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Analysis of Sexual Assault Policy Implementation Through the Narratives of University Support Professionals

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Abstract

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MPhil-PPA, Walden University, 2020

MPA, Purdue University Global, 2014

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Sexual assaults occurring on university campuses are a national health crisis with statistics revealing 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men endure an unwanted sexual experience during their college career. The United States government has modified Title IX to update processes and resources educational institutions must provide to their students affected by sexual assaults. Educational institutions have increased educational resources to inform students about sexual assault prevention, how to recognize a sexual assault, where to go on campus for assistance, and where to report a complaint. However, studies have shown that over 90% of sexual assaults never get reported, and students needing assistance refer to the campus sexual assault investigation process as the second assault. The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the policy implementation gaps using narrative policy framework to analyze best practices and barriers to implementation of Title IX policy from the perspective of university campus support professionals who are tasked with its implementation. Data were collected through in-depth structured interviews with 19 campus support professionals in a Midwest public university system. Findings indicated that the best practice is to adhere to the system/campus policy processes. Barriers for policy implementation included lack of education, not following the approved system and campus processes, lack of funding and lack of resources. Findings of this may be used by universities to better support their campus support professionals to improve the services provided to students affected by sexual assaults leading to positive social change.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my children, Ian, Sascha, Isabella, and Sofiya, and my husband, Matthew. Thank you for your encouragement and support. I adore each of you. You are the loves of my life.

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Dr. Karel Kurst-Swanger, my faculty and chair, I can't thank you enough for your dedication and support during this process. Your uncanny ability to know when I needed substantive feedback on the paper or words of encouragement kept me going through the long dissertation process.

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All of the campus support professionals who participated in my study, your compassion and earnest and tireless efforts are amazing. You make a difference.

My colleagues, survivors, and supporters, your strength and willingness to share your experience are invaluable.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Sexual assaults on university campuses remain a matter of national concern despite the increased public recognition of this problem. Although publicity and several policy changes enacted over the past 2 decades have advanced the dialogue on gender-based violence, recent studies on the phenomenon of sexual assault on university campuses have focused on understanding the actions of those directly involved in an incident of a sexual assault but namely the assaulted (see DeLoveh et al. 2017) and the responses of their peers (see McMahon, et al. 2017). Such studies have improved the communications of policy administrators and other professionals in higher education to confer on the social complexities of the phenomenon more accurately. However, the persistent prevalence of sexual assault on university campuses (Krebs et al., 2016) belies the efforts of university administration and the work of campus support professionals as they implement the policy created to prevent and respond to sexual assaults.

Campus support professionals are the people who, through their daily interactions with the students and administration, are responsible for policy implementation. The university campus support professionals are the people on university campuses who are the direct link between policy and students affected by a sexual assault. It is the distinctive position of campus support professionals that provides unique insight on the campus perspective as it relates to the written policy and the processes effected for campus compliance. Additionally, campus support professionals, as policy administrators, are best able to provide the details regarding how the written policy addresses the complexities of sexual assault allegations and where policy implementation

gaps exist. Obtaining qualitative data via the personal narratives of campus support professionals is crucial for policy creators to understand rationales of public administrators as their actions of campus support professionals align with the policy and whether policy is effective in producing the desired results.

Although this study does not focus on measurements of successful policy implementation, the narratives of policy implementors addressed both the best practices and barriers of implementing the sexual assault policy known as Title IX. Title IX is the overarching rule designed to address discrimination in education based on sex/gender, which also includes sexual harassment, gender-based violence such as sexual assaults, and rape (Education Amendments Act, 1972, 2018 & 2020). Title IX policy for the previous decade has provided educational institutions with guidance on the best practices for campus support professionals when responding to their students concerning allegations of a sexual assault. This guidance was the Dear Colleague Letter, which was issued on April 4, 2011 by the U.S. Department of Education. The 19-page document stated that processes and procedures were by and large left up to each individual university or system to determine their processes and procedures under Title IX (Education Amendments Act, 1972, 2018 & 2020). This document also allowed each university or educational system to determine which student supports would be available as well as all aspects of adjudication. The Dear Colleague Letter instructed educational providers to be prompt and fair to both complainants and respondents. On May 6, 2020, the Department of Education issued advisement to all educational systems receiving federal funding that effective August 14, 2020, the updated Title IX policy would take

effect. This allowed an approximate 3-month period for all universities and campus support professionals charged with the implementation to put into action the over 2,000-page policy.

The goal of the current study was to obtain narratives of campus support professionals regarding the processes of policy implementation they perform. The goal was to gain a better understanding of the work of these public administrators, including their successes and barriers. Understanding is necessary to improve processes and elicit positive social change regarding policy implementation. Policy administrators who believe they are adequately informed and supported by their institutions may be better equipped to support the students they serve, which may reduce the prevalence of revictimization of a sexual assault survivor, bring clarity to processes, and strengthen the university's ability to provide an educational environment that is safe and equitable.

In this first chapter, I introduce the phenomenon of sexual assault on university campuses in the United States as a major public health crisis, provide the statistical evidence that people are most at risk of a sexual assault during their years in higher education, describe how policy implementation gaps enable the decoupling of policy and practice, and discuss how obtaining narratives create an opportunity for process improvement. Additionally, I provide a broad overview of this study including the problem statement, nature of the study, research questions, hypotheses, theoretical framework, definitions, assumptions, and limitations.

Background

Challenges in public administration implementation are often as complex as the issues policies are designed to address. There are two main policy concepts that make a problem like sexual assaults on university campuses appear to be insurmountable. The first is the existence of the policy implementation gap. The policy implementation gap, as described by Gunn (1978), is the gap that exists between a good policy and how that policy is often undermined by an organization's business practices during implementation. The second concept is the idea of a wicked problem described by Rittel and Webber (1973) as a problem that may be impossible to solve because the costs associated with finding a solution would create an immense financial burden to society. With wicked problems, there exist contradictory viewpoints and information, incomplete knowledge about the problem, numerous stakeholders with varying opinions and goals, and heavily interconnected societal problems.

Although the phenomenon of sexual assault on university campuses does present a wicked problem exacerbated by policy implementation gaps, it is vital to the advancement of safety and equity in institutions of higher learning to invest time and resources for improving policy implementation of Title IX (Education Amendments Act, 1972, 2018 & 2020). Gaining insight as to the perceptions of best practices and barriers related to Title IX implementation may reduce the retraumatization of survivors and due process for all parties by making the processes and procedures clear and accessible for every educational institution and campus. Obtaining the narratives of campus supports for the purpose of policy improvement may indicate where support is needed to allow

frontline professionals to better advise and support students while imparting clear expectations as to the rights and benefits afforded by the Title IX policy (see DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017).

The perspectives of campus support professional as policy administrators impact implementation. Policy administrators working as campus support professionals are not immune to societal norms, personal biases, and business practices of the institutions they serve. The role of university campus support professionals is to connect students with resources that allow them to achieve their educational goals. This is true whether the campus support professional provides academic guidance, financial advisement, health and wellness support, or other supports under the Title IX policy. Successful obtainment of an education is the goal of educational providers. However, policies and the narratives of implementors are not mutually exclusive. People who implement policy impact the effectiveness as each policy by their experiences and interpretations of the policy. Furthermore, no individuals are impervious to the ideologies of their environment and the social norms therein; they are also not immune to the impacts of just world beliefs (Newins et al., 2018; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015), rape myth/culture (Newins et al., 2018, Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015), or the decoupling of the written policy when it comes to the practice and process of policy implementation (Holland & Cortina, 2019; Moylan & Hammock, 2019). Obtaining and examining the narratives of public administrators may provide nonpractitioners with a better understanding of how policy implementors perceive policy and how they believe their actions to implement policy do or do not meet the requirements of the policy (see Jones et al., 2014, 2018; Veidlinge,

2016). I sought to fill a gap in the literature by exploring the narratives of the people who implement Title IX policy. I analyzed the narratives for themes in best practices of university campus support professionals, and for themes regarding the barriers faced by policy administrators during implementation of Title IX.

Problem Statement

The high frequency of sexual assaults perpetrated on university campuses has continued at crisis levels in the United States for decades (Krebs, 2016). In 2018, the Office for Victims of Crime, a department of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (Office of Victims for Crime, 2018), published a study of sexual assaults occurring between 2005 and 2015, which indicated that 1 in 5 female college students (20% of the student population) and 1 in 16 male college students (6% of the student population) experience an attempted or completed sexual assault by the time they are a college senior. The study also indicated that only 10% of these university student assault survivors reported their assault to campus support professionals or the police (National Center for Victims of Crime, 2018). The rationale for not reporting, according to the current literature, indicated that survivors face many complex barriers to reporting and help-seeking such as rape culture, victim blaming (Buzo, 2017), not wanting to acknowledge a sexual assault (Newins et al., 2018), and confusion as to what assistance is available (Veidlinge, 2016).

Under the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter's guidance on Title IX policy, universities bore the responsibility to take action to eliminate the behaviors, prevent the recurrence, and remediate the effects of a sexual assault. However, sexual assault survivors refer to

dealing with the university and university policies as the second assault (Buzo, 2017). The trauma of the sexual assault compounded by the second assault is measured by assault survivors throughout their lifetimes physically, mentally, and financially. Those closest to these situations, namely the impacted students and university campus support professionals, have reported that the universities often do not follow their policies and procedures or do not follow them with routine consistency (Moylan & Hammock, 2019). As a result of the inconsistent process, it is difficult for students to understand what supports are available necessary to make informed decisions on where to turn for help (DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017). The updated Title IX policy that took effect in August of 2020 attempted to address the issues of transparency that were not afforded under the previous rule. The 2020 update to Title IX made substantial changes, including clearer directives that institutions must follow with the intent to provide procedures and available campus supports.

Although the 2020 update to Title IX provided clarity to process and due process, there were some changes that are likely to impact the willingness of students to put forth a claim. Examples of changes to Title IX that are anticipated to be detrimental to complainants are that campuses may raise the burden of proof from a "preponderance of the evidence" to "clear and convincing." Another change that may cause complainants to hold back from reporting is that cross-examination of the parties is now permissible, whereas cross-examination had been discouraged to reduce re-victimization of a survivor. However, the update now requires that the parties cross-examine not only the direct parties but also supporting witnesses in more of a courtroom-fashioned hearing. The

transition raising the burden of proof and cross-examination is also expected to negatively impact the social justice progresses made in the areas of just world beliefs, victim blaming, and rape myth acceptance (Newins et al., 2018; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015) because now not only must a survivor face their perpetrator about a sexual assault, but they must also be subjected to answering for the biases, just world beliefs, and victim blaming of the respondent and their advisors.

Continued research into the phenomenon of sexual assault on university campuses is vital. Sexual assault is a public health crisis, and the impact of sexual assaults on university campuses exceeds the boundaries of the campus geography and affects victims for their lifetime. The economic impacts to society were recently studied by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (as cited in Peterson et al., 2017), which found that the economic burden of a sexual assault on the victim over a lifetime is estimated to be approximately $122,000 per person. Because many survivors are not able to shoulder these costs alone, the burden is then shifted to taxpayers and society (as cited in Peterson et al., 2017). Although the financial burden is only one measure of the impact to a sexual assault survivor, it may also be the most tangible indicator of the trauma suffered by an assault survivor. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center study also indicated that the long-term effects of trauma may be reduced with effective supports. As it relates to the current study, the work provided by university campus support professionals under policies such as Title IX that require universities to provide access to support resources to sexual assault survivors is a meaningful effort to mitigate this phenomenon. Obtaining of the narratives of how support professionals deliver services in their implementation of

Title IX policy to ensure resources reach the impacted students may result in a reduction the financial burden to survivors and society.

Examination of campus support on university campuses is ongoing but has not been exhausted. Some researchers have explored the effectiveness sexual prevention programing (Malick, 2014), others have discussed the decoupling of university's written policy from university's active practices (Moylan & Hammock, 2019), and others have detailed how the complex systems, such as having multiple investigative models with unclear processes that leave students to decipher where to find assistance, directly correlate to a reduction in help seeking following a sexual assault (Buzo, 2017). There was a gap in the literature regarding the in-depth knowledge of Title IX policy implementation by the university support professionals who are tasked with its implementation. The current study was conducted to fill this gap by exploring the narratives of the university support professionals who effect policy implementation. The data obtained in this study were analyzed to identify common themes regarding Title IX policy implementation's best practices and barriers. These findings may be beneficial to universities and policymakers to define implementation gaps and to mitigate gaps with additional education to reach compliance in everyday practice.

The need for policy administrators to receive specific education on the policies and implementation guidelines is crucial to successful policy. Recent findings of The National Academy of Public Administration study on the shortfalls that will impact public policy and public administration through the 2020s indicated that practical knowledge on policy implementation is an area of concern (see Gerton & Mitchell,

2019). The study also indicated that the roles of employees working in public jobs and responsible for public policy administration indicate are often unclear and, as a result, the boundaries and responsibilities are also unclear. This leaves many public workers unsure of which aspects of a policy they are responsible to implement or how to implement (Gerton & Mitchell, 2019). This study was important to the field of public policy and administration because it addressed several of the key challenges impacting effective public policy administration currently and through the next decade. Some of the other challenges identified by Gerton and Mitchell included hyperoptimistic expectations of policy, inconsistencies of policy implementation processes resulting from autonomy given to governmental levels under the policymaking national level, policymakers not working with a wide range of stakeholders to develop policy, and the lack of accountability inherent in the system. Gerton and Mitchell determined that in each of these situations is improved training and education for policy administrators on execution to have a better understanding of policy implementation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the best practices and barriers to implementation of sexual assault policy from the perspective of university campus support professionals who are tasked with its implementation. University campus support professionals are the direct link between policy and the students. Through structured in-depth interviews with university support professionals, insight was obtained from the persons identified as university campus supports who are responsible with the daily implementation of the policies enacted to connect students to the resources available on

their campus. The findings from this study may provide a valuable addition to the literature by addressing a perspective that had not been thoroughly researched: the narratives of campus professionals implementing Title IX. Building on the literature, I identified areas of improvements as communicated by those responsible for policy implementation to define the gaps in policy implementation, which included improved communication and training, clarity in the documented policies and procedures, more frequent messaging, and availability of resources as each university endeavors to be Title IX compliant.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain contextual data from university campus support professionals regarding the implementation of Title IX. Because there was so little qualitative information available from the perspective of policy administrators, the following research question was used to guide the study: What are the best practices and barriers to implementing Title IX policy regarding sexual assaults?

Theoretical and Conceptual Support

I used the narrative policy framework (NPF) to provide context to the narratives of university campus professionals to gain insight into their implementation of Title IX. According to Jones et al. (2014, 2018), the NPF provides a structure whereby the basic elements of storytelling such as setting, characters, plot, and moral are used to identify the impact of personal stories on policy processes. These personal perspectives are important because the documented policy is the base level of policy implementation, which is then supported by the level of the thought process when providing support to

survivors as deviations create opportunities for inequities in the standard of care available to university students.

Although the decision to use the NPF was appropriate to provide structure to the data collected for this study, I anticipated that the personal stories of the university campus support professionals would be varied based on several factors and may produce alternative findings in reproducing this study. Such factors may be unique to the setting, for example the size, type, and location of the university. I also anticipate there may be differences among the characters, plot, and morals of the narratives that are impacted by the socioeconomics, age, and cultural backgrounds of the participants. Also, a factor for creating variance in future replication of this study may be the student population served by the campus support professional; for example, a private school based on religious doctrines may have different approaches in policy than their public university counterparts. Researchers seeking to replicate this study should find consistency in the rule because Title IX, as a federal mandate, requires all educational institutions receiving federal funding to meet the requirements for universities to be compliant.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative design to obtain the narratives of university support professionals. Working within the NPF framework, I focused on a micro level or individual (campus support professional) level of study (see Jones et al., 2014, 2018). I conducted interviews with university support professionals to explore their perceptions of the best practices and barriers they face while implementing Title IX when providing support to students dealing with sexual assault. To understand the current paradigm, I

determined that it would be appropriate to obtain the individual stories of campus professionals to find out how their perspectives endorse policy (see Jones et al., 2014, 2018). The interviews were conducted on the Zoom teleconference platform and were recorded, transcribed, and coded for common themes and categories grounded in the NPF.

