

The Impact of Sexual Orientation on College Student Victimization: An Examination of Sexual Minority and Non-Sexual Minority Student Populations

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Abstract

Our research examines the possible association of sexual orientation and self-reported sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner psychological abuse, and intimate partner physical abuse of college students from a northeastern university in the United States. Understanding the prevalence of these behaviors within this age group is important, as developing appropriate college policy to reduce these actions at this time may be beneficial for future prevention. This study also allows for one of the few true comparisons between those students who identified as sexual minority and non-sexual minority college students¹. A total of 1881 college students were surveyed. Classes were randomly selected and surveys were administered to students in those classes. Gender specific models were also analyzed to examine if the relationship between sexual orientation and victimization differs for males and females. The results from the analyses support the prediction that sexual minority students were more likely to report all four types of victimization than non-sexual minority students. Sexual minority students were about four times more likely to report sexual assault, two times more likely to report sexual harassment and physical abuse, and about 1.5 times more likely to report psychological abuse. Sexual minority males were more likely to report sexual assault (nine times), sexual harassment (3.5 times), and physical abuse (twice as likely). Sexual minority females were about twice as likely to report sexual assault, physical abuse, and psychological abuse.

Keywords

IPV, Sexual Minority, Sexual Orientation, Gender, Women, Sexual Assault,

¹The survey provided the following choices under the question about sexual orientation: Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, and other.

1. Introduction

1.1. Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pervasive public health concern that has received significant attention over the past three decades. IPV is an umbrella term for psychological, physical, and sexual abuse experienced between couples of any status that are in a relationship with one another (World Health Organization 2012). Research suggests that young adults between ages 18 - 24 experience the highest rates of IPV, and that college students are at an increased risk for some forms of IPV (e.g., sexual assault) when compared with same-age non-college peers (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Justice, 2000).

Despite a large body of literature documenting rates of IPV among college students in general, previous research has focused largely on experiences of heterosexual college students, often ignoring those of sexual minorities. The importance of examining sexual orientation in the context of IPV cannot be understated as research has suggested that sexual minority college students are significantly more likely to report dating violence and sexual assault than non-sexual minority students (Edwards et al., 2015). Thus, the current study examines whether or not sexual minority college students are more likely to be victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and intimate partner physical and psychological abuse than non-sexual minority students. In addition, to provide a clearer understanding of IPV among sexual minorities, the study also examined whether there were gender differences for males and females.

Studies focusing on IPV among heterosexual college samples suggest that almost one third of college students have reported some experience with physical abuse within a romantic relationship (Orcutt, Garcia, & Pickett, 2005; Perry & Fromuth, 2005). More common is the presence of psychological abuse, with some studies reporting up to 80% of college aged couples experiencing this type of victimization (Avant, Swopes, Davis, & Elhai, 2011; Cercone, Beach, & Arias, 2005; Harned, 2001; Hines & Saudino, 2003). Although male and female college students report similar rates of physical and psychological abuse by a partner, female college students report sexual assault at higher rates than male college students. To this end, researchers have found 1-year incidence rates of sexual assault for college women ranging from 17% to 33% (Smith, White, & Holland, 2003). Conversely, 8.2% of college men reported sexual assault (Banyard et al., 2007).

1.2. Sexual Minorities and Victimization

Another of the most frequently cited victimization concerns on college campuses is sexual assault among both sexual minorities and sexual non-minorities. While

women are more often the victims of sexual assault than men, both gay males and lesbians are significantly over represented as victims (Duncan, 1990). A meta-analysis of articles regarding gay, lesbian, and bisexual victims of sexual assault showed elevated rates of victimization, with gay males having 11.8% to 54% victimization rates, compared to two to three percent among heterosexual males. Lesbians were victimized at rates of 15.6% to 85%, compared to 11% to 17% of heterosexual women (Rothman, Exner, & Baughman, 2011; Todahl, Linville, Wheeler, & Gau, 2009; Wilson & Spatz Widom, 2010). However, critiques of this research have argued that most of these studies did not discern between same sex victimization and heterosexual victimization, thus making the findings unclear if the perpetrator was the same sex as the victim or not (Waldner-Haugrud & Vaden Gratch, 1997). Also, it should be noted that the bulk of these studies were not direct comparisons between gay, lesbian and bisexual victims to heterosexual victims, and the theoretical reasons for these differences have largely been ignored (Rothman et al., 2011). This research does, however, compare the two groups to one another to determine the role played by sexual orientation in victimization.

Research on psychological abuse among sexual minorities in non-college populations also reveals high rates of abuse. For example, studies of lesbians have found that verbal and psychological abuse was prevalent, ranging from 73 to 90% of women studied. This was consistent with gay males as well, with as many as 95% reporting at least one incident of psychological abuse, indicating a higher frequency of victimization (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Burke & Follingstad, 1999; Lockhart et al., 1994). However, it should be noted that the definition of psychological abuse is less universally defined than physical abuse, and thus what constitutes abuse may differ from study to study (Follingstad & DeHart, 2000).

