

CLASS STANDING AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY IN CHRISTIAN
HIGHER EDUCATION: A CAUSAL-COMPARATIVE STUDY

by

Bradley Carlton Bowen

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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APPROVED BY:

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ABSTRACT

Campus safety has become a significant topic in higher education. A dynamic environment including regulatory changes and notable criminal incidents has resulted in rapid changes in campus policy in the United States. Limited research has been conducted regarding stakeholder perceptions of campus safety, though research is lacking regarding campus safety in Christian higher education. Research is especially lacking among Christian institutions in the southeastern United States and in comparing student perceptions based on class standing. This causal-comparative study examined the results of a survey presented to undergraduate students at a Christian university to answer the question as to whether there are differences in student perceptions of campus safety based on class standing and gender. The adapted Perceptions of College Safety and Security scale was sent to undergraduate students at a suburban Christian university in upstate South Carolina. The survey results were compared via ANOVA based on class standing and again based on gender. The instrument as a whole showed no significant difference between students based on either gender or class standing, leading to a failure to reject the null hypothesis. Individual questions did show significant differences, leading to further discussion and recommendations for future research. Opportunities for future research including comparing student differences in perceptions of campus safety by comparing differences between students attending various Christian institutions in a variety of setting, comparisons of perceptions based on hometown or geographic region, perceptions of students during the college decision-making process, longitudinal studies, and comparisons of perceptions between different types of stakeholders (e.g. parents and students).

Keywords: campus safety, Clery Act, school shootings, Title IX, higher education, Christian

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Dedication

First and foremost, this paper is dedication to God the Father, Jesus Christ my Savior, and the Holy Spirit. This paper is also dedicated to my family and friends, without whom, I would have lost my sanity. To my wonderful and patient wife, April Bowen, who has provided encouragement throughout this entire process. To my children, Joshua Bowen, Kayla Hilliard, and Daniel Hilliard, especially Joshua who has had to share his time with me during this process. Finally, to my parents, Barry Bowen and LaVonda Bowen, who instilled in me a lifelong love of learning. I love you all and am grateful to have you in my life.

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Campus safety issues are not new, but they have become increasingly important in recent years. This chapter will provide background on the nature of modern campus safety concerns and how they relate to broader issues in higher education. The background will include an overview to lay a foundation for the importance of examining the issue of campus safety perceptions. By reviewing regulatory history and recent notable events, the importance of campus safety will be demonstrated and the need for research will be shown. The problem statement will then address the lack of research into perceptions of campus safety issues by freshman students and their parents at Christian institutions, while the purpose statement describes the variables for the research. The significance of the study section will describe the importance of campus safety and decision-making factors for Christian institutions and their stakeholders. Upon laying this foundation, the research questions will be presented, followed by the definition of terms related to the study.

Background

In recent years, higher education has shifted from a relatively noncompetitive industry into a highly competitive one. A variety of factors contribute to this phenomenon including, but not limited to, rising costs and increased globalization of education markets (Otara, 2015). Because of these factors, institutions are faced with competition on a national or even global scale (Bagley & Portnoi, 2014; Marginson, 2006;). Even smaller local institutions are not immune to these market forces and are becoming increasingly competitive in their recruiting endeavors. Awareness of safety and security issues in higher education is also on the rise among members of the public. This awareness may mean that campus safety issues have come to play

an increasingly important role in the decision to enroll or remain enrolled in an institution of higher education (Nobles, Fox, Khey, & Lizotte, 2013). Higher levels of awareness may be partially attributed to factors such as specific notable incidents, the rise of the Internet and social media (Giggie, 2015; Linder, Myers, Riggle & Lacy, 2016).

In addition to competitive pressures, there are also pressures exerted by federal and state government regulations. Many of these regulations relate to safety and security issues on campuses. Colleges and universities are increasingly focused on campus safety issues after the passage of the Clery Act. The Clery Act requires colleges and universities to disclose security policies and crime statistics, as well as provide timely notifications of criminal threats (Whissemore, 2016). This means that institutions must take proactive steps to implement campus safety measures and publicize those measures. Institutions can no longer gloss over campus safety issues as violations of the Clery Act can result in fines of up to \$54,789 per violation (Hanson & Irwin, 2017; Winn, 2017).

In addition to the Clery Act, Title IX provides additional regulations regarding sexual assault prevention, awareness, and investigation processes for colleges and universities. These regulations are meant to address the problem of sexual violence, which is estimated to affect as many as one in four female college students (Wies, 2015). With student populations only increasing, this problem is increasingly important to address. While universities are expected to protect their student population, this expectation has not always been met. A recent Penn State scandal only further demonstrates the importance of developing, publicizing, and following policies regarding sexual assault and serves as a warning to other institutions (Britt & Timmerman, 2013). Many institutions have completely overhauled policies, procedures, training, and resources in response to legislation (Holland & Cortina, 2017). Because this has

become such an important part of the college landscape, institutions must not only embrace campus safety initiatives, but they must also understand how such initiatives serve to differentiate them from other institutions.

Increased public awareness has also brought increased attention to campus safety issues. A major shooting incident at Virginia Tech in 2007 served as an impetus for greater awareness of campus safety policies and procedures (Giggie, 2015). Though other incidents have occurred on college campuses, Virginia Tech, in particular, served to highlight several areas in which universities have been woefully unprepared. Issues of mental health, interoffice and interagency communication, active shooter training, and timely notifications are among the many issues that have come to the forefront of campus safety discussions (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Even among institutions where crime rates are low, publicity of such major incidents may cause the public to question whether campus safety measures are adequate.

Christian institutions of higher education are not immune to the competitive forces of the national and global education markets. Leaders of Christian institutions have learned how to navigate these challenges if they wish to survive. The challenge, however, lies in Christian institutions' ability to maintain their Christian distinctiveness while simultaneously competing with hundreds of other institutions (Hulme, Groom, & Heltzel, 2016). Even well-established Christian institutions may find themselves struggling if they are unable to differentiate themselves from secular institutions or other Christian institutions. In order to survive, Christian institutions of higher education must be accessible, flexible, relevant, and creative (Starcher, 2006). Even though Christian institutions may be not-for-profit, they must increasingly act like a business in terms of marketing, customer service, and product differentiation. In the past, it may have been taken for granted that the local Christian institution was the go-to institution for local

Christian students. In many instances, this is no longer the case due to the number of other institutions that potential students now have at their fingertips.

The importance of safety and security in decision-making is rooted in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory of motivation. Maslow ranks the importance of safety and security as being second only to physiological needs (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1954; Taormina & Gao, 2013). If there is uncertainty regarding one's safety, this concern can override other concerns (O'Connor & Yballe, 2007). In the enrollment decision process, a number of factors are considered simultaneously. It is unknown whether safety and security play as an important role in the enrollment or process as Maslow might suggest. Student decision-making processes do not end upon enrollment. A variety of factors also come into play in the retention of students. With competitive tuition and academics at the forefront of most higher education discussions, it is also important to examine what role, if any, campus safety plays in the decision-making processes of students.

Problem Statement

In the wake of the Clery Act and several notable violent incidents, campus safety has evolved and research has been undertaken to examine this evolution. Existing literature has examined student perceptions of the safety of their campus and how this perception affects enrollment decisions (Carrico, 2016; Nora, 2004; Secore, 2018). There is some evidence to support a correlation between students' perceptions of campus safety and decision-making. It is important to begin to better understand these perceptions and explore some of the factors that may affect them. Are perceptions relatively static, or do they evolve over time during students' tenure at an institution? Do certain demographics perceive campus safety differently than others at the same institution?

Additionally, the primary focus of the majority of existing research has been on specific secular institutions with the results not necessarily being generalizable to other types of institutions (Chekwa, Thomas & Jones, 2013; Patton & Gregory, 2014). This gap in the literature means that perceptions of campus safety at Christian institutions of higher education have been left largely unexamined and ripe for research. Because accredited Christian institutions face the same competitive pressures and regulations as secular institutions, the examination of campus safety perceptions in this environment is no less important. Christian institutions do not operate in a vacuum and experience the same campus safety issues faced by any other institution of higher education. Christian institutions must be aware of the environment and be prepared to proactively address issues in order to remain distinctive and survive in a dynamic environment (Hulme et al., 2016). The problem is the general dearth of research regarding students' perceptions of campus safety in a Christian higher education setting, specifically a lack of information regarding the relationship between perceptions and class standing.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the students' perceptions of campus safety at a Christian institution of higher education. In this study, no variables will be manipulated, only observed and compared. The primary independent variable is the participant's class standing. A second primary independent variable is the participant's sex. The dependent variable is the perceptions of campus safety factors as indicated by the Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale. The population being examined consists of all on-campus undergraduate students at a single Christian institution of higher education located in a small-sized city in the Southeastern United States.

Significance of Study

Leaders in Christian higher education cannot be satisfied to maintain the status quo regarding security issues. They must proactively seek ways to not only survive, but to thrive while maintaining their distinct Christian mission (Hulme et al., 2016). Christian institutions must also recognize that they operate in a fallen world and safety and security issues cannot be ignored. These institutions must, therefore, understand the concerns of students during the enrollment and retention decision-making process. While some of these concerns have been researched within the context of secular institutions, little research exists for Christian higher education. Thus, Christian leaders need to understand the implications of this problem in Christian higher education despite the deficiency in research. This study seeks to provide Christian leaders with insight into this concern specifically within the context of a Christian institution.

Students are the primary customers in the higher education industry, so it is important to understand their perceptions and awareness of campus safety. It is important to understand both students' perceptions of safety in order to gain a better understanding of decision-making processes, and possibly even retention and success in college (Carrico, 2016). This study will provide insight into how student perceptions of campus safety may differ over time. While this study will not explore the relationship between perceptions and enrollment or retention decisions, it will seek to provide insight into differences in perceptions that may be useful in future studies. It is important for administrators to consider all stakeholder perceptions because these perceptions can sometimes be counterintuitive (Kyle, Schafer, Burruss & Giblin, 2017). This study will provide leaders in Christian higher education with insight into these perceptions of students regarding campus safety. Christian institutions cannot simply maintain the status

quo, but must instead proactively navigate paradigm shifts while maintaining their distinctiveness in an increasingly competitive education market (Hulme et al., 2016; Otara, 2015).

Research Questions

RQ1: Are there differences between student levels of perceptions of campus safety at a Christian higher education institution based on class standing?

RQ2: Are there differences between female and male student levels of perceptions of campus safety at a Christian higher education institution?

Definitions

1. *Campus safety* – Campus safety refers to efforts related to crime statistics, school safety policies and procedures, and timely notification as described in the Clery Act (DiMaria, 2012).
2. *Christian institution* – Institution of higher education which explicitly describes a commitment to advancing God’s kingdom and to the integration of faith and learning (Schreiner, 2018).

Summary

This chapter lays out the foundation for the importance of campus safety in higher education and the reasoning behind the current study. It is clear that campus safety is an important and timely topic, but it is also clear that research into this area is lacking. This sets the stage for further research. The following chapter will build on this foundation and present support for the historical and theoretical groundwork of this study. It will also present a review of relevant studies contributing to the current body of knowledge related to research into campus safety.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A sparse, yet growing body of literature regarding campus safety forms the foundation for this study. An increasing focus on campus safety has left institutions scurrying to get policies in place, while researchers have struggled to keep up with the demand for research-based campus safety policies. While the first obstacle is ensuring policies are research-based, the second obstacle is communicating those measures to stakeholders. The literature provides some insight into stakeholder perceptions of campus safety, though there is a lack of literature comparing student perceptions, particularly within a Christian institution. The review of the literature will provide an overview of the theoretical framework for understanding campus safety as well as a context for understanding the campus safety environment and stakeholder perceptions of the campus safety. A review of notable incidents also provides context for the current state of campus safety policy.

