals to participate that met the inclusion criteria. One of the eight participants was a referral from another participant.

The optional follow up focused on member checking by giving participants an opportunity to review the transcript. During the initial interview, I explained the option for and purpose of an optional follow up interview. Then, after I had finished transcription, I emailed all participants a copy of the transcript, encouraged them to review the transcript and provide feedback to me, offered a follow up interview, and provided a deadline by which I would need to receive the feedback. Five out of the eight participants responded and confirmed the accuracy of the transcript. Three did not respond. None asked to participate in the follow up.

In forming the interview questions, I was conscious that these students would be speaking about deeply personal, intimate, and potentially traumatic topics in a second language.

Reviewing the previously described literature regarding language barriers assisted in navigating

potential language issues. Despite the fact that all of the participants would have needed to

display English proficiency to study at Hart, I utilized multiple strategies for addressing language

concerns. First, I simplified language and sentence structure when writing the interview

questions. Second, I showed drafts of the interview protocol to other non-native speakers,

including from East Asian backgrounds. Third, I prepared a list one-page sheet that provided

definitions of words that may be more complex and used more commonly during the interviews

(e.g. harassment, consent, etc.). Finally, when interviewing, I frequently used summarizing

techniques to check my own understanding of the participants' responses. All of these strategies

sought to mitigate any concerns about language.

Throughout the process, I remained open to conducting additional interviews if necessary

to reach data saturation or to clarify information provided in an interview. By the end of the first

eight interviews, it did not appear that further interviews were necessary to reach data saturation.

Significant statements began to repeat in the interviews and I began to see themes emerging in

the data (Creswell, 2012). Condensing the research process ensured greater participant retention,

particularly given that I allowed the process to move forward if the participant was unresponsive

or uninterested in participating in the follow up. Most interviews lasted between 45 - 60 minutes,

though the shortest lasted 30 minutes and some lasted over 60 minutes. All interviews were

recorded as no participants expressed concern about being recorded. As was the case with all

data for the study, recordings were stored in a Dropbox account that can only be accessed with a

password that is stored on a password manager program that is only accessible via two-factor

authentication. Pseudonyms were used in the transcription process and are used throughout the

manuscript. Audio recordings were kept until accurate written notes had been made, then they

were destroyed. Because the follow-up is optional, data was included if a participant only sat for one interview. Once an interview time and location was confirmed, no participants withdrew from the study at any point in the process.

In addition to interviews, document analysis was an important part of data collection. Ravitch and Carl (2015) describe three types of document data: personal documents, official documents, and popular culture documents. In this study, official documents published by the institution related to sex and relationships including their policies, websites, and additional materials that are distributed to international students were analyzed to provide context that assisted in forming the interview questions, understanding participant responses, and supporting the initial coding process.

Initially, I intended to observe any educational initiatives related to sexual violence prevention for international students that occurred in the first six weeks of matriculation. However, despite receiving initial support from Hart's Title IX Coordinator, the Title IX Coordinator never provided information on these initiatives despite multiple forms of outreach.

Participant consent was obtained at the beginning of the study. All participants were given a consent form with a description of the research and its purpose. Participant information was protected by use of pseudonyms. No participant data could be identifying and, thus, no additional data was redacted. Data was stored electronically on a computer that remains in lock-protected environments when not on the researcher's person.

Ethical considerations included that I described my role at the beginning of the project including that, though not a mandated reporter of the institution, information regarding a credible, substantial risk of harm to individuals within the institution would need to be reported to the institution. No such information emerged over the course of the study. As a result, no

information was shared with authorities or the institution including information about violations

of law. No representatives of the institution knew any information about the participants. All but

one individual emailed me directly if they were interested in the study. One individual replied to

the Office of International Affairs who then forwarded the reply to me. No additional

information about that individual, including whether they ultimately participated, was shared

with the institution. I emphasized to participants that they would face no consequences from the

institution for revealing sensitive or critical information about the institution. Further, I

emphasized that their participation in the study would have no effect on their performance or

standing at Hart.

I informed participants that they may experience some positive effects through their

participation in the study. Participants received a $50 gift card to the Hart bookstore.

Additionally, participants may have a positive experience feeling that they contributed to the

field's overall ability to educate international students about sex and relationships. However, I

also explained that there could be concerns for participants. For example, the content of the study

may invite participants to disclose information about their life history that may be painful.

Because of this risk, I familiarized myself with on- and off-campus resources related to health

and well-being. Throughout the course of the study, I made one referral to Hart's counseling

office based on a participant describing that they had been feeling stressed about academics and

had once outreached to the counseling office, but needed to cancel the appointment. The

individual did not disclose any thoughts of self-harm, suicide, or other safety concerns. No other

participants disclosed any information that would warrant a referral. Additionally, participants

may also have disclosed risky behavior. Although I did not plan on offering feedback on any

participant's behavior or attempting to influence it, I familiarized myself with resources related

to sexual health. None of the participants disclosed any information that warranted a discussion regarding those resources. I, also, carried Hart's sexual violence resource sheet should an individual disclose a recent incident of sexual or relationship violence or need support regarding a past incident. None of the participants made such a disclosure. Additionally, participants may experience frustration if they do not see systematic change within their institution after the study is complete. I was direct with participants about the purpose of the study to ensure that participants understood that I was not a representative of the institution, nor is the study an assessment initiative for the institution to update and improve its sexual violence prevention initiatives, though this may occur voluntarily after the study is complete. Finally, though highly unlikely given the above safeguards, the possibility of a confidentiality breach always exists and this information was shared with participants. No such confidentiality breach has occurred.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2012) and Moustakas (1994) both describe a specific conceptual structure for phenomenological data analysis. Although specific steps are described, the nature of qualitative inquiry requires flexibility in revisiting steps as necessary and treating data analysis as a dynamic and continual process (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The analysis began after interviews were transcribed verbatim. I completed the transcription myself. The analysis was guided by the following steps as suggested by Moustakas (1994):

1) The researcher describes and considers personal experience and bias through a process of *bracketing*.

2) The researcher will develop a set of *preliminary codes* based on the conceptual framework.

3) The researcher develops a list of significant statements within the data

(*horizontalilzation / coding*).

4) From these statements, the researcher develops *clusters of meaning* from which themes emerge, seeking validation by avoiding repetitive themes and accounting for discrepancies.

5) The researcher integrates the themes into an exhaustive (textural) description of what the participants experienced.

6) The researcher then writes a concise statement that describes the *essence* of the participants' experience.

In qualitative research, it is imperative that the data is rigorously analyzed and revisited both throughout and at the conclusion of data collection. The continual analysis of data throughout the research process allows the researcher to explore new concepts as themes begin to emerge during data collection (Johnson & Christensen, 2016). The following strategies serve as a map for data analysis. First, the researcher considers bracketing throughout the data analysis process. Bracketing the researcher's previous experiences ensures that the data analysis captures the essence of the participants' experience (Creswell, 2012). Second, data analysis begins with an open coding process that creates the foundation for categories of meaning. The coding generally takes place at the level of phrases and sentences that emerge from the field notes or interviews (Moustakas, 1994). Finally, themes emerge from the clusters of meaning formed by the coding process. However, because analysis takes place continually, themes are modified as new data emerges or discrepancies in the data need to be accounted for (Creswell, 2012).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Ensuring validity and reliability is fundamental in qualitative research. Creswell (2012) suggests a number of strategies to ensure a credible study, many of which were utilized in this

research to maximize trustworthiness.

1) Corroborating evidence by using multiple data sources (e.g. document analysis and individual interviews).

2) Being attentive to negative case analysis and accounting for it through description in the findings.

3) Making use of bracketing throughout the study.

4) Making use of an *external audit* by working closely with my dissertation committee throughout the research process. The researcher may also consult with an additional peer reviewer who will review the audit trail and final findings.

5) Producing rich description with abundant, interconnected details to help describe the essence of the participants' experience.

6) Member checking and giving participants the opportunity to review the transcripts.

Further, *inside-outside legitimation* is an integral part of establishing research validity. As an outsider in this research, inside-outside legitimation refers to process of accurately presenting and utilizing my outsider's perspective to describe and explain the phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2016). Due to my outsider's view, presenting the participants' subjective experience will be more challenging. However, sociocultural factors present challenges for all researchers, regardless of if they are researching within their own identity group or outside of it (Johnson & Christensen, 2016; Stanfield & Dennis, 1993).

Further, strategies exist that help overcome the obstacles presented by these personal experiences in order to enhance trustworthiness in this study. First, bracketing pervades the literature as a means of setting aside one's personal experiences to more authentically analyze data (Giorgi, 1997; Moustakas, 1994). Second, researcher reflexivity at every step in the research

process assists researchers in identifying how one's personal experience may influence knowledge construction (Creswell, 2012; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Reflexivity can be fostered by practices such as memoing (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Third, dialogic engagement with my chair, committee members, colleagues, and other individuals with an insider's lens throughout the interview process assists in hearing multiple perspectives on the research process (Creswell, 2012). Finally, journaling throughout the research has assisted in documenting my own identification with the process (Moustakas, 1994). By utilizing all of these strategies, I hope to have managed the biases that stem from personal experiences and identities.

These strategies assist in producing a description that is dependable, convincing, and protects against any conscious or unconscious research bias.

Delimitations

Some delimitations are present that should be addressed in later qualitative research. First, the participants' experiences are more varied than would be ideal. Although all participants are from East Asian international students, they represent four different countries of origin and have varied language proficiency. Although all of the individuals may experience the same phenomenon, their distinctive cultural background make it difficult to arrive at a specific lived experience about a group of individuals. Second, the absence of multiple forms of data collection was an unexpected disappointment. Phenomenological inquiry is most effective when multiple forms of data collection assist researchers in reaching data saturation (Groenewald, 2004). The unexpected lack of follow through from the staff member who committed to facilitating my observations of sexual violence prevention initiatives, made this aspect of the research untenable. Finally, the research only focused on one institution for data collection. In phenomenological educational research, it is common for researchers to conduct research at multiple sites to help

account for biases present within a single context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In this case, a single site was chosen and the research drew upon in depth analysis of that particular site including asking intentional questions during the interviews that relate to the specific site. Although this may create the possibility of research that is site specific, qualitative research is not focused on generalizing a finding to the larger population, it attempts to describe a specific phenomenon within a context (Creswell, 2012; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). These delimitations needed to be accounted for while conducting the research.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

This study explored how East Asian international students in the United States experience

learning about sexual violence. I was motivated to do this study due to a lack of previous

research that investigates this phenomenon. Qualitative literature is lacking in the field of sexual

violence prevention. Further, published studies that focus on how East Asian international

students learn about sexual violence (or sex and relationships in general) in the United States are

nearly nonexistent. The participants in this study had unique lived experiences that augment their

beliefs about sex and relationships. Further, they entered the country with specific beliefs about

relationships in the United States and, in some cases, changed their views as they were

confronted with more direct experience about these relationships. The study is a qualitative

analysis. Specifically, I used phenomenological methodology drawing upon the work of

Moustakas (1994). The following results deeply describe the lived experiences of these students

as they studied within the United States. My research was guided by the following central

question:

> How do East Asian international students attending an urban college/university in the
>
> U.S. describe the experience of learning about sexual violence during college?

This central question was supplemented by the following sub-questions:

1. What are the different settings in which international college students learn about sexual

   violence in the United States?

2. How does the experience of learning about sexual violence in college differ from the

   experience of learning about sexual violence prior to coming to the United States?

3. What strategies and resources do international college students use to navigate cultural

   differences when learning about sexual violence?

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the data. I collected the data through

interviews with eight East Asian international students studying at a public university in the Midwest. After transcribing these interviews, I began the coding process. I utilized a partially deductive, or *a priori* coding method (Creswell, 2012), utilizing the previously discussed conceptual frameworks to develop an initial set of codes (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). I then engaged in multiple cycles of axial coding, reading and rereading the data while assigning and reassigning codes as appropriate. After developing a final list of codes, I searched for clusters of meaning (categories) emerging from the codes, and subsequently observed themes that described the phenomenon.

Summary of Participants

The students were selected based on a set of inclusion criteria. As described in Chapter 3, to be included, students needed to be enrolled at Hart University at the time of the study, over the age of 18, and identify as East Asian. Finally, participants were excluded if they had spent a majority of the decade prior to enrolling at Hart within the United States. The sample included five males and three females. Ages of participants ranged from 21 to 43 with an average age of 26. All but one participant was in their 20s. The students were predominantly graduate students. This was initially surprising, but made sense as many students described that they would need to do their own research as graduate students and felt motivated to help another researcher. Five of the eight students were from China and the other three were raised in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mongolia. The majority of the students were in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) fields. Hart is known for its STEM programs. The following table contains a full breakdown of demographic information regarding the participants (see table 1).

Variable	N
Age	
21	2
23	3
24	1
28	1
43	1
Country of Origin	
China	3
Hong Kong	1
Mongolia	1
Taiwan	1
Gender	
Female-identified	3
Male-identified	5
Degree Pursuing	
Bachelor of Arts	1
Master of Arts	4
Doctor of Philosophy	3
Field of Study	
Economics	1
Education	2
Engineering	3
Physics	1
Sociology	1

Table 1. Summary of Participants. Overview of participant demographic and academic

information.

Participant Narratives

In qualitative research, the participants' lived experience is central to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). The following section provides a description of each participant and their previous lived experiences. Phenomenological methodology calls for investigating a shared phenomenon with participant narrative at the core of the inquiry (Groenewald, 2004). As a result, each participant summary concludes with the response each participant gave when asked, "Imagine you were in charge of the international student educational initiatives at your school related to healthy relationships and sexual violence, what would you do the same? What would you do differently?" Overall, the purpose of providing these descriptions is to provide context for the exhaustive textual description of the phenomenon to follow (Moustakas, 1994).

Nick is a 21-year-old master's student seeking a degree in economics. Nick was raised in Taiwan and knew from a young age that he wanted to go to college in the United States. Nick believes that the education system in Taiwan "sucks," stating that the "student's attitude...the whole environment…we're not that motivated." Nick attributes the decline in the Taiwanese education system to low birth rates. He says schools are pressed for enrollment and "just accept whatever application people submit." He came to the United States for his bachelor's degree at Hart, completed it in 2.5 years, and then went on to pursue his master's degree at Hart directly afterward.

Nick states that he had more knowledge about sex and relationships in the United States than other Taiwanese youth because he went to an international high school and interacted with Americans. In contrast to other institutions, he stated that the students and teachers at the school spoke directly about sex and relationships in the United States. Because of this, Nick says he

"didn't learn that much" about sexual violence when he came to America.

Nick described not having the time to focus on learning about sex and relationships here, stating that he focuses "on other stuff, on economics, on mathematics." Nick's focus on mathematics and economics is apparent in how he thinks about his own learning. In making recommendations about how schools could teach international students about sexual violence, he focuses on the data. For example, Nick makes a case for schools sharing information on crime rates.

Nick stated that he had to "convince" his parents to let him study in the United States and that he was able to "prove it" to them by completing his undergraduate degree so quickly. Nick notes that he was one of the "trouble kids" growing up. This included him challenging his parents to let him have a girlfriend at a younger age. He stated this is uncommon in Taiwan.