Of additional concern are directly aimed forms of harassment, sexual and otherwise, toward sexual minority students based upon their sexual orientation. An early study of harassment of gay and lesbian students in colleges found that over 77% experienced verbal harassment regarding their sexual orientation at some point, with 49% reporting more than one incident of verbal harassment while a student. However, this study surveyed only gay and lesbian students (D'Augelli, 1992). Two decades later, harassment based upon sexual orientation has continued to be a problem amongst sexual minority students, with 36% reporting being harassed in the previous year for their orientation (Rankin, 2003).

1.3. College Life and Risk Factors for Victimization

A number of control variables—living alone, living on campus, race, and participation in sports—are also important to acknowledge when studying victimization amongst college age populations. Previous research suggests that living arrangements may be associated with victimization risk, whereby college students that live independently and off-campus may be more vulnerable than those living with others and on-campus (Anderson & Leigh, 2010; Lehrer, Lehrer, Lehrer, &

Oyarzun, 2007). Some research also suggests that race may be associated with the risk of victimization, although studies are inconclusive. For example, some research has found higher rates of interpersonal violence among African Americans when compared to Whites (Caetano, Schafer, & Cunradi, 2001; Makepeace, 1987; Rouse, 1988) while another study found just the opposite (Lane & Gwartney-Gibbs, 1985).

Although not studied extensively, it has also been suggested that participation in sports may protect females from victimization in that it develops strength and self-esteem (Fasting, Brackenridge, & Sungot-Borgen, 2003). An often held assumption is that fraternity and sports membership are significant correlates for perpetrating sexually aggressive acts, largely due to hyper masculine beliefs, secrecy, and peer pressure (Boeringer, 1996; Martin & Hummer, 1989). Recent research has found, however, that fraternity and sports membership has more of an indirect effect based upon those groups' emphasis on maintaining secrecy and peer pressure as related to sexual behaviors (Franklin, Bouffard, & Pratt, 2012). Alcohol consumption, closely associated with fraternity and sorority participation, has also been found to be a significant predictor of sexual victimization (Monks, Tomaka, Palacios, & Thompson, 2010).

Research also suggests that international students also may be targeted more frequently due to language barriers and the fact they are not as assimilated into American culture when compared to non-international students. This sometimes drastic change in cultural roles and expectations, coupled with a general fear of strangers, can lead to feelings of helplessness and an increased vulnerability to victimization (Coston, 2004).

1.4. Current Study

This study adds to the literature by examining how both sexual orientation and negative attitudes towards orientation affects various victimizations (physical and psychological abuse, sexual harassment and sexual assault) on a college campus. These are the institutions one would expect to be most tolerant and progressive regarding social issues of this type, but that often is not the case (M. J. Brown & Groscup, 2009; Cotten-Huston & Waite, 2000; Rankin, 2003). We also examine the effect of sexual orientation on victimization by gender.

The primary goal of this research is to determine the nature of victimization amongst college students, and how their gender and sexual orientation may be a factor in their victimization. Understanding the experiences on a college campus will provide insight as to what importance having clear and enforceable policies at the administrative level may have. As previously mentioned, many of the previous studies have used vague and changing definitions for what constitutes abuse and harassment, thus making comparisons between studies difficult. Considering previous research has not included both sexual minority and non-sexual minority populations together, this research makes these comparisons possible since both populations are studied using the same instruments.

Based upon the extant literature, it is hypothesized that sexual minority students will be more likely to report victimization experiences in all of the categories under study. It is also expected that females will experience the highest levels of IPV victimization overall, while men will report the lowest levels of victimization regardless of type of relationship. With regard to sexual assault alone, it is expected that non-sexual minority females will experience higher rates of sexual victimization compared to sexual minority females, while sexual minority males are hypothesized to experience higher rates of sexual victimization compared to non-sexual minority males. It is also expected that same sex couples will report the highest rates of sexual harassment, with non-sexual minority females reporting more incidents than males.

2. Methods

2.1. Data Collection

The cross-sectional data for this study were collected from students at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) (<http://www.rit.edu/>), a northeastern university in the United States. Forty classes were randomly selected by the researchers. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at RIT, surveys were distributed within randomly selected classes to all students. Participants were informed that the survey was voluntary and were told that if they had previously filled out a survey they should not fill out the survey again. A total of 1941 students filled out the surveys for response rates of 97.2% in year 1 ($n = 954$) and 98.3% ($n = 987$) in year 2. After removing cases missing data on any of the dependent and independent variables, the final sample size for this study was 1881.