Theoretical Framework

While campus safety research is a relatively new venture developing over the last couple of decades, the theoretical foundations for such research are nothing new. Any discussion of campus safety is ultimately rooted in an understanding of some of the most basic human needs; safety and security. It is important to understand how these basic needs influence motivations, perceptions, and actions.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: A Theory of Human Motivation

Maslow's (1943, 1954) theory on motivation presents a hierarchy of needs which includes physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. Maslow argued that all social actions are best understood as a product of these

motivations (Abulof, 2017). These motivations inform all of human decision-making, regardless of whether such motivations are conscious or unconscious. The pyramid representing his hierarchy of needs has become ubiquitous, even among school-age children (Abulof, 2017). It should come as no surprise that Maslow's ideas on motivation have endured and continue to inform research in a variety of fields, including education. Despite the fact that some have questioned Maslow's theory, ongoing research continues to show support for many elements of Maslow's schema (Rasskazova, Ivanova, & Sheldon, 2016). It is therefore important to develop an understanding of each of Maslow's categories and what these motivational factors mean in the context of higher education.

Physiological needs include the most primal, basic human needs that are needed to survive. These may include shelter, oxygen, climate, food, water, clothing, sex, and sleep (Maslow, 1987). All humans have a natural drive to fulfill most or all of these needs, regardless of time, place, or cultural considerations. From the time a baby is born, he or she experiences hunger and other discomforts associated with unfulfilled physiological needs. This is not something that must be taught. By the time a student has reached a higher education institution, these needs have been met to the extent necessary to keep them alive. Many of these needs do not need to be met by a higher education institution as they will be fulfilled by other means in the course of the student's everyday activities. Many institutions, however, do provide for some physiological needs such as shelter in the form of residence halls or food and water in the form of dining options. Services such as housing meet basic needs that are predictable and universal (Zavei & Jusan, 2017). These services are seen as necessary among most institutions of any significant size.

The next motivational category Maslow (1954) describes includes safety and security needs. While physiological needs sustain life, safety needs protect life against death and injury. It can even be argued that safety needs may take priority over physiological needs and that safety and security deficits sometimes even contribute to illnesses of the mind and body. Satisfaction of safety and security need satisfaction may even mitigate such illnesses (Zheng et al., 2016). In a higher education setting this may include medical considerations, fire and weather precautions, accident prevention, and physical security measures to protect against harm caused by other humans. While these factors are important, some people remain oblivious to safety factors unless they or someone they know is affected by them. While people may neglect to list safety and security as being a hypothetically important need, the same people will recognize it as being important when there is an identifiable safety and security deficit, suggesting that this category remains important in any model describing human needs and motivations (Rasskazova et al., 2016). Often, a more conscious effort must be undertaken to address these needs than might be necessary to meet physiological needs. While parents may be conscious of some of these factors, many students used to dependence on having these needs fulfilled by their parents may have never been forced to consider them in their decision-making.

The third category of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy includes factors related to belongingness and love. A student's time attending a higher education institution provides, what for some might be, the first real opportunity for independence and seeking of one's place in the world. Support and sense of belonging have been shown to be important to students, and therefore should be important to institutions as well (Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley, 2014). Most institutions recognize this and may provide for these needs in the form of academics, friendships, sports, clubs, and various other extracurricular activities. Many students

will maintain their association with the institution and individuals from the institution for the rest of their lives. Institutions often attempt to differentiate themselves by showcasing the variety of opportunities for students to feel a sense of belonging. These touchpoints can be important for both recruiting and retaining students.

The fourth category of Maslow's (1954) original hierarchy consists of factors related to esteem needs. Esteem need factors include prestige and feelings of accomplishment. Most institutions are careful to develop a reputation that contributes to prestige. This contributes to marketability to students and marketability of graduates. Most students desire to be proud of their institution before, during, and after their time there. Students also seek the feelings of accomplishment that accompany milestones such as matriculation, academic achievement, sporting achievement, and graduation. Research continues to show the importance of self-esteem needs among college students (Wouters et al., 2014). Although individual self-esteem factors are beyond the control of institutions, by fostering a prestigious reputation and academic rigor, an institution can contribute to the motivational factors that a student experiences related to esteem.

The last original category described by Maslow (1954) consists of factors related to self-actualization. This higher-level category of motivation revolves around an individual's fulfillment of their potential. Any higher education that is student-centered, realizes the importance of this category. The institution should seek not to create an assembly-line of graduates, but to encourage and support each individual student in achieving one's potential in academics, employment, social activity, and life in general. This category can be more abstract and difficult to quantify than some of the lower-level needs contributing to motivation. Higher education institutions may seek to facilitate these needs by being intentional in building

relationships with students and ensuring that the institution is people-oriented, rather than process or product-oriented. The foundations for many factors related to self-actualization are family-related and may be beyond the control of institutions, though some limited factors may fall under their control (Poorsheikhali & Alavi, 2015).

The categories previously described compose Maslow's (1954) original five categories of needs related to motivation. While later works have expanded upon Maslow's original model, Maslow's five category model remains the most recognizable version. Other models have been proposed with differing category names or order, though the basic concepts remain consistent. Newer models are not entirely new, in that they often build on Maslow's basic ideas while integrating current knowledge from a variety of fields (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010). While the exact organization of motivation models is still debated, there is evidence that continues to support the idea of universal needs. Tay and Deiner (2011) undertook a study of need fulfillment and subjective well-being across 123 countries, finding that ordering of needs was fairly consistent, though there appeared to be cultural differences in how these needs were fulfilled.

Theoretically, Maslow's hierarchy should inform higher education institutions' priorities for the allocation of resources, the marketing of their institutional resources to potential students, and student priorities when selecting an institution. Based on this hierarchy of needs, safety and security needs are the most important category of motivating factors after the fulfillment of basic physiological needs such as food, water, clothing, and shelter (Taormina & Gao, 2013). It is important to understand that Maslow's hierarchy is not necessarily a linear progression that an individual considers before making decisions. Instead, multiple categories are often considered simultaneously and no single category necessarily requires complete fulfillment before

considering “lesser” needs. Regardless, there is evidence to suggest that uncertainty over the fulfillment of safety and security needs can override concerns regarding needs in other categories (O’Connor & Yballe, 2007). Realization of needs such as esteem, love, belongingness, and self-actualization needs may be hindered by lack of fulfillment of safety-related needs or the perceptions related to these needs.

While physiological needs have traditionally been addressed by institutions of higher education, safety and security needs have long taken a back seat to an emphasis on lesser needs such as belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Higher education institutions provide products in the form of academic programs that rely heavily on the fulfillment of the upper levels of Maslow’s hierarchy. Many assumptions are often made about the fulfillment of some of the more basic needs. There have long been standards for residence halls, dining commons, and other ancillary services designed to meet students’ physiological needs (Downs, Alderman, Schneiber, & Swerdlow, 2016; Payne-Sturges, Tjaden, Caldeira, Vincent, & Arria, 2018; Turk & González Canché, 2018). Regardless of an institution’s academic reputation and ability to meet higher level needs, no student would even consider such an institution if there was no place for the student to live or eat while attending. This has not always been the case with campus safety considerations, though the tide has been turning. The importance of campus safety was in many ways predicted by Maslow’s model long before it became such an important topic in higher education. Recent years have seen what might be characterized as a paradigm shift in institutional priorities, including the increased emphasis on safety and security on campus (Deisinger & Scalora, 2016; Fox & Savage, 2009). Research is in the early stages of evaluating campus safety policies and how these policies affect institutions and their stakeholders, including students.

College Choice: Three-Phase Model

In addition to the basic motivational factor model described by Maslow, it is also important to understand the decision-making process using a framework that is specific to the process of selecting an institution of higher education. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) proposed a model of college choice consisting of three phases: predisposition, search, and choice. Subsequently, some researchers have used a three-part model to examine college choice (Choy & Ottinger, 1998). This model, combined with Maslow's theory, helps us understand not just motivations, but also the process by which motivations are considered in the context of selecting a higher education institution.

The first phase, predisposition, consists of factors generally outside the control of decision-makers in higher education. It is assumed that certain background factors will have a significant impact in laying the foundation for a student's search for an institution (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Factors such as socioeconomic status are very significant influencers in determining whether an individual will attend college, and which institution that individual will attend. Other important factors include peer influence, proximity to an institution, and high school experiences (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Perhaps the most important predisposition factor related to the current study is the influence of parents. Research has shown that parental attitudes or affluence can play a significant role in a student's decision to attend an institution of higher education (Hamilton, Roksa, & Nielsen, 2018; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). It is important for institutions to understand parents' attitudes and how these attitudes can play a role in the decision-making process of selecting an institution. It is also important to understand how, over time, students may begin to develop their own perceptions after enrolling.

The second phase of the process of selecting an institution is the search phase (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). This phase begins to build upon the predisposition phase and it is during this phase that students begin to seek information about institutions. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) point out that the search phase includes not only students searching for institutions, but also includes institutions that are searching for students. It is during this phase that the institution begins to exert influence over the choice process by recruiting and making information available to potential students through various marketing strategies. Institutions cannot, however, control what students do with this information, which means that the search process is not always rational (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Institutions also have no control over potentially inaccurate information from unofficial sources students may consult during the search process. Social media and unofficial Internet information can contribute to misinformation which further complicates the process.

Even when a logical search process is employed, the information about institutions cannot always be guaranteed to be accurate (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). While institutional transparency has arguably improved, and the Internet has contributed to the accessibility of information, this has potentially contributed to a case of information overload in which it becomes even more difficult to rationally process information in some cases. While accurate information is more readily available than in past decades, it has potentially become more difficult to sort out the accurate information from the inaccurate as anyone with Internet access can now contribute to the aggregate information that is available about a particular institution. Even if accurate information is available, there is still an issue of students not having well-defined search parameters (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Technology simultaneously simplifies and complicates college search processes.

The final phase of the college choice model is the choice phase. In this phase, students utilize collected information to narrow their choice set (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). This set may consist of one to several institutions to which the student may wish to then apply. During this phase, the communication of information by institutions continues to be critical. The student has narrowed his or her choice, but may still be evaluating various types of information. Financial aid appears to be one of the most significant factors in this stage of the college choice process, though at this stage in the process, a student's ranking of college preferences has largely already been determined (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). As a student has not yet made the final selection, it is critical that institutions do not neglect communication during this stage of the process.

For the purposes of the current study, the college choice model is important for understanding how students seek information and make decisions regarding institutions of higher education. The three-phase model allows policymakers to understand how students obtain and use information in the decision-making process. This may inform the ways in which campus safety information is communicated to students and potential students. It is important not only to ensure that information is being communicated, but that it is being communicated effectively in a manner that is meaningful to the intended recipients and consumers of that information. The communication of safety information should be ongoing after the enrollment process and must continue throughout the students' college career.