During our conversation, Nick stated that his views on sex and relationships in the United States had been influenced by a young woman who told him that she had been sexually assaulted. Nick says that she confided in him and ended up pursuing therapy after multiple conversations with him about the situation. Ultimately, though, Nick stated that he doesn't believe he helped her. When asked about the ideal sexual violence prevention program, Nick stated:

> Looking at data. Crime rates. If you look at a crime rate, that's econ,
> history, math. That's everything. That's basically everything. We're not
> trying to get interpret the data, but we're trying to review it and see how
> bad the dating is going on. Yeah, and if the crime rates going…increasing
> or decreasing…or at some point decrease, but then it went back. We
> can…yeah…we can try to dig in there…I think it's more important about

how to a relationship, how to maintain a healthy relationship with your

partner. I think that's more important about, I personally think that's more

important than teaching safe sex or, like, sexual assaults related topic. I

think if people can, can have healthy relationship with other people, these

bad things can be naturally avoided...because a lot of teenagers including

myself, but I don't do that no more…a lot of guys just force their partner

to do something. Or, act like whatever they want to. And, that will cause

some negative consequences I would say.

Shu is a 24-year-old Ph.D. student studying physics. Shu's research focuses on finding

patterns in how subatomic particles interact with each other. Shu came to the United States from

Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, Shu primarily learned about sex and relationships through friends,

and that has continued through her time in the United States. Her friends in the United States are

all male, which she believes may influence her perceptions about sex and relationships here. She

"never" talked to her family about these topics and doesn't believe she would speak to her

children about it either should she have children in the future. She believes these topics are a

"very private thing."

Shu noted that it is uncommon in Hong Kong for people to speak to their family at all

about serious topics. Shu spoke extensively about the political unrest in the country, and stated

that she knows that she has a difference of opinion from her parents. She stated that her father, in

particular, is critical of the protests taking place, but Shu never challenges his opinions, even

though she disagrees with him. She stated that challenging her father would not accomplish

anything.

Shu recommended that educators consider the use of movies when talking to students about sex and relationships: "It's the best way. Like, if we want to say movie and want to discuss plot in movies. That's both these kind of things. Then I think it's a very natural way to bring this up." When asked about the ideal sexual violence prevention program, Shu stated:

> In the first place, I would not be willing to teach people about this.
>
> Because, I feel like if they want to know, for example, if I have kid, and if they want to know about these things and ask me...I would be like, I'm the one that initiates everything. But, if I had to do so, it's probably from movie. It's like maybe a story gives more inspiration than actually, I don't know…a movie would be a better way…this topic is definitely important for everyone. But, I feel like because for me this is a very private thing to say, to talk about, so, if someone wants to reach out and talk about this, then I'm willing to do so, instead of me initiating the whole thing as if I wanted to think about it…Movies…it's the best way. Like, if we want to say movie and want to discuss plot in movies. That's both these kind of things. Then I think it's a very natural way to bring this up.

Han is a 23-year-old Ph.D. student studying electrical engineering. He first came to the United States to pursue his master's degree at Hart and then continued on to a doctoral program. Han was raised in China. Our conversation began with Han explaining the importance of National Day (October 1st) as he was entering the date on the consent form. He also corrected my use of the word "China" on the consent form. Han explained that I should use the phrase "Mainland China" in light of Hong Kong and Taiwan also being included on the consent form, emphasizing that "China" is inclusive of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

When answering my first question regarding sex and relationships in the United States, Han stated that the "major problem" with sex in China is AIDS. He stated that he has a girlfriend in China, but doesn't worry about AIDS with his current girlfriend because she has "self-control." Han stated that he believes sexual assaults are more common in the United States than in China. He formed this belief because of the frequent alerts he receives from Hart informing students about recent sexual assaults. He also stated that assaults are less common in China due to women wearing more clothing, a choice that mitigates risk because men will not get "erections" upon seeing the women and thus be motivated to assault them.

Han emphasized that he did not receive any formal education in China regarding sex until high school. Once in high school, Han described his coursework included "one chapter" on sex. He stated that, in his school, some teachers covered this chapter and others did not. He shared that he did not learn anything new about sex when he came to the United States because "we already know about how open you are." He did not find Hart's online sexual assault training valuable because he did not believe it applied to him. Han shared that because he is a man, he was not at risk for being sexually assaulted, "so I don't care about that." He also shared that he has "self-control" so he "wouldn't do sex assault on other ones." Han stated that he did not believe the bystander intervention section in the online training was valuable either because no one would ever tell him they were assaulted. He stated that his Chinese friends would not tell him because "we will not tell anyone" and his friends from the United States are all men, so could not be assaulted. When asked about the ideal sexual violence prevention program, Han stated:

> First, it's better to put the quiz at the beginning. And after the quiz, offer
> videos…And, if they get low score, they have to watch the videos. And,

they only have to watch the videos in those parts. So, if I did well in the

first part and did poor on the second part, I would only have to watch the

second part…I mean, they have to watch the videos beginning to end and

we cannot overlap any of them…So, if we are forced to watch videos that

we don't need to watch it will be low effective. We will eject to watch

this. So, for some friends and me, we open the videos and we think, I

don't want to watch this. Because we don't want to waste our time. Take

quiz first. And, only what we would use, like we were in law school.

When I noted that Han could conceptualize education beyond just adjusting the current online

training, Han stated:

This kind of thing, why me, because I don't have much sexual experience

before…So, I don't know how to answer these questions…Yeah. So, I will

not participate in this activity because I am not interested in this part. But,

if you are asking me to do some mathematical computation, I would be

happy about it because that's good for me.

Sara is a 43-year-old Ph.D. student studying math education. Sara grew up in Mongolia

during the communist era. She said that during these times sex was "forbidden to talk about."

She stated that her belief about sex in the United States at the time was that people have one

night stands: "People go to bar and then meet and then one day and one night and they forget

each other." However, Sara stated that she no longer believes this. She believes that there is a

diversity of sexual practices in the United States, but noted that couples here are generally more

"open" than in East Asia and typically have sex prior to marriage.

Sara has traveled in and out of the United States, first arriving when she was 22. She has lived in a variety of settings including Budapest, Hawaii, and Utah. Sara was exposed to the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints (Mormonism) early in life, became Mormon, and still identifies as Mormon today. She remembers the educational initiatives at Brigham Young, where she was a student, being highly influenced by the institution's Mormon background. She stated that the students were held to strict behavioral expectations grounded in the institution's honor code. Drinking was prohibited. Women were not allowed to wear "revealing clothing." Men and women were not allowed to be out together at night, and the institution's security department would patrol the campus to "break up" couples who were out together after midnight. Sara shared that she appreciates Hart's online sexual assault training, stating that the courses are "really good" and that she appreciates that the institution takes these matters seriously. Sara was, herself, sexually harassed earlier in her life. She stated that she spent her early career working in a corporate setting where sexual harassment was commonplace. Sara never formally complained about the situation because she believed this was "normal" behavior in that environment.

Sara's assessment of sexual violence in Mongolia was that Mongolia was different than other East Asian countries. She believed there was a recent increase in sexual violence, in contrast to other participants who described believing that sexual violence in their home countries had been steadily declining. Sara believes that the fall of communism in Mongolia increased individual freedom, but also emboldened violent individuals. She stated that social media campaigns in the last 4-5 years have helped raise awareness about the violence.

Sara described helping other Mongolian victims of relationship violence. At least two women in her housing complex came to her after their husbands attacked them. On one occasion, Sara called the police. Sara stated that she feels "so bad" for victims of relationship violence,

noting that it is common in Mongolian culture, and that she has never had this problem in her own family. When asked about the ideal sexual violence prevention program, Sara stated:

> I don't know. Maybe through the…I don't know. I don't remember my orientation at [Hart] that well. I don't really remember what went through, but orientation may be a good place, maybe. But, I know the orientation, it's kind of tiring you know? You go through lots of information and you forget so maybe they can talk about in orientation, but maybe they can create one credit course and it's one of the mandatory courses to graduate. They don't want to receive grade, you know? They can receive pass or no pass. So, maybe they can just watch videos and read some scenarios or something like that. *laughs* I don't know…The orientation is too much information. I can't absorb too much information in a short time. So, I just, forget about it. Yeah. But, I think the international students definitely need that kind of course because of the culture difference and then…because I know when I was in Utah as a graduate student, one of the undergraduate students from, I think he was also from Mongolia, the same country like me, but he had a girlfriend….American girlfriend. So, they were dating and then they were getting really good in relationship and then, they went to movies and afterward, he went to take her home. And then they went inside, so in his mind he thought it's okay to go further. *laughs* So, he started kissing and hugging, but she thought it's not okay. But, somehow they misunderstood each other and then she had to call police...Yeah. So, he got arrested for it. And, one of my friends who was

working as a social worker. She had to translate and help, but I think it's culture difference. Because in his mind, it was not harassing, you know? It wasn't rape, you know? Because they were close friends and they were kind of intimate it was okay, but for her it wasn't okay….I think it can cover more topics. More like ethical issues. Like, for example, I don't know, I'm trying to remember what the [Hart] course. They were covering, for example, accepting gifts and stuff like that. Maybe it was for more of employee situation…For example, if I'm teaching a course and then a student that's giving me a very expensive gift, then I cannot accept that, you know? While I'm teaching….In my country, when you are really good buddies, it's okay to just visit them and even stay overnight. And, if there's no place to sleep, they can even share a bed. And, there's no problem. But, here they will think that they're having some relationship, right?

Lee is a 23-year-old master's student studying civil engineering. He came to Hart after completing his undergraduate years in China. While pursuing his undergraduate degree, Lee spent six months at an exchange program in St. Petersburg, Russia. Lee grew up in China near a university. His grandfather served on the institution's faculty. Lee remembers spending significant time on the institution's campus talking to the students, many of whom had traveled abroad: "I'm more familiar with the American culture than the rest of my Chinese peers." Growing up, Lee watched American films and television shows. He cited the sitcom *Friends* as being particularly influential in his understanding of sex and relationships in the United States. He stated that he believed all relationships in the United States were like *Friends.* However,

coming to the United States challenged those beliefs. He now believes that American relationships are much more complex than he originally believed. Lee described movies in the United States to illustrate how these films contribute to stereotypes: "There is always a woman who is attractive and sexy." Regardless of the plot of the movie or its genre, Lee notes that America films typically have a heterosexual romance. In contrast, Lee described the Chinese monster action film, *The Great Wall*, starring a male and female lead that did not have a sexual relationship.

Lee spoke extensively about the problems in China with sexual harassment and assault. He believes that sexual assault occurs in both China and the United States, but Chinese individuals have no recourse. In particular, Lee cited problems at the college level. He stated that Chinese faculty take advantage of helpless students and the media and institution work together to cover up reports. This leaves victims of sexual harassment and assault powerless. Lee observed this kind of behavior throughout his education. He described primary school teachers making the female students sit on their laps and finding ways to require their students to spend time with them privately. He stated that college TAs are "sex slaves" for their assigned instructors. Lee recognizes that sexual harassment and assault occur in the United States, but is appreciative of the steps taken by institutions to support victims. He discussed his appreciation for the easy access he has to counseling at Hart and noted how easy it is to report sexual violence on Hart's website.

Although Lee was able to learn a little bit about sex and relationships through illegal pornography in China, he learned the most when he traveled to St. Petersburg. He spoke fondly about a roommate there who would talk to Lee about sex and help him find pornography after Lee had moved to a place where pornography was legal. While in St. Petersburg, Lee

encountered sexual situations that concerned him, though. He described an incident where one of

his faculty invited the class out drinking. Lee had never been to a bar before. While at the bar,

the teacher asked Lee to dance. Lee declined and the instructor went on to dance with Lee's

roommate in a "very sexually attractive way" instead. This "shocked" Lee. Lee also described a

male Russian professor in St. Petersburg who would ask male students to sit on his lap and

frequently give them unwanted hugs. Lee believes this behavior constituted sexual assault and it

made him "uncomfortable." When asked about the ideal sexual violence prevention program,

Lee stated:

> Wow. Okay. Three parts….the first part is advertisement. You can do
>
> video course, online courses talk about the...like, I can just open one
>
> course at [Hart] campus, just telling them it's a three-credit course, for-
>
> credit course. It will satisfy the graduation requirement for you. So, it's no
>
> exam. And, if you take this course, you will definitely get an A. So, many
>
> student will take this course. They will compete with each other. And, in
>
> this course, it's a great opportunity for me to share the idea about sexual
>
> assault, and examples of sexual assault. And, the second part will be
>
> weekly or monthly meeting. This can happen because I know some of the
>
> local bible study group, like Bridges, Navigators, Cornerstones…they are
>
> group from society, from outside the university. They spread the idea of
>
> Christianity for international students specifically. Only to international
>
> students. So, they have a group meeting every week and they provide
>
> food, the refreshment…all this stuff is free. So, most international students
>
> like Chinese students consider, I mean for Korean students, their economy

is very good. So, they come to America…the spending here and Seoul,

Korea is basically the same level, so they don't feel economic hardship.

But, for Chinese students it really depends if you're from Beijing,

Shanghai, or the western part of China where the economy is less

developed. Those students from those regions are really concerned about

the costing here. So, whatever they can do to save the money, they will do

that. So, if you have a free dinner every week to talk about sexual

harassment like they do about bible study, they going to come. Truly

believe they going to come. Especially if they international student. I

mean, most of them will be Chinese student. So, that is a good

opportunity. It's going to be four times a month, so one time a week, so

talk about the sexual harassment, the examples, the idea, just give lecture

like they the bible person they gave to instruct the people about

Christianity. So, this is the second part. And, the third part I think it's

going to be a one year, one time to have a seminar about sexual

harassment. And, we can invite some students who have previously sexual

harassment experience, but it's very hard to do this most of people don't

really share this kind of experience. But, if you can do that, one thing they

can share their story, it's really person story. It's not in the media, not in

the news. So, the students who come to the seminar they truly can

understand that sexual harassment actually exists. So, it's affected

people's life, daily life. So, the seminar I think is going to be…and, also,

can invite not only students in [Hart], can invite students all over the

United States for students who had that experience before, for students

who want to share the experience. And, because those [other local

institution] professor, the problem is not going to be caught by the police

and put into the jail, so we can also invite them to give speech. I think they

have some idea to share when they have sexual harassment – what do they

think? And, they will instruct the students how to fight back. And, just do

what their student did to them before. So, I think from the three part it can

be better, for the student to know more about sexual harassment.

Chao is a 21-year-old master's student studying electrical engineering. He moved from

China this term to study in the United States for the first time. Chao shared that part of the reason

that he wanted to participate in the study was so that he could practice his English and have an

additional opportunity to connect with an American. His roommate, another participant,

encouraged him to participate knowing that Chao was looking for these opportunities. Chao also

expressed an interest in these topics, stating that he wished early Chinese education taught

students about sex and relationships. He stated that he struggles to start relationships or talk

about sex because these topics were not discussed at home or in school in China. Chao never

observed members of his family being intimate with each other.

Chao received most of his sex education from media, including his perceptions about sex

and relationships in the United States. In China, Chao watched *The Big Bang Theory* and was

surprised by how relationships in the United States seemed to work. He noted that he struggled

to understand the nature of Penny and Leonard's relationship: "He's Penny's boyfriend, but

sometimes I'm confused because this guy sometimes very love Penny, and sometimes have a

date, go out, and have some sex."

Chao also noted how quickly individuals get married in China. He shared that, after waiting a long time to begin relationships, Chinese individuals feel immediate pressure from their parents to get married. Chao currently is in a long-term relationship that he started in high school. He reflected that this was different than most of his peers who did not have relationships in high school. Chao stated that the relationship was difficult due to the pressure he faced regarding academics and because of his lack of knowledge about maintaining a relationship.

Chao shared his own concerns about sexual harassment and violence in China. He described that people are "scared" to report because of the potential impact on their "reputation." Additionally, in the context of the education system, schools work to suppress reports of sexual violence and protect assaulters within the institution. Chao described being personally affected by the story of a young woman who killed herself after being assaulted by one of her faculty members. He stated that she never reported the situation out of fear and eventually killed herself. Chao stated that the media later reported what happened once they eventually discovered the suicide note she left on her WeChat. Chao shared his own aversion to sexual violence, noting that relationship violence is a result of a "psychological problem." He stated that victims should share their experiences and leave violent relationships: "Her boyfriend are violent to his girlfriend…if his girlfriend is my friend I try to say to her that you can…you must break up with boyfriend here."