There were some other representativeness issues that should be addressed for these surveys. First, women were slightly overrepresented in the sample. Women were 33.4% of the student population. In the sample used for this study, women accounted for about 40% (39.2%) of the participants. The different colleges at the university were not represented in the sample as they were within the student population. In particular, the College of Liberal Arts was oversampled within the survey and this college has a higher percentage of women than the other colleges at the university. The reason for the oversampling was that the College of Liberal Arts classes were selected since all students are required to take these courses. It was the most efficient way to guarantee the inclusion of students from every college.

2.2. Participants

The sample consisted of 1881 respondents, including 1143 men (60.8%) and 738 women (39.2%) (see **Table 1**). Slightly over 6% ($n = 115$) identified as a sexual minority based upon our definition. The majority of the participants (74.8%) identified themselves as White. There were 107 (5.7%) international students. More than half of the respondents lived on campus (54.7%; $n = 1029$) and about

Table 1. Frequency distributions.

Variable	Value	All Cases (N = 1881)		Males (N = 1143)		Females (N = 738)	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Sexual Assault	No	1678	89.21%	1062	92.91%	616	83.47%
	Yes	203	10.79%	81	7.09%	122	16.53%
Sexual Harassment	No	951	50.56%	737	64.48%	214	29.00%
	Yes	930	49.44%	406	35.52%	524	71.00%
Physical Abuse	No	1466	77.94%	887	77.60%	579	78.46%
	Yes	415	22.06%	256	22.40%	159	21.54%
Psychological Abuse	No	1135	60.34%	718	62.82%	417	56.50%
	Yes	746	39.66%	425	37.18%	321	43.50%
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	1766	93.89%	1095	95.80%	671	90.92%
	LGBT	115	6.11%	48	4.20%	67	9.08%
Gender	Male	1143	60.77%	-	-	-	-
	Female	738	39.23%	-	-	-	-
Belongs to a Fraternity/Sorority	No	1659	88.20%	1007	88.10%	652	88.35%
	Yes	222	11.80%	136	11.90%	86	11.65%
On a Sports Team (Intercollegiate/Campus)	No	1567	83.31%	924	80.84%	643	87.13%
	Yes	314	16.69%	219	19.16%	95	12.87%
International Student	No	1774	94.31%	1083	94.75%	691	93.63%
	Yes	107	5.69%	60	5.25%	47	6.37%
Lives on Campus	No	852	45.30%	499	43.66%	353	47.83%
	Yes	1029	54.70%	644	56.34%	385	52.17%
Lives Alone	No	1686	89.63%	1033	90.38%	653	88.48%
	Yes	195	10.37%	110	9.62%	85	11.52%
Race	Non-white	475	25.25%	245	21.43%	230	31.17%
	White	1406	74.75%	898	78.57%	508	68.83%

10% (n = 195) lived alone. Only a small percentage of the sample, 16.7% (n = 314), participated in intercollegiate or campus sports or belonged to a fraternity or sorority (11.8%; N = 222).

2.3. Measures

The dependent variables for analysis are dummy variables created from a variety of questions pertaining to various types of victimization. The first type of victimization is sexual harassment. A student that reported experiencing one or more of the following over the past year received a score of one on this variable: unwelcome remarks of a sexual nature from students, unwelcome remarks of a sexual nature from faculty, unwelcome touching from students, unwelcome touching from faculty/staff, repeated pressure for dates/sexual activity from students, and repeated pressure for dates/sexual activity from faculty/staff (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.58).

The second form of victimization examined was sexual assault. Any student that reported verbal threats of sex against their will, sexual touching against their will, attempted sexual penetration (vaginal, oral, and/or anal) against their will, and/or sexual penetration (vaginal, oral, and/or anal) against their will were recorded as having been sexually assaulted (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.72). Participants reported sexual victimization that occurred over the school year in the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). The SES asks about a variety of sexually-related behaviors including verbal coercion, authority abuse, and acts legally defined as attempted rape and sexual assault. Thus, our measure is consistent with a past measure of sexual abuse.

To measure psychological and physical abuse among dating partners within the past school year, Straus et al.'s (1996) Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) was used to measure intimate partner violence by "a partner" over the previous school year. Use of the term "partner" denotes intimate partner violence may exist among non-sexual minority and same-sex partners. The CTS2 is a commonly used measure of intimate partner violence that measures the frequency with which respondents had experienced psychological and physical abuse from their dating partners. Three items assessed psychological abuse: partner insulted or swore at you, partner put you down in front of friends and/or family, and partner threatened to hit/throw something at you (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.60). Seven items assessed physical abuse: partner pushed, grabbed or shoved you, partner slapped you, partner kicked, bit, or shoved you, partner beat you up, partner hit you or tried to hit you with something, partner choked you, and partner threatened you with a gun/knife (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.75). Subjects responded on a four-point scale (never, 1 - 2 times, 3 - 10 times, more than 10 times).