Definitions

Complainant: The person who brings a claim of an unwanted sexual assault in a Title IX claim. Other names used by campus support professionals can include *survivor*, *victim*, and *plaintiff*. The use of these words depends on the scope of work of the campus support professional. For example, a campus police officer may use victim or plaintiff, whereas the Title IX coordinator or deputy may use complainant because it conveys a neutral perspective.

Narrative policy framework (NPF): A theoretical framework that is designed to discover what the roles of policy narratives are regarding the existing policy processes (Jones et al., 2014, 2018).

Peer bystander intervention: Education that teaches university students how to recognize the behaviors and scenarios where sexual assaults are normalized. This education equips university students with the knowledge of how to intervene on behalf of their peers or assist peers in locating campus supports following assault (McMahon et al., 2017).

Rape acknowledgment: A survivor's willingness to refer and define an unwanted sexual experience. This is an important concept because the survivor's willingness to

refer to an unwanted sexual experience as a sexual assault impacts help seeking and reporting. A survivor may acknowledge they need support services but may continue to be unable or unwilling to categorize the experience as a sexual assault (see Newins, et al 2018).

Rape culture: The normalization, minimization, and ignorance of gender-based violence, sexual aggressions, and sexual violence behaviors.

Rape myth acceptance: The generalizations in U.S. culture that perpetuate the stereotypes that condone or minimize sexually aggressive behaviors. Rape myth acceptance includes such concepts as the perception that a rape is exclusively an event in which a person is violently and horrifically attacked, that a rape is perpetrated by a deranged stranger in a dark alley in the middle of the night, and that the victim should not have been out alone. Because this is the widely accepted perception of a sexual assault, many people who have been sexually assaulted do not report their experience even though it meets the definition of a sexual assault (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015).

Respondent: The person against whom and allegation is brought in a Title IX complaint. Other names used by campus support professionals include (alleged) *perpetrator*, (alleged) *aggressor*, *defendant*, and (alleged) *assailant*. The use of these words depends on the scope of work of each campus support professional. For example, a campus police officer may use alleged perpetrator whereas the Title IX coordinator may use respondent because it conveys a neutral perspective.

Sexual assault: Any unwanted and nonconsensual sexual experience proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

Sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE): A registered nurse or higher-level nurse who has taken forensic nursing training to identify a sexual assault, collect data, and collect evidence for a criminal investigation of a sexual assault (see Veidlinger, 2016).

Task Force on Sexual Violence and Harassment: Midwest university system offers a cross-disciplinary group of professionals within the Midwest university system with the purpose of evaluating policies, practice, and attitudes on campuses across its system to measure frequencies of sexual assaults on campus to increase awareness and prevention. I did not focus on analyzing or critiquing this group or its mandates but rather acknowledged its existence and directives related to the Title IX policy requirements and the accepted procedures for implementation.

Title IX Act: The federal law that prohibits sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, in all federally funded education programs and workplaces (Education Amendments Act, 1972, 2018 & 2020).

Title IX coordinator: The person identified in an educational setting with most of the responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring, and compliance with Title IX (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020).

Midwest university system sample internal policy: Title IX is a federal level policy, which often is supplemented by local state and/or campus policy. The Midwest university system sample internal policy shows that this system does make readily available its policies on sexual assaults. This study did not focus on analyzing or critiquing implementation of any of the internal policies of the Midwest university

system; however, it is important for this study to acknowledge its existence as it pertains to implementation of Title IX policy requirements (Appendix F).

Assumptions

There were several assumptions in this study. These presumptions were important to advance the process for data collection. The first assumption was that all participants had experience providing supportive services to university students in the Midwest university system. The second assumption was that all participants were in an active position to provide services for students dealing with a sexual assault. The third assumption was that all participants had received training pertaining to their area of expertise in providing support services as a campus support professional. I assumed that the training may have included but was not required to include the recently rescinded Title IX policy, new Title IX rules that were put into effect in August of 2020, state system policy (such as Midwest university system's internal policy), and any other earned certifications or training entitling participants to provide their services to effected students. The fourth assumption was that all participants acknowledged through their participation that their personal narratives would be valuable in the analysis of policy implementation. Finally, I assumed that each participant would respond honestly and accurately to allow the collection of accurate data and recurrent themes in policy implementation practices.

Scope and Delimitations

The specific aspect of sexual assaults on university campuses that this study addressed was the implementation of Title IX. Under Title IX, universities are required to

create and provide safe and equitable educational opportunities and must have processes

and support for students affected by sexual assaults. By focusing on the narratives of the

people who are tasked with providing support to students under the policy, I was able to

collect data that provided a deeper understanding of why a university's support processes

for sexual assault are often called the second assault by assault survivors. The boundaries

of this study were confined to Title IX and campus support professionals, often referred

to as student supports, in the Midwest university system's 4-year brick and mortar

universities that also provide dorm housing. The design of this study was expected to be

transferrable to any type of educational system to obtain the qualitative data to

understand implementation of Title IX policy.

Limitations

One issue with this study may be the reliability of the data because each

participant was employed within the university and system for which they were also

offering critiques. Unfettered honesty may not have been possible for fear of retribution

or reprisals. It is reasonable to assume that criticism of the system or one's employer may

be problematic and that some people would not want to say anything that might

compromise their employment. Another issue potentially limiting the findings of this

study was conducting interviews via Zoom. I chose to interview each participant via

Zoom but set the default of the video to be off because this approach would be less

confrontational. By providing each participant the option to participate via Zoom

conferencing but not demanding the use of the camera allowed each participant to speak

freely without having to face me during questioning. I also kept my video off during the

interview to not influence the participant's responses. By allowing the participants to keep a modicum of privacy by not facing me, I hoped that they would feel an increased level of comfort and willingness to share. I assumed that participants would be more inclined to share openly if they did not have to see me or see themselves.

Another limitation was that each campus support professional brought their own perspectives and experiences to the study. Factors such as education level, socioeconomic background, political leanings, religious beliefs, cultural origins, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual survivor status may have impacted the data gathered during the interviews. Future researchers should be aware that there could be outliers whose answers were vastly different compared to the other obtained responses. I attempted to mitigate this potential limitation by interviewing a large sample of participants. I did not encounter any outlier data in the 19 interviews that were conducted for this study.

Finally, this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic may have influenced participants' responses. Under the urging of the Center for Disease Control, the population of the United State was encouraged to self-isolate until further notice or when vaccine and viable treatment options are readily available to enough people to reduce the need for extreme social distancing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the traditional brick-and-mortar universities moved content delivery to online studies or abbreviated face-to-face educational opportunities, and many students moved back to their familial homes. With fewer students physically on university campuses and in their dorms, and with university staff and faculty fulfilling

their roles remotely, there was also a reduction in the need for and availability of university campus support services.

Finally, this was my first formal study. As is best practice for doctoral research, I elicited the expertise and guidance of experienced scholars and experts, including Title IX and higher education administrators. This triangulation was intended to ensure the validity of the findings in the study.

Significance

Effective policy implementation is the foundation of a successful society. The Title IX Act (Education Amendments Act, 1972, 2018, & 2020) is the federal policy that directs universities to stop the behaviors, prevent recurrences, and remediate the effects of an unwanted sexual experience. According to the Buzo (2017), students are confused about campus resources and their processes, which serves to exacerbate the original trauma of the sexual assault rather than remediate it. Failure to respond effectively to students who are experiencing the trauma of a sexual assault leaves university campuses open to lawsuits, fines, political strife, and angry students, parents, and alumni. Inequitable, unclear, and unknown campus policies and campus supports have become known as the second assault by sexual assault survivors (Buzo, 2017). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (see, Peterson et al., 2017), the long-term financial effects of a sexual assault, including the costs of seeking justice, medical/mental health expenses, and loss of income, are estimated to cost taxpayers an average of $122,461 over each sexual assault survivor's lifetime. The current study was conducted to add to the existing literature and create opportunities for improvements in policy

implementation practices. This study was important because it provided an opportunity to examine sexual assault policy implementation by exploring the perceptions of those tasked with carrying it out. Through analysis of the personal narratives of campus support professionals regarding how policy and policy application impacts their roles, policymakers and university decision makers may discern whether university support professionals need additional education and training to effectively implement policy, and whether a policy implementation gap exists.

A policy implementation gap refers to vague policies enacted without collaboration of constituents, which makes effective implementation difficult unless institutions make major investments of time for policy learning, training, and peer learning (Hudson et al., 2019). The information obtained through this study may provide universities and the overarching system with the support that their university professional support employees need to effectively implement, communicate, and deliver assistance to students. The positive social change goal for this study was to reduce the second assault of university sexual assault victims and improve the pathway to obtain support from universities to allow the student to continue their educational experience equitably. Moreover, I hoped that that this research would assist in filling a policy implementation gap for university campus support professionals, Title IX coordinators, and their deputies. Improved confidence in services provided under clear policies and procedures that have been effectively taught may increase transparency, competency, and continuity in service delivery.

Summary

Chapter 1 provided the background for this study of sexual assault implementation through the narratives of university campus support staff. Chapter 1 included the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, definitions, assumptions, limitations, and significance. In Chapter 2, I provide an assessment of the current literature related to this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Sexual assaults on university campuses have received increased national attention and scrutiny. Due to an emotionally charged and divided political climate, but also due to the seemingly endless stream of highly publicized incidents of sexual assault occurring on university campuses, the phenomenon of sexual assault on university campuses has been the subject of many new studies and policy review over the past decade. Although impactful to a variety of related and important topics such as equity and civil rights, the current literature has primarily focused on campus assaults from the perspectives of those directly involved in an incident of sexual assault, including the assaulted, the assaulter, and their respective peers and bystanders. Furthermore, most of the studies have been quantitative, which is meaningful to determine the magnitude of the persons who are affected in several categories, but it does not provide any depth to the conversation as to why incidents occur or provide context for involved people's actions during and after an incident. I expanded the current literature in this qualitative study by obtaining in-depth personal narratives from policy administrators implementing Title IX policy and using the NPF to code the data.

Few studies have focused on the campus professionals who assist and support students through the campus processes following an allegation of sexual assault. Existing studies addressing the unique relationship between campus professionals and the students they serve (Holland & Cortina, 2019; Veidlinge, 2016) were quantitative in design. Few studies addressed the personal accounts of people assisting students through sexual assault matters. Those studies focused on the disconnect between written policy and

practice of procedure (Moylan & Hammock, 2019; Veidlinge, 2016) rather than how that disconnect impacts participants' actions pertaining to implementation of policy. Additional qualitative research was necessary to understand why people act or think as they do in certain circumstances.

As part of the current study, I reviewed the literature on the present state and culture of campuses life as it relates to rape culture (Buzo, 2017), just world beliefs, victim blaming, and rape myth acceptance (Newins et al., 2018; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). Although not the focus of this study, these studies provided context regarding active participants of the process and setting. Also, I reviewed the ever changing and hotly debated policy known as Title IX, allowing me to provide a clear backdrop for applying analysis via NPF. The evolution of Title IX, which has had significant changes depending on the dominant political party in office, impacts not only the procedures but also the rights afforded under it. These changes have impacted the ability of policy administrators to effectively implement the policy because the policy is overly broad and has little direction on how to achieve its goal (Gerton & Mitchell, 2019). I endeavored to understanding how these significant changes to policy impact campus policy support professionals as they strive to implement Title IX policy.

In Chapter 2, I synthesize the findings of the literature beginning with a description of the search strategy I employed. Thereafter, I provide a review of the current works on policy implementation gap and wicked problems, followed by the social constructs of rape culture, just world beliefs, victim blaming, and rape myth acceptance that shrouds incidents of sexual assaults on university campuses, and decoupling of Title

IX policy. Finally, I have provided the details of the structure of the NPF, explained how I developed a codebook using this framework, and described how narratives were used to analyze implementation of policy.

Literature Search Strategy

The public policy and administration databases searched for this study were SAGE Journals, ProQuest, and Ebsco to locate peer-reviewed articles related to U.S. college sexual assaults. The keywords used to find the scholarly literature were *sexual assault*, *higher education*, *rape culture*, *bystander intervention*, *Title IX investigations*, *sexual assault procedures*, *sexual assault policy*, *wicked problem*, *implementation*, *implementation gap*, *narrative policy framework*, and *public policy*.

In addition to the peer-reviewed journals, additional research on the Title IX Act from the Department of Education was reviewed (Education Amendments Act, 1972, 2018 & 2020). Additionally, I reviewed the Midwest university system regulation because the participants sought for this research project were with the Midwest university system and it was important to understand the system guidance regarding implementation of sexual assault policy. Much of the literature obtained for this study was published between 2015 and 2020. However, some of the seminal works of Gunn (1978) and Rittel and Webber (1973) provided a foundation of public policy and implementation. In addition, the influential works of Burt (1980) regarding rape myths and rape culture were also included in this study.

Theoretical Foundation

Studying any aspects of a phenomenon as complex as sexual assault must include the topics addressed in the literature. Several of the recurring topics detailed in previous studies and examined in this section are policy implementation gap, wicked problems, rape culture, just world beliefs, victim blaming, rape myth acceptance, and decoupling of policy.

Policy Implementation Gap

The policy implementation gap was defined by Gunn (1978) as the disconnect that exists between documented policy and the enactment of policy in public administration. The continuing goal of research is to identify the components of implementation gap and to create measures to fill the gap. Although implementation gaps have been studied for the past 40 years, they continue to be problematic for policy creators. Furthermore, implementation gap is expected to be one of the most difficult challenges in policy administration over the next decade (Gerton & Mitchell, 2019).

A recent review of policy failure and implementation gap was conducted by Hudson et al. (2019) to examine policy implementation within complex organizational systems. Hudson et al. argued that written policies often become policy failures because policies are overreaching in expectation and scope, they do not adequately define governance, they are drafted in a vacuum without the input of key stakeholders, and they are drafted or changed at the whim of the current political powerholders. Research is necessary to analyze policy as a means of identifying the implementation gap. Analysis of policy demands first looking at the problem. Evaluation must first include a deeper

examination of the underlying factors that lead up to and include the problem that written policy is intended to correct. Braithwaite (2018) explained that there are three basic components at the problem level that make effective policy creation elusive: randomness, adaptability, and uniqueness of situations. Each of these components of a wicked problem aligned with the focus of the current study, which was sexual assault on university campuses. Sexual assault policy, specifically Title IX, has been in place since 1972 and has been updated to include sexual harassment and sexual assault guidance, but this has had little impact on the pervasive reality of sexual assaults on university campuses. Policy implementation gap provides a possible explanation for this phenomenon because it is nearly impossible to anticipate when an assault will take place, who or where the affected students will turn for assistance, and whether flexibility in support accommodations is possible because every situation is unique (Gerton & Mitchell, 2019).

Wicked Problems

Problems that are seeming too complex or big in scope are often referred to as "wicked problems". First identified by authors, Horst W.J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber (1973) they depicted wicked problems as those societal problems that are overwhelming in nature and may in fact be impossible to solve. Some of the perceived impossibility is derived from the fact that these problems are so interconnected to other societal problems that it is nearly impossible to ascertain the beginning or end of each interlaced problem. Examples of wicked problems include biodiversity issues, climate change, equity, food safety and poverty. These problems are wicked because they are so complex that the costs of fully investing in finding a solution would create an immense financial burden

that would itself be impossible to calculate. Additionally, the information known about the wicked problem is often contradictory, inconsistent, and incomplete which then produces fractured stakeholders with a wide variety of origins and differing opinions (Daviter, 2019). The phenomenon of sexual assaults on university college campus meets the criteria of a wicked problem. Reviewing the underlaying causes for implementation gap and implementation is important to organize the common themes derived from the narratives of policy administrators.