Chao believes that the most important topics to discuss with international students regarding sex and relationships are foundational concepts about how to start a relationship and prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS. He believes that any educational program should focus on ways of bringing international students and domestic students into contact with each other, stating that international students often have limited opportunities to interact with their domestic

peers. He believes these interactions will help international students learn about the culture in the United States. When asked about the ideal sexual violence prevention program, Chao stated:

> I think, if I'm leader and I've been to America for many years, lot of American people, lot of American friends, I want to let them to have a party or have discuss with American people. Because I think Chinese people in America they just come to America they are not very familiar to the environment. And, they have very less opportunity to talk to American people about all the things. And, include the sexual things. So, I think at first I would introduce open party or introduce some American friends to the Chinese student and then I think also tell them some American opinions, American culture about the sexual relationship and let them know how to start a sexual relationship and how to deal with it. And, also, let them know the difference between the two countries because we introduce American friends to them so they will have some conversation, some small talk, so they will understand how the American people think. Yeah. How American people feel this kind of things. Not very shy. I think not look at very important, just is a very common things to talk about. And, after that, I also want to give him some materials and some chance to have a visiting to some sexual assault…the company protect the who assaulted…just like some sexual exams, just like exam…to let them know the theory and know the very formal introduction to this kind of things, yeah.

> Mike: So, you would focus mostly on connecting international students

with American students and having those conversations focus mostly on

the difference between the two cultures.

Chao: Yeah. The two cultures. And, one topic would be very open to talk

about more things. And, in this area we give them some materials and

movies about this…and, also, sometimes they can go to some very

important place, such as museums, such as this kind of place. This

company can describe that a sexual not just for fun. The theory. Let them

know more clearly about sexual assault…so, they can very believe it and

quickly to being into the American society. And, for them to start a

relationship or just have some, more some common opinions and some

talking when they talk to foreign people, American guys. More and more

they have the same opinion, same ideas.

Shing is a 28-year-old master's student studying education. She traveled to the United

States from China for the first time in order to pursue her master's degree. Prior to coming to the

United States, she had strong perceptions about sex and relationships here. She watched *Gossip

Girl* and, from it, believed that Americans did not typically commit to one partner. This

influenced how Shing approached relationships. She resisted committing to a single partner

growing up.

Shing shared that here parents were divorced, an experience she stated was not common

in China. She did not provide details about why her mother divorced her father, but described her

mother as being a "very brave woman" for going through a divorce despite the immense social

pressure to stay married. Shing believes this experience influenced her perceptions about

relationships and the freedom that her mother gave her compared to the parents of her Chinese

peers. Growing up, Shing told herself that she would never get married. This changed after her relationship with her current partner developed.

Shing speaks extensively about her husband, an American who she met while studying in the United States. She refused to go on a date with him at first because of her perceptions about Americans. Although she was not interested in marriage, she wanted a partner who would be faithful, and media taught her otherwise about Americans. She stated that, initially, her husband had to prove to her that he was serious. Shing shared that her husband taught her about American culture and helped her to realize that Americans have a variety of perspectives regarding sex and relationships, even if the culture is generally more open than Chinese culture. She prefers the "freedom" offered to Americans in their relationships, noting how happy she was that she found someone with shared interests including food, travel, and golden retrievers. In China, Shing believes that people often "pretend happiness" in relationships that they pursue purely because of their perceptions that the partner will be stable.

Shing described the pressure facing Chinese youth about relationships and careers. She talked about how family elders have high expectations for young adults. Shing's husband has two siblings who work at Costco and a bakery respectively. She said that this would not be something Chinese youth would feel proud to share with their families. However, her husband's sisters talk about their experiences openly. Shing shared that they "love" their jobs and this is what is important to their parents.

Shing has observed the differences in family dynamics between the two cultures firsthand through watching her husband interact with his parents. She stated that he argues with them and opens up to them about his struggles. Shing says that her husband's parents are his "friends." She wished she had more of this type of relationship with her mother. Shing stated that

she does not confront her mother or talk about her struggles. Even despite having a more progressive mother than her peers, Shing's conversations with her mother remain superficial, speaking about her day and her brother. At one point, Shing described that, similar to many women in China, she would not tell her mother if her husband started abusing her. She did not believe that her mother would be able to do much, and it would only worry her. She believes this barrier is one faced by many Chinese women who are "trapped" in abusive relationships because they are totally dependent on their husband, do not have good reporting options, and are marginalized by their community when making a report.

Shing stated that sexual violence prevention training for international students should include providing definitions to international students about basic American relationship terminology. Shing noted that phrases such as "hang out" have multiple meanings and this can be confusing for East Asian students. Shing also described the importance of giving specific examples when doing these trainings. Finally, she stated that educators should be sensitive to how "shocking" this type of content can be for someone who has not yet received sex education. When asked about the ideal sexual violence prevention program, Shing stated:

> I think that would be much easy for me because I'm a very…like let's say
>
> the audience is all Asian…I'm one of them. So, I would actually use my
>
> example instead of doing more like a formal thing, but I know that is not
>
> effective because you're supposed to have guidelines. You know what I'm
>
> saying? So, guidelines are different than personal experience sharing. Do
>
> the training you need some sharing for the experience, but you don't need
>
> 100% sharing. That would be a story or sharing or all students sharing
>
> stories. But, training would be, you need to have some guidelines and

maybe have someone who willing to share some of their stories. Both

sides. American sides. American new students. We can have some new

student who just got into [Hart], or we have some Chinese who just got to

[Hart]. Let them make a little discussion before they're going to present

and share what they think because that will open lots of confusion. They

will say, "Oh maybe you guys think our parties like that. Our parties not

actually bunch of people flirting or trying to ask who can have sex. We

play ping-pong. We play board game. We play video games." Make

something clear from American perspective and the Chinese

perspective…Because I feel that will be more age-related appeal. Because

most of the training I did either they're professor. I feel they're far away

from me. Their life is totally different. But, if I know, "Oh this one is

actually same stage as me," I would be more interested to listen instead of

feel like (*makes gesture of not caring*).

Jin is a 23-year-old undergraduate student in his second year studying sociology at Hart.

Jin grew up in China, but went to high school in Detroit at an all-boys preparatory school. Jin

describes experiencing discrimination in high school. He stated that the White students made fun

of his name repeatedly and that the school never took any action to protect him. Eventually, he

reached a breaking point and physically attacked the students. He was expelled. Despite Jin

telling his father about the discrimination, his father was upset with him. Jin stated that this

situation illustrates a larger problem with Chinese culture, that Chinese individuals often blame

themselves for transgressions against them, not knowing that they were the victims. Jin shared

that when he began studying sociology at Hart he realized these White students were

discriminating against him because of his nationality. Until then, he sided with his father, thinking the situation was his fault.

Jin described many cultural differences between the United States and China regarding sex and relationships. He talked about how American children are able to have relationships earlier in life. He also talked about the challenges he experienced not having any kind of education regarding sex and relationships. This posed particular challenges for him and his girlfriend. Jin met his girlfriend in middle school, but was forbidden to talk to her. Their teachers noticed that they had a connection and would not let them sit together. After falling out of touch, she recently messaged Jin asking if he remembered her. Jin recalls what it felt like when he received this message, "…that light my fire so much because that's a very…the best memory I ever had." Despite the rekindling of their relationship, Jin shared that the two of them struggled to connect because they both were unfamiliar with relationships. In particular, her family is quite conservative and they instilled negative beliefs about sex within her: "She still think, in a way, that sex is very evil thing." The major recent turning point in their relationship was that his girlfriend was sexually assaulted.

The sexual assault motivated Jin to participate in my study. He shared that the situation with his girlfriend was an interesting "case study." His girlfriend's mother is not married and had different partners since separating with his girlfriend's father. Jin shared that one of the recent partners sexually assaulted his girlfriend. Jin became heavily involved after learning about this. First, he counseled his girlfriend as she processed the event. Jin stated that, because Chinese individuals are not educated on sex and relationships, it is hard to identify sexual assaults when they occurred. He stated that, generally, when "serious" physical violence was involved, individuals from China understood that a situation was a sexual assault. However, less violent

behaviors are not as widely identified as sexual assaults. Jin stated that studying sociology in the United States helped him to identify violence such as what his girlfriend experienced. He spoke to his girlfriend about talking to her mother so that they could move away from her assaulter. Jin also encouraged his girlfriend to go to the police, but her mother convinced her otherwise. After Jin provided this support to his girlfriend, they had sex for the first time. Jin felt that this was an important step in their relationship, but that his girlfriend would still need more time to come to terms with the assault and to change her view about the evils of sex.

Supporting his girlfriend informed Jin's beliefs about what schools should cover when educating international students about sexual assault. He believes that educators should define sexual assault for international students, give them strategies to protect themselves, and encourage them to report if they were assaulted by helping to alleviate their feelings of shame and guilt. When asked about the ideal sexual violence prevention program, Jin stated:

> I don't really know. I have no experience on that. I try to talk my
>
> girlfriend about that, but then nothing really come out. I don't know how
>
> to explain my idea, this kind idea, to my girlfriend that she can accept.
>
> Even today she still feel like, although we had lot of relationship, spend
>
> one night together, the thing is, she still think, in a way, that sex is very
>
> evil thing. And, then get sexual assault it's much even…if sex was evil
>
> and it's a shame to talk about sex, then get sexual assault is *very* evil, like
>
> extremely evil thing to talk about. I just don't have…I don't know how to
>
> explain to my girlfriend that this is wrong. This is not how you're
>
> supposed to think about sex. Because I get education in America so I have
>
> a lot of American ideology about sex within me, and the social movement

about gender and female rights, so I am pretty much a very strong

feminism, but I'm not that kind of feminism. So, I think woman rights

very important and I think I should support woman rights at any cost. It's

a lot related to my girlfriend. I just really don't want anything to happen to

her again because of her gender. And, then, I will support female rights

just from my girlfriend's perspective. I don't even know without me what

kind of life, what kind of sexual assault she would get but she don't know.

I'm afraid all the time when she going into public without me and going to

work without me. Of course without me. When she working a job, what

kind of male partners over there, coworkers over there, and there's

something I just don't know and I'm afraid that she get sexual assault and

she just don't know about that. So, I very much support female rights…but

I don't know how to explain this. I can explain how my study is, but I

can't explain that kind of idea to my girlfriend in a way that she can

accept. If I can't, then I can't even explain to other girls. I mean, I can tell

them that, this is a sexual assault in United States and you should be

careful. And, then, you should report police if you get a sexual assault, and

remember his name, his look, take a picture of him. Then, when police

comes, they know who's going to catch. But, the thing is, I can talk about

that, but I can't educate them because by saying "education" or

"educating" you have to get into their mind. They need to know this is

something that they should do in first place. And, whenever this

happening, there shouldn't be any other thought about shame, they should

protect themselves in the first place, when that happen, before that happen,

after that happen. And, the thing is I just don't know how to do it.

Codes, Clusters, and Themes

In phenomenological inquiry, engaging with the data is an ongoing process. After initial

data collection, I wrote memos reflecting on my experience and noting emerging thoughts about

the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). This served two purposes. First, it allowed me to begin

forming ideas about potential themes. Second, it helped me bracket preconceptions that may

have unconsciously affected the analysis. For example, I left my interview with Han frustrated

and judgmental regarding his negative comments about Hong Kong protesters and his tendency

to blame victims of sexual violence for their own assault. Although my positionality was always

present and important through data analysis, I had to recognize it in order to prevent it from

influencing how I interpreted the data.

Finally, once data collection and transcription were complete, I began the coding process.

I utilized a deductive, or *a priori* coding method (Creswell, 2012), utilizing the previously

discussed conceptual frameworks to form a set of initial codes. I drew upon Hofstede's Cultural

Dimensions Theory to form an initial code category, "Cultural Differences," and populated this

category with a code for each of Hofstede's dimensions; individualism-collectivism, power

distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, long-term orientation, and indulgence-

self-restraint. If no significant statements were coded in one of the six dimensions by the end of

the coding process, they were removed from the final codebook, but most codes were used at

least once in the coding process. Similarly, I used the ecological framework to develop a second

code category, "Sources of Knowledge" with a code for each level of the ecological model;

individual, relationship, community, and society. I then followed the same process of eliminating

codes that were not used during the coding process (Creswell, 2012). All initial codes were entered into QDA Miner, the coding software used throughout the research process. QDA Miner is a mixed methods and qualitative data analysis software. QDA Miner features many of the same functionality as other popular qualitative research software solutions such as ATLAS.ti and NVivo, but purports to integrate more quantitative analysis tools such as keyword retrieval, section retrieval, and cluster extraction (Lewis & Maas, 2007), tools I believed would be helpful in my analysis. Additionally, due to financial constraints, I was interested in a software that I could continue to use at low cost. Although ATLAS.ti and NVivo offer free trial versions, they expire. QDA Miner offers a "Lite" version that does not have a trial termination date. Due to these reasons, I chose to work with QDA Miner.

I used a deductive process to determine the coding strategies used in the analysis, choosing the coding methods before using them. Using a deductive process mitigated the risk of being influenced by my review of the data when choosing a coding method. Because my inquiry was phenomenological in nature, I utilized coding methods that focused the analysis on the lived experiences of the participants for the first cycle of coding; attribute, in vivo, narrative, process, and structural coding (Saldana, 2015). Attribute coding focuses primarily on demographic information, which was of particular importance when acknowledging crucial differences in the participants' backgrounds including their country of origin and gender. In vivo coding draws directly from participant words and phrases. Narrative coding uses language that represents participants' experience as a story. Process coding using active verbs and phrases. Structural coding categorizes the data into segments allowing the researcher to collect similar segments together (Saldana, 2015). Each coding method provided a different lens for data analysis. I would spend time between each cycle stepping back from the data to seek feedback from peers

and mentors, including those with an East Asian cultural background. I also reviewed the codes

to clean up redundancies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Periodic memoing helped me remember

decisions I made regarding coding and clustering.

After utilizing these first cycle coding methods, I then engaged in several cycles of axial

coding. Axial coding refers to the process of relating the data together by reading and rereading

the data while assigning and reassigning codes as appropriate (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). After

developing an initial list of codes, I finalized a list of clusters of meaning, and eventually themes

that describe the phenomenon.

Coding and Clustering. By the end of the analysis, I was utilizing 80 total codes and had

identified 737 significant statements to be coded. At times, I used simultaneous coding, applying

multiple codes to the same datum (Saldana, 2015). As such, these were not necessarily 737

individual quotations from the text. By the end of the coding process, I had organized these 80

codes into ten coded clusters: Avoiding Help, Developing Knowledge, Experiencing the States,

Facing Barriers, Gathering Information, Idealizing the Learning Environment, Navigating

Differences, Remembering Home, Searching for More, and Stereotyping the States. Codes

categorized as Remembering Home were substantially more common than the other codes.

However, this could be because the questions in the interview protocol, in large part, focused on

participants' lived experience in their country of origin. The following table contains a full

breakdown of the code and cluster distribution for each participant. Each number represents the

final tally of how many codes within a particular cluster were assigned to each participants'

interview transcript (see table 2).