Sexual orientation was measured with the following question: "Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?" Heterosexual was coded as 0 and gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other were coded as 1. Gender was coded as a dummy variable where 1 = women and 0 = men. As discussed in the introduction, a variety of control variables were included due to prior research that has found a relationship between these variables and victimization. The control variables were all made into dummy variables and coded as follows: involvement in sports (1 = intercollegiate or campus; 0 = none); international student (1 = yes; 0 = no); live on campus (1 = on campus; 0 = off campus or other); live alone (1 = alone; 0 = roommate/housemate, or spouse/significant other, parents, and other); and race (1 = White; 0 = non White).

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviations for the full sample and for subsamples based on gender. The correlation matrices are provided in **Tables 3(a)-(c)**. A correlation matrix is provided for each subsample based on gender. The correlations between the various measures of reported abuse are significant, except for between sexual assault and physical abuse for men.

The victimization variables are all dummy variables that indicate the presence or absence of abuse. While a scale could have been used since there are three

Table 2. Univariate statistics.

Variable	All Cases (N = 1881)		Males (N = 1143)		Females (N = 738)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sexual Assault	0.108	0.310	0.071	0.257	0.165	0.372
Sexual Harassment	0.494	0.500	0.355	0.479	0.710	0.454
Physical Abuse	0.221	0.415	0.224	0.417	0.215	0.411
Psychological Abuse	0.397	0.489	0.372	0.484	0.435	0.496
Sexual orientation (Heterosexual = 0; LGBT = 1)	0.061	0.240	0.042	0.201	0.091	0.287
Gender (Male = 0; Female = 1)	0.392	0.488	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
Belongs to a Fraternity/Sorority (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.118	0.323	0.119	0.324	0.117	0.321
On a sports team (Intercollegiate or Campus) (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.167	0.373	0.192	0.394	0.129	0.335
International Student (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.057	0.232	0.052	0.223	0.064	0.244
Lives on Campus (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.547	0.498	0.563	0.496	0.522	0.500
Live Alone (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.104	0.305	0.096	0.295	0.115	0.319
Race (Non-white = 0; White = 1)	0.747	0.435	0.786	0.411	0.688	0.463

psychological abuse measures and seven physical abuse measures, the main purpose of this study was to see if there was a difference in the reporting of abuse. Dummy variables allow for the testing of the presence/absence of each type of abuse. Additionally, the scales had low Cronbach's Alphas, particularly for psychological abuse, and skewed distributions. Chi-square statistics were calculated to test for differences in the prevalence of each of the types of victimization experienced. Binary logistic regression analyses were used to examine the effect of sexual orientation, gender, and other variables on the two types of victimization. Columns three and four examine the effects of the independent variables on psychological and physical abuse for men and women. Multicollinearity does not appear to be an issue for any of the models. The largest variance inflation factor (VIF) in any of the various models was 1.14. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 17 (SPSS Inc., 2008).

3. Results

Tables 4(a)-(d) provide the results for the binary logistic regressions for the various types of abuse. Sexual orientation has a significant effect on the likelihood of reporting sexual assault. This finding holds for the sample with both

Table 3. (a) Correlations for all cases (N = 1881). (b) Correlations for males (N = 1143). (c) Correlations for females (N = 738).

(a)

Variable	Sexual Assault	Sexual Harassment	Physical Abuse	Psychological Abuse	Sexual orientation (Heterosexual = 0; LGBT = 1)	Gender (Male = 0; Female = 1)	Belongs to a Fraternity/Sorority (No = 0; Yes = 1)	On a sports team (Intercollegiate or Campus) (No = 0; Yes = 1)	International Student (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Lives on Campus (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Live Alone (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Race (Non-white = 0; White = 1)
Sexual Assault	1.000	0.245**	0.162**	0.121**	0.183**	0.149**	0.064**	0.028	0.048*	0.048*	0.107**	-0.090**
Sexual Harassment	0.245**	1.000	0.112**	0.218**	0.107**	0.347**	0.077**	-0.004	0.042	0.067**	0.030	-0.076**
Physical Abuse	0.162**	0.112**	1.000	0.384**	0.078**	-0.010	0.044	0.016	0.035	0.000	0.029	-0.048*
Psychological Abuse	0.121**	0.218**	0.384**	1.000	0.074**	0.063**	0.054*	-0.010	0.017	-0.055*	0.042	-0.032
Sexual orientation (Heterosexual = 0; LGBT = 1)	0.183**	0.107**	0.078**	0.074**	1.000	0.099**	0.051*	-0.043	0.110**	-0.044	0.066**	-0.082**
Gender (Male = 0; Female = 1)	0.149**	0.347**	-0.010	0.063**	0.099**	1.000	-0.004	-0.082**	0.024	-0.041	0.030	-0.109**
Belongs to a Fraternity/Sorority (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.064**	0.077**	0.044	0.054*	0.051*	-0.004	1.000	0.062**	-0.019	0.058*	0.027	-0.041
On a sports team (Intercollegiate or Campus) (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.028	-0.004	0.016	-0.010	-0.043	-0.082**	0.062**	1.000	0.007	0.141**	-0.012	0.017
International Student (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.048*	0.042	0.035	0.017	0.110**	0.024	-0.019	0.007	1.000	0.021	0.037	-0.317**
Lives on Campus (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.048*	0.067**	0.000	-0.055*	-0.044	-0.041	0.058*	0.141**	0.021	1.000	0.036	-0.003
Live Alone (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.107**	0.030	0.029	0.042	0.066**	0.030	0.027	-0.012	0.037	0.036	1.000	-0.091**
Race (Non-white = 0; White = 1)	-0.090**	-0.076**	-0.048*	-0.032	-0.082**	-0.109**	-0.041	0.017	-0.317**	-0.003	-0.091*	1.000