Rape Culture, Just World Beliefs, Victim Blaming, and Rape Myth Acceptance

Sexual assaults on university campuses present unique concerns for policy administrators in higher education. Universities are first and foremost institutions of higher learning. Creating an environment conducive to learning necessitates also providing a safe and equitable space for all students. As such, higher education is responsible to address the sexual assaults that affect their students to allow an opportunity for students to successfully complete their academic endeavors. Existing literature on sexual assaults on university campuses has primarily concentrated on understanding the beliefs and behaviors of aggressors, the survivors, and their peers. While these studies are vital to understanding the overall issue, there are few studies dedicated to the study of the university support professionals who implement the policies designed to address sexual assaults on university campuses. This study focuses upon these professionals as they implement Title IX and provides background on the issues that make implementation unique in the university setting.

As it pertains to Title IX, understanding the uniqueness of the university is to understand its students and the inclination toward helpseeking and reporting. The recent study conducted by Newins, Wilson, and White (2018) offers additional insight regarding rape myth acceptance and rape acknowledgment as impacting the victim's willingness to refer and define an unwanted sexual experience as a sexual assault. This information pertains to this study as campus support professionals working directly with student to implement Title IX may struggle with students who do not or do not refer to an assault as an assault and may be a factor that impedes the campus support professional from providing best supports to the student. The authors posit that sexual assertiveness of a student victim may be an interceding factor as a victim who believes that women who are docile during a sexual act because it is the expectation that women are docile during sex, support the victim blaming standard that a strong woman who should have been able to "fight harder", and the rape myth the men can't control themselves, fighting is a futile effort and men as supposed to be sexually aggressive. This previous research work is important to this research project because it considers the behaviors of the trauma survivor and their willingness to normalize sexual assault and sexual aggression. The normalization of these behaviors and beliefs that have been documented for the past forty years and made first notable by social scientist Martha Burt (1980). Her work first documented the beliefs that females are the sole responsible party to reduce the risk of sexual assaults. Women are responsible for the due diligence to ward off and fend off sexual assaults by being cautious and conscientious in her actions. Authors Vonderhaar and Carmody (2015) study these "just world beliefs and rape myth acceptance as barriers

for victims to report their trauma to campus supports affirm these continued beliefs. These studies are pertinent to the narratives of campus support professionals and the students they perpetuate the barriers in help-seeking and providing the necessary support services under Title IX.

Rape culture does not exist in a vacuum and therefore a broader view of all the people who contribute to a culture must be examined. It is the responsibility of universities to provide a safe and equitable environment conducive to student learning. Too few studies about sexual assaults on university campuses have provided insight on understanding campus support professionals who work directly with the impacted students and the campus at large. These are the persons who are charged with providing support students at their universities and guide them students through the processes. This study contributes to the body of knowledge related to understanding how campus support professionals guide and direct sexual assault survivors through the available campus supports and campus processes by obtaining the narratives of the campus support professional practitioners who provide support.

Decoupling of Policy: Title IX

Regrettably, survivors refer to experience of working through the sexual assault procedure as "the second assault". Research indicates that many students, believe they know where they might seek campus supports, but they are unaware of the process or report claims to persons not integrated with professional campus supports (McMahon, Palmer, Banyard, Murphy & Gidycz, 2017) and as a result less than 10% of assault survivors report the assault or make use of the available supports. Reporting shows that

students who do seek supports deem the process of finding support extremely confusing and overly complex (DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017). Failure to reach survivors or to provide adequate support following is costly to both the universities and students (Peterson, et al 2017) and is ultimately a failure of policy compliance.

Other studies have examined student perceptions of campus supports such as Title IX Director, residence hall personnel, and campus sexual assault center (Holland & Cortina, 2017) several research studies about to the effectiveness of the current available resources. The suggestion of these studies is that there is little to no incentive for university campuses to increase measures and programming. For instance, one study indicated that campuses must also be mindful of their ethical business concerns about obtaining absolute Title IX compliance; does the school decide to underserve and risk a possible lawsuit for not handling a sexual assault claim verses the potential loss of student applications as reporting would show a high number of sexual assaults that scare away future student prospects (Buzo, 2017 and Carina, 2017). Another study evidenced a social media backlash from students who felt that the questions posed were an invasion of their privacy (Mazer, et al. 2017). Therefore, there are significant business risks that may be associated with total policy compliance.

A study regarding the decoupling of implementation from Title IX was conducted by Moylan and Hammock (2019). The term "decoupling" occurs whenever an action is taken which is different from the written policy but is undertaken due to financial, business and/or political pressures that act as barriers to policy implementation creating implementation gap. Utilizing institutional theory, the Moylan and Hammock study

found that larger and public universities had higher decoupling scores and there were conflicting scores from different professional campus supports: victim advocates reporting higher decoupling scores and Title IX coordinators reporting lower decoupling scores. The authors also posited that decoupling occurs in implementation due to a hands-off approach from legislators once policy is created. Without oversight institutions of higher learning struggle to meet the requirements of Title IX policy as well as their own system or campus policies. What this study doesn't provide is the perceptions of campus support professionals to provide a deeper understanding of why there are differing opinions from campus support professionals regarding implementation gap

Although few in quantity, there exists quantitative studies depicting procedural obstacles to sexual assault reporting. Title IX provides the policy depicting the goal but does not detail process on how, creating an inherent lack of uniformity of processes and the provision of campus supports for universities across the U.S. Specifically, university students are confused about where they can turn on campus for helpseeking (DeLoveh et al., 2017). Confusion as to where to turn is in part due to the lack of cohesive and consistent policies as they are presented by the universities and the lack of information from their institutions about which supports give them the support sought by the students seeking assistance. Considering the elements of rape myth acceptance, victim blaming and that statistically one is 73% more likely to be assaulted by a person known by the victim than by a total stranger (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 2005), victims are often unsure which support they wish to pursue as they are unsure about what each support provides. Until the 2020 update to Title IX, the written policy required that supports be provided

equitably to provide the supports that allow students stop the assault behaviors, remediate the effects, and prevent the recurrence so to allow the impacted students education may proceed. However, the written policy of Title IX left up to each institution or system to determine what that entailed type of supports and education would be provided and when (U.S. Department of Education (2011). Title IX directs universities to act on matters involving discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sexual harassment and sexual assault, but without clear delineation as to how to enact processes to carry out the purpose a wide array of inconsistent procedures resulted. What this has meant for sexual assault victims is that each allegation and how it is investigated may differ not only from campus to campus but also from case to case (Malick, 2014, Deloveh & Cattaneo, 2017). In Abigail Malick's (2014) research project she underwent a literature review of peer reviewed publications of scholarly works to examine the effectiveness of sexual prevention education provided to students attending U.S. college campuses. This study was most significant to this dissertation study as it identified the important the most common types of programming used by campuses is bystander intervention. However, the study also indicated that that the implementation or delivery methods of the programming are varied in that it is most often only delivered to students during their first school semester and that it doesn't resonate with all students, and that the surveys obtained (usually pre-education and post-education usually a few weeks after training) should be requested at regular intervals during a prolonged period of time or throughout their time at university. These findings were affirmed in an updated study by authors McMahon, Palmer, Banyard, Murphy & Gidycz (2017), Deloveh and Cattaneo (2017),

Holland and Cortina (2017) and highlights the need to create tools for effective

programing.

While this study seeks to analyze the implementation of Title IX it is not a

critique or a summation of the policy itself. It is, however, important to acknowledge that

there have been many updates changes in the Title IX policy since enactment in 1972 as

these changes have impacted the efficacy of its implementation. In the over 48 years of

its existence the Title IX has had thirty-one (31) updates and clarifications; not all are

related to sexual assault, but all the changes are related to ensuring improvements in the

language and guidance to educators designed to ensure equity in educational

opportunities. Aligning with wicked problems and policy implementation gap the

changes have created and changed the stakeholders, the rights, and the responsibilities of

all of those affected by Title IX. The current political powers have completed revamped

and stripped down the policy change made during the previous administration. As the

2020 updates to Title IX are still fresh coupled with Covid-19 pandemic it is not clear

what the impacts of the new written policy will have on an institutions ability to

implement, but all these issues were identified as being impactful to the narratives of the

university campus professionals who participated in this study. Using narrative policy

framework to identify the common themes those narratives have specifically focused the

on the best practices and barriers of implementation of the Title IX policy through

narratives of the campus support professionals.

Theoretical Framework

A relatively new tool to research, narrative policy framework (NPF) has been used in several studies since its origination in 2014. As a theoretical framework NPF lends itself well to analyzing policy and policy problems because both policy and its problems are themselves structured in a storied format. Policy and policy problems are relayed and understood to all have a beginning, middle and end (Stone, 2002 p. 138). A search in the databases of Ebsco and Sage Journals indicates that NPF has been applied to investigating the narratives of nearly every type of policy available. Just a few examples in the past six years, NPF has been applied to examining domestic U.S. policy and foreign policies abroad including campaign finance reform (Gray & Jones, 2016), environmental policy involving nuclear energy (Grupta, K., Ripberger, J., and Wehde, W., 2018), agricultural policy related to the importance of language use in regulation of agricultural commodities (Huda, 2019), social policy related to the electronic vapor regulation (O'Leary, et. al, 2017), and education policy analyzing the depictions charter school in media (Ertas & McKnight, 2020). The originating authors of NPF caution that it is not a theoretical framework that works or should be applied for all research projects. The researcher who opines to use NPF for their study must not divert from the core assumptions in every NPF study which are: social construction, bounded in relativity, generalizable structures, must include micro, macro and meso levels of analysis, and homo narrans model of the individual (see Jones et al., 2014, 2018).

This dissertation study uses narrative policy framework to provide context to the narratives of university campus professionals' stories to gain insight into their

implementation of Title IX. According to the description of NPF theoretical framework in the peer reviewed study conducted by Jones, McBeth and Shanahan (2014 and 2018) this theoretical framework provides a structure whereby the basic elements of storytelling such as setting, characters, plot and moral are used to provide a means for interpreting the underlying beliefs of the storyteller. Narratives relay these beliefs through personal perspectives which are the focus of this study as they are used to examine implementation of Title IX by its practitioners.

Narrative policy framework is also a useful structure that seeks to extract the complex chronologies between public policy administrators, other persons impacted by policy, actions, situations, and results (Weible, 2017, p 2). The two main models for conducting a NPF study are narrative form which utilizes an experimental research design or narrative content which utilizes a non-experimental research design. This study incorporated narrative content model with a non-experimental research design. The research method for this study was face-to-face interviews conducted over the video conferencing platform Zoom. In keeping with NPF this study details the setting, the characters, and the heroes, villain and supporting characters as relayed by the campus support professionals through their implementation of Title IX. The research methods employed for this study are explained in greater depth in Chapter 3.

Narrative Policy Framework: Setting

Studies utilizing a narrative policy framework used the concept that people make sense the of the world by thinking and speaking in a storied format. Settings of a story provide the backdrop for the story that enable better understating of the events that occur

in that setting. This study focuses on the setting of university campuses. University

campus life, for most, conjures imagery of friends and newfound freedoms. It is a unique

experience whereby people from all different cultures, family structures, life experiences,

socio-economic backgrounds and beliefs are enjoined to cohabitate for a finite but

extended period. Many students are away from home for the first time and just beginning

to realize the liberties and responsibilities of adult decision making. Pertinent to this

study, many university students have not had romantic or sexual relationships and are

experiencing the complexities of their own sexuality (Malik, 2014). Studies on these

issues have produced an excellent base towards understanding the causal connections to

sexual assaults and have provided terms such as rape myths, rape culture, victim blaming,

bystander intervention. These studies have also been influential on the overall discourse

of sexual assaults as these terms have worked their way into the common vernacular

(Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). University support professionals, in addition to

implementation of policy, must also be mindful of the plethora of differing circumstances

brought by the previous experiences of the students and they provide the meaningful

backdrop factors which influence implementing policy.

Given the breadth of diversity in the belief structures existing on university

campuses, it is reasonable to recognize that the prevalence of sexual assault on university

campus has remained consistent for decades (Krebs, 2016). In 2018, the Office for

Victims of Crime, a department of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of

Justice, published a study of sexual assaults occurring between 2005 to 2015 depicting

that one in five female college students (20% of a student population) and one in sixteen

men (6% of a student population) will experience an attempted or a completed sexual assault by the time they are a college senior. This study also reported that only 10% of these college student sexual assault victims indicated they reported their assault to either campus support professionals or to the police (National Center for Victims of Crime, 2018). The literature indicates universities are aware of their responsibility to provide campus supports students to effectively stop, prevent, and remediate the effects of sexual assaults. As a basis for setting the stage for Title IX implementation, universities meet this the requirement by providing their version so educational programing and support professionals made available to students.

Narrative Policy Framework: Characters

Studies that utilize narrative policy framework must depict the social construction as well as the belief systems held by the characters as narrators of their story. This research project focused on the roles of the individuals applying Title IX as the main characters in this study. As main characters, the campus support professionals are responsible for creating an environment conducive to learning in a safe and equitable space for a diverse student population. As such, higher education policy administrators are responsible to address sexual assaults that affect their students. Few studies have focused directly on studying campus support professionals; however, Holland and Cortina (2019) authored a qualitative study on the role of college campus resident assistants ("RA's") as they have a distinctive position of being both university campus support employees and fellow students. The Holland & Cortina's study is significant to this study, as it explored the relationship between survivor and university campus support

employee specifically as it relates to the importance of the university campus supports response to the survivor. The study was successful for identifying four main categories of responses: controlling (advising the survivor of next steps and direct to other supports), empowering (advising to the survivor that they are deserved of assistance and to seek it out), gatekeeping (asking if the survivor would like assistance and then advising based on survivor response) and minimizing (advising the survivor when they are ready or decides to seek help where they can find them). This study is important to this dissertation as it highlights that university campus supports approaches do, in fact, vary greatly and that Title IX policy is not specifically referred to when RA's work with victims reporting a sexual assault to their housing professional and thus how they direct victims to the university resources.

RA's and other campus housing professionals as student support professionals in the sexual assault process may deal with the highest volume of reports but there are several other groupings of campus support professionals who participate in Title IX implementation process. A study of SANE professionals authored by attorney Rebecca Veidlinge (2016) wrote of her findings from her years of working with Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) professionals through the various models of campus adjudications processes inclusive of both the hearing panel and the single investigator model (it is noteworthy to relay that the Title IX update of August of 2020 requires campus to provide a hearing panel option). The Veidlinge study was significant to this research study because it provided the rare perspective of the feedback of the SANE professional, it also describes the requirement of the SANE to be involved in the

evidentiary collection processes and must be prepared to provide testimony during both criminal and campus hearings. The participating SANE professionals shared their views on the lack of continuity in campus processes supporting both decoupling and policy implementation gap. Additionally, this study provides details on the divergent processes and policies while discussing the impact specifically of Title IX. While this piece of literature provides the rare feedback from a campus support professional there are several issues to recognize in this document. Author Veidlinger is an attorney sole practitioner and consultant to institutions of higher education in Michigan the author provides the issues of the SANE professional through her lens of a consulting attorney. It may be opined the work of Veidliger's work is not a true scientific study, but it is more than anecdotal as it is the firsthand accounting of several struggles in the implementation of Title IX (Veidlinger, 2016).

