Super Likes and Right Swipes: How Undergraduate Women Experience Dating Apps

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Dating apps on mobile devices have grown in popularity over the last five years, but little research has been done to understand how college women engage with these apps. As such, this study aimed to uncover how undergraduate women engage with dating apps and how they feel in regards to their safety. Based on this study, connections were made between the utilization of social networks by women using dating apps and the need for healthy sexual and relationship education.

Social media has become increasingly prevalent, with 90% of young adults ages 18-29 using social networking sites (Perrin, 2015). Due to an increased use of technology in building personal connections, it is vital that stakeholders in higher education gain a better understanding of how dating apps in particular impact the student experience. As of 2016, 27% of 18-24 year olds use online dating apps, which is an increase from just 10% in 2013 (Smith, 2016). Hookup culture and consent are also issues that play a role in the dating app experiences of undergraduate women (Garcia, Reiber, Massey, and Merriwether, 2012). Hookup culture is a term that has emerged in recent years to describe a culture on college campuses in which students engage in sexual acts frequently and with little long-term commitment (Garcia et al, 2012). Consent is the act of providing affirmative verbal and/or nonverbal communication to engage in sexual acts with another person (Breiding, Basile, Smith, Black, & Mehendra, 2015).

In addition to patterns of use, it is important for stakeholders to understand the safety implications that using these apps could have on undergraduate women when meeting potential partners in person. As such, this study explored undergraduate women's perceptions and experiences of safety in regards to the online dating app environment at Indiana University Bloomington (IUB). In hopes of being more inclusive of different experiences as women, this study included women who identify on different parts of the gender spectrum. including: women, trans women, genderqueer, and demi girl. According to Xie (2015), demigirl is defined as a breaking of gender boundaries, where an individual identifies as both "girl" and "non-girl."

The researchers sought to understand what women look for and expect when utilizing these apps that they may not get from their in-person interactions in the socially constructed environment (Strange & Banning, 2015) at IUB. This exploratory study investigated the experiences of undergraduate women who utilize dating apps as a means to make new connections. The research questions were as follows:

1. What are undergraduate women's perceptions of using dating apps?
2. With regard to safety in particular, how do undergraduate women experience dating apps?
3. What campus resources, if any, are these students utilizing in order to process their experiences within the dating app culture?

This study was intended to invite administrators, faculty, student affairs professionals, and campus partners (see Table 2) to: (1) re-conceptualize how we promote sexual and mental health of undergraduates, (2) influence our approach to campus safety policies, (3) spark critical conversations about how we engage women in positive and healthy relationships, and (4) reaffirm this institution's commitment to creating a safe and affirming campus environment for all IUB students (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2015a). The campus resources asked about in this study are described in Table 1. The offices the researchers partnered with to disseminate the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Literature Review

The Internet has become a tool for online dating and forming relationships and has partly replaced family, school, and the neighborhood as venues for meeting potential partners (Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2012). For example, location-based real-time dating (LBRTD) apps rely on photos and minimal bios, allowing users to market themselves in order to attain a desired outcome (Birnholtz et al., 2014). One of the apps discussed in both of these studies is Tinder, a popular online dating app that allows users to self-select through potential partners by parameters of age and distance.

Online Dating Apps Perpetuating Hook-Up Culture and Existing Gender Norms

The advent of self-selection dating apps has been said to have given rise to hookup culture, specifically on college campuses. Garcia et al.'s (2012) study of hookup culture among young adults and college students acknowledged that the

Table 1

Campus Resources

Resource	Peer Led vs. Staff Led	Description
Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)	Staff Led	Holistic cognitive behavioral counseling center located in the IU Bloomington Health Center.
Student Advocates Office	Staff Led	Office that provides students with resources and confidential support to address personal or academic issues.
Raising Awareness of Interactions in Sexual Encounters (RAISE)	Peer Led	Student-led organization under the umbrella of IU Health Center programs that educates students on sexual assault and relationship violence.
Men Against Rape and Sexual Assault (MARS)	Peer Led	Student-led organization that educates men on consent and healthy relationships.
Safe Sisters	Peer Led	Student-led organization that serves as a peer confidential resource for Panhellenic sorority women.
Step UP!	Peer Led	Delivers bystander intervention-training sessions focused on sexual wellbeing, respect, mental health, and drugs and alcohol.
Sexual Assault Crisis Services (SACS)	Staff Led	Provides comprehensive resources for survivors of sexual assault located in the IU Bloomington Health Center.

term "hookup" can be extremely vague and may encompass a number of sexual behaviors, such as kissing, oral sex, and penetrative intercourse (Garcia et al., 2012). Although casual sex is not exclusive to young adults, a study by Garcia and Fisher (2015) found it to be much more common among college students in that age cohort than those who do not attend college.