**p < 0.01. *p < 0.05.

(b)

Variable	Sexual Assault	Sexual Harassment	Physical Abuse	Psychological Abuse	Sexual orientation (Heterosexual = 0; LGBT = 1)	Gender (Male = 0; Female = 1)	Belongs to a Fraternity/ Sorority (No = 0; Yes = 1)	On a sports team (Intercollegiate or Campus) (No = 0; Yes = 1)	International Student (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Lives on Campus (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Live Alone (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Race (Non-white = 0; White = 1)
Sexual Assault	1.000	0.258**	0.113**	0.041	0.248**	.a	0.078**	0.021	0.042	0.051	0.095**	-0.105**
Sexual Harassment	0.258**	1.000	0.171**	0.208**	0.136**	.a	0.083**	0.006	0.047	0.027	0.049	-0.085**
Physical Abuse	0.113**	0.171**	1.000	0.403**	0.076*	.a	0.088**	0.016	0.024	0.003	0.003	-0.042
Psychological Abuse	0.041	0.208**	0.403**	1.000	0.028	.a	0.053	0.007	0.022	-0.056	0.001	-0.035
Sexual orientation (Heterosexual = 0; LGBT = 1)	0.248**	0.136**	0.076*	0.028	1.000	.a	0.058	-0.058	0.127**	-0.036	0.020	-0.135**
Gender (Male = 0; Female = 1)	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a
Belongs to a Fraternity/ Sorority (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.078**	0.083**	0.088**	0.053	0.058	.a	1.000	0.034	-0.014	0.029	0.036	-0.058*
On a sports team (Intercollegiate or Campus) (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.021	0.006	0.016	0.007	-0.058	.a	0.034	1.000	0.015	0.097**	0.015	0.005
International Student (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.042	0.047	0.024	0.022	0.127**	.a	-0.014	0.015	1.000	0.002	0.109**	-0.336**
Lives on Campus (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.051	0.027	0.003	-0.056	-0.036	.a	0.029	0.097**	0.002	1.000	0.030	-0.004
Live Alone (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.095**	0.049	0.003	0.001	0.020	.a	0.036	0.015	0.109**	0.030	1.000	-0.126**
Race (Non-white = 0; White = 1)	-0.105**	-0.085**	-0.042	-0.035	-0.135**	.a	-0.058*	0.005	-0.336**	-0.004	-0.126**	1.000

**p < 0.01. *p < 0.05.

(c)

Variable	Sexual Assault	Sexual Harassment	Physical Abuse	Psychological Abuse	Sexual orientation (Heterosexual = 0; LGBT = 1)	Gender (Male = 0; Female = 1)	Belongs to a Fraternity/Sorority (No = 0; Yes = 1)	On a sports team (Intercollegiate or Campus) (No = 0; Yes = 1)	International Student (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Lives on Campus (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Live Alone (No = 0; Yes = 1)	Race (Non-white = 0; White = 1)
Sexual Assault	1.000	0.164**	0.228**	0.191**	0.113**	.a	0.054	0.069	0.048	0.061	0.114**	-0.047
Sexual Harassment	0.164**	1.000	0.044	0.211**	0.015	.a	0.083*	0.067	0.020	0.183**	-0.022	0.021
Physical Abuse	0.228**	0.044	1.000	0.358**	0.087*	.a	-0.026	0.015	0.052	-0.006	0.069	-0.060
Psychological Abuse	0.191**	0.211**	0.358**	1.000	0.113**	.a	0.056	-0.027	0.006	-0.046	0.094*	-0.012
Sexual orientation (Heterosexual = 0; LGBT = 1)	0.113**	0.015	0.087*	0.113**	1.000	.a	0.047	-0.009	0.091*	-0.047	0.108**	-0.011
Gender (Male = 0; Female = 1)	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a
Belongs to a Fraternity/Sorority (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.054	0.083*	-0.026	0.056	0.047	.a	1.000	0.113**	-0.026	0.103**	0.014	-0.020
On a sports team (Intercollegiate or Campus) (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.069	0.067	0.015	-0.027	-0.009	.a	0.113**	1.000	-0.001	0.214**	-0.050	0.014
International Student (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.048	0.020	0.052	0.006	0.091*	.a	-0.026	-0.001	1.000	0.050	-0.059	-0.292**
Lives on Campus (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.061	0.183**	-0.006	-0.046	-0.047	.a	0.103**	0.214**	0.050	1.000	0.048	-0.012
Live Alone (No = 0; Yes = 1)	0.114**	-0.022	0.069	0.094*	0.108**	.a	0.014	-0.050	-0.059	0.048	1.000	-0.041
Race (Non-white = 0; White = 1)	-0.047	0.021	-0.060	-0.012	-0.011	.a	-0.020	0.014	-0.292**	-0.012	-0.041	1.000