Narrative Policy Framework: Villains

Studies that utilize narrative policy framework must illustrate the structures of the interacting levels of the narratives. Interactions amongst the levels is presumably where conflict is most evident giving rise to the concept of the story's villain. As this study is focused on the implementation of Title IX, the villain was anticipated to be described in the narratives as interactions between the micro, meso, and macro levels. Regrettably, survivors refer to experience of working through the sexual assault procedure as "the second assault". Research indicates that many students, believe they know where they might seek campus supports, but they are unaware of the process or how to formally report claims to persons who are integrated with professional campus supports or the

investigative process (McMahon, Palmer, Banyard, Murphy & Gidycz, 2017) which

explains the resulting less than 10% of assault survivors report the assault or make use of

the available supports. Other studies show that students who do go through the formal

reporting procedure and student supports, deem the process of finding support extremely

confusing and overly complex (DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017). Failure to reach survivors or

to provide adequate support following a sexual assault is costly to both the universities

and students (Peterson et al., 2017) and is ultimately a failure of policy compliance.

These studies and discussions have been useful to better the understanding of

complexities of campus sexual assaults which has also provided considerable

improvements to the terminology that surrounds this phenomenon. Some of the terms

derived from these research studies include "rape myths" "victim blaming" and "rape

culture". These terms are found in common language on university campuses use to

describe the rationales for the broad cultural behaviors (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015)

which have allowed the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses to continue.

Because these nomenclatures have become standardized terms when discussing sexual

assault behaviors, public policy administrators and other professionals in higher

education can more accurately confer on the intricacies when working through an

incident. These terminologies have also allowed educators to build upon these theories to

educate their students about them. Currently the most used programming is known as

peer bystander intervention education which teaches university students how to recognize

the behaviors and scenarios where sexual assaults are normalized. This education equips

university students with the knowledge of how to either intervene on behalf of their peers

or how assist their peers in locating campus supports following a sexual assault

(McMahon, Palmer, Banyard, Murphy & Gidycz, 2017). While these studies have

provided greater depth to the conversation on a national scale and have been the catalyst

moving policy makers to update regulations (Title IX and VAWA), the prevalence of

sexual assault on university campsues have statistically remained stagnated (Krebs, et al.,

2016). The Krebs study supports that it is evident that additional research is needed. In

terms of villainy for the purposes of story structure Title IX policy itself is the likeliest

culprit as what it is and how to carry it out seems elusive.

Summary and Conclusion

The goal of this study was to provide public administrators the data needed about

the stories behind the decision made by campus professional. This data is available to be

used to enact positive social change by updating procedures and policy that brings about

the reduction in the prevalence of revictimization of students needing support following a

sexual assault. Additionally, this study provides policymakers with information it needs

to close the policy implementation gap related to Title IX implementation thereby

strengthening each university's ability to provide an educational environment in a safe

and equitable manner.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the best practices and barriers to implementation of sexual assault policy from the perspective of university campus support professionals who are tasked with its implementation. Sexual assaults on university campuses meet the definition of a wicked problem that Title IX policy intents to correct. However, over the past 40 years of this policy being enacted, there have been no discernable changes to sexual assault statistics, which warranted further examination. This chapter includes the methodology used for this qualitative study, including the NPF to code the common themes and social constructs in Title IX policy to identify the barriers and best practices for implementation. Additionally, I discuss the research design and rationale, my role as the researcher, participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedures for data collection, and the data analysis process. Finally, I discuss issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures followed for this study.

Research Design and Rationale

A qualitative design was used for this study. The purpose of this study was to identify the best practices and barriers according to the campus support professionals who implement Title IX on their campuses to gain a better understanding of how they perceive policy and implement it. This study was conducted to answer the following research question: What are the best practices and barriers to implementing Title IX policy in sexual assaults? Regarding barriers, I expected that participants would confirm various aspects of policy implementation gap and identify social constructions embedded in policy that impede their ability to effectively implement Title IX. Additionally, I

expected that each participant would indicate that they are implementing the rules as best they can despite the barriers.

NPF is a theoretical framework designed to identify the role of policy narratives in the policy process (Jones et al. 2014, 2018). In 2018, Jones et al. provided guidance on how to conduct an NPF study, which I used when creating the codebook for the current study to analyze the policy narratives. I determined NPF to be an appropriate framework for a narrative study based upon the five core elements that must be present for NPF to be used. The first element is that the main aspects of policy are rooted in social construction (Jones et al. 2014, 2018). Related to sexual assault, the perception of consent to sexual activity and when a sexual assault occurs remains the subject of debate due to the many social constructs including rape myths, rape culture, and just world beliefs (Aurrekoetxea-Casaus, 2020). The second assumption that must be present for an NPF study is that the policy is bounded and remains consistent over time. The intent of Title IX policy is to ensure equity in education and provide direction to educational institutions for achieving equity. This policy for gender equity in education was enacted in 1972. The updates and clarifications made since its enactment have been in response to the changing norms of society.

The third element for an NPF study is that narratives have distinguishable and detailed structures. In the current study, the content of the narratives was discernable with story components that included characters, settings, plots, and a moral. The fourth element of an NPF study is that there must be three interacting levels: micro (individual), meso (group), and macro (institution). The current study included all three with the

primary focus on the micro level because university campus support professionals are the individuals implementing Title IX policy, but they also work in a group of support professionals and within the larger university (institution). Finally, the fifth element is that the narrative form is inherent in how people understand and make sense of the world and the rules that they follow. This final element was the core component of the purpose of this qualitative study to examine the content of the narratives of campus support professionals regarding implementation of policy.

Jones et al. (2014, 2018) noted that once the researcher determines to utilize NPF, the research question for the study must be policy centered or theory centered from the perspective of the micro, meso, or macro level. The current study was policy centered (Title IX) and focused on the micro level (campus policy professionals). Specifying the type of model for an NPF study is the next determination of the researcher. The researcher must determine whether the intent of the study focuses on the narrative form or narrative content. I chose narrative content and sought the unique narrative of each participant regarding the implementation of Title IX through semi-structured interviews with the participants.

Role of the Researcher

I have worked as a legal analyst in higher education for over a decade in the upper Midwest of the United States. The scope of my work has been separated into three main areas: contract administration and risk management, investigations, and assisting on legal issues that arise on campus. Related to the investigation aspect of my work, I conduct both employee and Title IX investigations. Because of my unique perspective on the

investigations that take place in higher education, I was aware of the biases I had acquired due to my experiences. However, I did my best to keep my biases in check so they would not impact the quality of my study. I also work with my peers to debrief and gain feedback on every investigation, and I made use of my debriefing skills throughout the current study.

The participant pool for this study was professional campus support persons outside of the university system where I am currently employed. The decision was made to engage another public university system in another state. Making this decision to review a system separate from my own was done with the intent to avoid any ethical conflicts or power differentials related to me and the participants. All participants in my study self-identified as campus support professionals and nonvulnerable adults who exercised their option to volunteer in this study. Throughout this study, I adhered to personal ethics and the guidelines of the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

I recruited participants from public institutions because they receive federal funding and are therefore required to meet the requirements of Title IX (Education Amendments Act, 1972) in providing campus support services to prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence, prevent recurrence of sexual violent/harassment behaviors, and address the effects of sexual violence/harassment. It is also reasonable to include 4-year traditional brick-and-mortar institutions because most such institutions offer student housing. While it is true according to the National Center for Victims of

Crime (2018) report, approximately 66% of reported rapes of college students occur off-campus, this still leaves 33% of the rapes occurring on-campus. Additionally, this study also found that of the rapes reportedly occurring on-campus, 62% of these incidences occurred in on-campus housing and dormitories. As such, it is reasonable to assume that full 4-year institutions with housing/dorm accommodations available on campus shall have a higher number of both sexual assaults than other universities that do not provide campus housing.

This study concentrated on the public universities in the Midwest university system. There are several reasons that I chose this Midwest university system for this study. In the Midwest university system, there are brick and mortar institutions of higher education offering bachelor and advanced degrees. Institutions were omitted from this study as they are research institutions meaning they have more graduate and doctoral degree level offerings for the graduate level student. The omission of these institutions were based on the available statistics that indicate a woman in the U.S. has the highest likelihood of being sexually assaulted between the ages of 18-24 than any other age category (Dept. of Justice, 2014) against the fact that the average age of a graduate student is 33 years of age (Council of Graduate Schools, 2009). This study concentrated on only 11 institutions within the greater Midwest university system as they are primarily focused on undergraduate programs but do have a few graduate level offerings. These selected 11 universities have over 21 different campus locations with large student populations. I was able to collect a respectable number of approximately 600 names of people who were identified as providing student supports or connected with the Title IX

process according to their websites. This process of purposeful sampling met the criteria of looking to data rich centers to obtain the information needed for this dissertation (Patton, 1995).

It is worthy to note that I live in the Midwest and I work in a nearby state in a separate university system. I made a concerted effort to choose a public university system in the Midwest but avoid pursuing participants where I am employed. As I am Title IX deputy in my role, it was my intent that by selecting to invite people in a different system, I would avoid generating any perceived conflicts of interest rather than attempting to work within my own community. Another advantage of inviting participants in the a nearby system was the feasibility and proximity of the interviewees. If not for the Covid-19 pandemic, it would have been the case that in-person interviews were possible, the interviewer would have offered that as an option to participants. The campus support professional population of the Midwest university system are within a reasonable driving distance for me as the researcher. Additionally, many of the universities in the Midwest typify the old standard college experience and most of their students start out in on-campus dormitories or on-campus housing. These university student also participate in-person in course delivery which allows the universities to offer robust campus life activities for students to choose to be a part. As it relates to Title IX policy requires all university students to receive sexual assault prevention education and relay to how to access university campus supports at the start of their educational experience.

As required by law, each college in the Midwest university system supplements the educational requirements of Title IX by indicating on their campus' websites who the

campus support professionals are and how to contact them. I used this public information to compile a list of all the persons identified as providing campus support for sexual assault victims in the Midwest university system. Thereafter I excluded all student run support services such as peer bystander groups, peer advocates and resident assistants who are active students. The remaining list of over 600 potential participants were comprised of the following main categories: university police, human resources, student support services, residence life and student housing, student affairs, inclusion and diversity, victims' advocates, health wellness & counseling, sexual assault nurse examiners, student life and code of conduct departments.

Instrumentation

As it relates to instrumentation and processes followed for this study the resulting methods were adhered to. I first worked on a proposal related to the methodology to be used in the data gathering for this research project which was presented and was approved by the Independent Review Board (IRB). Following receipt of the IRB approval, I set to creating a list of potential participants by going to each of the 11 universities in the Midwest university system's websites and entered the following search terms: Title IX, student supports, and sexual assaults. These search terms were important as they are likely to be the terms used by a student impacted by a sexual assault and who is seeking assistance. Using these search terms, the results yielded information about the university personnel that students may contact for helpseeking. The websites commonly revealed layers of connected services when a term was used. For example, entering the search term "sexual assault" yielded results for the Title IX office and then on the Title

IX page there were links or references to university police, counseling options, healthcare supports, or other support services and their departments. Some of the university websites that referenced the services and duties of the Title IX Director but did not give an email address for the Title IX Director, in those instances I used the campus directory. I did not go outside of the websites to obtain any additional names of go outside university public websites. It is worthy to note that there were a few instances when it was noticed that a relevant campus support person's email noted that they were a third-party contractor who is website as a support service. The most common examples of this were when there were contracts in place with community resources such as the local women's resources centers. The final list included the name, title, department, phone number and email address of each potential participant.

Once the final list was completed in its entirety using Excel spreadsheets, I sent out to each person listed the combination invitation and consent form. The initial e-mail blast took approximately 2 days to send out all 600 emails as I received and kept track on the spreadsheet of all the bounce back notices stating that some persons were no longer employed at the university, were on extended leave for various reasons, or were returned undeliverable. Regrets were also tracked on the spreadsheet as to not re-ask those persons who have already declined. The IRB approved combination invitation and consent form which provided background for the study, sample questions as well as the purpose for the study and requested they contact the researcher to schedule a time to be interviewed via the Zoom platform. The e-mailed invitation also provided the option to participants that they may suggest other persons on their campus whom they feel may be interested in

being interviewed. This request was consistent with purposeful snowball sampling (Patton, 2015). This initial consent invitation email also outlined the research questions and sample questions, directed that the interviews would be recorded and that the finding would be shared with them at the conclusion of the study to assist potential interviewees in the decision-making process. Finally, the email also indicated that should they consent to be a participant, they should provide a few dates and times that work best for the interviewee's schedules so that I, as the researcher, could choose one and send an Outlook meeting planner for 60 minutes in duration along with the link that would be needed to access the Zoom teleconference.

According to Timothy Guetterman (2015) sampling in qualitative studies is an iterative process which may necessitate me to make changes depending on responses. If the study's plan for collection data meets with IRB standards, it may be necessary to provide additional follow up requests to the potential participants to reach the maximum number of participants for this study. The target number of the participants I hoped to gain for these in-depth interviews was between 10 to 25 persons (Creswell, 1998) as an ample sample size is necessary for saturation to be reached. Additionally, and because the 2020 pandemic had a direct impacted on participation levels and significantly changed the ability to conduct interviews while keeping up with social distance requirements and travel restrictions, a second follow up email was planned. The second email blast was sent after the initial email and one week of silence from prospective interviewees. In the follow up email I used the same combination invitation and consent form but addressed each person by name. I also relayed that their name can be removed from the

participation list if they request it. I was successful in obtaining the participation of 19

persons consenting to be interviewed for the purposes of this study.

Storage for the data collected was maintained on my home computer and personal

thumb drive, cloud storage in the Microsoft 360 software products provided by Walden

University. The data collected for this research project will be disposed of in accordance

with Walden University's 5-year required retention period.

Data Analysis Plan

The interview data collected for this study uses thematic coding as a means of

analysis. Coding was be processed using manual coding and Microsoft Excel

spreadsheets and Word. The code book was prepared according to established coding

guidelines for micro-level narrative data to describe the descriptive data extracted from

the narratives following the NPF (see Jones et al., 2014, 2018). As such rules for the

coding the narratives were entered into the Excel spreadsheet to segment and extract

demographic information followed by columns to identify when a narrative was

significant for the types of policy narrative characteristics. Each narrative was then

reviewed repeatedly to apply for each interview, the coding scheme of zero (0) when a

narrative was absent a type of characteristic or a one (1) when a narrative was positive for

a characteristic. Characteristics included hero, villain, or victim for characters, causal

mechanisms and plotlines. Each characteristic whether present or absent would receive

only one number for each characteristic even if the interviewee mentioned certain

characteristic multiple times as to not inflate or double count the significance of any

certain distinctive attribute. Instances where the interviewees identify more than one

message in a single category each one was counted but only once for that interview. An example would be if a participant identifies multiple times throughout their interview the victims are both "sexual assault survivors" and "all students seeking support" this would be counted as one (1) for "sexual assault survivors" and one (1) for "all students seeking support". Micro-level narrative data as was obtained for this project which is centered around the people and their personal storylines.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness and credibility between the interviewer and interviewee while safeguarding the reliability of this study required pre-planning. In the dissertation process, each researcher works on their proposal and IRB approval. This process gave me the roadmap to prepare all the documents necessary to give credibility to both the project and me, as the budding academic researcher. As the researcher for this project, I worked with my committee to make decisions and prepare the documents that would present professionally to the potential participants. Establishing the credibility of myself as the researcher creates a level of trustworthiness with the participants. Much time was spent by me preparing the invitation and consent form that would reasonably but wholly layout for the participants what to expect during the interview. At the beginning of every interview I reviewed crucial aspect such as confidentiality, the purpose of the project, that they would each receive the findings of the student and finally that they could withdraw from the project at any time up until the final dissertation and potentially publication. Also, at the start of the interview I asked for confirmation that they were in a safe and comfortable area to speak and then provided at least two specific opportunities for the

participant to ask questions at the very start of the interview and after an overview of the

process and procedures. Each participant was informed that I was not seeking specific

student data but rather the discourse should only include the interviewee's experiences

provided in the aggregate. If an individual student name were to emerge, I as the

researcher would redact this information from the collected data. As for reliability and

transferability, I provided the same open-ended research questions, in the same order and

with the same guidance to each of the participants. Further, the interview questions were

not direct so to allow the interviewee to provide their perspectives more organically.