Existing gender norms associated with heterosexual dating and hookup culture are also perpetuated through these apps. Eisenhart (1990) offered insight into the exchanges that heterosexual college men and women engage in when creating a cultural system of romance. This study found that students must develop an expertise regarding the language, norms, and expectations surrounding this culture, with inherently gendered behavior and expectations, in order to survive it (Eisenhart, 1990). Hookup culture raises many concerns for the physical and mental wellbeing of those who participate in it, and this is an important aspect to address.

Safety and Online Dating

According to the research, women who engage with online dating are more likely to experience emotional and physical abuse (Abowitz, Knox, & Zusman, 2010; Cali, Coleman, & Campbell, 2013). These studies found that dating apps present dangers to women's safety, can lead to depression and anxiety (Abowitz et al., 2010), and may cause women to exhibit self-protective behaviors (Cali et al., 2013). This increased likelihood of emotional and physical abuse suggests that colleges may not be providing the proper intervention and education programs to prevent or address this problem (Abowitz et al., 2010; Cali et al., 2013).

The need for self-protection can be explained by gender differences in victimization. A recent survey by the Association of American Universities

(AAU) found that one in four undergraduate women experience sexual assault while in college (Cantor et al., 2015). Due to this phenomenon, women have to take responsibility for their own safety concerns in order to keep themselves safe and reduce their victimization risk (Jennings, Gover, & Pudrzynska, 2007). College responses to female victimization have been virtually absent (Jordan, 2014), despite the common perception of college campuses as safe environments.

A campus security report by the Indiana University Office of Public Safety indicated that reports of sex-related offenses, along with Violence Against Women offenses, have increased at IU in the past few years. In 2015, there were 29 reported instances of rape on campus, a marked increase over the 15 and 13 cases reported in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Additionally, there were five reported cases of domestic violence, 10 cases of dating violence, and 25 cases of stalking. The number of these incidents has also increased since 2013 (IU Office of Public Safety, 2016). The increase in reporting is consistent with a national trend among college student survivors of intimate partner violence. According to a report collaboratively published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, and American Institutes for Research (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Oudekerk, 2016), reporting of forcible sex crimes on college campuses more than doubled between 2001 and 2013. Research experts and American policy makers have asserted that, while it is impossible to know if the increase in reporting is due to an increase in assaults, they strongly suspect that the combination of a national shift in perspectives on sexual violence and increased support for survivors is encouraging more students to report to authorities (Nunez, 2016).

According to Wilcox, Jordan, and Pritchard (2007), most research on the fear of crimes has focused on adults, not necessarily college students. Day's (1994) research found a critical piece of information about campus violence prevention initiatives, being that resources focused on addressing women's victimization often make women feel more uneasy and restrict their behavior (Day, 1994). As explored later, this is a critical point in the analysis of undergraduate women's perceptions of safety on online dating apps.

Racial identity adds an additional layer to the discussion of safety. Utilizing data from a national Gallup poll, research by Jordan and Gabbidon (2010) revealed an important trend: Even when controlled for geographic location, age, gender, and income, minorities feel less safe than their white counterparts. This study intentionally collected racial and ethnic demographic data in an effort to provide insight into the diversity of dating app experiences.

Theoretical Framework

Two concepts that inform this study are human aggregate and socially constructed environments. A human aggregate environment refers to how people influence and react to the space around them, while a socially constructed environment is related to perceptions and experiences of an environment (Strange & Banning, 2015).

In addition to these two environmental frameworks, this research is informed and influenced by an intersectional feminist framework. This study surveyed undergraduate students who identify as women at IUB, both users and non-users of these apps, and examined the environment that has been constructed by users' interactions with and perceptions of dating apps. Feminist theory, which sparked

massive social and political movements, asserts that women have not reached social, economic, and educational parity with men (hooks, 2000; Millett, 1970). The framework of intersectional feminism troubles the concept of feminism in that to understand a woman's experience, one cannot overlook her intersecting social identities within the systems of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991). The researchers thus operated under the assumptions that women are not always treated as equal partners by men and that troubling the intersecting identities of women is necessary to uncover their unique experiences.