Variable	Chao	Han	Jin	Lee	Nick	Sara	Shing	Shu	Total
Avoiding Help	12	1	23	16	2	4	13	3	74
Developing Knowledge	5	2	9	2	0	3	4	2	27

Experiencing the States	7	2	0	13	2	2	0	0	26
Facing Barriers	3	7	11	5	0	0	3	0	29
Gathering Information	7	8	11	16	6	4	2	6	60
Idealizing the Learning Environment	9	8	0	10	8	10	12	8	65
Navigating Differences	11	11	18	18	0	1	10	0	69
Remembering Home	57	32	89	32	2	13	32	9	266
Searching for More	14	3	12	5	3	8	6	0	51
Stereotyping the States	13	3	10	7	1	1	11	4	50

Table 2. Code Distribution. Overview of clusters of meaning including number of coded significant statements falling within each cluster.

After arriving at the above clusters of meaning, I looked for potential overlap between them. I began to identify clusters that seemed to describe a similar phenomenon. I also looked at simultaneously coded data to find patterns for which separate clusters of meaning were most often coded simultaneously. After doing this review, four themes emerged that allowed me to consolidate the clusters of meaning and address the central research question: How do East Asian international students attending an urban college/university in the U.S. describe the experience of learning about sexual violence during college? These themes were (1) navigating a more open society without preparation, (2) feeling pressure and choosing silence, (3) searching for meaning and learning through example, and (4) developing knowledge through interactions. First, I will describe the themes and then I will present them in further detail with participant quotations.

The first theme **navigating a more open society without preparation** describes the experiences the participants had when traveling from a sexually conservative country to a country that they believe is more open-minded. In their home country, these individuals develop beliefs about the United States through informal settings such as social interactions and the

media. This occurs because formal conversations about sex and education in familial or educational settings are almost non-existent. As a result, these students have minimal experience with sex and relationships and then enter into a society where they believe people are having sex faster and more randomly.

The second theme **feeling pressure and choosing silence** describes the tremendous influence these students' families and communities have on their decision-making and beliefs. Less commonly, families influence these students by having direct conversations with them. More frequently, the influence comes from a lack of conversation. The students' families rarely had any kind of conversations with them about sex or relationships and did not display intimate partner affection of any kind in front of them. However, the conversations that were had focused more generally on encouraging the students to find stable, reliable partners. At times, these students received these signals from larger society including their schools and the media. Regardless of the source or method, students often felt significant pressure to focus on their academics, develop well-regarded careers, and to secure long-term partners. As a result, when these students perceived that they were straying from that path, they expressed fear at sharing their experiences with anyone, including their families, and chose to remain silent.

The third theme **searching for meaning and learning through example** describes how the participants focus their time and attention on what is relevant to them. These students described having to be selective with their time. In the context of learning about sexual violence in the United States, value is placed on activities related to their goals. The participants often agreed that schools could demonstrate this value by providing examples or facilitating face-to-face interactions between students. Simply telling students that something is relevant, or even describing why it is relevant, is less successful than giving an example of a situation in which

they could imagine themselves. As such, if participants did not perceive that sexual violence education efforts were valuable, they often took them less seriously.

The fourth and final theme **developing knowledge through interactions** describes the phenomenon that students who seem to know more about American culture have had more opportunities to interact with Americans. In the context of learning about sexual violence, the students who had the most nuanced understanding of sex, relationships, and sexual violence in the United States typically had more opportunities to interact with Americans. All students entered the United States with preconceived beliefs. The students with fewer opportunities to interact meaningfully with Americans often stated that their beliefs remained unchanged. Conversely, students with the most opportunities to interact with Americans seemed to develop the most nuanced understanding of American culture.

Theme One: Navigating a More Open Society without Preparation. All participants described that their perceptions of sex and relationships in the United States prior to their arrival included that Americans were "open." Being open included that Americans enter relationships earlier in life, are prone to having multiple simultaneous partners, go on dates quickly after meeting, and have sex quickly after meeting. Similar to other students, Han described believing that the United States was more open almost immediately when asked about his perceptions about American culture: "Japanese…American…European…are very open. Open means that they are open in sexual." Shing described her early beliefs about American openness as focused on having the ability to maintain multiple partners:

> So, I was thinking, "Oh you don't need to need to be commit in one
>
> partner if you're in a relationship. You guys can be free to choose
>
> whatever you want to do." Outside of a relationship, maybe your body and

your spirit can be separate.

When asked what she meant by the body and spirit being separate, she described

feeling like Americans are able to have sex without deeper meaning or connection:

> Like someone's cheated on you…there are two standard. Either their body
>
> cheated on you or spirit cheated on. Like, "Oh I want to start a new
>
> relationship. I don't want to be together." Or, "I don't have interest in your
>
> body. That body seems interest to me." So, that's the thing I was thinking
>
> before coming here.

These statements about Americans being open emerged in every interview. Each student

added to the description of American openness. Lee described believing Americans' sexual

behaviors were "random" in that they seek out sex despite potential consequences: "They really

don't care about if they want to have a sexual relationship with anybody, they just want to do it."

Nick described how quickly Americans have sex compared to people from Taiwan: "And, when

I say long enough, it's definitely more than half year…the Americans will probably do sex in,

like, a couple days!" Shu recalled an American friend telling her how quickly he asked a girl on

a date after meeting her: "He was saying about how he asked for date. And, then that was his

first time meeting that girl at a party. And, then the next day, and he's asking should we have

dinner tomorrow."

When asked how they came to these beliefs, students' most common response was from

watching American media in their home country. Lee broadly described American action movies

and his observation of the seemingly unnecessary addition of romantic relationships:

> So, like, the White House was falling. Or, the president was about to be
>
> assassinated by the foreign power. So, there is sometimes a superhero to

rescue the president. And, along with the superhero there is always a

woman who is attractive and sexy. So, they usually have the sexual

relationship in the movie...and, before that they didn't know each other.

For example, this is an FBI agent who is going to rescue the president.

And, another, for example, Russia send an attractive Russian woman and

they have relationship. But, they didn't know each other before.

Chao described developing a belief that Americans have multiple partners from *The Big Bang Theory* through his confusion about the nature of Penny and Leonard's relationship:

He's Penny's boyfriend, but sometimes I'm confused because this guy

sometimes very love Penny, and sometimes have a date, go out, and have

some sex. Sex activities. But, I think they are not very in the relationship I

think. Because they just have a date or sometimes Penny also has another

boy.

In contrast, East Asian films omit sexuality. Han described a popular Chinese book-to-film, *Journey to the West*, which depicts spider monsters ejecting silk from their abdomen. Despite the spider monsters being women in the books, men played the part in the film:

They're all woman because based on the books. And, so, the spider eject

the silk up with this part (*gestures to abdomen*). And, so they wear

nothing. Only in that section. And, so this part is played by men because

it's not acceptable at that time.

Lee recalled a Chinese film, *The Great Wall,* with male and female leads who never had a sexual relationship throughout the movie. He later learned that a sexual scene had been cut after the producers faced pressure about its inclusion:

[The male actor] came from the West to rescue the Chinese army and then

he knows this Chinese woman general. But, they didn't have any sexual

relationship. But, if they placed it in Western Hollywood it's going to be

very sexual thing. And, I also learn about something, the movie, originally

there was a scene, there was a clip that they had a sexual relationship, but

after Chinese viewed that, then they cut that. Because Chinese superhero

movies, cannot be allowed those things to happen.

In addition to mass media, Chinese students shared that the government ban of

pornography also limited their ability to learn about sex. Lee described how difficult it can be to

find pornography in China:

It's forbidden…strictly forbidden or banned in China. You never get

access to sex or sex movies. They just cancel that. I mean, there is no

possibility for you to get access on that. So, even, usually they don't even

teach you the words for penis, they just avoid all of this stuff.

Depictions of sex and relationships are absent from more than only media, though. The

students described the absence of portrayals or discussions of intimacy in the family. Chao could

not recall a time when adults in his family were intimate with each other: "From my parents and

grandparents, I just see what they do. They don't perform some close things in front of me." Jin

described not knowing how to engage in relationships because of the absence of conversations in

his family: "They never teach me how to make relationship with girls. Or, how to properly have

a relationship at all. I just have to figure it out." Shu described her parents never speaking to her

about sex and not being sure that she would initiate conversations with her future children either:

"This is a very private thing to say, to talk about, so, if someone wants to reach out and talk

about this, then I'm willing to do so, instead of me initiating the whole thing."

The students also describe an absence of sexual education in school. Sara shared her experience growing up in Mongolia during the Communist era:

> I grew up in a country which was communist country. So, the relationship
>
> and the sex part is really forbidden to talk about. It's a kind of taboo topic.
>
> So, we don't get that much education. We never had the education in
>
> school.

Chao described missing out on sex education growing up and feeling like he did not know how to have relationships: "In high school they don't have some education in sexual or…how to deal with the relationship and each other. This kind of education they lack a lot of it." Multiple students, including Han, described having their first and only experience with sex education in high school and that it was only one optional chapter in a book: "We have the education about how to make love, not when we are child, when are in high school. And, it's only one chapter in the books." The little education the students described receiving focused disproportionately on risks associated with HIV/AIDS and served as an additional deterrent to them having sex. Lee directly described that Chinese students harbor feelings of fear due to the country's focus on HIV/AIDS: "I think this is a common idea or common restrict in Chinese students' mind…it is the fear of getting HIV and AIDS."

These students described leaving a country with minimal knowledge or experience regarding sex and relationships and entering a country where they believe sex is a prominent part of the culture. As will be discussed more in theme four, not all participants retained the view that the United States was more open about sex and relationships, but they unanimously believed it to be true when they first arrived. This led to several challenges. First, students described feelings

of culture shock. Lee most directly highlighted this phenomenon as he recalls his study abroad

roommate talking about the amount of times that he had sex while on the program:

> But, the Mexican guy I think twice or third times and he was there for only
>
> one month! And, he went back to Mexico. And, he would post lot of
>
> pictures of him in a bar with the beautiful girls in the Facebook. And, he's
>
> quite shocking for me.

Other students shared feelings of shock as well when traveling to a place they perceive to

be more open about sex. Nick had similar feelings when a female student told him that she had

been assaulted: "Well, it was a little bit shocking, cause I never felt like she had that kind of

experience before."

The second side effect was feeling unable to connect with potential romantic partners. In

many cases, these students were not allowed to have relationships in high school, and had been

waiting until college to start dating. However, once arriving there, they lacked the experience

necessary to make romantic connections. Chao described the family pressure his peers faced to

secure a stable partner, but noted that they struggled because Americans were not as interested in

a serious relationship in college:

> Chinese people are also more conservative. So, they start very late when
>
> their parents want their daughters getting married. So, they began to
>
> concern about these things. Lots of people. So, they start very late. Get
>
> married very quickly. They just want to, very quickly to, get married and
>
> have home. So, there is a lot of pressure from their parents. So, not very
>
> freedom, I think. Sometimes. But, in America, start very casual.

These feelings can lead to frustration. Not only do East Asian students lack the education

and experience to pursue relationships, even if they did, Americans are not interested in these types of serious relationships. Jin described this phenomenon:

> I also don't know how you supposed to love a girl, what kind of thing you do to show a love to a girl, and to make her love you more. That's something we just don't know and we never get educated about.

The final challenge involves not knowing appropriate sexual behavior. In particular, victims of sexual assault may not know that they experienced an assault because they assume that what they experienced is simply the cultural norm in America. Jin described how a sexual assault victim may blame themselves for not properly understanding American culture:

> We just don't know it's a sexual assault or not. It's not saying we don't understand it. It's just that we don't know it's sexual assault in America-centered environment. We see that it's probably very negative personality to us, and it's culture or something like that, something wrong with us. That's a very Chinese cultural thing, you blame yourself before blaming others. So, what we see something wrong with ourselves. That's probably the personality issue of the individual. Because they are more open.

Sara described her own experience being sexually harassed in a corporate position, and struggling due to a lack of awareness that this was a problem: "I am, myself, experienced lots of sexual harassment. I was single. I was young. I was, like, 24. And, then, people think that's normal."

The first theme **navigating a more open society without preparation** focused on perceptions East Asian international students had about the United States prior to the shared phenomenon of traveling here. Further, it described how their lived experience of minimal sex

education affected that phenomenon. These experiences establish that East Asian students may face challenges when navigating this new culture.

      Theme Two: Feeling Pressure and Choosing Silence. Seven out of the eight participants stated that they feel pressure from their families and from their communities to achieve positive academic, career, and relationship outcomes, particularly when they traveled to the United States. When they did not achieve these outcomes, students often chose to keep their failures to themselves, rather than share them with their families. Shing described the influence Chinese parents have on their children's romantic relationships:

> In China, it's basically like you need to be considered what your family
>
> say, how your next generation will be, is your partner stable enough, rich
>
> enough to support your family.

Lee talked about the American practice of having a one-night stand, and notes that, if this were to occur in China, it would be considered a family betrayal:

> Before coupled get married, either from the male side or female side, they
>
> have sexual partner…sex partner that they want to probably have sex, but
>
> they don't really live together. So, they don't go shopping together, they
>
> don't do things together, they just have sex at night. And, after that, they
>
> maybe become strangers. That's why I say random, because…like, in a
>
> party if you drink too much, like in China it happens, but not that open
>
> because of the social norms and social values. So, if you do that, it's betray
>
> to your family. Like, with parents I think it's family traditions.

Additionally, the participants also described feeling pressure to obtain a well-regarded job and to perform well academically. Chao described feeling this pressure throughout his

education in China:

> And, do you heard Chinese people before they been to university they
>
> have long time to prepare for their study? Prepare for their exam entrance
>
> to the university…there are lot of people in China so there are more
>
> pressure to have this test and to go to the university.

As Lee described, the time spent focused on academics makes it difficult to build social connections or learn about nonacademic topics such as sex: "Chinese students especially, I don't know about Korea, but I think it's a common phenomenon in East Asia, students don't have that much time." Nick described not having time to take Hart's online sexual violence education training due to a focus on his academics and health: "I'm too, way too focused on power lifting, on other stuff, on economics, on mathematics." Han put it simply in response to being asked why he hasn't made more of an effort to make friends in the United States: "I don't want to waste my time on society." Shing asserted that this pressure goes beyond academics and permeates most major decisions made by East Asian students, including their career choices. She compares her experiences in China to those of her American husband's family:

> I feel according to my husband family…one of her sister is working at
>
> Costco, one of her sister is working at bakery. But, they love their job. My
>
> husband is a teacher. I never heard them say, "Oh, my son is more
>
> successful. And, I don't want to mention about my two daughters." But, I
>
> feel in China most of people were bragging their most successful child.
>
> But, if they say they're an artist, they're probably going to say they're self-
>
> employment. They won't mention exactly the job is.

Shing went on to describe how this pressure has a direct impact on the choices East Asian

students make about whether to share negative experiences, such as relationship violence, with their families:

> Just if your grandma had three daughters, that would be my mom, my two aunts, right? So, the old people in their family will kind of say, "Oh, which daughter is more happy now? Which daughter is married to a more rich guy? How many cars they have? What kind of house they live in?" So, you don't want actually tell people, "Oh, I do have a big house, but my husband beat me."

This was noteworthy, in particular, for Shing who was raised by a single mother and described having a much more open relationship with her mother than the typical Chinese family: "My mom is not a typical Chinese parent. My mom is like, 'You can do whatever you want.'" However, despite having this type of relationship with her mother, she still asserted that she would not tell her mother if her newlywed husband was violent with her:

> Chinese people don't actually tell their parents about bad thing. So, bad thing happen to me, I wouldn't want to share that much. I would share what happens to cheer them up. But, in here I feel like my husband complain a lot if something bad happens to him. But, in China, for me I would ask him, "Why you tell that to your parents? You're just going to make them worried." He's like, "I don't want to hide anything from them." But, for me, would actually tell them violence…I would say maybe 30% if my husband (*knocks on nearby wooden column*) beat me, I wouldn't tell my parents at all.