Since all the participants of this study are within the same Midwest university system

structure and must follow the same federal law requirements as well as the same

institutional policies it is reasonable to expect that saturation was met within the obtained

sample size. Other than the interview questions as indicated in Appendix A, the only

additional prompts that were provided during the course of the interviews were to ask for

clarification about an aspect that the interviewee has provided or simply asking the

participant to "tell me more about [fill in the gap]" If a question was asked that ventured

outside of the prepared interview questions, the interviewee was informed by me. At the

end of each interview all participants received a thank-you email the researcher's contact

information should they have questions or wish to contact in the future. I also kept a

journal of notes documented during and immediately after each of the interviews. The

total time timeframe for the data collection process as it relates to feasibility took place

over 2 months or 60 days to allow for scheduling and completing of the interviews.

Ethical Procedures

The ethical backdrop of any modern research project must first adhere to three main principles of the Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1978) which are beneficence, justice, and respect for persons. I, as the sole researcher of this dissertation, completed all the doctoral coursework requirement to gain the knowledge of the requirements performing an ethically sound research project. Additionally, in accordance with the requirements of the Walden University's IRB approval process she attended and completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) human subjects protection training to obtain the completion certificate to assure integrity for this project. Additionally, as the researcher of this study I received approval from the Walden IRB and was issued the following IRB approval number: 09-22-20-0825421 on September 22, 2020 which expires on September 21, 2021.

Throughout the study I stayed within the boundaries of the ethical rules for research. In terms of meeting the justice principle, all potential participants names and contact information was obtained through publicly available means because they were identified on their university's websites. Participants were not selected or rebuffed on the basis of sex/gender, social class, ethnicity, or race. In fact, all persons who consented to be interviewed were interviewed. The participants all adults and had the capacity to provide their consent to be interviewed. There were no incentives promised or provided as part of this study nor did this study use duplicity to obtain interviews.

The principle of respect for persons was shown each contributor as every person interviewed did who in a wholly voluntary manner which could be revoked at any time. All participants were provided were explained and received electronic copies of the invitation and consent form, to which they were requested to provide written confirmation via email regarding consent. I relayed that the data collected would be stored via IRB approved storage in the cloud and devices which would be erased in accordance with the 5-year retention policy.

As it relates to beneficence, I took steps to minimize the risk for each participant by requesting that the participant choose the date and times for the interview that would afford them the opportunity to select a location and time when they were safest to speak freely. At no time during this study was confidential or private information requested or collected and the participants were informed their responses would be documented in the final project in aggregate form. Due to the sensitive subject matter, phone numbers were provided for counseling and mental health resources as was Walden Universities contact number should the interviewee need to access to help or to ask for additional information about their rights as a participant in this study.

Summary

This qualitative study intended to use narrative policy framework to obtain the narratives of campus support professionals to analyze the implementation of Title IX. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that at the time this study is being conducted there were two major impactful events that affected this project. The first is that Title IX underwent a major policy reworking which has drastically changed the scope and requirements upon

all educational providers that must follow it. In response to the drastic changes at least 18 states filed for injunctions against U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and the U.S. Department of Education citing the timing for making sweeping changes could not have come at a worse time and would irreparably harm to the system (Anderson, July 2020). However, as the date for implementation was August 14, 202 the lawsuits proved to be unsuccessful, and universities had put into the place the new rules (Anderson, August 2020). The other major event that occurred during the research project was the 2020 Pandemic which has fractured socialization in every walk of life including n university campuses and is expected to have lasting effects on university life going forward. Students on most campuses in the U.S. moved to an online format in March 2020 to try to contain the exposure to the virus. In the fall of 2020, educational institutions attempted to return to in-person instruction or provide a hybrid of online and in-person instruction, but many had to return to completely online instruction again as the numbers of persons experiencing severe reactions to Covid-19 strained the already stretched healthcare system. There has been speculation that it may be closer to the end of 2022 before a complete return to campus can occur (Schroeder, 2020). As of the date of this final study, it is impossible to know to what extent these events have impacted this study regarding the sample that may be obtained. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, I believed the plan that had been laid out in herein to be effective and transferrable, reliable, and re-creatable in the future and amongst all types of universities implementing Title IX.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the best practices and barriers to implementation of sexual assault policy from the perspective of university campus support professionals who are tasked with its implementation. Sexual assault on university campuses is a wicked problem that Title IX policy has evolved to correct over the past 48 years. As with many well-intentioned policies, Title IX has suffered from the elemental issues indicative of policy implementation gap. There have been no discernable changes to sexual assault statistics, which warranted further examination. In this chapter, I discuss the setting, demographics, data collection methods, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results of this qualitative study addressing the implementation of Title IX. The research question was the following: What are the best practices and barriers to implementing Title IX policy regarding sexual assaults?

Setting

Individuals who participated in this qualitative study were currently employed at one of the 11 universities in the Midwest university system. The Midwest university system includes public institutions of higher education. All participants were identified on their university's public website as campus support professionals available to university students. Each participant in this study agreed to be interviewed via teleconference, and each had a unique perspective as a campus support professional based on the types of services, they provide to the students related to Title IX.

The interviews took place in the fall of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted this study's setting. Because of the high

communicability of COVID-19, the United States was under quarantine effective March 2020. Schools were closed and moved to online formats, and people who could work from home did. One of the first impacts to this study was that all interviews were conducted via Zoom. Another impact to the setting for this study was that many of the interviewees and I were at home during the interviews. Universities in the fall of 2020 provided courses either entirely online or in a hybrid of online and face-to-face, and many students taking online courses did not return to campus in the fall of 2020.

Demographics

I used purposeful snowball sampling (see Patton, 2015) beginning with the search of potential participants on the websites of the 11 public universities in the Midwest university system. This initial search using the search terms *campus support*, *sexual assault*, and *Title IX* yielded 602 potential participants who would receive the first email request consisting of my IRB approved invitation and consent document. I received 64 responses that were notices of declinations, retirements, no longer employed at the university, or undeliverable, and these names and addresses were removed from the list. The first email yielded four people who consented to be interviewed via teleconference. A second email was sent to the remaining names with a request to send regrets if they wished not to received follow up emails. The second email yielded 15 additional consenting participants. Some of the participants' names were provided by other participants who had been interviewed or who had been asked to be part of this study but were unavailable to participate. The people who provided the names of other possible participants did so because they knew them to be a part of the Title IX process and

therefore eligible for this study. However, in all instances, I had already included them on my original sheet of potential participants. For the purposes of maintaining confidentiality, the participants are referred to as P followed by a three-digit numbering system (P001 through P019). Table 1 includes the gender/sex, education attained, and department of the participants in this study. There was at least one participant from each of the 11 universities.

Table 1

Midwest University System Participant Demographics

	Sex/gender	Education attained	Department	Training current (up to date)
P001	Male	Associates	University Police	Yes
P002	Female	Bachelors	University Police	Yes
P003	Male	Masters	Human Resources	Yes
P004	Male	Bachelors	Human Resources	Yes
P005	Male	Some College	University Police	Yes
P006	Female	Professional Degree	Student Support Services	Yes
P007	Female	Masters	Residence Life	Yes
P008	Male	Masters	Dean of Students	Yes
P009	Male	Masters	Dean of Students	Yes
P010	Male	Masters	Residence Life	Yes
P011	Male	Masters	University Housing	Yes
P012	Female	Masters	Student Affairs	Yes
P013	Male	Doctorate	Inclusion & Diversity	Yes
P014	Female	Doctorate	Human Resources	Yes
P015	Female	Bachelors	University Police	Yes
P016	Female	Masters	Student Support Services	Yes
P017	Female	Doctorate	Student Affairs	Yes
P018	Genderqueer	Masters	Inclusion & Diversity	Yes
P019	Female	Professional Degree	Student Affairs	Yes

Data Collection

I conducted all 19 interviews via Zoom teleconference over a 2-month period from October 2020 to November 2020. In the invitation, participants were urged to secure a quiet place to be able to speak freely during the interview. Those who consented to participate in this study did so by responding to the email invitation and supplying dates and times that worked best for their schedule. I responded by sending the participants an Outlook meeting invitation for 60 minutes with a link to the Zoom teleconference meeting. Each of the participants who consented to participate in this study presented for their scheduled teleconference as scheduled. Each participant was asked the same demographic and open-ended questions (see Appendix A). I also asked follow up questions based on the interviewee's shared perspective. At the start of each interview, I reminded the participant that they had the right to opt out of the study at any time, their information would be kept confidential, they could ask any question about the process or the study, and they would receive a 1- to 2-page summary of the findings at the conclusion of the dissertation process.

Prior to the close of each interview, each participant was provided and an open-ended offer to follow up with any questions or concerns, and participants would be sent an email of thank you that reiterated my willingness to address questions or concerns. Interviews were recorded via the Zoom platform and ranged in duration from 19 minutes to 89 minutes with the average interview lasting 48 minutes. I produced verbatim transcripts in Microsoft Word of each interview by typing and using Microsoft Word's dictation feature for my analysis of the data. The only variation in the data collection

methods employed from those planned was that snowball sampling would be instrumental in obtaining the necessary interview participants. Several participants disclosed that they became interested in this study from discussing it with their colleagues; however, in the interest of transparency, all of the persons interviewed were included in my original list of potential participants.

Data Analysis

I prepared a codebook following the basic NPF structure as described by the literature (see Jones et al., 2014, 2018). I kept a record of the process via an Excel spreadsheet to document each participant's narrative elements, such as character, causal mechanisms, and plot (see Appendix C). I used the methods outlined in Chapter 3 but focused only on participants' responses to the in-depth Interview Questions 9, 10, 11, 12, and 15 because these addressed best practices and barriers for implementing Title IX policy. Additionally, I prepared an interview analysis summary form (see Appendix D) to record the emerging themes and terminology used by participants according to NPF and to identify the best practices and barriers to implementing Title IX as it relates to sexual assault.

The foundations of a story in a NPF are the narrative elements. As it relates to understanding the implementation practices and views of the campus support professionals for data analysis it was first important to segment these elements for review. Essential to every story are its characters and, in this study, the characters have been split into the categories of victims, heroes and villains. Thereafter for review was the relationship between these characters is a narrative element known as the causal

mechanism. The last element studied was what each of the campus support professional indicate what their story is about, this is the plot. The subsequent paragraphs provide the details each of these elements at they were used for data analysis.

<div align="center">

Narrative Elements

</div>

Characters: Victims, Villains and Heroes

The Figures 1, 2, and 3 indicate the characters as described by the participants' narratives. The victims, as described by NPF, the characters who are harmed by action or by inaction of the other characters within the obtained narratives. The participants identified that the victims of Title IX implementation are the sexual assault survivors, marginalized students, students/anyone needing supports and the student support professionals.

Figure 1

Victims
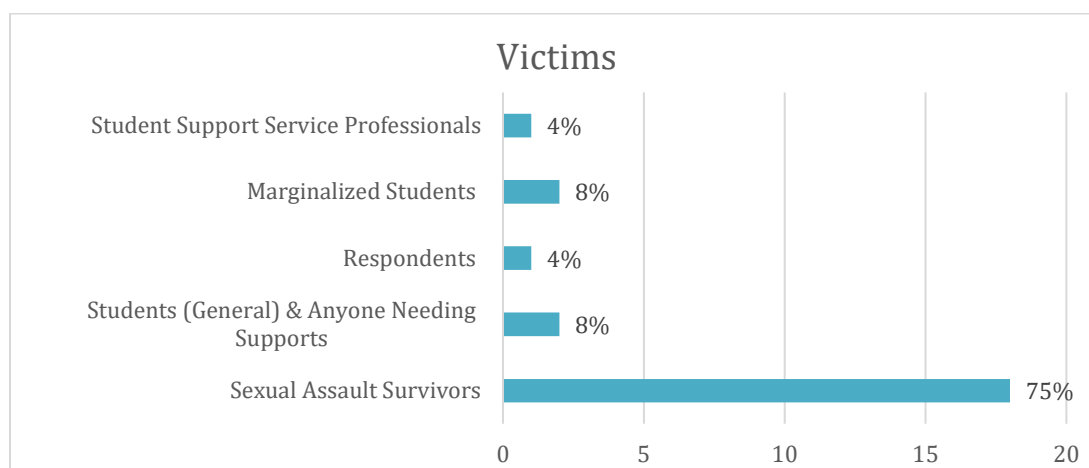
The villains identified in the story of Title IX implementation recognized by the participants are: Policy/Policy-Owners/Administrators, Persons Who Don't Follow Processes/Consistency, Sexual Assault Perpetrators, Persons Who Lack Education of

Title IX Processes, Bad Reporting Lines for Title IX Coordinators, Constantly Changing Policy & Politics, Sexism/Misogyny/Racism/Exploitation, Lack of Funding/Finance & Liability Based Decisions. NPF describes villains as those who create harm, inflict damage or pain, upon a victim.

Figure 2

Villains
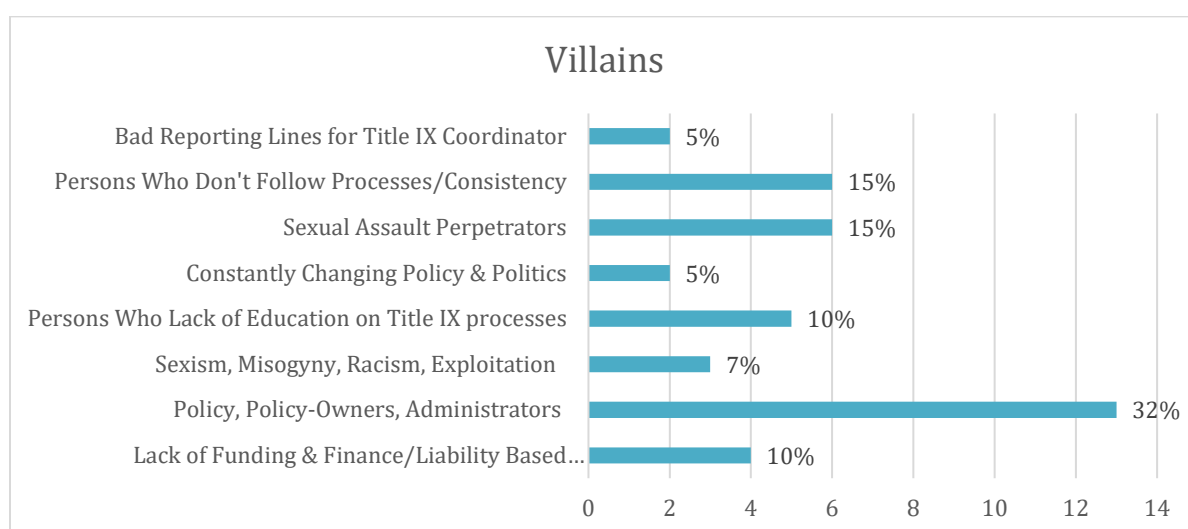
The final group of characters in NPF are the heroes who are those that with purpose to achieve a policy solution. Participants of this study identified the heroes of Title IX policy implementation are the campus support professionals – this included themselves, their departments, and the larger group of persons with roles in the Title IX process and there were two persons who referenced persons who follow processes.