**p < 0.01. *p < 0.05.

genders (column 1 in **Table 4(a)**), males, and females as well. The effect was quite strong in that one was almost four times ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.907$) more likely to report sexual assault if they were a sexual minority. Sexual minority males were almost ten times ($\text{Exp}(B) = 9.449$) more likely to report sexual assault victimization than heterosexual males. Sexual minority females were a little over two times as likely to report sexual assault as heterosexual females ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.159$). These findings indicate that the effect of sexual orientation on sexual assault victimization was much stronger for males than for females.

Table 4. (a) Victimization outcomes for sexual assault. (b) Victimization outcomes for sexual harassment. (c) Victimization outcomes for physical Abuse. (d) Victimization outcomes for psychological Abuse.

(a)

Independent Variable	All Cases			Male			Female		
	B	Exp(B)		B	Exp(B)		B	Exp(B)	
Sexual Orientation (1 = Gay/Lesbian/Other)	1.363	3.907	**	2.246	9.449	**	0.770	2.159	**
Gender (1 = female)	0.882	2.416	**						
Fraternity/Sorority	0.398	1.489	+	0.493	1.637		0.284	1.328	
On a Sports Team (Intercollegiate or Campus)	0.327	1.387		0.290	1.337		0.456	1.578	
International Student	0.116	1.123		-0.241	0.786		0.348	1.416	
Lives on Campus	0.346	1.413	*	0.441	1.555	+	0.247	1.280	
Live Alone	0.729	2.074	**	0.821	2.272	*	0.757	2.133	**
Race (1 = White)	-0.384	0.681	*	-0.529	0.589	+	-0.191	0.826	
Chi-Square	1177.079			526.238			638.210		
DF	8			7			7		
N	1881			1143			738		

**p < 0.01. *p < 0.05. +p < 0.10.

(b)

Independent Variable	All Cases			Male			Female		
	B	Exp(B)		B	Exp(B)		B	Exp(B)	
Sexual Orientation (1 = Gay/Lesbian/Other)	0.717	2.049	**	1.249	3.489	**	0.193	1.212	
Gender (1 = female)	1.500	4.483	**						
Fraternity/Sorority	0.495	1.640	**	0.449	1.566	*	0.523	1.686	+
On a Sports Team (Intercollegiate or Campus)	0.084	1.088		0.040	1.040		0.159	1.172	
International Student	0.180	1.197		0.083	1.087		0.165	1.179	
Lives on Campus	0.362	1.436	**	0.119	1.126		0.782	2.186	**
Live Alone	0.057	1.059		0.248	1.281		-0.216	0.806	
Race (1 = White)	-0.123	0.885		-0.287	0.750	+	0.140	1.150	
Chi-Square	2335.325			1453.655			858.078		
DF	8			7			7		
N	1881			1143			738		

**p < 0.01. *p < 0.05. +p < 0.10.

(c)

Independent Variable	All Cases		Male			Female	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	
Sexual Orientation (1 = Gay/Lesbian/Other)	0.634	1.885 **	0.684	1.981 *	0.578	1.782 *	
Gender (1 = female)	-0.103	0.902					
Fraternity/Sorority	0.262	1.300	0.547	1.728 **	-0.261	0.770	
On a Sports Team (Intercollegiate or Campus)	0.105	1.111	0.102	1.107	0.188	1.206	
International Student	0.153	1.165	0.084	1.087	0.307	1.359	
Lives on Campus	-0.016	0.984	0.007	1.007	-0.045	0.956	
Live Alone	0.156	1.169	-0.052	0.949	0.442	1.556 +	
Race (1 = White)	-0.193	0.824	-0.145	0.865	-0.248	0.780	
Chi-Square	1966.453		1201.398		757.276		
DF	8		7		7		
N	1881		1143		738		

**p < 0.01. *p < 0.05. +p < 0.10.

(d)