This choice to remain silent permeated the students' responses. Jin described the painful

experience of supporting his girlfriend after she was sexually assaulted in China. His girlfriend

was considering not telling her mother who was in a relationship with the assaulter, even if that

meant that she might have continued to be assaulted: "I helped her tell her mother. Because very

serious. I can't let these things happen again. That's my girlfriend and that's my future wife.

Shouldn't happen anymore." The fear of sharing these experiences goes beyond family. Many of

the students reported feeling pressure from society as well, and a fear that reporting to other

societal outlets such as law enforcement or the media will cause them to be marginalized. Sara

described Mongolian law enforcement's apathy towards domestic violence: "In Mongolia unless

it's really serious, like guy is holding a gun or really physically injuring the wife…the police

comes and they say, you know, it's a family matter."

Lee also described the lack of responsiveness from formal reporting outlets in China,

particularly when the sexual misconduct occurred in a university:

> But, in China, the idea to fight back is very…it's so little because if the
>
> student fight back to the professor, the professor can use resource or even
>
> the media to just cover this. And, usually the university will help the
>
> professor to cover this story because they don't want their reputation to be
>
> damaged by this kind of thing.

Outlets are unlikely to take the report seriously and the victim may be stigmatized in their

community. Chao shared that Chinese parents who learn about their children being assaulted will

discourage reporting: "The parents also don't want somebody to know these things because they

think they lose their reputation so they very scared." Jin experienced this firsthand as he

attempted to convince his girlfriend to report her sexual assault to law enforcement to prevent the

assaulter from harming anybody else. Jin stated that, ultimately, her mother convinced her not to

make a report. She was concerned that Jin's parents would not let him marry his girlfriend if they knew she had been a sexual assault victim:

> Her mother don't want that to go into police because, in fact, that would influence her daughter's reputation. And, I said I don't care. I don't care. She will be my wife in the future and I don't care what my parents think, and I don't really care what she think. But, then she very strongly disagree what I'm going to do. I'm going to report it to the police. But, the thing is, I need my girlfriend with me so then they have a victim to the police. My girlfriend's mother strongly disagree about that. So, I didn't do it.

In some cases, these students reject or resent the relationship that societal pressure has forced them to have with their parents. Shing admires her American husband's relationship with his family when reflecting on her own relationship with her mother:

> I feel it's kind of sad. Because I'm not my mom or dad's friend, but my husband is. They're not just parents and son of parents. They actually have lots of fun. They can go traveling together and sometimes my husband take care of it, sometimes my husband's parents take care of it. But, if I go traveling with my parents, I'm the one going to take care of everything. So, it's kind of sad because we don't share the same emotion feelings or do the same thing.

Jin reacted to his parents' relationship by vowing to develop a different kind of relationship with his future wife: "I'm not going to have a marriage like my parents. We should have very lovely relationship. We should always stay together, and we should always face challenges together."

The second theme **feeling pressure and choosing silence** focused on the shared experience of East Asian students feeling pressure from their families and communities about their grades, careers, and relationships. This pressure limited students' time and openness to experiences that do not directly relate to these areas. The pressure also created a barrier for students sharing failures or struggles. This includes a resistance to seeking help in general and reporting sexual and relationship violence.

Theme Three: Searching for Meaning and Learning through Example. As briefly described above, the participants in the study describe utilizing their time and attention thoughtfully. Six out of the eight participants shared experiences evaluating if an activity or learning opportunity was applicable to their goals and choosing not to take part in activities that were not a good use of their time. They also frequently described that an effective way to illustrate applicability was through narrative or example. They found it helpful to learn through discussing scenarios, having conversations, or watching movies, rather than hearing definitions or information. Multiple students expressed that they participated in my study expressly because they believed that the study was applicable to them or that they had something to gain from their participation. Shing, Jin, and Sara all described that they believed their lived experiences were specifically applicable to the topic area of the study. Shu, Lee, and Chao all shared that they participated in the hopes of learning more about sex and relationships in the United States. Chao also added that it was an opportunity to interact with an American and practice his English.

In light of this theme, it is unsurprising that multiple students chose to ignore the mandatory online courses at Hart due to their belief that they were inapplicable or not a good use of their time. Nick described this sentiment: "They say it's required, but I don't see that it's a big deal. I attempt to finish it, but it's way too much information on it. It's going to take, like, 2-3

hours on it. And, I'd rather just skip it." Shu also described ignoring the course: "I usually don't pay attention to those courses. I just find the answer that makes more sense. I don't actually listen to the course." Han in particular shared that he did not understand why he needed to take the course since, as a man, he would not be sexually assaulted: "So, it tells us how to deal with if you are assaulted by sex. And, I am a man so I don't care about that." Through my conversation with Han, I brought up possible ways that the training could be applicable including helping him be conscious of his own behavior: "I'm self-control so I'm pretty sure I wouldn't do sex assault on other ones." I also brought up helping a friend who had been assaulted:

> Let's talk about Chinese friend. For Chinese friend, we are traditional so
>
> we will not tell anyone. Unless we are…even we will not tell our parents.
>
> So, how will we tell our friends? So, that's the first part. The second is
>
> American friends. I mean, all my American friends are men.

Of note, the students that spoke most positively about the courses are the ones that disclosed having direct experience with sexual harassment or assault. Sara, who disclosed being sexually harassed during her time in the corporate sector, spoke positively about the courses: "Also, in [Hart] I never feel, and I need to take those courses. Mandatory courses about, what do you call it? Sexual misconduct and they're really good courses!" Lee, who witnessed sexual abuse of minors growing up, believed that integrating online courses into sexual violence prevention education was important: "The first step you can have lectures or online course to talk about sexual harassment, some examples, and what is consequences if you don't speak out."

To combat these feelings of inapplicability, most of the participants described the importance of using specific examples or narratives to help facilitate the learning. They described that this was a helpful practice in general given that many East Asian international

students struggle with the English language. As a result, content-heavy, lecture-based sessions were less effective ways to learn. Shing makes this recommendation plainly: "Yeah, stories and examples videos instead of long paragraph where we sit there and read for a while." Lee also integrates storytelling into his description of the ideal sexual violence prevention program. In particular, he recommends having victims of sexual misconduct be invited to share their experiences:

> And, the third part I think it's going to be a one year, one time to have a seminar about sexual harassment. And, we can invite some students who have previously sexual harassment experience, but it's very hard to do this most of people don't really share this kind of experience. But, if you can do that, one thing they can share their story, it's really person story.

Sara found that one of the strengths of the online course at Hart was its use of examples:

> So, that's why I kind of like that online course from [Hart] because they have those scenarios, you know? Scenario 1. This and this happened, what do you think? And, should you report? And, choose one of those. And, of course it's a course, but just to the normal people, just the common regular people I think it's important to let them know, what is abuse.

When asked about the ideal format for a sexual violence prevention training, Shing highlighted the issues with language and cited narrative and media as a way to address those issues:

> I would say I'm more visual. I don't like read long paragraph of words. So, if you could have small videos, it would be more illustrative so I don't have to read it. Because some international students will have hard time reading

things. So, if you put a lot of hard words or harassment…for me, it's not a

very hard word, but for some students they might have to check the

dictionary to know what harassment means. You know what I'm saying?

So, simple words and put more in the example. Like say, "John asked Mary

out. Mary said no," or something like that. Instead of saying, "If you have

this, then you should do blah blah blah. You should not do blah blah blah."

Given how many of the students shared that they learned about sex and relationships

through film and television in their home country, it was unsurprising how many suggested it as

a learning device in the United States. Chao suggested it: "We give them some materials and

movies about this." Shing also suggested the use of videos: "So, maybe they can just watch

videos and read some scenarios or something like that." Shu recommended this as well, in

particular as a way of avoiding uncomfortable conversations with her future children:

Because, I feel like if they want to know, for example, if I have kid, and if

they want to know about these things and ask me...I would be like, I'm the

one that initiates everything. But, if I had to do so, it's probably from

movie. It's like maybe a story gives more inspiration than actually, I don't

know…a movie would be a better way.

This notion that sex is sensitive subject matter for East Asian students emerged with

multiple students. Shing brought up how students may be uncomfortable hearing about sex in a

group training:

I feel like some kind of Chinese or different nationality, they don't talk

about sex in public. So, some people may not feel comfortable. One time

my colleague say "penis" in workplace, I was like, "Did she just say that

word?" I don't actually feel comfortable if I have someone talk to me. If I

want to search for help, that would be another story. But, if you give me

too much information at first training…and you're just one instructor,

right? If you say, "Oh, I'm who who who, I'm here to give training. One

night stand doesn't mean relationship," that kind of…"Who you are? Why

did you tell me that? That wouldn't happen to me." So, I would not have

very strong connection to that those things you talk about.

The third theme **searching for meaning and learning through example** focused on the

shared experience of East Asian students feeling that they need to prioritize content that is

applicable to them. Sexual violence and harassment as a topic is not inanately applicable to many

students and work may need to be done to make it resonate with them. The most frequently cited

strategy to help content resonate is to use specific examples, including discussing scenarios,

discussing situations in movies, or having students share their stories.

Theme Four: Developing Knowledge through Interactions. The participants who were

able to have deeper and more meaningful interactions with Americans described more nuanced

understandings of American culture regarding sex and relationships. This pattern emerged with

six out of the eight participants.

The students with fewer meaningful interactions with Americans generally maintained

their preconceived views that Americans were "open," including having many partners, having

sex early in their lives, and having sex early in their relationships. When asked about having

American friends, Han replied, "I don't want too much. I want some in my area. So, we can talk

about homework and research and something…I don't want to waste time on society." When

asked what challenges he faced when learning about sex and relationships in the United States,

Han replied that he did not face any challenges, because he already knew about sex and relationships here:

> It's not hard that way. We already know about how open you are. *laughs*
>
> So, we are basically, we already know that international is very different.
>
> So, know much things from China about United States. We already know
>
> you are very open.

Similarly, Shu described only having one friend in the United States that she talks to about these topics and reflected that she hasn't been surprised by anything she learned in the United States about sex and relationships: "I feel like, because so far it's what I expect, I don't be surprised knowing these facts." However, when asked if she had more to learn, Shu replied, "Definitely yes. Because what I know about America now is what my friend told me. And, he might be a specific case. I don't know. Maybe he's not, I mean, well how average Americans would act." Chao, who shared that he participated in the study, in part, to gain more exposure to Americans, replied that he hasn't learned more about sex since his arrival in the States:

> No. Because before I been to here I was in the university academy before
>
> the university. And before that in high school the school isn't want to teach
>
> about sexual programs or sexual education. And, in the university, they
>
> think you are 18, they think you are by yourself. So, they don't think they
>
> need to teach, open a course about the sexual. So, I heard about sexual
>
> things mostly from the internet. By myself.

Some of the participants had deeper interactions with Americans. These students developed a view that American culture is more diverse than they originally believed, that some Americans are more open regarding sex and relationships, while others are not. Jin has spent

more time in the United States, going to high school in Detroit and studying sociology in college for a few years. He described spending more time having conversations with Americans, including about sex and relationships. His view changed about all Americans being open and he now believes that the qualities of a relationship depend on the individuals within them:

> People have a very much more open relationship with each other
>
> here…People switching boyfriends somewhat earlier, like faster, but not
>
> necessarily, it's very individual. It depends on peoples…So, although in
>
> the United States it's stereotype, the media shows us it's a very open
>
> relationship, it's very individual.

Sara, who spent more time in the United States prior to her arrival at Hart, also discussed how her views about sex and relationships changed: "So it seems like now, now that I'm living in United States longer, some people have very conservative view about relationships and some people kind of have free thought."

Finally, Shing had significant exposure to American culture through marrying her American husband. She described her developmental journey through having minimal exposure to American culture, seeing more similarities and differences, and eventually realizing the more complex cultural divides. When her husband first asked her on a date, Shing turned him down fearing that he would not be a stable partner based on her preconceived ideas:

> And, during this time we're dating, I was turn him down because I said
>
> you're not stable for me and I'm not looking for some relationship who is
>
> not going to be real. It's going to be, "Oh you want to find some other
>
> girls.." I told him that is not fine for me. And, he was like, "Why do you
>
> have that idea?" And, I was like, "Because that's how your people do

that."

After time, Shing gained more experience in the United States and began to develop more nuanced views about the culture. She went to parties and observed that different individuals wanted different relationship outcomes:

> So, I went to both parties. And there are kind of guys that are saying on
> purpose, "Oh I want to flirt with some girls," or, "I want to get laid." But,
> there are some like us because we're kind of trying to be boyfriend and
> girlfriend and there's some couple who went to the party to and they're not
> just randomly want to be their sexual partner. So, that's kind of separately
> knowing that. Maybe that's just exaggerated from the TV show, not the
> same thing.

After having more time to interact with her husband and his family, Shing found deep differences between the cultures. She observes that her husband shares more with his parents than she does with hers: "And, Chinese people don't actually tell their parents about bad thing. So, bad thing happen to me, I wouldn't want to share that much…But, in here I feel like my husband complain a lot if something bad happens to him." Her husband's parents were supportive of him choosing a career that he enjoys: "My husband…travel all around…his parents feel pretty happy for him…But, for my mom. My mom had a very big talk with me before I come here, 'You really need to take care of yourself.'" Overall, Shing's exposure to her husband and his family has given her insight on how different the two cultures are:

> Because I feel, for me, even though I'm much open than before because I
> wouldn't be married to American if not open. But, now I still feel there's
> so many times that I have argument with my husband, not because we're

not in a good relationship or we have so many difference…it's the cultural standard. It's not like he's wrong or I'm always the right. It's just consider different perspective.

Shing's journey illustrates this theme in vivid detail. As she spent more time in the United States, she developed more nuanced views about the culture. She initially had a view that was based on media stereotypes. After she spent more time in the United States, she began to observe the similarities between Chinese culture and American culture. Ultimately, as she developed ongoing relationships with her husband and his family, she found deeper differences between the cultures. The quantity and quality of the interactions she had with Americans deepened the complexity of her views on the culture.

In that vein, multiple participants shared that having opportunities to interact with domestic students should be a part of the learning opportunities. Chao recommended that colleges host a party where international and domestic students can interact: "I want to let them to have a party or have discuss with American people. Because I think Chinese people in America they just come to America they are not very familiar to the environment." Shu stated that direct interactions are a more effective way to teach content than online courses: "I feel like if you actually want to know about things like that, you actually need to talk to people about that, instead of reading articles. It's kind of boring."

The fourth and final theme **developing knowledge through interactions** focused on the shared experience of East Asian students developing increasingly nuanced views about American culture. These views developed through having meaningful interactions with Americans.

Connection to Research Questions

Sexual violence prevention educators seek to have an impact on students towards the overall goal of reducing the prevalence of sexual violence. However, not all students have the same baseline knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexual violence. By describing the shared phenomenon of East Asian international students coming to the United States and learning about sex and relationships, I set out to help educators adapt their violence prevention initiatives to better meet the potential needs of the population. To explore this phenomenon, I posed a central research question and three sub-questions that address facets of the central research question. The following section describes how my findings relate to these research questions.

Central Question: How do East Asian international students attending an urban college/university in the U.S. describe the experience of learning about sexual violence during college? My central question focused on the core of the shared phenomenon. In order to address the educational needs of international students, I sought to deeply understand and describe their learning experience in the United States. At least three of the themes directly address this research question.