Institutions should be aware that students may not know what information they should be seeking when selecting an institution (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Students may not be aware of the importance of campus safety information, how to obtain accurate campus safety information, and how to process campus safety information within the context of a search for an

institution of higher education. Although campus safety information appears to be utilized most likely during the search phase, institutions should ensure that such information is effectively communicated to students long before and long after a college choice has been made. This current study will serve to inform researchers as to how well campus safety factors have been communicated to undergraduate students by assessing their perceptions of these factors.

Related Literature

The review of related literature seeks to build upon the theoretical foundations of the importance of motivations and college choice. The literature provides a background for understanding the current environment in higher education and the trends related to campus safety. The past few decades have seen many developments which shape the environment and inform the direction of campus safety policy. Competitive forces, regulations, and high-profile violent incidents have created an environment in which campus safety can no longer be ignored by policymakers and other stakeholders. These factors must be examined to lay the foundation for the current study.

Competitive Forces in Higher Education

The nature of competition in higher education has changed significantly in recent years. While many elements of higher education remained relatively unchanged for centuries, the evolution has arguably and exponentially accelerated as a variety of forces have begun to exert influence on the higher education environment. The competitive nature of modern education is much different than the one that existed in previous generations. For much of their existence, institutions have remained in a relatively uncompetitive higher education industry. While students may have been in competition with other students to achieve acceptance to certain

institutions, the institutions themselves did not become highly competitive until recent years (Otara, 2015).

A variety of factors contribute to the increasingly competitive higher education market. As technological forces extend the reach of institutions beyond their historical recruiting grounds, institutions must harness those forces if they wish to survive. Factors such as the availability of financial aid and rising costs have also played a significant role in competition in higher education (Otara, 2015). Ultimately, education is one of the many industries that has both benefitted and suffered as a result of globalization. Institutions that can adapt to this dynamic, macro environment will survive, while institutions that continue to think on a local and regional level will find themselves faced with a shrinking pool of applicants. Institutions of all sizes are finding themselves in competition for students on a global scale (Bagley & Portnoi, 2014; Marginson, 2006).

Regulatory Environment

In addition to market demands, the higher education institutions are increasingly finding themselves subject to regulations for a variety of reasons. Some regulations are a result of an institution's association with an accrediting body. Other regulations may come from state and federal governments which provide guidelines for the operation of institutions of higher education. Even private institutions are increasingly falling under regulatory requirements as more institutions become dependent on government aid which subjects them to additional oversight. Not all institutions have been proactive in addressing safety issues, which reinforces the rationale behind regulations related to campus safety. While regulations do not spell out specific policies and procedures for individual institutions, they do lay out a framework to ensure that institutions are compliant and proactive regarding campus safety issues. Two of the most

significant federal laws related to campus safety in higher education are the Clery Act and Title IX (Griffin, 2015). These pieces of legislation provide significant guidance for higher education policymakers and, in turn, may have an effect on stakeholder perceptions of campus safety at a given institution.

Clery Act. The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, more commonly referred to as the Clery Act, regulates the dissemination of certain campus safety information by institutions participating in federal financial aid programs. The Clery Act, which was passed in 1990, requires institutions to report crime statistics, provide timely notifications of safety and security threats, and make annual reports available to stakeholders (Whissemore, 2016). The Clery Act was inspired by an incident at Lehigh University in 1986. Jeanne Clery, a 19-year-old student, was raped and murdered in her residence hall on the Lehigh University campus (Allen & Lengfellner, 2016). Jeanne's parents were surprised at the lack of information that was available to students regarding crime and safety on campus. In response to their concerns, the Clerys founded The Clery Center for Security on Campus in 1987 and lobbied for the eventual passage of the Clery Act (Allen & Lengfellner, 2016).

Since the original passage of the Clery Act, several amendments have introduced additional requirements and penalties. Some of the major requirements of the Clery Act include: publication of annual crime and fire reports, public crime and fire logs, disclosure of certain crime statistics, timely warnings and emergency notifications, and development of missing student policies and procedures (Clery Center, 2018). Both intentional misrepresentations and mistakes in mandated reporting can be extremely costly. Violations of the Clery Act can subject institutions to fines of over \$54,000, which nearly double the cost of earlier fine amounts

(Guffey, 2013; Hanson & Irwin, 2017; Winn, 2017). The increase in fines are intended to maintain a deterrent effect for institutions that may otherwise be tempted to brush these concerns aside (Winn, 2017). This gives institutions incentive to ensure that accurate and timely information is provided to students, prospective students, and other interested parties such as parents.

Theoretically, the information provided by institutions, as required by the Clery Act, would be utilized by prospective students when selecting an institution of higher education. According to Maslow's hierarchy, this safety and security information should be among some of the most important information sought during the process of selecting an institution. The extent to which this information actually influences these decisions is not clear. There may also be a question of how useful this information is for practical purposes of decision-making at the micro-level by individual prospective students. Even with such guidelines in place, many instances of violence remain unreported by institutions because they are never brought to the attention of authorities. Just because the federal government provides definitions does not mean that students have an understanding of those definitions or how they relate to their everyday lives and interactions (Mayhew, Caldwell & Goldman, 2011). An individual's perceptions of campus safety factors are likely shaped by a wide variety of internal and external factors (Mayhew et al., 2011; Wilcox, Jordan & Pritchard, 2007). Regardless, the Clery Act remains arguably the single most influential piece of legislation affecting campus safety decisions at an institutional level.

Title IX. Another important piece of federal legislation that has widespread policy implications for institutions of higher education is Title IX. Title IX has been discussed in the media and by political pundits, though the complete implications of Title IX are not always well understood, even among higher education professionals. Title IX seeks to ensure equal

opportunity for women in education programs benefitting from federal funding. In furtherance of this goal, Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex. Title IX addresses many aspects of discrimination and equal opportunity at a variety of education levels. For the purposes of this study, the primary areas of interest are the elements of Title IX which deal with the institutional response to sexual assaults.

One aspect of Title IX seeks to address the significant problem of sexual assault in higher education, which is estimated to affect as many as a quarter of female college students (Wies, 2015). While campus shootings may capture more headlines, these incidents are actually quite rare, especially when compared to incidents of sexual violence (Cantalupo, 2009). Title IX requires institutions to provide certain sexual assault prevention programs, reporting procedures, and adequate investigation processes. A major aspect of these requirements includes awareness, which requires communication of campus safety procedures to stakeholders. Similar to the Clery Act, these requirements should theoretically provide stakeholders with access to the safety and security information they may need in making decisions using Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Many of the components of the Clery Act and Title IX are useless if there is no awareness among stakeholders. This study will examine whether students are aware of some of these key pieces of information related to campus safety and whether these perceptions vary based on class standing or gender.

Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act. Another important piece of legislation for institutions is the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act. Women attending a higher education institution are often at increased risk of sexual assault compared to women who do not attend an institution of higher education (Boucek, 2016). This is true even when students are at reduced risk for victimization of other crime categories when compared to the general population

(Carr, 2005). For this reason, it is necessary for institutions to proactively address issues related to sexual assault rather than ignoring them or covering them up, as some institutions have been criticized for doing (Schroeder, 2014).

The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act was passed in 2013 as an amendment to the Clery Act (Boucek, 2016). The Campus Sexual Violent Elimination Act builds on both the Clery Act and Title IX requirements in order to provide even greater protections for students in higher education. More specifically, this act requires institutions to create plans to prevent sexual violence, educate victims regarding their rights and available resources, and develop detailed accounting of processes involved in the reporting and investigation of a sexual assault allegation (Schroeder, 2014). Unfortunately, just like with previous legislation, compliance is sometimes lacking as many institutions fail to comply with regulations related to preventing and reporting crimes (Griffin, Pelletier, Griffin & Sloan, 2017). Additional protections are useless if unscrupulous administrators do not have students' best interests in mind or if adequate consideration is not given to implementation and compliance.

Tort Liability. For institutions of higher education, the consequences of safety incidents can extend far beyond the immediate aftermath of the event. Institutions may find themselves subject to lawsuits for negligence in a variety of categories including, but not limited to, sexual assault, violence, hazing, incident reporting and investigation, and policies and procedures (Hartmann, 2015; Simmons, 2014). In some, but not all, instances of accidental or intentional harm, it may be found that an institution has a special duty to protect students and breach of that duty may be considered negligent (Simmons, 2014). Although previously discussed legislation, such as the Clery Act, Title IX, and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, provides

standards for many campus safety issues, these laws are far from comprehensive. Legislation can never address every issue that may arise.

The legal intricacies of tort liability are beyond the scope of this discussion, but it is important to note its influence on the legal environment in which institutions operate. Even when negligence is not proven and lawsuits are unsuccessful, it can still bring negative publicity that harms the institutional reputation and drains resources. This is yet another reason why institutions must proactively address safety issues on campus and develop comprehensive policies and procedures. Institutional officials must have a working understanding of any potential duty to students to provide a safe environment and an understanding of negligence and tort liability.

Balancing rights and safety. Higher education campuses are no strangers to constitutional and other legal challenges. The nature of court cases, the political environment, and current events mean that responses to challenging situations may have to evolve as priorities and guidelines change. While private institutions may have more leeway in responding to certain issues than public institutions, all institutions must straddle lines of acceptable responses to potential safety and security issues. Even private institutions must operate within a framework of certain legal protections that are afforded to all citizens. Institutions must be proactive, rather than reactive, in developing responses to protests and other potential safety issues that bear constitutional and other legal implications.

First Amendment. While the subject of protests may evolve over time, the challenges that these incidents present remain. The modern era of protests is reminiscent of the Civil Rights and Vietnam era, which saw many protests that were sometimes violent. Officials then, just as now, were often criticized for their heavy-handed responses to protests. Many campus safety

concerns are related to the First Amendment and what type of speech is acceptable on campuses. Disruptions are not always black and white safety issues that can be addressed with force or threat of force. Officials must walk a fine line between protecting physical safety and protecting the rights of constituents. Not only do officials target protesters, but controversial speakers are often sometimes subject to restrictions or revocation of invitations to visit college campus. The way in which disruptive behaviors are addressed may affect perceptions of campus safety. Officials may be perceived as either not doing enough, or of going too far. Outside observers will not always have complete information regarding individual incidents or relevant processes and their perceptions may be shaped by either ignorance or misunderstanding.

While protests and controversial speakers may receive the most attention in the media, another issue may be distinguishing protected speech from threatening and intimidating behavior (Matthew, Kajs, & Matthew, 2017; Schroeder, 2013). Disruptive classroom behavior and disrupted behaviors directed to faculty and staff in institutional or public settings are often distinguished legally from speech made to third parties in private settings, which is more likely to be protected. It must be determined whether behaviors are threatening, harassing, or are violations of the code of conduct or professional standards in order to be actionable through administrative or criminal processes (Matthew et al., 2017). While overreach should be avoided, disruptive behaviors should not simply be ignored as they may represent immediate operational and safety issues, or they may be precursors to increasingly dangerous behaviors in the future.

Fourteenth Amendment. In addition to First Amendment considerations, there are also due process concerns related to the Fourteenth Amendment, which can be extremely complex (Nisenson, 2016). Due process requirements differ between criminal and administrative processes, though due process is essential to both. Competing law enforcement interests and

internal discipline processes sometimes blur lines and create confusion. Safety concerns, unclear Title IX guidance, or failure to properly abide by policy and procedure may lead to rushes to judgment and violations of due process. While criminal trials require a standard of *beyond a reasonable doubt*, administrative processes typically utilize less rigorous standards similar to that used in civil law such as *preponderance of evidence*. Higher education administrators must adhere to established policies and procedures and ensure that sanctions are rationally based rather than arbitrary (Matthew et al., 2017). The complexities of constitutional and due process requirements are not easily understood by the public, which may affect perceptions of campus safety.

Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act. In some cases, student discipline issues related to threats and disruptions have resulted in claims against institutions for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act (Matthew et al., 2017). Federal law requires higher education institutions to make reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities in order to ensure reasonable access to education. In some cases, students utilizing disability accommodations may become subject to discipline and, in turn, make claims of discrimination related to disability. Institutions must be prepared to explain how disciplinary actions are not the result of a disability but are instead reasonable and nondiscriminatory actions (Matthew et al., 2017). The ways in which concerns related to disabilities are approached could also affect perceptions of campus safety.

Notable Incidents

While changes in institutional behaviors are often motivated by competitive forces and the regulatory environment, changes in stakeholder behavior may be inspired by other factors. The average student may not be aware of legal requirements or market forces, but it is likely that

they are aware of incidents of violence or other victimization through high-profile media stories. The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported 160 active shooter incidents between 2000 and 2013 (Vieselmeier, Holguin & Mezulis, 2017). While these incidents are almost certainly more heavily publicized in recent years, there is controversy over whether school shootings are increasing (Peterson, Sackrison & Polland, 2015). Varying definitions and data collection parameters can provide different statistics on this topic. Regardless, major campus safety incidents can have widespread effects at all levels, including the individual-level, institutional-level, or even broader industry-level. Despite the debate over whether or not there has been an increase in school shooting incidents overall, fatalities and serious injuries, as a result of violence on campus, remain relatively rare when compared with statistics for the general population (Allen & Lengfellner, 2016). Statistical reality does not, however, override the widespread fear and panic that can result from these rare incidents when they do occur. Among the more high-profile incidents related to campus safety are the Penn State scandal and the Virginia Tech shootings, though several other incidents have shaped campus safety policies and procedures as well (Crawford & Burns, 2015).

University of Texas. Long before campus safety was at the forefront of higher education policy discussions, a lone gunman shattered the silence of the University of Texas campus in Austin. In 1966, a young man named Charles Whitman shot his wife and mother before making his way to the top of the university tower and shooting victims below (Stearns, 2008). The shooting only stopped after police officers and citizens killed the gunman. By the time the incident had ended, 17 people had been killed. While the Texas tower sniper incident left an indelible mark in the minds of many Americans, it did not significantly alter the campus safety policy landscape. While investigations were conducted into the incident, it was largely viewed

as an isolated incident rather than an ongoing problem. While campus safety did see improvements over the next four decades, these changes were slow and incremental rather than a paradigm shift. The University of Texas shooting would be the largest shooting incident on a university campus until 2007 (Stearns, 2008).

September 11, 2001. While the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, did not target higher education institutions, this incident was a pivotal event in public safety and security in the United States. This event resonated in the lives and memories of many citizens, even if they were not remotely involved in the incident (Whitmer, Torres & Sims, 2015). September 11th shaped an entire generation and opened their eyes to a reality that was previously foreign to them (Cameron & Pagnattaro, 2017). In response to the attacks, government entities (public and private organizations) and individuals defaulted to an elevated level of caution in everyday operations. For many, fears have not subsided and the demand for safety and security resources has only increased. Safety and security policies and procedures, physical security features, notification systems, and many other safety protocols have become ubiquitous in higher education as well as almost every other industry in the United States. Campus safety officials cannot rely on reactive safety and security operations, and must instead be proactive (Williams, LePere-Schloop, Silk & Hebdon, 2016). While most officials have long understood this, September 11, 2001, only reinforced this and caused a redoubling of proactive safety and security efforts.

Virginia Tech. In 2007, 32 people were killed and many others were injured in a mass shooting carried out on the Virginia Tech campus. This incident helped shine a light on systematic failures in campus safety procedures. In the aftermath of the shooting, every aspect of the incident was investigated including physical security measures, emergency notification

procedures, interdepartmental communications, active shooter response, and a variety of other issues (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). No single factor was identified as being the point of failure, though communication issues were a common theme throughout all of the interrelated factors.

Though this was far from the first incident of violence on campus, the high number of casualties and the random nature of the incident caused members of the public across the country to begin to ask questions regarding issues they had previously never considered. Partly as a result of this incident, campus safety policies and procedures began to receive greater levels of awareness never previously seen in the United States (Giggie, 2015). Virginia Tech served as a seminal event in campus safety history and has served as an example for many institutions and policymakers (McEntire, 2015; Seo, Torabi, Sa & Blair, 2012). It was a catalyst for policy discussions and operational changes across the country. For many, it began to become clear that campus safety should be a consideration, not just for high-level administrators, but for all stakeholders at all levels. Students were less likely to make assumptions regarding the safety of an institution of higher education when going through selection, admission, and enrollment processes.

Northern Illinois University. Just a few months after the Virginia Tech shooting, another major shooting incident occurred at a higher education institution. In February of 2008, 21 people were shot, and five were killed, at Northern Illinois University by a former student (Nykodym, Patrick & Mendoza, 2011). The event ended only after the suspect committed suicide. Interestingly, Northern Illinois University responded to the incident with new security protocols implemented in the months following the Virginia Tech incident (Johnson, 2008). These protocols included emergency notification and class cancelation procedures recognized as

being necessary after the failures at Virginia Tech. Despite these advancements, constituents believed that further improvements were necessary (Johnson, 2008). Unfortunately, this and many of the other smaller-scale shooting events were largely forgotten in the shadow of Virginia Tech and other large-scale incidents.

Oikos University. The year 2012 saw another major shooting on a university campus, this time at a religiously affiliated institution. In this incident, a former student returned to Oikos University, a small Christian institution in Oakland, California, that he had previously attended and he began shooting students and staff (Wollan & Onishi, 2012). Seven people were killed and three more were injured during the shooting incident. The suspect fled the scene initially but turned himself in a few hours later (Wollan & Onishi, 2012). This incident showed the size of the institution did not matter and that even religious institutions are not immune to campus safety issues. Even Christian campuses cannot presume that they operate within a protective bubble and must take proactive steps to protect constituents.

Umpqua Community College. In 2015, a student at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, opened fire on fellow students, faculty, and staff at the institution (Kraemer, 2017). The shooter killed nine people during the shootings. The incident ended after the shooter engaged in a firefight with law enforcement before committing suicide (Kraemer, 2017). While the number of victims did not rise to the level of Virginia Tech, some were quick to note that the effects of these incidents extend far beyond the direct victims. According to an administrator from the school, violent incidents such as the Umpqua Community College shooting completely change the way a college does business from that point forward (Wilson, 2016). Victim count is ultimately irrelevant as every stakeholder is affected in some way or another. The combined

knowledge from these incidents contributed towards a collective understanding of the nature of these violent incidents and proper preparedness and response to them.

Penn State. Shootings are far from the only campus safety concern. The Penn State scandal is not a single incident but instead refers to a series of instances of child sexual abuse perpetrated by a staff member over several years. The victims in this case were further victimized by the culture of silence that allowed other institutional personnel to ignore the criminal activity that was occurring. Not only are campus safety procedures necessary to protect against external threats, but they may also be necessary to protect from internal threats. The scandal had repercussions throughout Penn State and throughout higher education. This scandal served as an example of what might occur if there was a breakdown in campus safety procedures (Britt & Timmerman, 2013). It also served as a reminder of the importance of consistency and proper oversight in the development, implementation, and communication of campus safety procedures. It also demonstrated that institutional interests may sometimes take priority over students' interests related to safety.

A common issue in campus safety is the desire for administrators to save face for themselves and their institution. For a small number of higher education officials, public relations may be more important than actual, meaningful campus safety measures. Public relations concerns and unscrupulous administrators may lead to ignoring campus safety concerns rather than addressing them proactively. This may manifest in omissions and, in rarer cases, such as Penn State, it may result in criminal behavior and the outright cover-up of the scandal. The Penn State scandal proved to be costly in more ways than one. Penn State received the largest Clery Act fine of \$2.4 million in addition to athletic sanctions and losses due to negative

public relations (Winn, 2017). This case highlights not any single point of failure, but a systematic breakdown in the handling of campus safety issues.

Michigan State University. A still-developing story reminiscent of Penn State is that of Larry Nassar and the USA Gymnastics sexual abuse scandal. In 2018, Nassar was sentenced to decades in prison after being convicted of sexually abusing young athletes under his care over a period of several years (Pearce, 2018). Nassar was the team doctor for USA Gymnastics in addition to teaching and clinical duties at Michigan State University. With Nassar's sentencing, the scandal is far from over as other individuals and organizations stand accused of facilitating Nassar's abuse. Michigan State University is currently under fire for failing to properly act on accusations and red flags dating back into the 1990s (Pearce, 2018). While the full fallout from the scandal has yet to be seen, Michigan State University President Lou Anna Simon has already been forced to resign and calls continue to come for an investigation into the role of the university in the scandal. Time will tell whether the fallout from this case will compare to the Penn State case, though it appears as if the case is far from over.

Campus Safety in Christian Higher Education

Christian institutions of higher education face most of the same issues as secular institutions and campus safety is no exception. Christian institutions have faced these challenges while also dealing with the need to maintain the Christian distinctions that make them unique (Hulme et al., 2016). Whereas secular institutions are subject to the environmental concerns already mentioned, Christian institutions operate in a similar environment while also answering to a higher authority. Faith-based institutions are accountable on two domains: higher education and the church (Hulme et al., 2016). In some cases, this results in competing commitments that create complex issues for institutions. Christian institutions must be able to adapt to dynamic

environmental changes while ensuring a sustainable, Christian higher education setting. In some areas, this requires a new way of thinking to address serious issues such as campus safety that may have previously been taken for granted among many Christian institutions.

Bubble mentality. Some research refers to a looming higher education bubble similar to that of the housing and tech bubbles of recent years. Christian higher education institutions arguably also face a bubble. This bubble is not an economic industry bubble, but instead, a bubble created around the institution itself. Most individuals and most institutions are averse to change and Christian institutions are no exception. Changes to customs and traditions are often resisted in favor of maintaining the status quo (Hulme et al., 2016). There is a danger of Christian institutions neglecting campus safety measures in favor of maintaining an illusion of a protective Christian environment that has lasted for decades. Christian institutions, like any other institution, are often open to the public and will likely become even more open in years to come. Rather than being reactive in response to the environment, Christian administrators at higher education institutions would be well-served by respecting the sanctity of life by proactively addressing safety issues. Taking a strong stance regarding safety can arguably serve to strengthen the Christian higher education distinctives rather than compete with them. Christian institutions can embrace challenges such as safety concerns and turn them into opportunities to demonstrate hope and stability (Hulme et al., 2016).