Independent Variable	All Cases		Male			Female	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	
Sexual Orientation (1 = Gay/Lesbian/Other)	0.499	1.647 *	0.192	1.212	0.697	2.008 **	
Gender (1 = female)	0.221	1.248 *					
Fraternity/Sorority	0.331	1.392 *	0.324	1.382 +	0.365	1.441	
On a Sports Team (Intercollegiate or Campus)	0.009	1.009	0.064	1.067	-0.114	0.892	
International Student	0.047	1.048	0.106	1.112	0.039	1.039	
Lives on Campus	-0.228	0.796 *	-0.245	0.783 *	-0.199	0.820	
Live Alone	0.235	1.265	-0.033	0.967	0.541	1.717 *	
Race (1 = White)	-0.067	0.936	-0.132	0.876	-0.020	0.980	
Chi-Square	2497.506		1499.703		992.033		
DF	8		7		7		
N	1881		1143		738		

**p < 0.01. *p < 0.05. +p < 0.10.

Both non-sexual minority and sexual minority females were over two times more likely to report sexual assault victimization than were males of any sexual orientation (Exp(B) = 2.416). Living on campus increased the reporting of victimization for the full sample (Exp(B) = 1.413) and for males (Exp(B) = 1.555), but not for females. Whites were less likely to report sexual assault (Exp(B) = 0.681) than non-Whites. For males, Whites were less likely to report sexual assault (Exp(B) = 0.589), but there was no difference by race for females. Living

alone had increased the likelihood of sexual assault for the full sample ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.074$), males ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.272$), and females ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.133$). Fraternity/sorority membership increased reported sexual assault victimization in the full sample ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.489$), but did not impact reported victimization in either the male or female samples.

Sexual minority students were about two times ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.049$) more likely to report sexual harassment (see column 1 in **Table 4(b)**) than non-sexual minority students. Sexual minority males were over three times ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.489$) more likely to report sexual harassment than heterosexual males. Sexual minority females did not report more sexual harassment than non-sexual minority females. Gender did have an impact on the reporting of sexual harassment. Women were over four times ($\text{Exp}(B) = 4.483$) more likely to have reported sexual harassment than were men. The findings that females were significantly more likely to report sexual harassment than males and that sexual minority females were not more likely to report sexual harassment than non-sexual minority females suggests that the driving force for sexual harassment for females is simply their gender.

Sexual harassment was more likely to be reported by those in a fraternity or sorority. This finding holds for all three samples: all cases ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.640$), males ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.566$), and females ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.686$). Living on campus increased the likelihood of reported sexual harassment for the full sample ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.436$) and for females ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.186$), but not for males. White males were less likely to report sexual harassment ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.750$) than non-Whites, but race had no effect in the full sample or for females. The other control variables did not exhibit significant relationships with reported sexual harassment.

Table 4(c) provides the results for physical abuse. Similar to sexual assault, sexual minority students were significantly more likely to have reported physical abuse than non-sexual minority students. However, the impact of sexual minority status was somewhat similar across the samples (all cases, males, and females) for physical abuse. Sexual minority males were about two times ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.981$) more likely to report physical abuse than non-sexual minority males. The full sample found that sexual minority students were also just under two times ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.885$) more likely to report physical abuse victimization. For females, sexual minority students were less than two times ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.782$) more likely to report victimization than non-sexual minority students.

Unlike sexual assault and harassment, gender had no impact on the reporting of physical abuse. Membership in a fraternity or sorority increased the likelihood of reporting physical victimization, for males ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.728$), but not for the full sample or females. Living alone increased the reporting of physical abuse for females ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.556$). None of the other variables had significant relationships with reported physical abuse.

For the final type of victimization, psychological abuse, sexual minority students were significantly more likely to report victimization than were heterosexual students. Unlike the results for both sexual assault and physical abuse,

this finding holds for the full sample ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.647$) and females ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.008$), but not for males. Thus sexual minority males were not more likely to report psychological abuse than non-minority sexual males.

Females were more likely to report psychological abuse than males ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.248$). Membership in a fraternity or sorority increased reported psychological abuse in the full ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.392$) and male samples ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.382$). Living on campus reduced the likelihood of reported psychological abuse for the full sample ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.796$) and the male sample ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.783$). Living alone increased the likelihood of reported psychological abuse for females only ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.717$).

4. Discussion

While research on violence among college students has historically neglected the victimization experiences of sexual minority college students, the findings clearly point to an effect of sexual orientation on reported victimization. Consistent with previous research (Edwards et al., 2015) sexual minority students were significantly more likely to report at least one incident of sexual assault ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.907$), sexual harassment ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.049$), physical abuse ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.885$), and psychological abuse ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.647$) than non-sexual minority students. These findings lend support to the hypothesis that sexual minority students would be more likely to report victimization experiences in all of the categories. If we assume that sexual minority students were in same sex relationships, these findings support the hypothesis that same sex couples will report the highest rates of psychological abuse, with non-sexual minority females reporting more incidents than males. Findings indicate that males, however, have a greater risk of other types of abuse.