Methods

The goal of this study was to gather data regarding how undergraduate women are using dating apps, as well as the potential safety concerns that may arise. In addition, this study aimed to provide information to student affairs professionals regarding their role in having conversations regarding dating application use. The research team is familiar with dating apps, having either used them personally or having learned about them from friends. Although all of the researchers have experienced firsthand both positive and negative outcomes associated with the use of dating apps, they recognize that this technology will continue to evolve and impact the lives of young adults on college campuses.

This research took place at IUB. Located in south-central Indiana, IUB is the flagship campus within the larger Indiana University statewide system (Indiana University, 2016a). It is a large, four-year, public, more selective institution with over 46,000 students (Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016), over 38,000 of which are undergraduates (Indiana University, 2016b). Indiana University has a balanced mix of liberal arts, science, and professional majors

and is a primarily residential campus (Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016).

Survey

The researchers created a 22-question survey that can be divided into three sections: Dating App Experience, Knowledge of Campus Resources, and Demographics. In the Dating App section, the students were asked what dating apps they have used, their habits in using the app(s), and their perceived sense of safety in relation to the apps. The Knowledge of Campus Resources section aimed to assess the extent to which students utilize peer led and staff supported campus resources to process dating app experiences. These resources, as described in Table 2, explicitly address topics related to dating app users, such as sexual health and wellness. Lastly, in the Demographics section, the survey collected information such as age, racial or ethnic identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and class level to determine if there are any disparities among these identities in terms of dating app experience and feelings of safety. The researchers modeled the demographic information section after other major research instruments, including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the 2016 United States Census. The researchers then modified the questions regarding gender identity to be more inclusive of respondents who fall outside of the gender binary.

Since the researchers were unable to find previous data on the topic of college women's sense of safety regarding dating apps, they created a new and unique survey tool. According to Floyd J. Fowler, Jr. (1995), "[a] good survey instrument must be custom made to address a specific set of research goals" (p. 78). Because this survey instrument is an original design, it was important to evaluate the validity of the survey before disseminating it. In order to confirm the survey's validity, six undergraduate women took the survey and provided feedback regarding clarity, timing, and functionality of the instrument prior to dissemination.

Procedures

The researchers used a purposeful cluster sampling technique (Creswell, 2015; Schuh, Biddix, Dean, & Kinzie, 2016) to select groups based on their continued involvement in discussions regarding sexuality and sexual health. A full list of campus resources and survey dissemination channels can be found in Tables 1 and 2. As these tables indicate, a majority of the student-led organizations and resources created opportunities for their peers to engage in discussions around the central themes of this research. Undergraduate women above the age of 18 were targeted for the distribution of the survey tool. The researchers coordinated with various peer-led and staff-supported resources. The authors created the survey in Qualtrics, and campus partners (see Table 2) agreed to disseminate the survey through campus listservs.

The researchers took many steps to ensure the protection of participants' rights in this survey. This study did not collect any personally identifiable information from participants that would limit their anonymity. In order to ensure that no individual participated in this survey more than once, participants were required to log into the IU server with their IU. In light of the role the researchers play as responsible employees and the obligation to report any sexual misconduct communicated to them (Fasone, 2016), the researchers chose to gather data anonymously and provide contact information for various campus resources at the end of the survey in the

event that a survey respondent was triggered by their participation.

Data Analysis

The researchers employed two separate methods for analyzing the data. First, descriptive statistics were collected from all 22 survey questions and were used to identify general tendencies in the data. Second, for the open-ended question, the researchers used a text-mining approach to sort and make sense of the data. The open-ended question was tied to a one-to-ten scale that asked respondents to rate their sense of safety while meeting up with someone from a dating app. The researchers grouped all open-ended responses together and categorized them based on common themes. In line with the intersectional feminist framework, the researchers further explored the data to investigate the ways in which responses were nuanced based on participants' identities. The researchers specifically reviewed responses for questions of safety and campus resources and how they varied based on an individual's race, sexual identity, and gender identity. By doing so, the authors were able to uncover fruitful data and gain insight into the non-dominant dating app narratives of undergraduate women at IUB.