Christian views on safety issues may vary from secular views, and views can even vary significantly among Christian-based institutions on denomination or other factors (Giovannelli & Jackson, 2013). Training and prevention program needs for Christian institutions may vary from those used among secular institutions. Some Christian institutions may avoid sexual harassment and assault prevention programs that refer to same-sex relationships. Institutions may have strict

student codes of conduct that would inherently limit the type of prevention programs offered to students. If, for example, students are prohibited from drinking, it might be difficult for the same institution to officially sanction a program that encourages students to drink in moderation or use a designated driver. If students are prohibited by code from engaging in premarital sexual activity, it may be difficult for the institution to simultaneously endorse sexual assault prevention programs that encourage students to seek consent. Strict codes of conduct may also make it more difficult for students to have the courage to seek help for substance abuse issues or sexual assault for fear of punishment or shame, even if the institution encourages them to seek help and provides avenues for doing so. In one study it was found that perceptions of sexual and other forms of interpersonal violence varied based on Christian denomination (Giovannelli & Jackson, 2013). More conservative denominations were likely to have more conservative views regarding gender roles and patriarchal societal structures. These can contribute to perceptions such as belief of rape myths and victim-blaming (Giovannelli & Jackson, 2013). Higher education officials cannot ignore these factors when developing campus safety policies and procedures for Christian institutions.

Perceptions of Campus Safety

A variety of competitive forces, regulatory requirements, and notable incidents have contributed to the need for disclosure of campus safety information and the need for stakeholders to seek such information. Maslow (1954) predicted this need for safety information in his hierarchy of needs, though it is likely that a significant amount of this information was taken for granted in previous decades. Even after the University of Texas shooting, campus safety was largely taken for granted or even completely ignored for many years. In today's rapidly changing education environment, greater awareness of campus safety issues has meant that

stakeholders are likely coming to realize that these issues can no longer be taken for granted. There is some research regarding stakeholder awareness of campus safety, though there are still many questions that remain unanswered (Janosik, 2001a; Patton & Gregory, 2014; Schafer, Lee, Burruss, & Giblin, 2018). One of the primary challenges is the fact that defining and quantifying perceptions can be very difficult for researchers (Hites, et al., 2013).

Much of the existing research regarding stakeholder awareness and perceptions of campus safety comes from the research of Janosik (2001b). This study and subsequent studies have examined various stakeholders including students, parents, and various categories of faculty and staff. The results of these studies are mixed with varying levels of awareness demonstrated by the stakeholders (Janosik, 2001b; Janosik, 2004; Janosik & Gehring, 2003; Janosik & Gregory, 2009; Janosik & Plummer, 2005). While there is minimal research into demographics and campus safety perceptions, there is some research regarding perceptions of crime in general. A variety of factors may play a role in perceptions of crime, including “victimization, perceived capacity, fear of crime, perceived risk, and associated demographic variables” (Schafer et al., 2018, p. 321). In many studies, for example, females tend to express a greater fear of crime than males (Kyle et al., 2017). Age can also influence perceptions as older individuals are generally more likely to express fear of crime. Studies have also shown that these fears are not necessarily correlated with risk of victimization (Kyle et al., 2017). Age differences may play a role in comparisons of different categories of stakeholders, such as in the current study’s comparison of students based on class rankings.

Previous studies of stakeholder perceptions have taken place primarily within the context of secular institutions. The majority of these studies also occurred prior to the emergence of Generation Z as higher education consumers. Despite the existence of a few studies examining

stakeholder perceptions at secular institutions, there remains a need to examine the perceptions of undergraduate students at Christian institutions of higher education and whether there are differences in levels of perceptions between these groups. Students are likely to have different expectations of campus safety in a Christian higher education environment meaning previous studies are not necessarily applicable to a Christian higher education institution. It is possible that stakeholders have different assumptions about the environment on a Christian campus, either due to the nature of the institution itself or due to the stakeholder framing issues of campus safety from a Christian worldview. This is an important perspective considering that approximately 1,000 religiously affiliated institutions service nearly two million students in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Generational differences. A new generation of students is entering higher education. A still loosely defined generation known as Generation Z is beginning to replace the millennial generation as the majority of students (Shatto & Erwin, 2016; Shatto & Erwin, 2017). This generation is roughly defined as being born during the mid-1990s through the mid- to late-2000s (Lanier, 2017). The definitions, however, are still being worked out. Generation Z is known as the first true generation of digital natives, meaning that they do not know of a time before the Internet, social media, and constant access to technology (Lanier, 2017). These characteristics are likely to have an effect on how students want to learn and how institutions will cater to these students. These characteristics may also have an effect on higher education offerings outside of the classroom experience.

Generation Z is theorized to have different characteristics and priorities than millennials when it comes to pursuing careers and higher education. While millennials are old enough to remember being impacted by September 11, 2001, and the economic crashes of the 2000s,

Generation Z has grown up with this reality and they have a different understanding of risk than the previous generations (Cameron & Pagnattaro, 2017). Generation Z tends to be less fearful, unafraid to lead, willing to solve problems, entrepreneurial, and it demonstrates a strong work ethic (Bencsik, Juhász & Horváth-Csikós, 2016; Rickes, 2016). This generation is more likely than previous generations to utilize the Internet for searches of information related to selecting an institution of higher education (Zorn, 2017). It is possible that generational differences may play a role in perceptions and awareness levels of campus safety. Most likely, differences between generational traits will significantly influence changes among higher education institutions (Rickes, 2016). While generational characteristic differences are still being researched, the effects of these differences are even less understood, and could potentially affect how students seek information related to higher education and how they interpret and utilize that information to shape their perceptions. Although safety and security are innate human needs, the evolution of the nature and concerns related to campus safety likely plays a role in how safety is perceived. These views may change with the aging of an individual, or there may be a difference between collective views of different generational groups.

Class Standing and gender differences. Early research showed some evidence that class standing and gender did influence safety values, even if those values did not translate to behaviors (Crowe, 1995). Later research suggested that class standing might not be as important of a factor as age (Blair, Seo, Torabi, & Kaldahl, 2004). Support for differences based on gender appear to have more support. There is evidence that gender does play a role in perceptions of safety (Blair et al., 2004; Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Starkweather, 2007). Females may have greater awareness for certain safety issues due to factors such as gender role socialization or greater fear of sexual assault (Ferraro, 1995, 1996; Starkweather, 2007). Not only might female students be

more aware of safety issues, but this awareness is also more likely to affect their decision-making (Blair et al., 2004). While some research has examined these factors in secular institutions, less research exists in a Christian institutional setting.

Summary

The topic of campus safety is timely and is becoming an ever more visible factor in the higher education experience. Various factors within the higher education environment have required institutions to take steps to develop and proactively communicate information related to campus safety. While policymakers in both government and higher education have taken steps to increase campus safety, it is unknown whether those increases translate to an increased awareness of campus safety among certain stakeholders, particularly students. Based on Maslow's (1954) theory of motivation, safety and security factors should be significant influences on the three-phase, decision-making process of selecting an institution. This information would theoretically be communicated throughout the three-phase model of college choice, though it would primarily be actively sought and processed by students during the search phase. By the time freshmen students enroll in an institution, they would theoretically have an awareness of issues related to campus safety as long as pertinent information is effectively communicated by the institution and made available for consumption by stakeholders.

The current study seeks to understand whether undergraduate students begin their higher education experience at a Christian institution with an awareness of various campus safety factors and whether those perceptions change during their time at the institution. Theory would suggest that safety concerns are a very important part of the decision-making process, though research has demonstrated somewhat mixed results to date. Not only does the study seek to determine if students are aware of campus safety factors, but whether there are differences in

their perceptions of these factors, over time, based on class standing and gender. This study seeks to build on this information by addressing a lack of current research regarding perceptions of campus safety in Christian higher education institutions. It is possible that differences exist between generations or that a Christian institutional setting may even affect perceptions. As a more complete understanding is developed of student perceptions of campus safety, policymakers can begin to develop a better understanding of what information is important to constituents and how such information can be effectively communicated in a manner that is appropriate for the current generation of students.

The review of the literature has shown that higher education has experienced a major shift in campus safety priorities in the past two to three decades. This shift has been accelerated by a variety of factors including competition, regulations, and violent events. With safety and security being an important human motivation, it seems to make sense that it would be an important factor in higher education, and these environmental factors have only highlighted its importance. This review shows that information regarding stakeholder perceptions of campus safety is still limited. While the literature review has laid a foundation for the current study, the following chapter will discuss how the current study will be designed and implemented in an attempt to answer some of the questions that arise from the literature review.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This study is based on similar previous studies of campus safety perceptions. It will discuss the design, research questions, hypothesis, participants and setting, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis that will be used in this study. The methods described in this chapter will be used to contribute to existing research. The research design described in this chapter is supported by methods used in previous studies of campus safety perceptions, with the majority of supporting research in this specific area rooted in the research of Janosik (2001).

Design

This study will utilize a quantitative, ex post facto, non-experimental, causal-comparative design. This design was selected because of the naturally occurring variations in campus safety perceptions in students. Causal-comparative designs are used to observe naturally occurring variations between two or more groups to determine whether these groups vary on a dependent variable (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). No variables will be manipulated in this study, only observed. This design will allow for evaluation of possible cause and effect based on personal characteristics of respondents which, in this case, will be group status based on class standing (Gall et al., 2007). Additional analysis will examine differences between male and female groupings of respondents.

A causal-comparative design has been used in previous studies observing campus safety perceptions between and among various stakeholder groups in higher education (Janosik, 2001b; Janosik, 2004; Janosik & Gehring, 2003; Janosik & Gregory, 2009; Janosik & Plummer, 2005; Schafer et al., 2018). These studies used categorical data to evaluate cause and effect relationships between personal characteristics of respondents and their perceptions of campus

safety. The personal characteristic of interest in this study will be perceptions of campus safety. Although previous studies have examined stakeholder perceptions of campus safety, there is little in the literature regarding stakeholder perceptions of campus safety in the Christian higher education setting.

Research Question(s)

RQ1: Are there differences between student levels of perceptions of campus safety at a Christian higher education institution based on class standing?

RQ2: Are there differences between female and male student levels of perceptions of campus safety at a Christian higher education institution?

Hypotheses

H₀1: There are no significant differences in campus safety perceptions of students at a Christian higher education institution based on class standing as shown by the adapted Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale (PCSSS).

H₀2: There are no significant differences in campus safety perceptions between male and female students at a Christian higher education institution as shown by the adapted Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale (PCSSS).

Participants and Setting

The participants for this study were drawn as a convenience sample of traditional, on-campus, degree-seeking undergraduate students at a Christian university during the fall semester of the 2019-2020 school year. The university is located in a suburban area in the upstate of South Carolina. The university is a smaller institution with fewer than 2,000 total students. The student body is 72.25% Caucasian/White, 15.2% African American/Black, 5.86% Hispanic, and 1.12% unknown. The instrument was sent to all traditional, on-campus, degree-seeking

undergraduate students enrolled during the fall semester of the 2019-2020 school year, which included 717 students. The surveys were not sent to graduate students, online students, students who were non-degree seeking, or students enrolled in otherwise non-traditional programs. Responses were received from 73 students for a 10% response rate. Out of 73 respondents, 71 completed the entire survey, for a 97% completion rate, which is still a 10% response rate of the total identified population. This exceeds the minimum required sample size. According to Cohen (1988), 60 participants are the required minimum for a large effect size with the statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level.

The participants consisted of 21 males and 50 females. The class standing of participants consisted of 20 freshman, 15 sophomores, 16 juniors, and 20 seniors. The respondent demographics consisted of 5 African Americans, 0 Asian Pacific Islanders, 65 Caucasian, 1 Hispanic/Latino, 0 Native Americans, and 0 other ethnicities. Respondents identified their hometowns as rural (32), suburban (29), or urban (10).