Sexual minority males were more likely to report each of the types of abuse (sexual assault ($\text{Exp}(B) = 9.449$), sexual harassment ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.489$), and physical abuse ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.981$)), except for psychological abuse. In fact, sexual minority males' odds of being victimized were consistently larger than they were for the full sample. This suggests that except for psychological abuse, sexual minority status for males is a bigger predictor of victimization than it is for females (though it appears to matter for both genders). This supports the hypothesis that sexual minority males would experience higher rates of sexual victimization compared to non-sexual minority males. For females, sexual minority status increases the likelihood of victimization for three of the four types of abuse (sexual assault ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.159$), physical abuse ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.782$), and psychological abuse ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.008$)). Sexual minority females did not see an increased risk of victimization for sexual harassment. Females were significantly more likely to report sexual harassment, thus this suggests that being female is the driving force for why females are sexually harassed. These findings lend partial support for our hypothesis that women would experience higher victimization rates in all abuse categories regardless of sexual orientation. The findings have important program

development implications directed at reducing victimization via education.

The current study is unique because the findings highlight the importance for education among groups about their varying risks for different types of abuse. For example, since psychological abuse is more common for sexual minority female students, they may be exposed to unique forms of abuse such as the threat of “outing” a partner (i.e., revealing sexual orientation) to others (Carvalho, Lewis, Derlega, A., & Viggiano, 2011). These are relevant indicators for policy development, not only for students but for other employees at colleges and universities.

This study is also important because it speaks to the need for colleges to have adequate policies for faculty and staff as well. While it varied depending on academic program, previous research found that student affairs staff members were more aware of issues than were faculty members, with findings indicating a greater knowledge of sexual minority topics and events amongst the student affairs staff when compared to the faculty (R. D. Brown et al., 2004). Clear policies that faculty and staff are aware of can assist them in recognizing and addressing these issues whenever observed, as well as being receptive to students who bring up such issues with them. It is important that faculty and staff should be kept aware of gender differences in experiences of abuse. Gender was also significantly related to reported sexual assault, sexual harassment, and psychological abuse, but not physical abuse. Thus, gender matters for three of the four types of victimization and females consistently reported more victimization for all three.

The lack of a significant result between gender and physical abuse is not surprising. Prior research has not found that the likelihood of reporting physical abuse is affected by the victim’s gender (Hines & Saudino, 2003). Straus & Ramirez (2007) report that women were significantly more likely to be seriously injured than men in cases of intimate partner physical abuse. We only examined the likelihood of physical abuse and not the extent of such abuse. Future research should examine the relationship between gender and the severity of physical abuse victimization.

Another possible reason for the lack of a relationship between gender and physical violence could be the skewed gender ratio at RIT. RIT has many more male students than female students. Despite the fact that our sample is about 40% female, over two-thirds of the students at RIT are male. Guttentag and Secord (1983) argue that when women are scarce and men are plentiful, men will be less likely to harass or assault women. Female college students at RIT may be less likely to be physically victimized by intimate partners because the sex ratio leads men to be more protective of women. Another possibility could be that female college students at RIT have more options to choose from amongst the male population and thus can be more selective and are better able to avoid abusive relationships.

While the current analysis uses sexual harassment as a variable, future research may wish to look at sexual harassment alongside measures of general harassment,

such as bullying. This was an area of victimization the current study could not examine. There were no questions concerning overall bullying or harassment by others. There were measures of intimate partner abuse, both physical and psychological, and sexual assault, but sexual minority victimization was more common for both IPV and for sexual assaults that are not necessarily perpetrated by an intimate partner. Thus, an examination of overall harassment of sexual minority students by non-intimate partners might be helpful to have alongside the victimization categories used here.

Our research indicates that sexual orientation is a strong predictor of victimization, particularly for males. The results of this study illustrate the importance for college health professionals and others dealing with college populations of avoiding a “one size fits all” policy approach to addressing partner violence, sexual harassment and sexual abuse. Accordingly, when developing programs and services, practitioners and college health professionals must strive for inclusivity, as well as develop targeted approaches for outreach to populations on their campuses, which may be at greater risk.

Although the current study extends research on IPV, sexual assault, and sexual harassment among sexual minority college students, findings should be viewed with caution in light of several limitations. First, data were obtained by self-report. Thus, the possibility of deliberate response distortion must be considered. Second, present findings may not generalize beyond the particular sample. We note our sample consisted of a small number of college men and women that were sexual minority on a mid-size campus who may differ from other groups in their experiences of perceived psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, and sexual harassment. The study does, however, provide evidence for future comparisons.

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