These East Asian international students in the study **navigate a more open society without preparation**. They travel to the United States with strongly held stereotypes about American culture related to sex and relationships. Further, they come to the United States with minimal sex education. As a result, the experience of learning about sexual violence here can be shocking. Shing described how surprising these trainings may be, particularly for students who have never experienced sex education before: "If you say, "Oh, I'm who who who, I'm here to give training. One night stand doesn't mean relationship," that kind of…"Who you are? Why did

you tell me that? That wouldn't happen to me." Multiple students, such as Chao, were looking for educational initiatives that focused on American culture: "I think also tell them some American opinions, American culture about the sexual relationship." As Nick describes, they also sought information on the fundamentals of sex and relationships: "I think it's more important about how to a relationship…how to maintain a healthy relationship with your partner."

The East Asian international students in the study **search for meaning and learn through example**. They describe the experience of learning about sexual violence in the United States as more positive if they found the content to be applicable to them. Han put it simply, "We don't want to waste our time." The students who had direct experience with sexual misconduct, such as Sara, were more likely to find the content meaningful: "It's a good reminder I think. And, I think now that I even see signs around the campus everywhere that says, "Harassing is not okay," and things like that. Just a reminder to students. It's not okay." However, multiple students did not appreciate the trainings because they did not think it applied to them. As a solution, some students believed that using examples would make the content easier to understand. Sara stated that examples are a good way to make the content clearer for students: "If they give some examples, you know? Okay so the guy's coming and then he's doing this and this, and woman is doing this and this, and that's abuse, you know? Then I think it's helpful with the example."

The East Asian international students in the study **develop knowledge through interactions**. These students learn about sex and relationships through various venues, most of which are outside of their institution. Outside of consuming media, social interactions were the most commonly cited source of information. Sara described the need to get information from others: "The relationship and the sex part is really forbidden to talk about…we never had the

education in school. So, people get it from their friends…" In relation to this, it is unsurprising that many of the participants, including Chao, suggested integrating interactions into any sexual violence prevention initiatives: "We introduce American friends to them so they will have some conversation, some small talk, so they will understand how the American people think." Many of the students who described having more nuanced knowledge about American culture disclosed learning about this through having meaningful interactions with Americans.

Sub-Question: What are the different settings in which international college students learn about sexual violence in the United States? The first sub-question focused on sources of information. In order to capitalize on existing knowledge, I sought to understand where and how international students were getting information about American culture. At least three of the themes directly addressed this sub-question.

The students described **navigating a more open society without preparation** because they learn about American culture through media and without sex education. As Jin described, because formal sex education isn't present, East Asian students seek it out through alternate means: "In general, that's how we get educated…through movies." This lack of preparation is also reflected in how they talk about **feeling pressure** from their parents. As Shu described, these students rarely have these conversations with their parents: "No. No. I never talked to my family about this." These sources of information all contribute to their understanding about sexual violence in the United States. Once these students are in the United States, they also **develop knowledge through interactions**. Many participants described their informal interactions with Americans about sex, relationships, and sexual violence. These range from Chao describing speaking to a friend's landlord: "But, I heard from my friends in [Hart] in her rental house, and her house owner is a very older guy. And, he talk about the sex," to Nick

supporting a student who had been sexually assaulted: "It was a little bit shocking cause I never felt like she had that kind of experience before." Notably, more opportunities to have meaningful interactions with Americans seemed to lead to more nuanced understandings about American culture.

Sub-Question: How does the experience of learning about sexual violence in college differ from the experience of learning about sexual violence prior to coming to the United States? In order for educators to create the best structure for educational initiatives, I sought to understand how these learning experiences differ from the students' previous experiences. At least one of the themes directly addresses this sub-question.

The students described **searching for meaning and learning through example**. Participants shared that they did not have much, if any, sex education in their home countries. Their experience learning about sexual violence prior to coming to the United States focused primarily on consuming media and speaking with friends. As a result, the experience of learning about sexual violence in an institutional setting in the United States was new to them. As Lee describes, this was a positive change: "It makes me more confident of my choice in coming here." However, many students shared reflections about searching for educational opportunities that more closely mirrored their previous experience, learning through media and interactions. Participants, such as Shu, suggested the use of movies to facilitate conversation: "Like, if we want to say movie and want to discuss plot in movies. That's both these kind of things. Then I think it's a very natural way to bring this up." Participants, such as Shing, suggested that colleges create spaces where students can interact: "We can have some new student who just got into [Hart], or we have some Chinese who just got to [Hart]. Let them make a little discussion…" Despite frequently cited frustration about the lack of education in East Asia, participants often

suggested learning opportunities that more closely resembled their experiences in their home country, at times referencing the perceived sensitivity of the subject matter.

Sub-Question: What strategies and resources do international college students use to navigate cultural differences when learning about sexual violence? The final sub-question focused on navigating cultural differences. In order to help educators address cultural differences, I sought to understand how students navigate these differences independently. At least one of the themes directly addresses this sub-question.

The students described **navigating a more open society without preparation**. While all of the participants described noticing cultural differences, no clear patterns emerged in terms of strategies and resources they used to navigate them. Some participants, such as Han, did not see a need to navigate cultural differences due to not needing additional education: "I'm self-control so I'm pretty sure I wouldn't do sex assault on other ones." Other participants, such as Lee, have utilized institutional resources such as counseling: "Recently I have some anxiety and stress from applying Ph.D. and I called the [Hart] counseling center and they gave me an appointment this morning." Finally, some participants, such as Jin, lean on friends and loved ones: "I'm not going to have a marriage like my parents. We should have very lovely relationship. We should always stay together, and we should always face challenges together." Although they all describe noticing these cultural differences, their strategies for navigating them differ.

Summary

In this chapter, I have laid out my findings regarding how East Asian international students describe the experience of learning about sexual violence during college. I reiterated details about my data collection and analysis including the coding process. I described how the choices I made were driven by my research questions. I began by providing narratives of the

participants' experience. I then provided a description of four themes that emerged from the participants' descriptions of the shared phenomenon: (1) navigating a more open society without preparation, (2) feeling pressure and choosing silence, (3) searching for meaning and learning through example, and (4) developing knowledge through interactions. Finally, I connected these themes back to the research questions to describe how these findings relate to the experiences of East Asian international students learning about sexual violence in the United States.

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

This qualitative study explored the experiences of East Asian international students as they traveled to the United States and learned about sex, relationships, and sexual violence. The absence of previous research in this area led me to believe that these experiences could illustrate the unique needs of these students. By understanding students' needs, educators could better adapt their sexual violence prevention efforts to be responsive to these students. To understand these experiences, I interviewed eight East Asian international students from a public university in the Midwest. Four themes emerged from the interview data that describes these experiences. In this final chapter, I will connect these themes to the previously described literature, discuss implications for practice, and make recommendations for further research.

Connection to the Literature

In chapter two, I reviewed three areas of literature that relates to the topic of this study; college primary prevention efforts, factors in the educational experiences of international students, and international students and sexual violence. Reviewing this literature gave me a foundation upon which I designed this study. Having concluded the study, I will now return to this body of literature and describe how the findings align or depart from previous findings.

The first theme, **navigating a more open society without preparation**, describes the shared experience of international students entering a culture that they perceive to be sexually open without having previous sexual education or experience. Previous literature on how attitudes and beliefs about sexual violence differ by country is in line with my participants' experience that their home country fosters a conservative sexual culture. Students in my study

posited that the lack of sex education in their home countries might cause international students not to recognize sexual assault when they see it or experience it. This is in line with previous findings that Chinese students are less likely to identify abusive acts as intimate partner violence than students from the United States (Lin et al., 2016). The finding is also supported by previous literature asserting that rape-supportive attitudes may stem from conservative cultural ideologies (K. B. Anderson et al., 1997). Further, the need for more comprehensive sex education in East Asian countries is well-documented (e.g. Cernada, Chang, Lin, Sun, & Cernada, 1986; Wang, Hertog, Meier, Lou, & Gao, 2005; L. Zhang, Li, & Shah, 2007).

Beyond the need for sex education, my findings align with the comprehensive body of literature describing the challenges associated with the acculturation process (Ryder et al., 2013; Ryu et al., 2016; Yeh & Inose, 2003). In particular, the students in my study stated that this process is confusing and shocking. This is a finding that aligns with previous research describing the stress caused by being exposed to a new culture (Berry, 2005; Thorstensson, 2001). Notably, previous research asserts that acculturative stress stems, primarily, from frequent exposure to others from a different culture (Berry, 2005). The students who have not engaged with American culture as much, such as Han, Shu, and Chao, seemed less affected by the cultural change. This was in contrast to students who engaged more with American culture, such as Shing and Jin.

The second theme, **feeling pressure and choosing silence**, describes the shared experience of East Asian international students feeling pressure from their families and communities about their choices regarding academics, careers, and relationships. Further, this pressure makes it difficult for these students to report negative experiences around these topics, including reporting sexual violence. This finding is well-supported in external literature. My review uncovered a substantial body of research regarding international students' hesitancy to

seek help. In particular, international students have negative perceptions about seeking counseling (Yoon & Jepsen, 2008; N. Zhang & Dixon, 2003). As a result, they utilize counseling at lower rates than their American peers (Mitchell et al., 2007; Nilsson et al., 2004). Although this research often focused on seeking help for a mental health concern, these aversions existed to help seeking in general (Flum, 1998; Nilsson et al., 2004). The literature typically connected this aversion broadly to differences in "cultural norms," which were perpetuated and reinforced by parents (Nilsson et al., 2004). Finally, multiple previous studies documented that norms in East Asian culture influence choices to remain silent about sex, including within the family (Dussich, 2001; Pines et al., 2003).

Patterns of aversion to help-seeking extended to aversion to seeking help for others. My review uncovered literature documenting patterns of East Asian students perceiving sexually violent behaviors in a different way than their domestic peers (Fujimori, 2010; J. Lee et al., 2005; Yamawaki, 2007). In some cases, this manifested as being more accepting of sexually violent behavior (J. Lee et al., 2005). In other cases, students did not as readily perceive problematic behavior as sexually violent (Lin et al., 2016; Nayak et al., 2003). This finding emerged frequently in my study as the participants described a belief that behavior did not rise to the level of sexual assault unless it was physically violent. Jin and Sara both described patterns of East Asians blaming themselves for the problems they face, even if these problems are not in their control.

East Asian students describe feeling pressure from their families to achieve certain academic and social outcomes (e.g. Chiu & Ring, 1998; Y. Cho, 2003; Quach, Epstein, Riley, Falconier, & Fang, 2015). The literature is concentrated on Chinese students and illustrates that these students keep their parents at the forefront of their minds as they make decisions regarding

their lives. This research aligns with findings in my study that many participants' parents are influential in how they think about relationships. Participants such as Shing and Shu explicitly described how older members of East Asian families often ask about the younger generation in a manner that fosters pressure and competition. Some studies cited in my review shed light on this phenomenon through findings that having family support alleviated stress (Y. Cho, 2003; Flum, 1998). The participants' descriptions of East Asians being averse to help-seeking is well-supported by existing literature. Additionally, participants' description that this aversion is, at times, a result of familial pressure to achieve also has foundations in existing literature.

The third theme, **searching for meaning and learning through example**, describes the shared experience of East Asian international students being selective about their time and focusing on experiences that they believe are directly applicable to their academic and career goals. The participants also asserted that using examples, stories, and movies was a helpful way to help international students learn and connect with the material. A large body of literature investigates East Asian students' learning styles at all grade levels and in multiple contexts. The majority of these studies contend that teachers in East Asian classrooms utilize pedagogical techniques that focus on teachers, books, lectures, and memorization (Hong & Suh, 1995; Ladd & Jr, 1999; J. K.-K. Wong, 2004). However, there is much disagreement on describing the actual learning styles of students. This disagreement is, in large part, due to research design. First, there are a variety of ways to assess students' learning styles including self-reporting (Kennedy, 2002), assessment (Chan, 1999), and observation (Hong & Suh, 1995). Additionally, these assessments occur in a variety of settings including in K-12 classrooms (Honigsfeld & Dunn, 2003) and in colleges (K. S. Lee & Carrasquillo, 2006). The variety of environmental and design factors make it challenging to draw a single conclusion.

Americans often have the perception that, because East Asian classrooms are more lecture-based, East Asian students must prefer to learn this way. Indeed some research indicates that this type of learning environment is preferable for these students (Jaju et al., 2002; K. S. Lee & Carrasquillo, 2006). However, other factors may drive these preferences. Instead of these preferences being grounded in cognitive differences, students may struggle in more interactive classrooms due to language barriers (Cheng & Erben, 2012; Kuo, 2011) or fear of challenging the authority of the instructors (K. S. Lee & Carrasquillo, 2006). A growing body of literature shows that these long-held perceptions regarding East Asian learning styles is inaccurate. Instead, when given the opportunity and the time to acclimate, East Asian students present a variety of learning styles including a desire for more interactive instruction and a focus on concrete examples (Chan, 1999; Kennedy, 2002; J. K.-K. Wong, 2004). These findings align with many of the students' self-described preferences in my study. Multiple participants described wanting the educational initiatives to be engaging. Previous research also showed that East Asian students learning styles emphasize searching for purpose in their learning experiences (J. Li, 2003). This supports the finding that the participants described being discerning about their learning experiences.

In addition to research regarding learning styles, my review uncovered a significant body of literature describing language barriers faced by East Asian students in the United States (Andrade, 2006; Jin & Liu, 2014; Kuo, 2011; Ramsay et al., 1999). These language barriers have direct negative consequences on academic success (Gang Li et al., 2010; Kuo, 2011). Multiple students in my study recommended that educators use examples to teach content. They stated that this is, in part, to help students connect with the material. However, it also is a means of delivering content in a way that helps students who may struggle with language.

The final theme, **developing knowledge through interactions**, describes the experience that East Asian students who have meaningful interactions with Americans develop a more nuanced comprehension of American culture regarding sex and relationships.

Many researchers have put forward acculturation scales or cultural development models (e.g. Gim Chung, Kim, & Abreu, 2004; Landrine & Klonoff, 1994; Marin, Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, & Perez-Stable, 1987). This includes models that describe the acculturation of East Asians (Gim Chung et al., 2004). One of the most commonly cited acculturation models is the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003). The IDI is a measure for assessing intercultural competence. In short, the model suggests that individuals acculturate on a continuum through five stages. First, those in the *denial* stage have a surface level awareness of cultural differences and display minimal interest engaging with these differences. Those in the *polarization* stage are aware, but judgmental of cultural differences and develop an "us versus them" mentality. Those in the *minimization* stage start to focus on commonalities between cultures and minimize deeper differences. Those in the *acceptance* stage accept both the commonalities and differences between cultures. Those in the *adaptation* stage are able to successfully navigate multiple cultures seamlessly (Hammer et al., 2003).

The assertions of the IDI align closely with the findings in my study. Those that utilize the IDI will, at times, group the five stages into two worldviews; *mono-cultural worldview,* which contains the denial and polarization stages and the *global worldview* which contains the acceptance and adaptation stages. The minimization stage is considered a transition stage between the two worldviews (Hammer et al., 2003). These two worldviews and transition stage can be mapped onto the findings of the study. The mono-cultural worldview applies to the participants in my study who reported having minimal contact with the new culture and surface

level understandings of cultural differences. The minimization stage in the IDI applies to the participants in my study who focused on commonalities between cultures. Finally, the global worldview applies to the participant in my study who became deeply familiar with American culture and noticed the deeper cultural differences present. Notably, the IDI also highlights the importance of interpersonal interactions in furthering intercultural development (Hammer et al., 2003).