Figure 3

Heroes
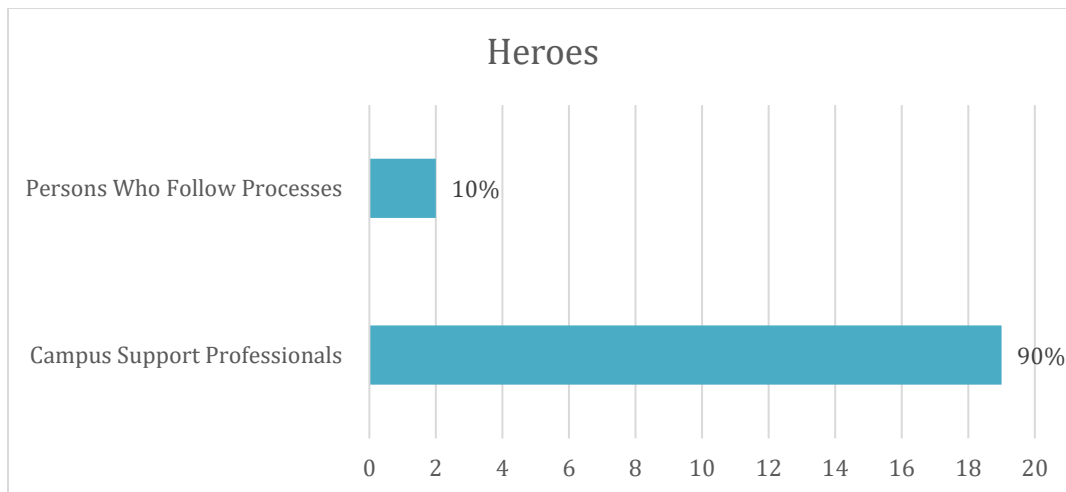
Causal Mechanisms

Using the NPF structure and definitions of narrative elements known as causal mechanism, these are the relationship between the characters and the outcomes or plots (Stone, 2012). Herein the following causal mechanism were used: inadvertent, intentional, mechanical, and accidental. I counted each causal mechanism identified once per interview; this is noteworthy as there were five in-depth questions analyzed within each interview so there may be suggestions of two or more mechanisms according to the question. I determined to code for the most apparent causal mechanism and extracted all applicable language to respond to the research question to define best practices and barriers to Title IX implementation.

Figure 4

Causal Mechanisms
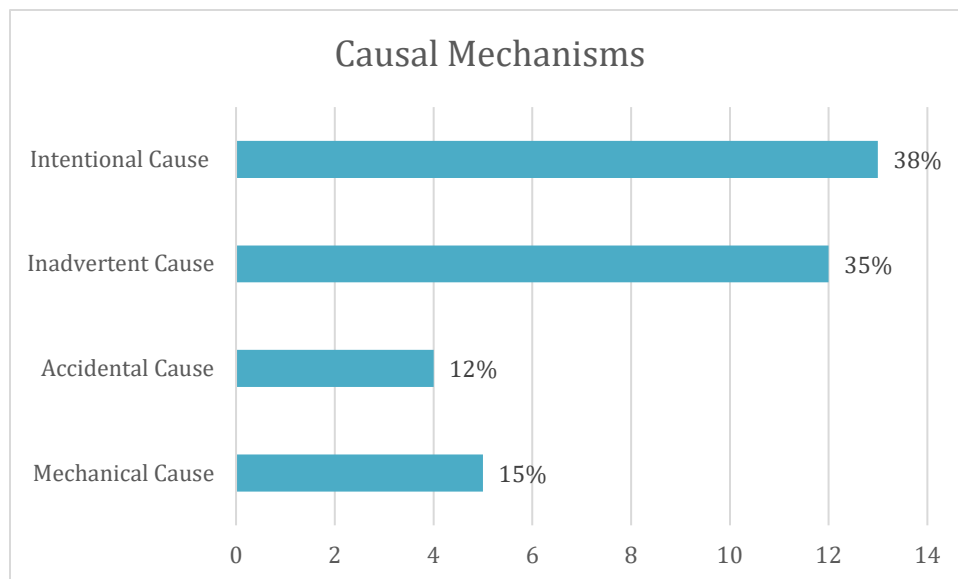
Plots

The plot in a NPF is what the story is about. Each plotline could only be chosen once per participant's interview however as I analyzed five different questions from each participant, I did allow multiple plotlines to be counted. I used the standard codebook plotlines as follows:

Narrative policy framework provides several standard plotlines for the purposes thematic coding they are as follows:

"Controlled by Victim" narrative describes the plot as moving from fate to control but locates the control in the hand of those suffering from the problem.

"Change-Is-Only-an Illusion" narrative describes the plot describes that improvement or decline was an illusion.

"Conspiracy" narrative described the plot as moving from fate to control but revealing a small group had control it all along.

"Story of Decline" narrative describes the plot as things are getting so bad that something must be done.

"Story of Helplessness and Control" narrative describes the plot as not great, but the situation must be acceptable because seems unchangeable, but still describes how change can occur.

"Stymied Progress" narrative describes the plot as hero making improvements to situation, but things are worsening because something/someone is interfering with the hero's work.

Figure 5

Plots
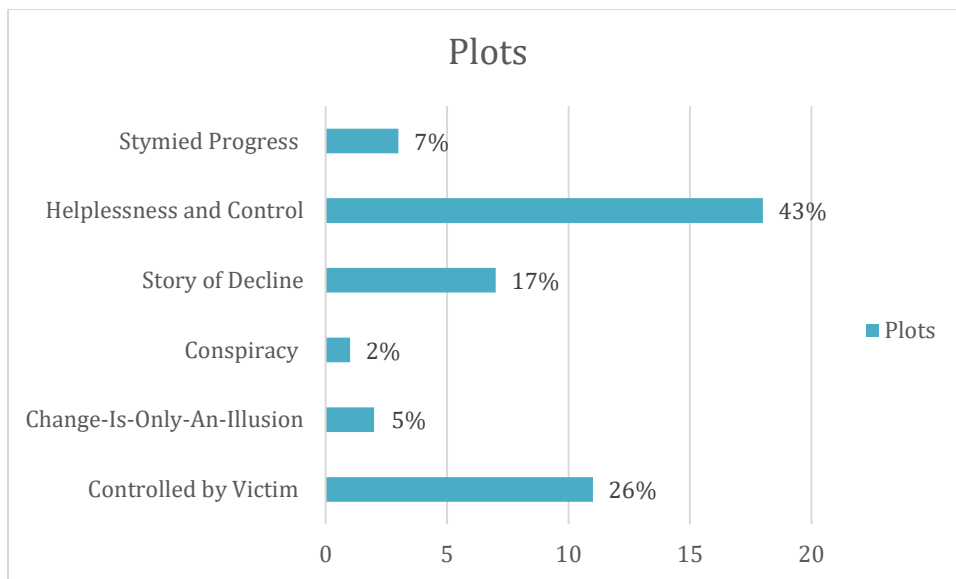
Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The measures to ensure trustworthiness and credibility as outlined in Chapter 3 were adhered. Included in the IRB approved invitation and consent outlining the project, research questions were provided to all participants. At the start of each interview, an overview of how researcher would maintain confidentiality was discussed with each interviewee. As the researcher of this study, I further informed each participant that this research is not seeking any protected student data, but rather only aggregate experiential information is requested. Each interviewee was also advised that in the event a student name was shared, it would be removed from the transcript, as a result no student names were shared. The interviews were collected in a quiet, safe, and convenient space chosen and secured by the interviewee. The default for video recording was defaulted to the offsetting, however there were instances when an interviewee expressed a desire to have video on or asked me to reveal myself; in those instances, I left it up to the interviewee and/or introduced themselves and I showed my face at the end of the interview. Also as a measure of reliability, all the participants, are interviewees are employees of a state system which means they would all be bound to follow the same institutional policies, state and federal laws, as well as the processes carried out by campus and other employees. Finally, I was able to achieve timeframe for data collection as all interviews and transcriptions were completed in a two-month period.

Transferability

To ensure transferability in this study, I followed the NPF design as noted in Chapter 2. Applying the policy narrative elements as a structure to the analyze the belief systems of the participant's narrative content. These belief systems related to policy, are not only measurable but are also reasonably predictable. Additionally, the belief systems may be evaluated against other theoretic concepts. That at the time of the interviews, each of the participants in this study were verified employees of the Midwest university system and acknowledged that they provide support to the students in their roles on campus.

Dependability

Regarding dependability, I have been transparent in all aspects of detailing the methodology and research design used for this study to attain a response to the research question. Additionally, I detailed all the steps to how the data was collected and thereafter analyzed. I was transparent in acknowledging the limitations of myself as a researcher and the study.

Confirmability

In terms of confirmability, I have acknowledged the role as researcher and documented biases and shortcomings. I documented in a journal the thoughts and feelings during the data collection. A sample of the journal has been shared herein for transparency (Appendix B). I used triangulation as a method of review to ensure the validity.

Results

Research Question

This investigation has intended to answer the research question: what are the best practices and barriers to implementing Title IX policy regarding sexual assault as relayed by the campus support professionals who implement the policy? Using the narrative elements detailed previously, each of obtained narratives were examined to find a response to the research question. The following describes the results within the narrative policy framework to reveal the relationships coded within each professionals' stories.

Narrative Policy Framework

The narrative policy framework authors (see Jones et al., 2014, 2018) specified that the research question used in an NPF study must be policy centered or theory centered and decide on an appropriate level of perspective of the micro, meso or macro. Thus, this study met those criteria by making this study policy centered – Title IX policy and thereafter the micro level of analysis – the interview narratives of those who implement the policy.

NPF provide to be a satisfactory approach for analysis of the narratives obtained as all the five core thematic elements which must appear in an NPF study were accounted for in this study. First that the policy is rooted in a social construction, the participants did acknowledge in their described barriers to implementation the various social constructions of consent, rape-myths, rape culture, just world beliefs (Aurrekoetxea-Casaus, 2020). The third element to be presented in a NPF study is that policy is consistent and bounded over time; Title IX has been in place for over 48 years having

been enacted on June 23, 1972. It is true that the policy has received supplemental guidance over years and the scope of the law has evolved with the culture and political climate, however at its base level it is the policy that prohibits sex/gender discrimination in all federally funded education programs so that all genders have equal access to an education. This base level of policy has remained consistent. Although each of the participants had varying amounts of time working within the policy, they were all aware that this policy has been in place for a significant amount of time and that they generally are following the long-standing process of following their system office procedures for remaining in compliance. The third element in a NPF study is that the unit of analysis are the narratives provided in a detailed storyline with all the thematic elements to include setting, characters, causal mechanism and plots or morals. As indicated below these story elements are present in the collected data with examples provided. The fourth element of an NPF study are that there must be interacting levels related to the described policy. While this focuses on the narratives of the individual (micro level), the participants describe working within their department or the larger Title IX group (macro level) and within the university or system (institution). The final and fifth element of an NPF study is that relaying in a storied format allows us to better understand the world and the rules that we must follow. This element is present in this study as the narratives as provided by the participants were in the prescribed storied format.

Setting

Settings as a narrative element in a narrative policy framework study are important as it sets the backdrop for the story. The setting in the narratives of this project

are the university campuses on which the campus professionals provide their expertise. As all the participants were, at the time of their interview, employed by a university within the Midwest university system the setting of university campus was consistent. However, through the course of the interviews, it became apparent that the specific departments through which the campus support professional provided support to students were also an important component of setting. Within the university setting the following subcategories for setting were: University Police – 4 participants, Human Resources – 3 participants, Student Support Services – 2 participants, Dean of Students – 2 participants, Student Affairs – 3 participants, Residences Life – 2 participants, and University Housing – 1 participant. It is noteworthy to mention that it was common for participants who are involved in providing supports to students under Title IX but not in the Title IX office relay they are directly related to Title IX but felt that they are not responsible for "implementing" Title IX.

The following Table 2 provides examples of some of the responses obtained as it relates a high level of involvement in Title IX but then they stated that they are not responsible for Title IX.

Table 2

Examples: Participants Indicate Involvement in IX but Not Responsibility for Title IX Implementation

Participant	Description from participant of involvement in Title IX	Description from same participant as not responsible for implementing Title IX
P001	"My involvement would be actually rather extensive. What we do here is a multi-disciplined approach involving victims or survivors of crime. So, I	"Well, that [Title IX implementation] really wouldn't be under my purview per se…"

| | would work with our on-campus advocate, counseling center, Dean of Students…." | |
| P002 | "I am the one in the department to go to for all things Title IX" | "I haven't had any involvement in that [Title IX implementation]. I mean the only thing I do with implementing is talk about it as an educational aspect when I train RA staff every year…." |

Characters

I observed that the narratives shared by the participants in this study demonstrated each narrative element from the perspective of individual campus support professional and their role on campus. That although all the participants work with students to provide supports, their defining role may be that of police officer, Title IX coordinator/deputy, advocate, etc. I had the expectation that each participant would indicate in their best practice testimony that their personal narrative on best practices is rooted in their belief all participants believe that they are implementing the rules as best as they are able but for the barriers. This bares out in detailed descriptions of the characters to follow.

Victims

The victims identified by the participants are categorized as follows: sexual assault survivors, anyone needing supports, marginalized students, support service professionals and respondents. As it relates to sexual assaults on university campus, the campus support professionals primarily identified the narrative role of victim as the sexual assault survivors/sexual assault victims (75%) as they are the persons who are reporting the assault and or the person whom the assault was enacted upon. The next two categories of victims identified by the campus professional were anyone needing supports

(in relation to a sexual assault) and marginalized students. Campus support professionals identified that other victims in the Title IX implementation process could include anyone seeking assistance related to a sexual assault (8%). This grouping includes friends/peer bystanders, or witnesses to an incident of sexual assault and whom may be seeking assistance with the procedural aspects of the process or may be in need of counseling for themselves. Campus support professionals also identified marginalized students (8%) as victims of the Title IX implementation as racism and bias impacts how such students are responded to in connection with a sexual assault. To a lesser extent, campus support professionals also identified respondents (2%) as those accused are sometimes dealt punitive sanctions before the investigation process produces a finding of fact. Finally, campus support professionals themselves are also noted as victims in Title IX implementation narratives as they are the frontlines for dealing with the second-hand trauma of a sexual assault. The following Table 3 provides examples of the statements provided in each of these categories regarding the victims of Title IX implementation. The codes were developed by me as the researcher and examples of the language used by participants are outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Examples: Participants Indicate the Victims of Title IX With Examples

Participant	Descriptions of victims	Sample language derived from participant responses
P001	Sexual Assault Survivors/Victims	"It is my job to keep the reporting person updated, that is really, really important throughout. You know I am talking from the past individuals that's one of the most important things they feel that they don't' have a voice if people aren't touching base with them periodically."

P019	Marginalized Students	"If the respondent is of color on in our very, very, very white community, making sure that they have the appropriate and necessary advocacy to make sure that racism is not at play in the investigation, and unconscious bias associated with it making sure that they have adequate and appropriate supports…"
P003	Students in General/Anyone Needing Support	"I determine how the student wants to move forward with a with a particular case and then at that point turn it over to the appropriate investigative party or hearing party"
P006	Respondents	"I guess there are usually sanctions against the perpetrator and a lot of times that um happens even if they haven't been convicted."
P004	Student Support Professionals	"Anybody who works in the Title 9 world is well aware of secondary trauma and that these complaints that come forward under title 9 are normally pretty traumatic not just for the person who goes through it but also the people who are working on it. And so, there is nothing in the regulations addressing secondhand trauma You have new people entering into these adjudication realms without knowing about their ability to cope with the things that that they'll have to see and hear but that will probably be a problem that is addressed in 10 years since the new regulations, I am sure.