Results

Demographics

The current IUB undergraduate body racially identifies as 79% White, International or unknown, 4.14% African American, 4.44% Asian American, 0.13% American Indian, 0.04% Pacific Islander, and 3.08% two or more races (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2015b). The study had a fairly representative sample of Indiana University Bloomington as it pertains to race, ethnicity, and class year. Out of the all of the students who began the survey, 110

students completed all questions. Two respondents did not identify as cis-women, transgender-women, or demigirl and were thus eliminated from the data pool. 91.82% of those surveyed identified as not of Hispanic or Latinx origin, compared to about 95.14% of students at IUB identifying as not Hispanic or Latinx origin (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2015b). Racially, respondents identified as 90.91% White, 5.45% Black or African American, 0.91% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.91% Asian Indian, 1.82% East Asian, 1.82% Southeast Asian, and .91% Pacific Islander. 1.82% of respondents indicated they prefer not to answer, and 2.73% indicated that they identified with a race not previously mentioned.

In terms of sexual orientation, 73.64% of respondents identified as heterosexual and 26.39% as somewhere on the LGBTQ+ spectrum. The highest number of participants in the latter category, at 14.55%, identified as bisexual. 97.27% identified as cisgender woman, and three respondents, at 2.73%, indicated that their identity was not listed. From those who shared that their gender identity was not listed, two identified as demigirl and one identified as queer.

Survey respondents fell into a wide range of class years, which closely mimicked the current class level breakdown of IUB undergraduates (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2015b). In the sample, 14.55% identified as first-year students, 32.73% as sophomores, 27.27% as juniors, and 25.45% as seniors, a category that included those in their 5th year. Overall, 99.09% of respondents identified as domestic students, with just 0.91% identifying as international students. This result is not representative of IU's international student population given that the international student population currently comprises 9.17% of the total

number of undergraduates (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2016; iStart, 2016).

The data indicated that just under half of all female respondents, and over 65% of respondents who identify on the LGBTQ+ spectrum, use dating apps. Across the board, Tinder was by far the most popular choice, used by 47.20% of respondents. Other popular apps included Bumble and OkCupid, used by 8.80% and 6.40% of respondents, respectively. Other apps accounted for 4.8%, primarily Her, a dating app made by and for gay women.

More than half of respondents (53.60%,) indicated that they do not currently use any dating apps, although some of those surveyed may have in the past. Of this group, 83.82% said that it was unlikely or extremely unlikely that they would use a dating app in the next six months. Although 8.82% were undecided and 7.35% indicated that they were likely or extremely likely to start using an app, most people do not plan to use dating apps in the future if they are not already utilizing them. Further, while the frequency of app usage varied widely as seen in the Graph 1.2 below, 65.30% of respondents indicated that they used an app at least a few times per week, including 30.61% who used it at least daily. For 22.45% of the respondents, app usage was much sparser, indicating they used an app "monthly" or "hardly ever."

Internal and External Motivations

When asked why the 66 respondents did not currently use dating apps, 71.45% of the responses fell into four of the possible nine options: "I'm in a relationship" (51.47%), "I like to meet people for the first time in person" (36.76%), "Dating apps are unsafe" (22.53%), and "Other users are dishonest" (20.59%). While survey participants could check all options that applied, it is important to note that outside of already being in a relationship, college women expressed

concerns related to safety, authenticity, and initiating romantic relationships in person.

In response to the question, "How important were the following factors in deciding to use a dating app?" respondents indicated that "Entertainment" and "I am looking for casual dating" were the two highest-rated factors. In addition, 69.39% of app users ranked "Entertainment" above 'moderately important,' and 34.69% ranked "I am looking for casual dating" as 'important' or 'very important.' Lastly, respondents ranked "I am looking for casual sex" as a remarkably low factor when deciding to use dating apps, with a resounding 75.51% of them marking it as less than 'moderately important' on the scale.

User Concerns

Through survey responses, the researchers found safety to be a very important factor for undergraduate women who are deciding to use dating apps and to meet up with people. The respondents overwhelmingly rated the following concerns associated with app usage as either 'important' or 'very important': "It could lead to unsafe situations" (71.43%), "Meeting people I have never met before in person" (55.10%), and "Having a bad experience" (57.14%). The most common 'very important' response was "It could lead to unsafe situations," which demonstrates that safety is an overarching concern for many undergraduate women who are using dating apps, despite the fact that 83.67% of the respondents have met up with someone at least once. This finding suggests that women are meeting up with people in real life at very high rates, even though they express safety concerns.