As described in my review, the literature regarding acculturation goes well beyond acculturation models or scales. A large body of research has described the acculturation process (e.g. Berry, 2005; Won Ho Kim & Young-An Ra, 2015; N. Zhang & Dixon, 2003) and the stress that it can cause (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015; Won Ho Kim & Young-An Ra, 2015). Noteworthy within this body of literature are recent studies that emphasize social interactions as a crucial part of the acculturation process. In my study, participants often described learning about culture in the United States from interactions with Americans. In particular, the participants who had the most nuanced views of sexual culture described having the most meaningful interactions with Americans. This aligns with previous research asserting that students with a strong social support network are better able to navigate the acculturation process (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Ryder et al., 2013). Of note, these social supports did not always need to involve Americans, but there is additional recent research emphasizing the importance of promoting international and domestic student friendships as a means of helping students navigate cultural differences (Williams & Johnson, 2011). Findings from my study reinforce the need for institutions to help facilitate these connections.

Implications for Practice

This study presents a rich description of the experiences of eight East Asian international

students as they travel from their home countries to a public university in the American Midwest. This description serves as a foundation for several recommendations that emerged from their stories. My hope going into the study was that it would have implications for individuals who are responsible for implementing sexual violence prevention initiatives at the college level. My assertion was that a one-size-fits-all approach to these initiatives is ineffective and does not respond to the unique needs of students. Further, previous research has established that certain types of sexual violence prevention initiatives are more effective with certain subgroups (e.g. males and past victims) (Morrison et al., 2004; Vladutiu et al., 2011). My findings suggest that international students, particularly those from East Asian countries, are a subgroup of students that would similarly benefit from prevention programming that responds to their specific needs.

In many cases, the information provided by the participants was not exclusive to sexual violence prevention education. The barriers described (e.g. language barriers) are barriers that they face in many aspects of their lives in the United States. As such, these recommendations may have implications beyond sexual violence prevention programming. However, further research is needed to verify that.

As a higher education practitioner myself, I am keenly aware that educators do not have unlimited resources. Further, they do not have total authority regarding their educational curriculum. As such, I have generally put forth recommendations that can be implemented with minimal additional resources and institutional buy-in. Further, I have structured the recommendations in order of how easy they are to implement, with the simplest implementations being earlier in the section. In writing these recommendations, I am assuming that institutions are doing some kind of sexual violence prevention programming, at least for their incoming students, as they are required by law to offer these initiatives (Stylianou, 2016). Finally, as

discussed in the limitations section of the study, every institution has its own unique needs and these descriptions represent the narratives of students at a specific institution. These recommendations may not be as applicable or possible for institutions with vastly different structures. However, my hope is that many of these recommendations can be scaled and adapted to institutions with a variety of student demographics. Other research provides more recommendations regarding scaling prevention initiatives (e.g. Brown, Alexander, Rothenberg, & EAB, 2015; DeGue, 2014; DeGue et al., 2012).

Use examples, media, and narrative. The students in this study **searched for meaning and learned through example** when experiencing educational initiatives in the United States. They analyze content to see if it is applicable to them and then focused their mental energy on content that seems like it could further their academic or career goals. The students described growing up in countries with narrow definitions of sexual violence and heteronormative views on relationships. As a result, using examples can help students connect with the material by depicting situations that are universal including helping a friend, experiencing sexually harassment from a superior, and experiencing repeated requests for a date. This includes framing prevention efforts in a way that helps students realize that they actually may already have direct or indirect experience with these issues, even if they may not have realized this at the time. As described earlier, bystander intervention initiatives appear to be the most effective initiatives regardless of the target audience and have the benefit of being perceived as universally applicable (DeGue, 2014; Morrison et al., 2004).

Using examples can take many forms. In particular, students recommended that institutions present and discuss situations depicted in film and television, stating that East Asians most commonly learn about sex and relationships through those venues. Students also

recommended that institutions allow victims of sexual harassment and violence to tell their stories during these initiatives if they are comfortable. International students may be more likely to appreciate the content if they are able to connect with others who share that they have experienced sexual misconduct. Institutions utilize a wide variety of pedagogical formats to educate students about sexual violence including online trainings, large-scale orientation initiatives, and peer education models. Regardless of the format, institutions should avoid language-heavy content that is exclusively theory-based. Although these students are interested in learning about the culture, they most frequently want to learn through hearing examples.

Destigmatize and demystify reporting. Barriers to reporting a sexual violence experience and intervening in a sexual violence situation exist for students of all backgrounds (DeGue et al., 2014). However, East Asian international students in particular **experience fear and choose silence**, meaning they are often afraid to report in part due to the **familial and societal pressure** they experience when studying in the United States. Initiatives that directly address these concerns may help international student victims reach out for help.

First, educators should address some of the most common misconceptions that may prevent students from reporting. This includes emphasizing that the school will not inform their parents, teachers, or peers that they experienced an assault. It also includes emphasizing that the school will not take action on a report unless the student wishes for this to occur. Second, educators should seek to normalize reporting. This could include asking students who had a positive experience reporting to share their stories. Multiple participants suggested story sharing so there seems to be a lot of interest in hearing from others. That said, it would need to be pursued carefully due to concerns about privacy and confidentiality. In particular, students who share their stories and those who listen must be clear that their story sharing is voluntary so as

not to create further misperceptions about what occurs when one reports sexual violence. It also could include talking about openness to help-seeking in American culture. Third, educators could emphasize that reaching out for help is not an indication of failure or fault. It also may be important for educators to correct misconceptions about reporting options. Participants described conflating violence prevention offices with counseling offices and vice versa. For students who may not be interested in counseling, but interested in making a report, it is important to describe the reporting options in the clearest language possible, perhaps providing examples as to why a student may choose a particular reporting option. Finally, campuses should internally develop or familiarize themselves with local culturally responsive reporting options and then promote these resources. This could include local advocacy organizations that serve individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It could also include peer education programs that foster diverse student leadership. Ensuring that students have an option to speak to somebody that is more familiar with their country of origin and the pressure facing them may help students feel more comfortable reaching out for help.

Address stereotypes. Participants entered the United States with preconceptions about sexual norms. These preconceptions often derived from watching film and television. After spending time in the United States, many participants realized that these preconceptions were overgeneralizations. However, some did not. And, participants described the potential harmful effects of an internal overemphasis on "openness" in the United States including students feeling undue pressure to engage in unsafe sexual activity that they would otherwise not. Educators should address these stereotypes head on and find ways to demonstrate that American culture is more complex than may be believed. This could be done by showing movies that display stereotypes about American culture and addressing the inaccuracies in these movies. It could also

include having American students talk about their actual experiences and preferences. Social norming campaigns could utilize data to show how many students are actually having sex. East Asian students could be polled about their predictions related to the sexual activity of domestic students and then climate data could demonstrate that their predictions were, likely, overestimates.

East Asian students **navigate a more open society without preparation**, meaning they come to the United States with little previous sex education and enter into a society that they believe is filled with sexual extravagance. It is important to be realistic with these students that there are, in fact, different cultural norms in the United States, but that the perceptions of "openness" may be overblown. Utilizing film and television clips that portray these stereotypes and then debunking them may be particularly effective at having individuals question the veracity of their beliefs given that many of them have emerged from film and television.

Discuss fundamentals. Another aspect of **navigating a more open society without preparation** is that participants in the study stated they were underprepared for engaging in relationships, particularly in the United States. Students express confusion regarding American terminology and the basic process of starting relationships.

Finding ways to explain the complexity of American dating culture will help students feel more comfortable engaging in these relationships in a safe way. Educators should spend time reviewing some of the more confusing American dating terminology (e.g. "hooking up," "friends with benefits," "on a thing," etc.). This can be done by asking students who are comfortable to share their understanding of the definitions of these words. This could illustrate the broad range of meanings. Educators could also use video clips or social media postings that illustrate the diverse meaning and eventually explain the general set of accepted definitions. Similarly,

educators could discuss the basic mechanics of how individuals meet and start dating in the United States. This could be done by students sharing their experiences or again using video clips. This may also be an opportunity to utilize video clips that display stereotypes of dating initiation and then debunk those stereotypes. For example, educators could show clips of people meeting at a bar or party and then use data or stories to illustrate that these stereotypes are overblown. Educators could also use clips of a film or television show that glorifies relentless romantic pursuit, and then discuss how this type of behavior would actually make many individuals uncomfortable. Regardless of the method, spending time addressing the fundamentals of American dating practices will help these students feel more comfortable navigating the American sexual landscape and avoid unintended sexual missteps.

Opportunities to interact. East Asian students **develop knowledge through interactions**. Meaningful interactions with Americans were a significant source of *accurate* information regarding sexual culture in the United States for international students. Educators could generate these opportunities during educational initiatives. Social programming initiatives such as mixers, pizza parties, and small group discussion-based events could give international students the opportunity to interact with domestic students in comfortable spaces. However, fostering an institutional culture that promotes intercultural engagement is a campus-wide undertaking.

Institutions use a variety of methods to promote intercultural engagement. These include developing central social spaces (student centers) where students have the opportunity to interact, implementing peer education programs that focus on intercultural engagement, and funding programming boards whose purpose is to create cultural events that encourage attendance from individuals of all backgrounds. Even the interactions that incoming international

students have with student leaders may start to shape the way they consider engaging with domestic students. Diversifying student leader cohorts such as orientation leaders and resident assistants will help new international students have the opportunity to engage with individuals from a variety of backgrounds. Further, if international students come into contact with other international student leaders, this may encourage them to get involved in the institution as well.

Offer tailored initiatives to international students. Although not always possible, offering specific educational initiatives for international students about American sexual culture reinforces the idea that these topics are applicable and important. Further, it allows more opportunities to implement the recommendations described above and tailor them to the international student audience. Of note, if institutions choose to offer tailored sexual violence prevention initiatives to international students *instead* of the larger trainings (as in opposed to offering them as a *supplement* for the trainings offered to all students) educators must be careful to explain the purpose of different "tracks." Informing students that they want students to be able to discuss these sensitive issues with those that have similar cultural backgrounds may help mitigate the perception that international students are deficient and prevent the concern about further isolating them from domestic students. Because of these concerns, it may be safer to offer tailored trainings as supplements if possible.

Supplemental initiatives can take many forms. The training could be an additional session that takes place during international student orientation, if such an orientation exists. Additionally, because several students described orientation being a particularly challenging time to absorb content, other formats may be preferable. Online, pre-arrival assignments allow international students to reflect prior to experiencing the stress of travel and class. Offering academic year sessions that students could be strongly incentivized to attend or given a

requirement to attend delivers the content after they have had some time to experience the culture. Finally, multiple students recommended delivering the content as part of a required course that meets throughout the semester. Many institutions deliver a required low- or no-credit "first year experience" course, and some institutions have sections of this course held exclusively for international students. This allows educators to discuss the themes above as well as other content outside of sex and relationships that promotes international student success.

Overall, the students in this study described **searching for meaning**. Providing tailored content helps students to make meaning of these complicated topics.

Train investigators and conduct administrators. Those charged with investigating and adjudicating complaints of sexual misconduct are responsible for handling some of the most sensitive situations on college campuses. These cases open up institutions to serious risk. As a result, those handling these cases typically undergo extensive training regarding policies, procedures, and best practices. Given that East Asian students **navigate a more open society without preparation***, their actions are typically informed by less experience and knowledge of American culture than their domestic peers. As a result, it is critical that Title IX administrators, investigators, and conduct administrators undergo cultural trainings that go beyond the basic diversity training delivered to all employees of the institution.

This is not to say that staff should give international students additional leeway regarding their behavior. Rather, the purpose of this training is to provide these staff members with additional information that may be relevant when working with these students. A few examples of this information emerged from the data in this study. First, East Asian students may be less comfortable talking directly about sex. Staff members should be thoughtful when using direct sexual terminology; using softer language at first, not asking direct sexual questions unless it will

clearly assist in the decision-making process, and explaining why direct questions are important when necessary to ask them. Second, East Asian students may struggle with language. Although colleges require a demonstration of English proficiency for students to be admitted, it is in the institution's interest to have interpretation services readily available given the complexities of the topic. Not only will this prevent students from claiming that institutions failed to accommodate them, it may help students feel more comfortable during the process. Other basic strategies to address language concerns include frequently checking in with the student for clarity, allowing them to use phone translation applications, and having resources available in multiple languages to be available by request. Third, it is a widely accepted best practice that schools allow students to have an advisor (support person) present with them during the investigation and adjudication process. Investigators and conduct administrators should strongly encourage East Asian international students to take advantage of this resource. Colleges should also consider developing a pool of advisors for students who are unable to identify their own and seek to have this pool include individuals with diverse cultural knowledge bases. Allowing a culturally competent advisor to be present and to consult with the student may help them make sense of these complicated processes. Finally, investigators and conduct administrators should keep in mind that East Asian students who perpetrate certain acts of sexual violence may be genuinely unaware that their behavior was inappropriate. Though this should not affect decision-making or sanctioning, it may alter the types of conversations that occur during the conduct process.

Sexual violence prevention educators may have little influence over offices that are responsible for resolving complaints of sexual misconduct. However, if strong partnerships exist between offices or if those offices are looking to improve, improving the cultural responsiveness of staff trainings is critical. Further, if students have a comfortable experience going through a

complaint resolution process, they will be more likely to encourage their peers who have similar concerns to report violence as well.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study described the experiences of East Asian international students as they journey to the United States and learn about sexual violence here. Previous research had not yet explored this experience and little research sheds light on the unique needs of international students regarding sexual violence prevention efforts. As described in earlier chapters, my study has delimitations that further research could address. In particular, this study describes the experiences of a particular group of students at a single institution. Further, the study only utilized one primary form of data collection; interview data. Phenomenological studies benefit from having multiple forms of data collection that shed light on the phenomenon being explored (Flood, 2010).

Due to the lack of previous research, one purpose of my research design was to build a foundation that researchers could use to develop further research. After reflecting on the findings, four areas emerged that could benefit from further research: (1) expanding the target population to more institutions, (2) controlling for specific countries of origin, (3) quantitative analyses of program success, and (4) quantitative analyses of learning outcomes.

Expanding the target population to more institutions. I recommend further studies utilize similar designs, but attempt the analysis at institutions of different types. The characteristics of Hart University may make the findings of the study site specific. Some of the factors that may influence the data include institution size, predominant areas of study, geographic setting, percentage of international students, predominant countries of origin, and graduate student population. Hart is a midsize, Research 1 institution with a particular focus on

STEM fields. Further, the institution has a large population of international students, particularly Chinese students, and a large graduate student population. Of note, all but one of the participants in my study were graduate students, many of whom were doctoral students. Part of this was likely self-selection as some students, including Lee and Sara, described choosing to participate in the study in part because they know that they will complete their own study in the future and wanted to help a fellow doctoral student. It is likely that undergraduate and graduate students have different lived experiences. Conducting the research at an institution with a more predominant undergraduate population may cause different themes to emerge regarding the phenomenon.

   Controlling for different countries of origin. My choice to include participants from all East Asian countries of origin was, in part, to ensure that I was able to have enough participants to achieve data saturation. Although it may have been ideal to focus the research on a specific demographic, I was concerned about my ability to reach data saturation if I excluded more populations. Mitigating this concern, multiple participants described that the countries represented in the study (China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mongolia) had similar sexual cultures. Shing and Shu, for example, described other East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea as being less conservative.

   The intention of this study was to avoid previous methodological missteps where researchers made broad assertions about international students. As such, it is especially important to be cautious when generalizing these findings, particularly to East Asian countries not represented in the study (Japan, Korea, and Macau). I recommend further research that utilizes a similar design, but focuses on one country of origin at a time. In particular, I recommend researchers explore the lived experiences of Japanese and Korean students who make up a large

population of international students studying in the United States (Farrugia, 2015).

Quantitative analyses of program success. My hope is that this study provides researchers with a foundation upon which sexual violence educators could develop prevention initiatives. I recommend that researchers then evaluate the ability of these educational initiatives to change the knowledge, attitudes, and ultimately behaviors of these students.