Table 1*Group Participants by Gender*

Group	Male	Female	Total	%
Freshman	06	14	20	28
Sophomore	04	11	15	21
Junior	07	09	16	23
Senior	04	16	20	28
Totals (N= 71)	21	50	71	100

Table 2*Group Participants by Ethnicity*

Group	African American	Asian Pacific Islander	Caucasian	Hispanic/Latino	Native American	Other Ethnicity
Freshman	03	00	16	01	00	00
Sophomore	01	00	14	00	00	00
Junior	01	00	15	00	00	00
Senior	00	00	20	00	00	00
Totals (N=71)	05	00	65	01	00	00

Instrumentation

The instrument in this study is adapted from the Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale (PCSSS) developed by Zuckerman (2010). The instrument was originally developed to be administered to students to gauge perceptions of campus safety at higher education institutions while also examining community involvement factors. The items included on the PCSSS were reviewed by college administrators for content validity and clarity (Zuckerman, 2010). The PCSSS is reported as reliable, though the internal consistency reliability was to be measured and reported for the adapted version for this study. Permission was obtained for the use and minor adaptation of the PCSSS for this study.

The PCSSS is a questionnaire consisting of 35 questions, including 10 demographic questions and 25 outcome questions using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (Zuckerman, 2010). Responses include the following: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, and Strongly Agree = 4. For the current study, the PCSSS questions were pared down to 28 questions. Six demographic questions were eliminated that were not applicable to the current study. This version includes four questions intended to collect demographic data including gender, class standing, race/ethnicity, and hometown setting. One

question was added to the Role of Campus Policy section, and one question was added to the College Management of Safety section. A replacement question was substituted in the Appearance of Campus Environment section. Minor verbiage changes were made to some questions or sections to ensure clarity and applicability to the current study. All questions within the adapted instrument were reviewed by student life professionals and undergraduate students for readability and face validity. The reliability of the adapted instrument was found to have a Cronbach's alpha of .917, which is considered to be excellent reliability (George & Mallery, 2003).

Procedures

Before collecting data, permission was obtained to use the Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale (see Appendix A). With permission from the author, minor changes were made to the survey instrument to ensure question applicability to the current study. Approval was obtained from the institution in the study, and a research proposal was submitted and approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B).

All communications with participants were delivered to students via their official university email address. The Institutional Research at the study site provided a list of email addresses of students meeting the identified criteria. The instrument was then delivered to these email addresses via a Survey Monkey invitation. The invitation included informed consent (see Appendix C), which provided an explanation of the purpose of the study, and the voluntary, anonymous nature of the survey and any risks involved. An incentive was offered in the form of participants being entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift card to an Internet retailer by voluntarily providing an email address at the conclusion of the survey. After confirming receipt of this information and consenting to the study, respondents were to be presented with the instrument.

The instrument was set to record responses anonymously. After two weeks, a follow-up email was to be sent to non-respondents who had not opted-out of further communication. After four weeks, the instrument link expired and data was gathered for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data from the instrument was recorded in Excel and entered into IBM SPSS Statistics for analysis. Email addresses entered into the optional drawing were removed from the dataset before being exported for analysis. No identifying information, other than numbers, was recorded in Excel or SPSS. Demographic data was reported as descriptive statistics. Likert responses to each awareness question were reported in a table along with group membership based on class standing. An ANOVA was run in SPSS to compare students based on class standing on each item of safety perceptions and overall difference across the instrument. ANOVA was again run using gender as the independent variable. Assumptions for ANOVA testing are met including independence of cases, normal distribution, and homogeneity of variances (Warner, 2013). An ANOVA was previously used to analyze results obtained with the PCSSS instrument (Zuckerman, 2010). The ANOVA was appropriate for testing the hypothesis in this study because it demonstrates whether there is evidence of a relationship between group membership and campus safety perceptions as measured by responses to the instrument. Likert responses can be, and often are, analyzed using parametric tests such as ANOVA (Norman, 2010).

The ANOVA statistics and probability values were reported at a .05 alpha level of significance. The data was then interpreted to determine the significance of the findings. The null hypotheses were then evaluated at the .05 alpha level of significance based on the probability values.

Summary

This chapter described the research questions, participants, and setting for this causal-comparative study of student perceptions of campus safety. The study utilized a survey to obtain data from traditional, on-campus, degree-seeking, undergraduate students at a Christian university. Upon collection of data, analysis was performed to determine if there is evidence of differences between students based upon class standing or between males and females. The following chapter will describe the findings that resulted from the data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Data were collected using the procedures described in the previous chapter. Next, analysis was performed using the previously described analysis procedures. Upon collection and analysis, the data were then reported as descriptive statistics and the results of the analysis were interpreted. The descriptive statistics and interpreted results are reported in this chapter in light of the research questions and null hypotheses.

Research Question(s)

RQ1: Are there differences between student levels of perceptions of campus safety at a Christian higher education institution based on class standing?

RQ2: Are there differences between female and male student levels of perceptions of campus safety at a Christian higher education institution?

Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: There are no significant differences in campus safety perceptions of students at a Christian higher education institution based on class standing as shown by the adapted Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale (PCSSS).

H₀₂: There are no significant differences in campus safety perceptions between male and female students at a Christian higher education institution as shown by the adapted Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale (PCSSS).

Descriptive Statistics

The mean is reported on the 1-4 Likert scale, with 4 indicating strong agreement and 1 indicating strong disagreement. The higher the mean, the higher the level of agreement for each question. The two following tables show the means and standard deviations for all the total of all

instrument items. Table 3 shows mean and standard deviation by class standing and Table 4 shows mean and standard deviation by gender.

Table 3*PCSSS Total Mean and Standard Deviation by Class Standing*

Class Standing	Mean	SD
Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	92.55	12.339
Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	86.53	10.954
Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	85.25	9.983
Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	83.30	9.815
Total (<i>N</i> =71)	87.03	11.238

Table 4*PCSSS Total Mean and Standard Deviation by Gender*

Gender	Mean	SD
Male (n=21)	84.48	12.148
Female (n=50)	88.10	10.780
Total (N=71)	87.03	11.238

The following three tables provide further descriptive statistics. Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviation for each instrument item. Crosstab was applied to create contingency tables for each question showing frequency of responses for each item by class standing as shown in Table 6. Crosstab was applied to create contingency tables for each question showing frequency of responses for each item by gender as shown in Table 7.

Table 5*Mean and Standard Deviation by Question*

Question	Mean	SD
I feel safe and secure in my campus community.	3.521	.557
The residence halls are safe places.	3.549	.501
Given the security on my campus, I plan to complete my degree at the college.	3.620	.517
I am satisfied with my college experience	3.380	.594
I would recommend this college to a friend or relative	3.380	.663
I am a part of a campus community	3.254	.712
My college offers a family atmosphere	3.380	.684
I feel comfortable walking around the campus community at night without fear of being attacked or bothered by strangers.	3.366	.702
I feel comfortable approaching a peer in my community who is acting inappropriately.	2.747	.751
I am involved in the campus community through a club or organization.	2.747	.996
I am involved in the campus community through an athletic activity.	2.282	1.185
I am involved in community service opportunities through my college.	2.620	.834
The alcohol and drug policies on campus create a safe environment.	3.169	.828
The guest policy in the residence halls creates a safe environment.	3.113	.820
The policies in place at my college increase my safety on campus.	3.268	.736
I am aware of how to locate crime statistics and campus policies related to safety on campus.	2.873	.970

Table 5 (continued)

The college keeps me notified about any potential safety issues on campus.	3.423	.625
The college has taken the necessary steps to address my safety on campus.	3.324	.671
The college uses cameras and other technology effectively to secure the campus.	3.155	.768
The college provides the resources that I need to know how to respond to an emergency.	3.282	.659
The college staff does a good job of maintaining the facilities on campus.	3.423	.690
The campus is well-lit.	3.155	.690
The physical condition of the campus helps maintain a safe atmosphere.	3.451	.604
I know how to contact campus security officials with a safety concern.	3.366	.797
I would go to campus security officials with a safety concern.	3.324	.752
I have a good relationship with faculty/staff in general.	3.437	.603
I would go to a faculty/staff member with a safety concern.	3.423	.690

Table 6*Question Responses by Class Standing*

Question	Class Standing	Responses			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel safe and secure in my campus community.	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	7	13
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	1	5	9
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	0	7	9
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	1	11	8
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	2	30	39
The residence halls are safe places.	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	5	15
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	0	7	8
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	0	8	8
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	12	8
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	0	32	39
Given the security on my campus, I plan to complete my degree at the college.	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	8	12
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	1	2	12
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	0	6	10
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	9	11
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	1	25	45
I am satisfied with my college experience.	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	1	8	11
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	1	7	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	0	9	7
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	2	12	6
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	4	36	31

Table 6 (continued)

I would recommend this college to a friend or relative.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	1	9	10
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	0	5	10
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	3	5	8
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	3	11	6
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	7	30	34
I am a part of a campus community.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	9	11
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	1	0	8	6
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	1	3	10	2
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	2	10	8
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	2	5	37	27
My college offers a family atmosphere		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	7	13
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	1	0	7	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	1	10	5
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	4	7	9
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	1	5	31	34
I feel comfortable walking around the campus community at night without fear of being attacked or bothered by strangers.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	2	7	11
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	3	6	6
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	1	5	10
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	3	9	8
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	9	27	35

Table 6 (continued)

I feel comfortable approaching a peer in my community who is acting inappropriately.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	7	7	6
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	7	7	1
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	6	7	3
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	1	8	9	2
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	1	28	30	12
I am involved in the campus community through a club or organization.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	1	7	8	4
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	3	3	4	5
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	3	5	3	5
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	1	7	6	6
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	8	22	21	20
I am involved in the campus community through an athletic activity.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	3	8	1	8
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	8	4	0	3
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	6	5	2	3
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	6	7	2	5
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	23	24	5	19
I am involved in community service opportunities through my college.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	1	4	10	5
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	2	6	7	0
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	3	5	7	1
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	1	7	9	3
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	7	22	33	9

Table 6 (continued)

The alcohol and drug policies on campus create a safe environment.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	1	3	16
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	2	6	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	2	3	7	4
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	7	11	2
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	2	13	27	29
The guest policy in the residence halls creates a safe environment.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	3	6	11
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	0	8	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	3	3	6	4
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	5	12	3
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	3	11	32	25
The policies in place at my college increase my safety on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	1	6	13
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	0	8	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	2	1	9	4
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	4	11	5
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	2	6	34	29
I am aware of how to locate crime statistics and campus policies related to safety on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	3	1	6	10
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	2	2	7	4
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	2	3	5	6
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	11	7	2
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	7	17	25	22

Table 6 (continued)

The college keeps me notified about any potential safety issues on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	6	14
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	2	6	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	1	8	7
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	2	11	7
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	5	31	35
The college has taken the necessary steps to address my safety on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	8	12
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	3	6	6
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	2	8	6
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	1	0	13	6
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	1	5	35	30
The college uses cameras and other technology effectively to secure the campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	0	9	11
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	1	3	5	6
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	1	2	9	4
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	5	11	4
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	2	10	34	25
The college provides the resources that I need to know how to respond to an emergency.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	1	0	7	12
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	0	9	6
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	1	11	4
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	4	11	5
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	1	5	38	27

Table 6 (continued)