When the respondents were asked, "On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being very unsafe and 10 being very safe, how did you feel when meeting up with someone from a dating

app?" 81.64% of respondents indicated a 6 or higher. In participant explanations of how safe they feel when meeting someone from a dating app, many respondents mentioned taking precautions such as meeting in public and alerting friends as to their whereabouts.

Campus Resources

Following questions regarding experiences and perceptions of dating apps, the researchers asked participants which IUB campus resources they utilize to specifically discuss online dating experiences. When asked to what degree they believe that IUB provided resources to discuss their dating app experiences, 88.69% of respondents marked 'undecided,' 'disagree,' or 'strongly disagree.' Next, the researchers asked about their awareness of the resources that various campus offices have available to them. Students were most aware professional resources and least aware of a peer-led resource.

When asked about their comfort level in utilizing resources, respondents indicated a mean score of 6.55 for a professional resource based on a scale from 1 (not comfortable at all) to 10 (being extremely comfortable). In contrast, respondents indicated a mean score of about 4.09 for peer-led resources. Next, the researchers asked respondents about their utilization of these resources to talk specifically about dating apps. Over 87.27% of the respondents indicated that they do not talk about their dating app experiences with any of these resources, a finding that requires further exploration through additional research.

Discussion

The findings from the study reinforce the numerous themes uncovered in previous research. As seen in this study, students did not widely use the resources available to them to discuss their experience with dating apps. Future research should be conducted to determine how student affairs professionals can help address this trend. The themes of safety and utilization of campus resources will be discussed below, as will strategies to proactively mitigate risk.

Leveraging Social Media for Safety

Although dating apps such as Tinder or Bumble are often the foundation upon which potential friendships or relationships might form, respondents also utilized other social media apps to develop those relationships and to establish the identity of their matches prior to meeting up with them. Respondents who reported feeling the safest when meeting up with someone from a dating app frequently mentioned using other social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat to verify that other person's identity, as well as to engage in conversation with them via messaging prior to meeting in person. These comments accounted for 15% of all respondents using dating apps. One respondent commented: "Most of the time I've messaged and snap chatted with them enough to believe they probably won't murder me." This result demonstrates that the use of social media apps in conjunction with dating apps helped the respondent feel safer. When respondents could use alternate forms of social media to connect their interactions on the app with their lives outside of the app and to evaluate the other person's identity, they felt more secure when meeting a potential partner.

Public Spaces

One recurring theme in participants' answers was the importance of public spaces as venues for meeting people for the first time. As Jennings, Gover, and Pudrzynska (2007) found, women tend to implement self-protective measures in order to avoid victimization on campus. Several participants in this study indicated that

8

meeting in public spaces and utilizing other self-protective measures increased their sense of safety when meeting up with someone they met on a dating app. One participant commented: "I'm very selective in who I'll meet up with and I have always and plan to always stay totally in public places until I know the individual well enough." Similarly, another respondent shared this self-protective plan: "I usually meet in a public place where there are many other people, which contributes to my feeling of safety." Meeting in public spaces that were easy to leave and making sure that someone else knew about the date were two frequent contributors to respondents' feelings of safety.

Support and Safety Network

When looking at the ways in which identity impacted survey responses, the researchers found that women of color and those who identify as LGBTQ+ experienced safety very differently from their straight, white peers. In-depth analysis of the data revealed that the top two reasons, chosen from the survey list of options, for women of color not using dating apps were: "I like to meet people for the first time in person" and "Other users are dishonest."

These responses are congruent with the literature on the victimization of women, specifically women of color (Jennings, Gover, & Pudrzynska, 2007; Jordan & Gabbidon, 2010). However, women who indicated that they go on dates with other women skewed the data towards an overall feeling of total safety. Of the women who identify somewhere on the LGBTQ+ spectrum, 94.12% rated their feelings of safety as a 6 or higher.

Interestingly, when looking at how responses varied based on sexual identity, the researchers found that pansexual students are comfortable and have talked to friends, family, peers, university staff, and classmates about their dating app experiences. This point is in sharp contrast to their straight peers, who lean more towards not talking to anyone about these experiences. In line with previous research by Eisenhart (1990) on heterosexual dating culture, the researchers hypothesize that a large part of this lack of information sharing is due to the normalized narrative of heterosexuality and individuals feeling as though they do not need to share or discuss their experiences for them to be accepted. The researchers of this study would assert that pansexual students are continuing to have these conversations as an effort to process and unpack their experiences within the heteronormative culture of IUB. Further qualitative research on the experiences of pansexual students with dating apps would be beneficial in order to provide additional counter-narratives of college student dating experiences.