Villains

The villains identified by participants are as follows: Policy/Policy-Owners/Administrators, sexual assault perpetrators, people who don't follow processes, persons who lack education on Title IX, lack of funding and finance-liability based decision-making, sexism/misogyny/racism/exploitation, constantly changing policy/politics, and bad reporting lines for the Title IX coordinator. The majority of the campus support professionals determined the role of villain in their narratives were the Title IX policy and Title IX Administrators (32%) as the rule itself is an unclear, scary, and secretive; and the administrators of the policy should be working to change that

situation for the better. Thereafter the campus support professionals put forth the next set

of villains as person who is included int the the Title IX implementation process or a

campus support professional but who don't follow the system approved procedures for

implementation (15%). Fifteen percent of the participants specifically said that those

who commit an act of sexual assault are the villains in Title IX implementation. Other

campus support professionals then deemed that people, in general, who lack knowledge

of Title IX (10%) are villains as it pertains to implementation. Participants shares, at this

same level of frequency that administrative controls such as lack of funding and making

decisions on Title IX implementation to reduce the exposure to liability for the campus

(10%) are the villains. A few campus support professionals also cited the villain in Title

IX implementation as racism, misogyny, and exploitation (7%). Further campus support

professional stated that villains in Title IX implementation are constantly changing policy

due to politics (5%) and poor reporting lines for Title IX coordinators (5%) as both of

these groups and their decision making are affected by the politics. The codes were

developed by me as the researcher and examples are outlined in Table 4 below together

with sample language provided by participants in their responses.

Table 4

Examples: Participants Indicate the Villain of Title IX With Examples

Participant	Descriptions of villains	Sample language derived from participant responses
P017	Lack of Funding & Finance/Liability Based Decision-making	"And then also just staffing in general. We are a smaller school and then our Title IX group is even smaller, and you know everyone has other roles as well. Um, so I think our group is wonderful and does a lot with limited resources and limited time and…but it is, you know, everyone is a part of a many, many

		other roles that they do and so it is a struggle to kind of like keep up with all of the reports and making sure that everything covered."
P03	Policy, Policy-Owners, Administrators	"I think that is a kind of a stigma with title IX that it is a secretive and scary process. And it certainly is serious and is a more serious process that involves more serious topics than a lot of other things that in my opinion. But I think the secretiveness of it makes it not very accessible for folks and so I think that that is I think that that's a challenge."
P010	Sexism, Misogyny, Racism, Exploitation	"Far greater than just our campus is just the misogyny and sexism and discrimination that exists in the world that greatly, greatly affects women and female survivors of sexual and gender-based violence."

P017	Persons Who Lack of Education on Title IX processes	"So, there's still not a full understanding of what all is covered in Title 9, and so you know. If faculty and staff aren't fully aware, obviously students aren't fully aware of what title 9 covers and their resources."
P019	Constantly Changing Policy & Politics	"The changes and regulations with our current Education Secretary and the constant change. And then in this case, the ambiguity about when we would begin enforcing the new regulations, I think that has is a barrier and going backwards, we made progress and going backwards is another barrier."
P016	Sexual Assault Perpetrators	"I'm trying to be clear that if a student, you know is assaulted. even if they were at these places alone or even if they were inebriated, they're still a victim. They don't have any responsibility in the situation. That the responsibility and the onus is on the perpetrator."
P007	Persons Who Don't Follow Processes/Consistency	"There's a lot of mistrust in the HR process and how HR will handle that situation and will or will not hold an employee accountable. I can't know what happens behind closed doors like anyone, and there's a lot of mistrust."
P014	Bad Reporting Lines for Title IX Coordinator	"I think there's a question as to whether or not the best practice, based upon previous federal recommendations, to have the Title IX coordinator report directly to the president or to the chancellor. I can see the benefits of that but to be quite honest, I think that a chancellor or a president are too busy to listen to the day-to-day nuances of Title IX."

Heroes

The heroes identified by the participants are as follows: campus support

professionals and persons who follow processes. Campus support professionals nearly all

agree that the hero in the Title IX implementation narratives are the campus support

professionals (90%). Other campus support professionals recounted that people who

follow the approved processes (10%) were also heroes in the narrative of Title IX

implementation. The codes developed by me as the researcher and examples of the

language used by participants in their responses are outlined in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Examples: Participants Indicate the Heroes of Title IX With Examples

Participant	Descriptions of heroes	Sample language derived from participant responses
P001	Campus Support Professional	"The care team is a multi-discipline team that involves the Police Department, Dean of students, counseling center, Provost office, and others I'm probably people that I'm missing. What we do is we try to dissect the issue at hand and trying to determine the best way to care for our student."
P010	People Who Follow Processes	"You've got to do that case justice and that takes in integrity to follow through and make sure those things are done. No, no cutting corners. No looking for ways to resolve it quickly. Integrity is certainly piece of best practices."

Causal Mechanisms

The causal mechanisms or the relationship between the characters and the

outcomes or plots (Stone, 2012) as obtained by the participants of this study were:

inadvertent, intentional, mechanical, and accidental. The campus support professionals

provided a language to show that intentional cause (38%) was their primary relationship

regarding their role related to Title IX as they act with intention and obtain the intended

outcome. Other campus supports professionals provided language to show that

inadvertent cause (35%) was their primary relationship regarding their role related to

Title IX as they act intentionally but sometimes to not get their intended outcomes. Some

campus support professionals provided language that aligned with mechanical cause

(15%) as their primary relationship regarding their role in Title IX implementation, meaning they obtain their intended outcomes by the overall process of which they are only a part but that does not change. Finally, the remaining campus support professionals provided language that shown accidental cause (12%) as their primary relationship regarding their role in Title IX implementation as they experience unintended outcomes resulting from actions there were not based in policy. The causal mechanism provided in the NPF (Stone, 2012), and examples of the language used by participants in their responses are outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Examples: Participants Indicate the Causal Mechanisms of Title IX With Examples

Participant	Descriptions of identified causal mechanisms	Sample language derived from participant responses
P015	Causal Mechanism - Mechanical Cause narrative relays intended consequences by unguided actions with a policy.	"Regardless of I guess who they are there, for us, our standard for any sexual assault is resolved is the same. I may be working with more agencies if it's a community member or happened off campus. I am involved and I work."
P002	Causal Mechanism: Accidental Cause narrative relays unintended consequences by unguided actions with a policy.	"So, I think that that I think is the is the biggest barrier that they don't know what they don't know and you, you can avoid all of that if you just made a little bit of time to understand it and to educate it made it a priority but everything else kind of takes precedence over that."
P018	Causal Mechanism: Inadvertent Cause narrative relays unintended consequences by purposeful action with a policy.	"I think the biggest hurdle to Title 9 up until this year was and is mandating mandated reporting. I understand the purpose of it, which is to try to stop the withholding of information and people covering things up. But the unintended consequences are, the lack of creating an environment where people can share their stories and get the help that they need and get access to the resources they need."

P014	Causal Mechanism: Intentional Cause narrative relays intended consequences by purposeful actions with a policy.	"I help our students, complainants, and respondents with any assistance they have or would like with faculty or housing arrangements or other intermediate or interim actions that need to be taken prior to an investigation."

Plots

The plots of Title IX implementation were categorized according to NFP (Stone, 2012). Plots or what the story is about obtained herein were as follows: controlled by victim, change is only an illusion, conspiracy, story of decline, story of helplessness and control, and stymied progress. Most campus support professionals provided that their plotline as it relates to their Title IX roles was as a story of helplessness and control (43%) as they depicted a storyline that is not good but that the situation must be tolerable because it remains mostly unchanged, but the participants provide suggestions on how improvements could be made. Other campus support professionals provided that their plotline as it relates to their Title IX roles was a story of control by the victim (26%) as they depicted a storyline that starts with fate but then control is moved to those who are impacted (victims) by the problem (sexual assault). Some campus support professionals provided a story of decline (17%) as their storyline as it relates to Title IX implementation as so bad that something must be done. Some campus support professionals shared a storyline of stymied progress (7%) of Title IX implementation as they are trying to make improvements but there is something or someone interfering with their work. A few campus support professionals opined that when it comes to Title IX implementation change-is-only-an-illusion (5%) as any decline or improvements in this

area are not real as this situation is unchanging. Lastly there were campus support

professionals whose plotlines relayed a story of conspiracy (2%) as they believe that Title

IX and its implementation is controlled by a small group who has always had control.

The plots were categorized as provided in the NPF (Stone, 2012), and examples of the

language used by participants in their responses are outlined in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Examples: Participants Indicate the Plots of Title IX With Examples

Participant	Descriptions of identified plots	Sample language derived from participant responses
P009	Plot - Controlled by Victim	"Quite frankly, whatever the federal government says, we will continue to use a very victim-centered approach and care-approach for our victims and the accused."
P015	Plot - Change is Only an Illusion	"You know I think dealing with this is pretty much similar to any other sexual assault investigation. I worked, prior to this, for this for 19 years with the city of XXX and did extensive crimes and I did, I've done both now I think they're very similar. I think there's more support to give the students there's more groups, they're just that extra help that we can give them and make sure they have that support. Other than that, I think it's about the same."
P018	Plot - Conspiracy	"Title IX and that process and wasn't necessarily being seen as an advocate. And so, I'm really hoping that as we move forward, we may need to look at should our University employ this person to do this specific job? Or maybe should this person just do education and we employ someone or work to find a partnership in the community that can serve as that advocate, so they're not tied to the University, because I feel like institutions do a great job protecting themselves and with that comes a lack of protecting our students."

P010	Plot - Story of Decline	"We need to do more. We need to do better. When you ask me how that's when I probably get a little bit stuck um, but as you know from your research, you know, and this is obviously there is always people who will challenge this. Yeah women 18 to 24 who attend an institution of higher education full time are sexually assaulted about triple the rate of women 18 to 24 who are not enrolled in higher education. And so, that's not something's not right, right? We gotta figure that out because there's, there's no reason for that. Why are colleges and universities postsecondary institutions so much of a threat?"
P014	Plot - Story of Helplessness and Control	"So, barriers I think that regardless, if it was before or now, money is always going to be a barrier because with the required annual training which is just a good idea even if it wasn't required – there's no money that is put out there for that. And so, finding the money or knowing who should be trained by outside sources verses then by training folks in house because of course you're gonna save money but then you've gotta make sure you've got the appropriate and the correct amount of training for someone inside to do that. And the sources for training are pretty limited."
P016	Plot - Stymied Progress	"Honestly, like with the current COVID situation where so many of us are working from home. We're only meeting with students virtually. You know, I feel that that's lessened our opportunity for conversation. The virtual meetings just don't seem as natural of a place to have those conversations. It can be harder to read a student's body language. You know, if you can tell something's bothering them, a lot of students that I meet with, choose to not be on video, so I can't see them, where, where if you're in person, it's, it's just more natural to approach the conversations if you feel that you know there was something a student wanted to talk about, but was refrain from saying, it's easier to pick up on those cues in person."

Best Practices and Barriers Results

As this study was largely exploratory, I was able to explore the range of practice areas of the campus as support professional who provide services under Title IX. The participants of this study are all employees whom, among one of their duties may be asked to provide their expertise and services to a student in need of a specific support. The research question for this project was singularly what the best practices and barriers are to implementing Title IX policy regarding sexual assaults. Through the interviews I obtained, the narratives of the campus support professionals provided their perspectives on this research question.

Regarding best practices and consistent with NPF, the participants associated themselves or those that follow processes in the role of hero as these are the persons who help and support the victims. The participants then primarily defined the victims as the students they serve who were then subcategorized (sexual assault survivors, students in general/anyone seeking supports, marginalized students, and respondents). The campus supports professional's specific department and service they provided impacted who they saw as the victims. There was one participant who opined that another victim is that of the student support professional because of the secondhand trauma and turnover they see through their role in the human resources department. Thereafter, the best practices of Title IX implementation as relayed by the student support providers fell into two main categories. The first category of best practice for Title IX implementation is that there are victim-controlled investigations and processes with a subcategory of this including the importance of diverse options for supports and reporting. The second category of best

practice for Title IX implementation is that the person involved with providing supports must work to follow the centralize process as provide by system/campus. A subcategory is that by following the centralized system, campus support professionals work well together to provide consistency and support each other. Following the NPF analysis to define the narrative elements codes, I extracted these common themes for the best practices of Title IX implementation in the following table.

Table 8

Best Practices of Title IX Implementation and Description

Best practices of Title IX implementation - themes	Researcher's description of the themes for best practices of Title IX derived from participant responses
Victim-controlled investigation/processes.	These best practices included providing information regarding what supports are available to victims, following up with the victims regularly, listening to the wishes of the victims at all stages of the investigation or processes and that the camps support providers is well informed on the various campus processes and is trauma informed.
Victim-controlled investigation – diverse options for supports and reporting.	These best practices including the above but also highlighted the importance of having and making known diversity in supports both in variety but also diversity in the persons providing the supports to marginalized student populations.
Following the centralized process as provided by system/campus.	These best practices require that the campus support professional should not veer from the campus or system provided processes. The participants were in alignment that continuity in the delivery of supports to victims is required. Participants also suggested that when a campus support professional is not sure what next step or best practice is in a situation they know they can contact Title

	IX but that additional resources should also be available to find answers.
Follows the centralized process as provided by system/campus – the system works well together to provide consistency and support each other.	These best practices were reflections of those who work very closely with Title IX office who stated that the larger system as a whole is an excellent source of additional support and guidance from which they benefit and subsequently better serve the victims.

As it relates to barriers of Title IX Policy Implementation and in accordance with NPF, the barriers to Title IX Policy Implementation correlate strongly with the elements of villain, causal mechanism, and the plot. According to the data collected for this study, the barriers to Title IX implementation were clearer following the NPF coding for the narrative elements as each of the barriers connected to the hero's perceptions of the villains, plots, and causal mechanisms. While it was a key component of this study to understand the perspective through the shared narratives using NPF, the table below details the barriers relayed the participants to specially respond the research questions. The results evidenced four main categories for the barriers to Title IX implementation which are: revictimization, lack of education (nobody wants to talk about sexual assault until they need to), lack of resources, and the need for improved Title IX training. I outlined the common themes for barriers to Title IX implementation below with their subcategories in the following Table 9 below.