The college staff does a good job of maintaining the facilities on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	1	1	4	14
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	1	6	8
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	0	8	8
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	3	10	7
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	1	5	28	37
The campus is well-lit.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	2	10	8
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	5	6	4
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	1	8	7
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	4	12	4
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	12	36	23
The physical condition of the campus helps maintain a safe atmosphere.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	1	0	6	13
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	0	7	8
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	0	9	7
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	1	12	7
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	1	1	34	35
I know how to contact campus security officials with a safety concern.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	2	0	5	13
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	4	4	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	1	7	8
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	1	0	10	9
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	3	5	26	37

Table 6 (continued)

I would go to campus security officials with a safety concern.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	1	0	6	13
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	2	6	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	2	7	7
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	1	2	11	6
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	2	6	30	33
I have a good relationship with faculty/staff in general.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	2	7	11
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	0	10	5
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	1	6	9
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	0	1	9	10
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	0	4	32	35
I would go to a faculty/staff member with a safety concern.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Freshman (<i>n</i> =20)	0	2	6	12
	Sophomore (<i>n</i> =15)	0	1	7	7
	Junior (<i>n</i> =16)	0	1	6	9
	Senior (<i>n</i> =20)	1	1	9	9
	Total (<i>N</i> =71)	1	5	28	37

Table 7*Question Responses by Gender*

Question	Gender	Responses			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel safe and secure in my campus community.					
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	1	9	11
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	1	21	28
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	2	30	39
The residence halls are safe places.					
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	0	10	11
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	0	22	28
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	0	32	39
Given the security on my campus, I plan to complete my degree at the college.					
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	0	10	11
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	1	15	34
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	1	25	45
I am satisfied with my college experience.					
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	3	8	10
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	1	28	21
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	4	36	31
I would recommend this college to a friend or relative.					
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	3	10	8
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	4	20	26
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	7	30	34
I am a part of a campus community.					
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	1	10	9
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	4	27	18
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	2	5	37	27

Table 7 (continued)

My college offers a family atmosphere.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	2	5	13
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	3	26	21
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	1	5	31	34
I feel comfortable walking around the campus community at night without fear of being attacked or bothered by strangers.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	2	9	10
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	7	18	25
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	9	27	35
I feel comfortable approaching a peer in my community who is acting inappropriately.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	7	9	5
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	21	21	7
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	1	28	30	12
I am involved in the campus community through a club or organization.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	3	4	9	5
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	5	18	12	15
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	8	22	21	20
I am involved in the campus community through an athletic activity.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	8	5	4	4
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	15	19	1	15
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	23	24	5	19
I am involved in community service opportunities through my college.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	4	5	11	1
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	3	17	22	8
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	7	22	33	9

Table 7 (continued)

The alcohol and drug policies on campus create a safe environment.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	7	5	8
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	6	22	21
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	2	13	27	29
The guest policy in the residence halls creates a safe environment.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	2	6	9	4
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	5	23	21
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	3	11	32	25
The policies in place at my college increase my safety on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	3	10	7
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	3	24	22
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	2	6	34	29
I am aware of how to locate crime statistics and campus policies related to safety on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	4	3	8	6
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	3	14	17	16
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	7	17	25	22
The college keeps me notified about any potential safety issues on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	3	9	9
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	2	22	26
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	5	31	35
The college has taken the necessary steps to address my safety on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	2	10	8
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	3	25	22
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	1	5	35	30

Table 7 (continued)

The college uses cameras and other technology effectively to secure the campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	4	10	6
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	6	24	19
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	2	10	34	25
The college provides the resources that I need to know how to respond to an emergency.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	2	13	6
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	3	25	21
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	1	5	38	27
The college staff does a good job of maintaining the facilities on campus.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	3	6	11
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	2	22	26
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	1	5	28	37
The campus is well-lit.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	4	12	5
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	8	24	18
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	12	36	23
The physical condition of the campus helps maintain a safe atmosphere.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	0	10	10
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	1	24	25
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	1	1	34	35
I know how to contact campus security officials with a safety concern.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	2	2	9	8
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	3	17	29
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	3	5	26	37

Table 7 (continued)

I would go to campus security officials with a safety concern.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	2	9	9
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	1	4	21	24
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	2	6	30	33
I have a good relationship with faculty/staff in general		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	0	2	8	11
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	2	24	24
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	0	4	32	35
I would go to a faculty/staff member with a safety concern.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Male (<i>n</i> =21)	1	3	5	12
	Female (<i>n</i> =50)	0	2	23	25
	Total (<i>n</i> =71)	1	5	28	37

Results

Assumption Testing

An ANOVA was used to test both null hypotheses. An ANOVA was previously used to analyze results obtained with the PCSSS instrument (Zuckerman, 2010). ANOVA is used for data that is quantitative and “at least approximately, interval/ratio level of measurement” (Warner, 2013, p. 221). While Likert responses are often considered to be ordinal data, such data can also be treated as interval. Likert responses can be, and often are, analyzed using parametric tests such as ANOVA (Norman, 2010). Assumptions for ANOVA testing also include independence of cases, normal distribution, and homogeneity of variances (Warner, 2013). Independence of cases refers to the fact that each case or respondent is separate and only accounts for one response on an instrument. Normal distribution refers to the assumption that the majority of data points will fall close to the mean, causing a graphical representation of data

to appear as a bell curve. Homogeneity of variances means that the amount of variance is approximately the same in each group (Warner, 2013).

The first ANOVA assumption is that observations are independent of each other, which is the case in this study as each survey invitation is associated with a single email address and a single student. Respondents could, therefore, only use the link to take the survey a single time, leading to a single set of data for a single respondent. The survey link only allowed the survey to be completed a single time.

The second ANOVA assumption is that scores are approximately normally distributed in the sample (Warner, 2013). The Shapiro Wilk test for normality was used to determine normal distribution of total scores across the instrument. For gender, the significance of test statistic fell above the .05 level for both males (.780) and females (.074), meaning that the null hypothesis of normal distribution was not rejected (Table 8). For class standing, the significance of the test statistic fell above the .05 level for sophomore (.356), junior (.472), and senior (.626) groups, with only the freshman (.017) group falling below .05; this lead to a rejection of the null hypothesis of normal distribution for freshmen, but a failure to reject the null hypothesis of normal distribution for all remaining groups (Table 9). Though the single group of freshmen cannot be said to be normally distributed, the remainder of groups based on gender and on class standing appear to be normally distributed. ANOVA testing is very robust in these cases of potential violations of normality, especially considering normal distribution across all other groups (Norman, 2010).

Table 8*Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality by Gender*

Gender	Statistic	<i>df</i>	Sig
Male	.972	21	.780
Female	.958	50	.074

Table 9*Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality by Class Standing*

Class Standing	Statistic	<i>df</i>	Sig
Freshman	.879	20	.017*
Sophomore	.938	15	.356
Junior	.949	16	.472
Senior	.964	20	.626

Note. *Significant at the .05 level

The third ANOVA assumption, homogeneity of variances was met. Based on the results of Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance, the data overall met the assumption of homogeneity of variance at the .05 level (Warner, 2013). For the group variable of class standing, the Levene statistic based on mean was .660. For the group variable of gender, the Levene statistic based on mean was .278.

Hypotheses

H₀1: There are no significant differences in campus safety perceptions of students at a Christian higher education institution based on class standing as shown by the adapted Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale (PCSSS).

To test this null hypothesis, an ANOVA was run to evaluate differences in means by class standing. The critical *F* value was determined to be 2.76 (Warner, 2013). ANOVA results for instrument totals by class standing are shown in Table 10.

Table 10*ANOVA PCSSS Totals by Class Standing*

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	942.060	3	314.020	2.664	.055
Within Groups	7897.883	67	117.879		
Total	8839.944	70			

Across the total instrument, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected as the total *F* value was not statistically significant.

H₀2: There are no significant differences in campus safety perceptions between male and female students at a Christian higher education institution as shown by the adapted Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale (PCSSS).

To test this null hypothesis, an ANOVA was run to evaluate differences in means by gender.

The critical *F* value was determined to be 4.00 (Warner, 2013). ANOVA results for instrument totals by gender are shown in Table 11.

Table 11*ANOVA PCSSS Totals by Gender*

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	194.206	1	194.206	1.550	.217
Within Groups	8645.738	69	125.301		
Total	8839.944	70			

Across the total instrument, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected as the total *F* value was not statistically significant.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

After data collection and analysis, the results were examined and compared with existing literature in order to set the stage for a discussion of the results. This chapter discusses the findings of this study in light of the existing body of literature. Upon the conclusion of the discussion, the implications of the findings will be addressed. The limitations of the study will be addressed and, finally, recommendations will be made for further study.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the students' perceptions of campus safety at a Christian institution of higher education. In light of this purpose and the results described in chapter four, each of the research questions will be discussed.

RQ1: Are there differences between student levels of perceptions of campus safety at a Christian higher education institution based on class standing?

Totals across the entire instrument failed to show a statistically significant difference between students based on class standing, leading to a failure to reject the null hypothesis. The failure to reject the null hypothesis is consistent with some previous findings at secular institutions that show that class standing alone may have little impact on student perceptions and behaviors related to safety (Blair et al., 2004). Early studies showed that class standing did appear to have some influence on perceptions related to safety; however, subsequent research has shown that the age of students is more influential than class standing (Blair et al., 2004; Crowe, 1995). Another study showed some evidence that support for certain campus policies may increase with age, though the significance of the influence of this factor depends on the type of policy in question (Kyle et al., 2017).

Overall, students appear to support and have some awareness of safety factors regardless of class standing. This is consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the assumption that students will be concerned with matters of safety and security (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1987). This is also consistent with preliminary descriptions of Generation Z as a cohort. As Generation Z students are just beginning to enter college, many descriptions of general characteristics are largely speculative, however, some descriptions exist based on trends in data related to perceptions and behaviors related to safety. Little empirical research currently exists regarding the attitudes and behaviors of Generation Z in the college setting as it is still early in this cohort. What is certain is that Generation Z has grown up in a post-9/11 world and a world characterized by international terrorism, heavily publicized mass shootings, and widespread perceptions of danger (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Generation Z is thought to exhibit relatively pragmatic characteristics with an emphasis on stability, safety, and security (Lanier, 2017). Various characteristics of Generation Z are argued to influence their behavior as consumers, including a desire to feel safe and secure (Priporas, Stylos, & Fotiadis, 2017; Woods, 2013). Campus safety has been identified as an important theme among students preparing to enter college (Trevino, 2018). How these themes and characteristics influence perceptions and behaviors of safety in their role as consumers of higher education is not yet fully understood as students begin to progress through their college career.

Four individual instrument items did appear to show difference between students based on the factor of class standing. The results of the first item, *I am part of a campus community*, suggest that freshmen show a higher degree of agreement with this item than juniors. This item is not directly related to safety perceptions, though feelings of community and connectedness may be a factor in perceptions of safety. It is possible that freshmen are less likely to have

become disillusioned as they are just beginning their college journey, while upperclassmen have had more time or emotional maturity to reflect on whether higher-level needs related to community are being met at their institution.