The quantitative findings of this study, specifically regarding feelings of safety, were given additional layers of meaning through the qualitative data collected in the survey. When asked to explain their rating of how safe they felt "when meeting up with someone from an online dating app," students who felt more safe than not outlined specific steps taken to mitigate risk. A common theme was the creation of a support or safety network before meeting up with a date in person. Four respondents mentioned in their qualitative responses the importance of alerting friends to date plans and location, requesting timed check-ins, or, in the words of one participant, having "people I trusted nearby just in case I was in danger." It is interesting to note that each respondent who mentioned prearranged safety networks also expressed a strong preference for having first dates in public locations. Undergraduate women are not only talking to their friendship circles about dating apps, they are leaning on such circles

to provide an added layer of safety and support in the actual dating experience. This finding begs the question: Do IUB undergraduate women know what resources are available to them if a dating app facilitated date goes south? Having friends around to help is but one step; these women, the researchers would assert, should also be equipped with the knowledge to act as a helpful bystander.

Resources

A major topic addressed in this study was the campus resources undergraduate women used to discuss their experiences with dating apps. Of all respondents, 88.69% indicated that they 'strongly disagree,' 'disagree,' or were 'undecided' that IUB offers resources for them to discuss these experiences. Although the data indicated that a majority of respondents were aware of the resources that the researchers asked about, an overwhelming majority had never used these resources. Of the resources respondents have used, the two most frequently utilized were both professional services, as opposed to the peer education resources. When asked to rate their level of comfort utilizing such resources, the mean ratings were very low for all resources and even lower for peer-led resources. 80.87% of respondents said that they talk to their friends about their dating app experiences; only 15.65% indicated that they talk with 'relatives,'19.13% selected 'I don't talk to anyone,' and 15.65% talk to 'classmates.' This wide margin in responses suggested to the researchers that the institution may not be getting the right information about resources to students and that even though students talk mostly to their peers about their experiences, they are not comfortable utilizing the peer education resources.

These results are troubling when the authors take into account the fact that the

Division of Student Affairs at this institution has emphasized the value and strength of its peer education programs. Peer education programs typically involve the sharing of "knowledge, experience, and emotional, social, or practical help with other students" (Olson, Koscak, Foroudi, Mitalas, & Noble, 2016). IUB is trying to reach students through a means that has been empirically proven effective (Hines & Palm Reed, 2015; Olson et al., 2016; Yan, Finn, Cardinal, & Bent, 2014), but if students are not aware of these programs or do not feel comfortable reaching out to peer educators, then these programs may not be as successful as the institution might assume. As the literature has made clear, peer educators can be more effective than professionals in addressing attitudes excusing rape against women, dating violence, bystander efficacy (Hines & Palm Reed, 2015), and health behaviors, such as nutrition knowledge, physical activity practice, and stress management practice (Yan et al., 2014).

Peer educators often connect better with students since they share similar campus experiences and use the same terminology; however, supervisors of these programs should be aware of the peer educators' personas outside of the program and how their on-campus behaviors might influence their audiences' perceptions of the peer educator (Hines & Palm Reed, 2015). Thus, peer educators can influence the constructed environment as it relates to healthy dating at IUB based on their social capital on campus. Still, it is important to note that peer educators might also be less prepared to address certain topics than professionals (Hines & Palm Reed, 2015), so special care should be taken when training peer educators.

Limitations

The researchers have identified several limitations of this study. Many of the students in peer educator roles are affiliated with one of the professional resources that the authors asked about and, therefore, may have had prior understanding of the issues with dating culture on campus and also knowledge of campus resources related to healthy dating. This heightened understanding may have skewed the data.

Another limitation of this study was the dissemination process. The online survey tool was sent out to a variety of campus partners and students in a specific email format. The researchers asked the participants to forward the initial outreach email with the exact content that they had provided, but were unable to track whether or not that request was followed. Although there was no incentive to take the survey, students may have felt pressured to participate due to hierarchical relationships within Culture of Care or Student Life & Learning. The researchers attempted to mitigate this issue by having the research team contact student groups that they did not directly supervise or advise.