Assessing these initiatives can be challenging. Researchers could develop basic assessments. However, in reviewing the literature, I found that several quantitative studies stood out as the strongest due to steps the researchers had taken. In particular, I recommend researchers find an opportunity to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of interventions, rather than only conducting the assessment directly after the initiative. I also recommend that researchers focus on experimental designs where possible, rather than only evaluating a single group. Finally, I recommend that researchers focus assessment on learning outcomes rather than satisfaction. It is important to evaluate if students felt comfortable with the structure of the initiatives, but the driving evaluative focus should be if they learned something and if their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors changed as a result.

Quantitative analyses of learning outcomes. Many sexual violence online training programs or individual educational initiatives include Likert-scale questions that assess climate, knowledge, and attitudes. Comparing responses between international and domestic students regarding experiences with sexual violence, willingness to intervene in a sexual violence situation, and beliefs about what constitutes sexual violence might shed more light on differences in pre-existing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. My hope is that this study can help illuminate areas that may benefit from this type of quantitative analysis, and that this knowledge could help educators better focus their educational initiatives on certain areas, spending less time

on areas where international students are already more advanced than their domestic peers. The areas I believe may most benefit from this type of analysis include bystander intervention behavior, rape myth acceptance, feelings of safety on campus, and openness to help seeking.

Conclusion

International students are a growing presence on college campuses across the United States (Bhandari & Chow, 2008; Farrugia, 2015). However, despite their increased numbers on college campuses, they have been overlooked in studies regarding sexual violence prevention (DeGue, 2014; Vladutiu et al., 2011). Due to the increased attention paid to sexual violence on college campuses, there is a need to ensure that prevention initiatives are optimally effective. Previous research has demonstrated that different types of sexual violence prevention initiatives are more effective for certain subgroups (Morrison et al., 2004). As a result, I believed there was a foundation to assert that international students may similarly benefit from tailored prevention initiatives.

This study sought to describe the lived experiences of East Asian international students as they travel to the United States and learn about sexual violence. I hoped to provide educators with more information about this critical population so that they can more appropriately address their needs. To do this, I interviewed eight East Asian international students studying at a public university in the Midwest. I utilized a phenomenological methodology due to my desire to analyze a shared phenomenon. The interviews provided rich data, from which themes emerged that described the lived experiences of these students. These themes were (1) navigating a more open society without preparation, (2) feeling pressure and choosing silence, (3) searching for meaning and learning through example, and (4) developing knowledge through interactions.

East Asian students often receive minimal formal education and have little experience

regarding sex, relationships, and sexual violence while in their home countries. Instead, they learn about these topics, including the sexual culture in the United States, through informal venues such as film, television, and social interactions. From this, they develop perceptions about sex and relationships in the United States. They believe that Americans are more sexually open, having sex earlier in life and with more partners. This poses challenges for international students in the United States who face pressure from their families and home communities to seek out stable relationships and careers. When they believe that they have experienced failure in these areas, including being sexually assaulted, they are afraid to report these issues because they may be marginalized by their families or, at best, their families will not be able to help. This pressure from their families and home communities forces them to be judicious with their time, only focusing on learning opportunities that they believe are applicable to their academic or career goals. Sexual violence education programming does not always seem directly applicable to their goals. However, direct conversations with Americans and pedagogical techniques grounded in the use of concrete examples help the students feel more connected to the material. In fact, the amount of time these students spend having meaningful conversations with Americans seems correlated with the depth of their understanding of American sexual culture.

This project helped me give voice to the experiences of East Asian international students in the United States. The themes that emerged aligned with findings of previous researchers. In particular, the findings were congruent with past research documenting the need for more sex education in East Asian countries, acculturation issues faced by international students, barriers to help-seeking, and the developmental process that occurs when someone navigates a new culture. The themes led to several recommendations for best practices in higher education. These recommendations were (1) use examples, media, and narrative, (2) destigmatize and demystify

reporting, (3) address stereotypes about the United States, (4) discuss the fundamentals of pursuing relationships in the United States, (5) provide international students opportunities to interact with Americans, (6) offer tailored sexual violence prevention initiatives to international students, and (7) provide culturally relevant training to sexual violence investigators and conduct administrators. The study also called led to recommendations for further research. These recommendations were (1) expanding the target population to more institutions, (2) controlling for specific countries of origin, (3) quantitative analyses of program success, and (4) quantitative analyses of learning outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

DePaul Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Services Institutional Review Board 1 East Jackson Boulevard Chicago, Illinois 60604-2287
312-362-7593
Fax: 312-362-7574

Research Involving Human Subjects
NOTICEOF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

To: Michael Blackman, Graduate Student, College of Education

Date: July 24, 2019

Re: Research Protocol # MB060619EDU
"Consent Around the Globe: Sexual violence prevention programming that responds to the needs of international students"

Please review the following important information about the review of your proposed research activity.

Review Details
This submission is an initial submission.

Your research project meets the criteria for Expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110 under the following categories:

> "(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes."

> "(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program
> evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies."

Approval Details
Your research was originally reviewed on June 24, 2019 and revisions were requested. The revisions you submitted on July 9, 2019 were reviewed and approved on July 24, 2019.

   Approval date: July 24, 2019
   Please note: Under the revised regulations, protocols requiring expedited review no

longer require annual continuing review. We have transitioned your protocol to the revised regulations. However, if any changes are made to your research, you still need to submit an amendment prior to initiating the amendment changes.

Approved Consent, Parent/Guardian Permission, or Assent Materials:
1) Consent Form before Interview, version July 24, 2019 (attached)
2) Consent Form as Recruitment Email Attachment, version July 24, 2019 (attached)
   a. Waiver of documentation of consent granted under 45 CFR 46.117(c)(ii).

Other approved study documents:

1) Recruitment Email, version July 24, 2019 (attached)
2) Re-contacting Email for Scheduling and Screening, version 6/25/2019 (attached)
3) Reminder Recruitment Email, version July 24, 2019 (attached)
4) [Hart] Resource Sheet, version July 9, 2019 (attached)

Number of approved participants: 14 Total
You should not exceed this total number of subjects without prospectively submitting an amendment to the IRB requesting an increase in subject number.

Funding Source: 1) PI self-funded.

Approved Performance sites: 1) DePaul University; 2) [Hart]'s Office of Global Engagement and International Services.

Reminders
- Only the most recent IRB-approved versions of consent, parent/legal guardian permission, or assent forms may be used in association with this project.

- Any changes to the funding source or funding status must be sent to the IRB as an amendment.

- Prior to implementing revisions to project materials or procedures, you must submit an amendment application detailing the changes to the IRB for review and receive notification of approval.

- You must promptly report any problems that have occurred involving research participants to the IRB in writing.

- **Once the research is completed, you must send a final closure report for the research to the IRB.**

The Board would like to thank you for your efforts and cooperation and wishes you the best of luck on your research. If you have any questions, please contact me by telephone at (312)

362-6168 or via email at jbloom8@depaul.edu.

For the Board,

Jessica Bloom

Jessica Bloom, MPH
Assistant Director of Research
Compliance Office of Research
Services

Cc: Rebecca Michel, PhD, Faculty, College of Education

Appendix B

Email Invitation to Students

Subject: Invitation to Participate in [Hart]-Sponsored Research

Dear Student,

My name is Mike Blackman and I am a Doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at DePaul University. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study. The purpose is to understand how East Asian international students learn about sexual relationships and violence in the United States to help schools address their needs.

This study involves one 45-60 minute interview with me. We will schedule the interview at a time and location that is convenient for you. My hope is that the interview will feel comfortable and informal to you, with the focus being on hearing about your experiences when you came to the United States. I will take care to protect your privacy during this study by being careful with your information and not using your name in the study. All responses will be confidential and you can request that any response not be included in the final project results.

You have the right to end your participation in the study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw, all the information you have provided will be destroyed.

As a token of appreciation, I will be providing you with refreshments during the interview along with a $50 [Hart] bookstore gift card.

This study has been approved by DePaul University's Institutional Review Board.

If you would like to participate in this research project, or have any questions, please contact me at mike.blackman@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Mike Blackman
mike.blackman@gmail.com

Appendix C

Email Reminder to Students

Subject: Invitation to Participate in [Hart]-Sponsored Research

Dear Student,

My name is Mike Blackman and I am a Doctoral student in the Educational Leadership department at DePaul University. You may remember that I sent an email in early September inviting you to participate in a research study. The purpose is to understand how East Asian international students learn about sexual relationships and violence in the United States to help schools address their needs. I wanted to send one reminder that I'm still accepting participants for the research study and you can email me at mike.blackman@gmail.com if you'd like to participate.

This study involves one 45-60 minute interview with me. We will schedule the interview at a time and location that is convenient for you. My hope is that the interview will feel comfortable and informal to you, with the focus being on hearing about your experiences when you came to the United States. I will take care to protect your privacy during this study by being careful with your information and not using your name in the study. All responses will be confidential and you can request that any response not be included in the final project results.

You have the right to end your participation in the study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw, all the information you have provided will be destroyed.

As a token of appreciation, I will be providing you with refreshments during the interview along with a $50 [Hart] bookstore gift card.

This study has been approved by DePaul University's Institutional Review Board.

If you would like to participate in this research project, or have any questions, please contact me at mike.blackman@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Mike Blackman
mike.blackman@gmail.com

Appendix D

Email to Interested Students

Subject: Re: [Subject of Their Email]

Hello [Name],

Thank you for your interest in my study! As I mentioned in my first email, this study involves a 45-60 minute interview that can be scheduled at a time and location that is convenient for you.

To get started, please let me know some times that you're available to meet in the next few weeks. I'm currently most available on [insert].

Also, to participate in the study, please confirm your age, gender, country of origin, and how many years you had spent in the United States (if any) prior to starting at [Hart]. If you have any questions about that, just let me know!

Finally, I have attached a consent form. This form provides details about the study so that you know exactly what to expect going into it. We will review this in person when we meet as well.

Thank you again! If you have any questions, don't hesitate to let me know. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Appendix E

Adult Consent Form

ADULT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Consent around the Globe: Sexual Violence Prevention Programming that Responds to the Needs of International Students

Principal Investigator: Michael Blackman, Graduate Student

Institution: DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Department, College: Educational Leadership, College of Education

Faculty Advisor: Rebecca Michel, PhD, Counseling and Special Education

Key Information:

What is the purpose of this research?
We are asking you to be in a research study because we are trying to learn more about international students' experiences when learning about sexual violence in the United States. This study is being conducted by Michael Blackman, a graduate student at DePaul University as a requirement to obtain his doctoral degree. This research is being supervised by his faculty advisor, Rebecca Michel. We hope to include about 14 people in the research.

Why are you being asked to be in the research?
You are invited to participate in this study because you are an East Asian (defined as China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Mongolia, South Korea, and Taiwan) international student studying in the United States. In particularly, East Asian international students (defined as is anyone who is enrolled in courses at institutions of higher education who is not a U.S. citizen, an immigrant [permanent resident], or a refugee) are being invited if they are currently enrolled at [Hart] and over the age of 18. You must be age 18 or older to be in this study. This study is not approved for the enrollment of people under the age of 18.

What is involved in being in the research study?
If you agree to be in this study, being in the research involves participation in one 45-60 minute interview and an optional 45-60 minute follow up to review what you described in the first interview. The subject matter of the interview will focus on your transition to the United States, your experiences learning about intimate relationships, and any barriers you faced while going through this transition.

The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed into written notes later in order to get an accurate record of what you said.

Are there any risks involved in participating in this study?
The questions may invite you to share disclose information that may be uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to. You also may be frustrated that you do not notice change at your school as a result of you participating since I am not a representative of your institution. Finally, there is the possibility that others may find out what you have said, but

we have put protections in place to prevent this from happening including that your name will be changed and any personally identifiable information will be changed.

Are there any benefits to participating in this study?
There are no direct benefits to participating in the study, but we hope that what we learn will help other people in the future create better educational programs for international students.

How much time will this take?
The interview will take about 45-60 minutes. There is an optional 45-60 minute follow up if you believe that you have more information to share and for you to review what you shared in the first interview.

Other Important Information about Research Participation

Is there any kind of payment, reimbursement or credit for being in this study?
You will also be given a token of gratitude in the form of a $50 physical gift card to the [Hart] bookstore as a result of your participation.

Can you decide not to participate?
Your participation is voluntary, which means you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences, penalties, or loss of benefits if you decide not to participate or change your mind later and withdraw from the research after you begin participating. Your decision whether or not to be in the research will not affect your grades or standing at your school.

Who will see my study information and how will the confidentiality of the information collected for the research be protected?
The research records will be kept and stored securely. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study or publish a paper to share the research with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. We will not include your name or any information that will directly identify you. Some people might review or copy our records that may identify you in order to make sure we are following the required rules, laws, and regulations. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board may review your information. If they look at our records, they will keep your information confidential.

To prevent others from accessing our records or identifying you should they gain access to our records, we have put some protections in place. These protections include using a code (a fake name) for you and other people in the study and keeping the records in a safe and secure place.

The audio recordings will be kept until accurate written notes have been made, then they will be destroyed.

Please be aware that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence during the course of research does not constitute a formal report to the University and will not begin the process of DePaul providing a response. If you are seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul, you should contact Public Safety (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7777;

Loop: 312-362-8400) or the Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7290; Loop: 312-362-8066 or titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu). Individuals seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources (773-325-7129 or hpw@depaul.edu). More information is available at http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html. Individuals are encouraged to take advantage of these services and to seek help around sexual and relationship violence for themselves as well as their peers who may be in need of support.

If you do disclose an experience with sexual or relationship violence, we will also provide you with a resource sheet containing this information at the end of the study.

Who should be contacted for more information about the research?
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, you can contact the researcher, Mike Blackman, at 312.629.6725 or mike.blackman@gmail.com.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the DePaul Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Compliance, in the Office of Research Services at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

You may also contact DePaul's Office of Research Services if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent from the Subject:

I have read the above information. I have had all my questions and concerns answered. By signing below, I indicate my consent to be in the research.

Signature:_____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Mike Blackman
Interview Protocol – Dissertation Proposal

"This interview is being audio-recorded for research purposes. If you object to the recording at any point, please let me know and I will cease recording and instead take handwritten notes. Do you agree to being audio-recorded?

Recording starts now."

Research Question

How do international students attending an urban college/university in the US describe the experience of learning about sexual and relationship violence during college?

Interview Questions

1. What perceptions did you have about relationships and sex in the United States prior to arriving?
    o Where did you get these perceptions?
    o How accurate were these perceptions?
2. What are the major cultural differences between the United States and your home country regarding sex, relationships, and sexual violence?
3. What are the biggest challenges you faced when learning about sex and relationships in the United States?
4. What types of people (e.g. friends, family, teachers, staff, etc.) in your life have been most influential related to sex and relationships?
5. Where and how did you learn about sexual violence in the United States?
    o What information was easy for you to understand?
    o What information was challenging for you to understand?
    o What school-sponsored initiatives were the most helpful for you?
6. How comfortable are you getting involved in a situation where you believe someone may be at risk for being a victim of sexual violence?
    o What knowledge would help you be more comfortable?
7. What topics related to sex, relationships, and sexual violence are most important to share with other international students?
    o Why are these topics most important?
8. What format (e.g. lecture, workshop, small group discussion, online training, etc.) is most effective for teaching about sex, relationships, and sexual violence?
    o What makes these formats most effective?
9. What types of scenarios or situations would be most relevant to discuss with international students as part of a training? Why do you think that is?

10. Imagine you were in charge of the international student educational initiatives at your School related to healthy relationships and sexual violence, what would you do the same? What would you do differently?
11. Is there anything you would like to add?
12. Would you like to set up a time for an option follow up for you to review the information you provided in this interview?