The remaining three items all deal with university policies related to campus safety: 1) *The alcohol and drug policies on campus create a safe environment*, 2) *The guest policy in the residence halls creates a safe environment*, and 3) *The policies in place at my college increase my safety on campus*. Lowerclassmen appear to express higher degrees of agreement with these items than upperclassmen. While other instrument items relate to student perceptions of campus resources, faculty, and staff, these items specifically relate to policies guiding student behavior. Previous research suggests that psychosocial development increases across class standing among students (Jones & Watt, 2001). This development appears across seven vectors: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). While initial student satisfaction may be gained from the fulfillment of more basic needs on the lower levels of Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1987) hierarchy, students will increasingly strive towards higher-level needs such as self-actualization, especially as they progress through college and psychosocial development.

Many aspects of psychosocial development relate to autonomy, which may explain why policies that restrict student behavior may lose support as students progress through college. It is possible that certain policy factors are not fully considered during the three-phase college choice process. Even if students are aware of these policies, they may not realize their implications until later in their college career as they continue to develop autonomy. Even if lowerclassmen do not fully support certain safety policies or initiatives, they may not explicitly object to them if

they have not yet experienced a conflict between their behaviors or desires and the policy in question. As students progress through their college career, they may begin to experience conflicts between lower-level needs such as safety and security and higher-level needs such as self-actualization. This would support Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1987) theory of simultaneous, yet sometimes conflicting needs, especially as students become increasingly self-sufficient upon leaving home.

RQ2: Are there differences between female and male student levels of perceptions of campus safety at a Christian higher education institution?

Totals across the entire instrument failed to show a statistically significant difference between students based on gender, leading to a failure to reject the null hypothesis. Examination of responses to individual items show one particular item of interest on which females appeared more likely to agree. The item in question is *The guest policy in the residence halls creates a safe environment*. This leads to the question of what might explain this difference, especially where there are no other identified differences suggested by the results. Many universities, but especially Christian institutions, have a guest or visitation policy for residence halls. Some Christian institutions have student codes of conduct that regulate the nature of romantic relationships. For these institutions, guest policies may serve to enforce these codes. In a broader sense, universities in general may seek to utilize a guest policy in order to create a safe environment within residence halls.

Starkweather (2007) argues that gender does play a role in perceptions of safety for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that females are more likely to fear sexual assault over other types of personal crimes (Ferraro, 1995, 1996). Research suggests that female students are more safety conscious, which affects their beliefs and behaviors (Blair et al., 2004). Kyle et al.

(2017) found that certain campus safety policies and initiatives are more likely to be supported by female students than by male students. Females may, for example, be more supportive than males of policies that relate to specifically sexual assault prevention on campus (Streng & Kamimura, 2017).

For some females, a guest policy may provide greater peace of mind from a fear of sexual assault or any other type of victimization. If so, and if fear of sexual assault victimization is greater for females, this may be reflected in greater female support for a guest policy. Rather than being viewed as an irrelevant inconvenience, females may connect the relevance of such a policy to an existing perception of fear. Females experiencing fear of sexual assault may already place limits on their own spatial freedom (Keane, 1998). This could mean that certain institutional policies may be seen as a validation of existing personal behaviors rather than a restriction on them. For male students, guest policies or other policies restricting behavior may be seen as irrelevant or having little connection to safety outcomes. The connection between gender and guest policy perceptions is speculative, but appears to be grounded in the literature regarding gender and perceptions of safety in general.

In this study, the relatively small sample size and the imbalanced group sizes lead to a word of caution. Female students in this study were more likely than male students to respond to the survey invitation in this study, leading to a much larger female group variable. Future studies may examine larger samples across multiple institutions. The literature seems to support that some differences may arise in perceptions, with females exhibiting greater support for certain policies (Kyle et al., 2017; Starkweather, 2007). There is some evidence in the literature that female students' attitudes and behaviors may change over time as they interact with male

students (Blair et al., 2004). Examinations of covariance of class standing and gender may provide additional insight into any relationship between these variables.

Implications

Evidence suggests that students are paying attention to various aspects of campus safety. This is consistent with Maslow's theory of motivation. Universities cannot discount the importance of ongoing communication related to campus safety issues. There is also evidence to suggest that certain policies may not be supported by students or that this support may evolve during students' ongoing enrollment at a particular institution. Full support for all policies can never be guaranteed, but care can and should be taken to ensure that students fully understand policies and, to the extent possible, the reasons behind these policies. This requires intentional ongoing communication.

In any institution, but particularly a Christian institution wishing to pour into the lives of their students, face-to-face communication is required. While safety needs are an important aspect of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, institutions cannot meet these needs without a holistic approach to meeting all needs. Campus safety authorities may be limited in the types of communications that can effectively be employed. Instead, it is the responsibility of all faculty and staff throughout the institution to develop deeper mentoring-type relationships with students. Individual and small group meetings should be used as times for both sides to ask questions and answer concerns. Students with policy concerns, for example, may not completely agree with a policy but may come to a greater understanding of such policies through informal discussions with individual faculty and staff in positions of trust, rather than through formal mass communications from campus authorities. The concurrent fulfillment of higher-level needs of belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization build on and inform students' understanding of

lower-level safety needs. Through a holistic, relational approach to communications, support for, or at least an understanding of, safety policies may be more likely.

Limitations

This study has identified limitations that may threaten internal and external validity. One variable that is difficult to account for are students who never make it to upperclassmen status due to negative perceptions related to campus safety or other factors. It is possible that the weeding out of certain students over time may skew the results when examining perceptions of upperclassmen. Future studies may utilize a longitudinal approach to attempt to follow the same students over time. As with most survey instruments, self-selection may also influence the characteristics of respondents. Students may self-select if they are particularly conscientious or if they are particularly disgruntled. A final internal threat is the lower response rate for male students in this study.

The nature of the small university studied results in a relatively small overall population and therefore a small sample. While the sample size allows for application to the overall university population, it reduces generalizability to other universities. Future studies may expand upon this study by utilizing universities with larger enrollment or surveying students from multiple Christian universities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the limitations of this study, as well as the lack of research into various factors related to perceptions of campus safety, there are several areas that are recommended for further research including:

1. It is recommended that future studies further explore factors such as class standing, gender, and age comparisons across multiple Christian universities. While the current study

seeks to examine student perceptions at a single Christian university, it may be difficult to generalize results. Christian universities are found in a variety of geographical settings and may vary significantly in other factors such as demographics, mission, resources, and enrollment. Examining other Christian universities regionally and nationally may provide a more complete picture of how class standing, gender, age, or other factors affect campus safety perceptions. Additional analysis of these factors, such as analysis of covariance, may provide additional insight into the influence and interactions of these factors.

2. Comparisons of various stakeholder groups are recommended for future studies. Faculty, staff, and students have typically been the focus of any examinations of perceptions related to campus safety. Even these stakeholder groups remain relatively unexamined within the Christian higher education setting. While the current study focused on students, another important stakeholder group has been largely unexamined in the literature. Parents often play an important role in the decision-making processes leading to enrollment and retention of their child at any given institution (Hamilton et al., 2018). It will be important to examine how the perceptions of students reflect or diverge from students from the college selection process through graduation. One challenge is that this group of stakeholders may be more difficult to identify and communicate with due to their indirect affiliation with the institution.

3. Comparisons of perceptions based on student hometown type or geographic location are recommended. While hometown type is collected via the adapted PCSSS instrument, it was not one of the independent variables of interest in this study. Future studies may examine whether this geographic location and other student background factors may influence their perceptions of campus safety. It would be helpful, for example, to understand whether a student

from an urban setting has a different perception of crime, security, and safety factors than a student from a more suburban or rural background.

4. Examination of perceptions during the college selection process is recommended in order to provide earlier insight into perceptions prior to enrollment. The current study examines the perceptions of students who have already committed to an institution. In light of Maslow's theory of motivation and the three-phase college choice model, it is important to build a better understanding of how perceptions of campus safety factors may influence the decision-making process of researching, selecting, applying, and enrolling in a university. This population may be difficult to identify and communicate with, depending on what stage of the process they are in. It is likely that potential students with negative perceptions related to campus safety would never be identified due to the fact that they may never make it far in an enrollment process for any institution for which they hold negative campus safety perceptions.

5. Longitudinal study of student perceptions over time are recommended in order to examine whether there are differences in the perceptions of individuals over time. While the current study provides a snapshot of perceptions of students based on class standing, additional insight might be gained by multiple surveys of the same sets of students as they progress through their college experience. If freshmen or sophomores who have negative perceptions never make it to upperclassman status, it may skew the results without the researcher being able to identify and quantify these students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: PCSSS Instrument Permission

Re: Permission to use research instrument

ZD
Tue 9/4, 3:51 PM
Bowen, Bradley ✉

↻ Reply all | v

Inbox

Blocked content will be shown while this message is open.

You replied on 9/6/2018 8:40 AM.

Hi Bradley,

Thank you for your email. I appreciate your interest in the instrument. Please feel free to use the instrument following the guidelines that you have outlined.

I look forward to hearing about your study.

Good luck with all of your research.

All the best,

On Mon, Sep 3, 2018 at 11:43 AM, Bowen, Bradley < > wrote:

I am a doctoral candidate from Liberty University writing my dissertation titled *Parent and Student Awareness of Campus Safety in Christian Higher Education: A Causal-Comparative Study*, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Meredith Park, who can be reached at . In addition to being a student, I am also a campus safety director at a small institution in South Carolina, which makes this topic very important to me.

I would like to request your permission to use your *Perceptions of College Safety and Security Scale* in my study:

- I will use the survey only for my research study and will not sell it or otherwise utilize it for any compensated activities.
- I will include any applicable copyright statement on all copies of the instrument.
- I will send a copy of my completed research study to your attention upon completion of the study.
- Minimal adaptations may be made to ensure relevance to the current study.

I can be reached at or at . Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Bradley C. Bowen

Appendix B: Liberty University IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 26, 2019

Bradley Carlton Bowen
IRB Exemption 3606.092619: Class Standing and Student Perceptions of Safety in Christian
Higher Education: A Causal-Comparative Study

Dear Bradley Carlton Bowen,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects:

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at

Research Ethics Office

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Appendix C: Liberty University IRB Informed Consent

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
9/26/2019 to --
Protocol # 3606.092619

CONSENT FORM

Class Standing and Student Perceptions of Safety in Christian Higher Education: A Causal-Comparative Study

Bradley Bowen
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study on student perceptions of campus safety at a Christian institution of higher education. You were selected as a possible participant because you have been identified as an undergraduate student at Southern Wesleyan University. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Bradley Bowen, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to compare student perceptions of campus safety at a Christian university based upon class standing.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following:

1. Complete and submit the survey via the provided Survey Monkey link. This survey can be completed within 15-20 minutes.
2. If you choose to be entered into a drawing to receive a \$50 Amazon gift card, you will be asked to provide your email address at the conclusion of the survey. Entry is not required to complete the survey.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. The benefits to society include the potential to provide information that can be useful in the development and communication of campus safety policies.

Compensation: Participants may be compensated for participating in this study. Participants completing the survey will have the option of entering their email address into a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card. The gift card recipient will be selected and notified within 10 days of the conclusion of the data collection period. The data collection period will take place over a four-week period. Email addresses will be requested for compensation purposes, however they will be pulled and separated from your responses by Survey Monkey to maintain anonymity.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private and anonymous to the researcher. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
9/26/2019 to --
Protocol # 3606.092619

Southern Wesleyan University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions or to withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Bradley Bowen. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at . You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Meredith Park, at .

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at .

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. By clicking the survey link to continue, I attest that I am 18 or older, and I consent to participate in the study.