Finally, the generalizability of this study was a limitation in terms of applying its findings to the greater population at IUB. While this study explored the experiences of undergraduate women, it cannot be conclusively state that the experiences of the respondents are representative of all women at IUB, simply because the sample size was only a small fraction of the total population. The study itself was of students at one large, public institution. It is entirely possible that the experiences of undergraduate women at smaller schools, or private institutions, would be different.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

The results of this study have implications related to community partnerships and bystander intervention and also to the promotion of sexual and mental health through peer education.

Community Partnership and Bystander Intervention

Campaigns have popped up all over the world for women in response to the rise in online dating apps and sexual violence (Fenton, 2016; Pesce, 2016). For example, a portion of these campaigns have provided an outlet or alternative for women in bars who feel unsafe on a date and feel as though they need to leave (Pesce, 2016; Fenton, 2016). A partnership between IUB and Bloomington bars and restaurants would require one-hour in-house training for staff members and would ensure that they have the necessary information to implement this low-commitment bystander intervention initiative. Further research could be done on where students are going on first dates with partners they met online to uncover the effectiveness of similar programs at Bloomington bars or social gathering spaces.

Promotion of Sexual and Mental Health through Peer Education

To continue building on peer initiatives that help students navigate their own mental and sexual well-being, the researchers of this study suggest that IUB takes the following actions: (1) train "front-line" student leaders by utilizing peer educators; (2) address social capital's influence on peer educator leadership positions; and (3) begin assessment for first year students to better understand the messages they are getting regarding campus resources. A major implication for the IUB campus would be to empower peer educators to take a more active role in the mandatory training course taken by all orientation leaders. Peer educators should be aware of the influence

that their lives outside of their positions have on their ability to connect with peers and make a positive impact during bystander intervention training (Hines & Palm Reed, 2015). Based on the research, students seem to be missing key ways that campus resources and peer led initiatives can help them.

Finally, future research must be done in order to assess the messages first year students receive regarding mental health and sexual well-being resources. The authors suggest a pre- and post-test be implemented to gain a better understanding of what information first years are receiving and what messages they are retaining regarding resources. Clearly, students are aware of and utilizing staff resources, but the authors believe more research should be done on peer-led initiatives and why students are not utilizing these at the same rate.

Conclusion

This exploratory study sought to close a gap in the literature on undergraduate women's use and experiences of dating apps. Survey results revealed common habits in precautionary safety measures among undergraduate women, interesting app-use trends among LGBTQ+ female users of dating apps, and confirmed previous research on perceived possibilities of victimization being higher among women of color. Although female students overwhelmingly said they sought out peers to discuss their dating app experiences, they indicated shockingly low rates of comfort seeking out resources grounded in a peer educator based model.

Student affairs practitioners must conduct a thorough review of policies and programs impacting the sexual and physical well being of its' undergraduate women. The importance of proactive bystander intervention education and community programming cannot go unaddressed when so many young women express their need to establish safety networks before meeting up with their dating app matches in person. Peer education marketing, outreach, and programming require revamping when students indicate that the very programs created to meet their needs are not adequately supporting them. With close to 50% of respondents indicating that they use dating apps, it is this research team's hope that student affairs professionals will utilize these finding to create a safer, more supportive environment for undergraduate women exploring this new addition to their student experience.

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Appendix A

Campus Research Partners		
Name	**Description**	**Point of Survey Dissemination**
Culture of Care	Campus initiative focused on creating a campus culture of respect through bystander intervention.	Sent survey to students that shared their email information after going through StepUp Bystander Intervention Training.
IU Health Center	Full-service clinic on campus.	Sent survey to professional staff members to then send to their student organizations.
School of Public Health	Academic college.	Sent survey to professor of Human Sexuality courses to then send to their students.
Social sororities	All sororities governed by the Multicultural Greek Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and Panhellenic Association.	Sent survey to all sorority presidents to then send to their chapter members.
Residential Programs & Services	Auxiliary unit responsible for running all housing and dinning on campus.	Sent survey to HESA Graduate Assistants to then send to their RA staff.
Indiana Memorial Union Board	Student programming body, which serves as governing body of the Indiana Memorial Union.	Sent survey to students who hold leadership position through Union Board.
IUB Cultural Centers	Individual centers each supporting specific identities and promoting a climate of cultural awareness.	Sent survey to staff at Asian Culture Center, La Casa, and LGBTQ+ Culture Center to share through their listserv or student newsletter.