Table 9

Barrier of Title IX Policy Implementation With Description

Barriers of Title IX policy implementation – themes	Researcher's descriptions of the themes for barriers of Title IX derived from participant responses

Revictimization caused not following processes.	These barriers outlined those working to provide campus supports but do not have a working knowledge of the Title IX processes or other applicable process as this serves to revictimize student seeking assistance. The revictimization may occur in several ways but includes not directing the students to available resources, not believing students, not following the wishes of the victim, and having students re-tell their stories too many times.
Lack of Education (Nobody wants to talk about Sexual Assault Until They Need to)	These barriers as expressed by the participants, are that there is a general lack of knowledge about understanding the complexities of sexual assaults. Specifically, participants state that sexual assaults is not a topic that people want to discuss until an instance of sexual assault personally affects their lives as an individual.
Lack of Education (Nobody wants to talk about Sexual Assaults until they need to) & the problem is complex interwoven with biases on racism, sexism, and the meaning of consent	These barriers included the above plus heroes often deal with the added complexities of sexism, racism, and the meaning of consent as additional barriers which necessitate additional but unwanted discussion.
Lack of Education (Nobody wants to talk about Sexual Assault Until They Need to) & need more people who are trauma informed and know the science of victimology	These barriers included the above plus heroes the added issue of a general lack of how to approach sexual assaults from a science-based understanding of victimology. Additionally, participants stated that the general public do not understand Title IX or what it means to be trauma informed. This creates a barrier for student reporting and perpetuates an environment conducive to perpetuating just-world-beliefs, victim-blaming, and rape culture.
Lack of Education (Nobody wants to talk about Sexual Assault Until They Need to) & and when they need to – it is overwhelming	In addition to the lack of education (about sexual assaults or the processes) participants stated that they often deal with the fact that when people are in a position to need to deal with a sexual

	assault all the information is overwhelming. This may cause the victim to decide that help-seeking is more than they can handle and do not get the support they need.
Lack of Resources and high turnover in campus support areas (stretched too thin – must wear too many hats)	Participants state that the barrier of lacking resources at many campuses is a major problem. Very often a Title IX coordinator or Title IX deputy is just one of the many roles a person working on a university campus may have. That even on campuses where there is a dedicated Title IX coordinator, the work is overwhelming for one person is in in charge of overseeing the provisioning of education for the entire campus, generally being available to an entire campus staff, faculty and student population for questions related to sexual assaults and sexual discrimination and the processing of the entire investigation process (report writing, interview, coordinating, etc.)
Lack of Resources and high turnover in campus support areas (second-hand trauma)	The lack of resources barrier is compounded by the fact that there are few to no additional resources available to help staff effectively deal with the second-hand trauma of being a support in a sexual assault which results in a high turnover rate in these roles.
Lack of Resources campus support areas: stretched too thin – must wear too many hats and proper training is very expensive and only available from a few sources.	This barrier also falls under the lack of resources as those persons who work to implement Title IX must receive ongoing training to stay current in the everchanging laws and interpretation of the law. Currently there are less than five providers recognized as qualified suppliers of Title IX education and as such the training is very expensive costing thousands of dollars for practitioners to stay current.
Current Title IX Training	Heroes expressed in their narratives that a barrier to implementing Title IX is the current Title IX training. Participants, who

work more peripherally to implement Title IX (they do not have Title IX title or do not work in the Title IX office) make it clear in their narratives that they know where to go when they have questions however, they want to have better and more ongoing training about:

- Processes related to all of the investigation processes that may apply to a sexual assault (Title IX Process, HR Process, Code of Conduct Process, and Police Process). It is not clear who does what and when, when process overlap and where or when handoffs may happen.
- The accountability for those that receive a finding of fact related to violating Title IX policy. Participants indicate that they understand that student data is protected but they also indicate that they do not know what happens or what the possible outcomes might be for a person held accountable when there has been a finding of fact.
- Clarity on whether the accountability differs depending on the process used (Title IX Process, HR Process, Code of Conduct Process, and Police Process) or if the victim has a choice of which process to pursue.
- Clarity on all available supports, how to access them and which are confidential, and which supports may be required to act. Participants know about their services but do not know the scope of all other campus supports available to students.

| Current Title IX Training – Higher Level Training Needed | The narratives of participants who work more directly with Title IX implementation (have Title IX title or do work in the Title IX office) state that they want to work on improving the marketing of Title IX training to evoke better discussion on sexual assaults and their complexities. Title IX should not be a secretive, scary, ominous process rather it should be as well known to students as locating academic supports on campus. These narratives show that they do not believe that providing an annual training or that training freshman students once at the beginning of the year is providing enough education. Student straining should be ongoing throughout their time on campus. Additionally, ongoing training should be provided to campus employees so that they better understand their own contribution to Title IX implementation as understanding this will allow for university environment conducive to normalizing gender equity. |

Summary

The focus of this study was to obtain the best practices and barriers to implementing Title IX policy on university campuses. Interviews were conducted of persons who work on a university to provide supports to students affected by sexual assaults (campus support professionals) to obtain their narratives of how they view and implement Title IX policy. Using narrative policy framework to decode the narratives which are inherently delivered in a storied format. All the narratives obtained did include the elements of a story including setting, characters (heroes, victims and villains), causal mechanism (showing the relationship triggering action/inaction between the characters) as well as the plot (the outcomes of those actions/inactions).The policy beliefs centered

around the principal that the heroes (campus support professionals) believe that helping

victims (students) and providing support to victims of sexual assault through the

resources and rules of Title IX, is one of the most important roles they provide to campus

and that but for the barriers they face as a campus support professional, the heroes are

successful in providing the best support they can provide.

In the next chapter, I have provided more discussion regarding this study, its

conclusions, and recommendations for the future. I also have provided an interpretation

of this study as well as delineated the limitations of this study. Additionally, I have

outlined the recommendations for future study and implications for continued research.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I have given the overall conclusion of this research project.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the best practices and barriers to implementation of Title IX from the perspective of university campus support professionals who are tasked with its implementation. In 1972, Title IX was enacted as the policy that dictates how educators address sexual assault and sexual discrimination to ensure equity in education regardless of gender. However, the high rate of sexual assaults on university campuses (20% of women and 6% of men) was problematic enough to be referred to as a public health crisis due to the failure of universities to adequately address sexual assault (see Peterson, et al. 2017). Moreover, Buzo (2017) found that sexual assault survivors refer to dealing with the university processes as the second assault. The current study was conducted to explore the perspectives of campus support professionals regarding implementation of Title IX.

I employed a qualitative design to conduct this study. I obtained the narratives of university support professionals and used the NPF (Jones et al., 2014, 2018) to analyze the narratives and code the data according to story elements to decipher the best practices and barriers related to Title IX implementation. Findings indicated that the campus support professionals (characterized as the heroes) are the people in place to support students affected by sexual assault (victims) on campus (setting) and that their best practice is to follow the standard process provided by their campus and system. The villains in the narratives were represented in this study as those who perpetrate the assault, the lack of funding and decision making based on financial or liability concerns, Title IX policy and those who manage the policy, sexism, misogyny, racism, exploitation,

constantly changing policies and politics, and people who lack understanding of Title IX and do not follow the processes. I examined the relationship between the characters in Title IX policy implementation with the causal mechanisms and plots to ultimately derive the best practices and barriers.

Interpretation of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to identify the best practices and barriers to implementation of Title IX as perceived by campus support professionals as policy administrators. I determined that NPF was an appropriate framework for this study because all five core elements required for an NPF study were included in the university sexual assault paradigm. Title IX policy is rooted in a social construction, and the participants described their barriers to implementation including the social constructions of consent, rape myths, rape culture, just world beliefs (Aurrekoetxea-Casaus, 2020) and additional wicked problems such as sexism and racism. The best practices were rooted in the social construction that Title IX policy is necessary to ensure equity in education. These social constructions are bounded and have remained consistent over time. The units of analysis used for the narrative data were detailed in storied format from which all of the thematic elements necessary for NPF were present (setting, characters, causal mechanism, plots, and morals). Although this study focused on the narratives of the individual (micro level), there were interacting levels related to the policy. Participants described working with the meso level, such as their department or team, and with the macro level, which was the university or system. This study indicated that the perception of policy is better understood via storied format. Using the NPF to analyze the stories of

those implementing Title IX was a sound approach. Through analysis of the narratives, I determined that the best practice of policy implementation for Title IX on university campuses is to follow the procedures related to Title IX which must include also providing diverse supportive options for student to choose from during the Title IX process.

This study was also significant for policy barriers related to implementing Title IX. The policy implementation gap (Gunn, 1978) is the gap that exists between a good policy and how that policy is undermined by an organization's business practices during implementation. The current participants consistently reported the need for additional education to gain a better understanding of the Title IX policy and processes but also expressed keen interest in receiving education about the connected social issues and their impact on sexual assaults on campus. This finding aligned with Hudson et al.'s (2019) study in which they stated that written policy often becomes a policy failure as a result of overreaching in expectation and scope, the policy does not sufficiently define its authority, the policy is drafted without stakeholders' input, and the policy is subject to the current impulses of political powerholders. The current participants echoed each of these issues as barriers for implementing Title IX on their campus as policy administrators.

The value of this study was that it provided an analysis of Title IX policy implementation from the view of those that implement on university campuses. Other studies on policy implementation gap have indicated that there are three basic components at the problem level that make effective policy creation elusive: randomness, adaptability, and uniqueness of situations (Braithwaite et al., 2018). I have shown in this

study that Title IX policy and its implementation efforts have these components and is perhaps most clearly evidenced by the participants who provide the supportive services to students dealing with the effects of a sexual assault under Title IX but are not in the Title IX office or do not have a Title IX title. They have shared in their narratives their desire to being supportive of students and help them through the processes. However, without a clear understanding of the policies, procedures, and options they are not sure how they fit into Title IX. This state of unsurety is compounded by the fact that sexual assaults are unique, random and requires adaptability. Additionally, participants state their confusion about the procedures under Title IX which seem everchanging (federally changes were made twice during the course of this study).

In addition to policy implementation gap, the current study indicated that sexual assault on university campuses satisfies the definition of a wicked problem. According to Rittel and Webber (1973), wicked problems are so interwoven with other social problems that the costs associated with finding a solution and connecting the varied stakeholders are overwhelming. The current participants linked the barriers to Title IX implementation to other wicked problems such as racism, classism, and sexism. These participants reported that implementing Title IX is fraught with connections to other major social problems. The participants repeated that to advance safety and equity in institutions of higher learning, it is imperative to invest time and resources for improving policy implementation of Title IX.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study was that all of the data was collected and analyzed by me as the researcher as the primary instrument. Although I made every effort to minimize bias by use of triangulation, journal keeping, and repetitive review of the data collected, the fact remains that the analysis was made through the subjective view of the researcher. Another important limitation and issue of trustworthiness was that NPF analysis should be performed by people who have been trained in NPF analysis (see Jones et al., 2014, 2018). I did my best to study, learn, and apply the NPF guidelines; however, because I was self-taught, there were likely to be inconsistencies compared to studies conducted by more experienced researchers. Nevertheless, I stand by the findings and the decision to use NPF as a framework to analyze the narratives regarding Title IX policy.

Finally, there were definite limitations of this study resulted from COVID pandemic. The inability to meet people in person for interviews forces the decision to utilize the Zoom teleconference platform. Although this was admittedly a more convenient way to obtain the interviews, researcher believes that this was a colder, less personable manner for interviewing. Also, the decision to not use the video options became a point of discussion with many of the participants, some turned their camera on, and others kept the camera off. After about the first couple of interviews, I made this a matter of the script to discuss with all the rest of the participants. I also made the decision to, at end of the interviews, turn on the camera so that the participants could see my face.

Recommendations

My decision as the researcher to use the NPF was a sound approach to providing structure to the data collected for this study, but it was also subjective to the participants and my vantage was a singular snapshot moment in time. Recommendations for future study would be to conduct interviews with the same participants using the same questions at regular intervals over the course of an extended period. In this way the data collected from each participant could be reviewed against future responses on the same topic from the same participant to determine if and how the responses change over time. Another recommendation would be to conduct in-person interviews and or allow both sides to see each other's faces during the interview as this may bring about different responses. Finally, another recommendation for future study would be to choose one of the villains or barriers prescribed in this study and focus on that area of discussion singly to gain a greater understanding of the totality of its impact on Title IX implementation.

Implications

The implications for continued research into the phenomena of sexual assaults on university campuses is crucial to the betterment of society. The data learned from this study is a valuable addition to the existing literature both for the use of the NPF used for data analysis but also the perspectives gained through the narratives of campus professionals implementing Title IX. In terms of striving for positive social change, this study has been beneficial in identifying the key areas of improvements that can be made by policy makers and administrators to fill the policy implementation gaps. This study exhibited that campus support professionals want a deeper understanding of Title IX, the

overall process, and how their individual roles contribute to its implementation. The campus support professionals interviewed in this study gave several viable suggestions for moving forward. Campuses' Title IX offices and system offices need to make a concerted effort to work with their campus employees to provide increased training to help them understand the scope and the limitations of Title IX. Additionally, campuses would benefit from also providing explanation on the various types of investigations that may exist in a sexual assault matter both on and off campus (police investigation, student conduct, Human Resource, civil and Title IX), their potential ramifications, and which processes may run concurrent or consecutively. Campus support professionals also expressed that they want more purposeful discussion and training related to and surrounding topics that relate to sexual assaults on university campus so they can better identify the cultural and systemic biases that they otherwise do not consciously face as a matter of course. Finally, campuses and system office need to work on the overall marketing of this education in a way that elicits participation and builds a team atmosphere to lose the secrecy the Title IX process currently exhibits.

Positive Social Change Implications

The positive social change implications of this study are that at the micro-level of policy implementation, the administrators understand that it is necessary to improve processes and to bring forward improvements to policy implementation related to Title IX. This study shows that policy administrators earnestly adhere and follow the processes of Title IX as they understand it. Although there are several underlying wicked problems that act as barriers to their ability to best serve students affected by a sexual assault, the

campus support professionals believe that improved and ongoing education on these matters as well as the process of Title IX are important to clarify and share. The participants hold firm to the fact that they follow the current processes as best as they can the betterment of students but also desire to gain a deeper understanding of Title IX and their role in it. The positive social change opportunities presented by ongoing and purposeful education shall reduce the prevalence of revictimization of a sexual assault survivor, bring clarity to processes, and strengthen university's ability to provide an educational environment that is both safe and equitable.

Conclusion

Through this study, I was determined to find the best practices and barriers to implementing the sexual assault policy known as Title IX from the perspective of the university campus support professionals as policy administrators. Utilizing narrative policy framework to decode the inherent storied elements in the narrative responses from the campus support professionals, I was able to show strong connections of policy implementation gap and sexual assaults as a wicked problem as being barriers to Title IX implementation. I also was able to show that campus support professionals want to follow the rules and the procedures of their campus and that they truly want to help students who are seeking their assistance, but they need to be given the tools and information about Title IX and its proper implementation. The findings provide a better understanding of the needs and struggles faced by Title IX policy administrators. This data may be used by universities to better support their campus support professionals to improve the services provided to students affected by sexual assaults

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your gender?
   - Male (including transgender men)
   - Female (including transgender women)
   - Prefer to self-describe as _____ (non-binary, gender-fluid, agender, please specify)
   - Prefer not to say.

2. What is your ethnicity.
   - White
   - Hispanic or Latino
   - Black or African American
   - Native American or American Indian
   - Asian / Pacific Islander
   - Other

3. What is your age?
   - 18-24 years old
   - 25-34 years old
   - 35-44 years old
   - 45-54 years old
   - 55-64 years old
   - 65-74 years old
   - 75 years or older

4. What is your highest level of education?

   - High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
   - Some college credit, no degree
   - Trade/technical/vocational training
   - Associate degree
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Master's degree
   - Professional degree
   - Doctorate degree

5. What is the name of your department at the university?

6. What is your title at the university?

7. What is your role on campus and/or what service(s) do you provide to the university?

8. Overall, how long have you been at university?

9. What are the titles of previous roles you have held at the university (if applicable)?

10. How long have served in the previous roles you have held at the university (if applicable)?

11. How long have you been in your current role?

12. What certifications and/or membership any do you have or maintain for you role at the university?

13. Please describe the training you have received or continue to receive related to Title IX.

Research Question: What are the best practices and the barriers to implementing Title IX policy in sexual assaults.

Interview Questions:

1. Please describe your level of involvement with cases of sexual assault on your university's campus

2. How do identify when a student in in need of supports relating to a sexual assault?

3. What are the steps you follow when you suspect or confirm a student is in need of campus support related to a sexual assault?

4. What constitutes a sexual assault?

5. Does your campus follow an affirmative consent model?

6. What does consent to sexual activity look like?

7. Please describe your level of follow up and interaction with students affected by a sexual assault?

8. Please describe your level of follow up and interaction with other departments on your campus in relation to your role on campus?

9. Please describe your level of involvement with the implementation of Title IX on your university campus.

10. Describe the best practices you use to implement Title IX as a campus support professional?

11. Describe any barriers that you have encountered as a campus support professional implementing Title IX.

12. Describe how your implementation best practices or barriers change depending on the status of when either respondent or the complainant (examples might be if an employee, athlete, or community member is either the respondent or complainant).

13. Please describe the best practices improvements to implementation you anticipate as a campus support professional with the 2020 update to Title IX policy.

14. Please describe the barriers or concerns for implementation you anticipate as a campus support professional with the 2020 update to Title IX policy?

    a. Have you received training on the changes resulting from the 2020 changes to Title IX? Please describe the training.

b. The 2020 changes to Title IX have brought forward some substantial changes in what constitutes an assault, who can investigate and when, please describe how well you are prepared for these changes by way of tools and resources you were given or prepared to ensure your processes align with the changes.

c. Have you been informed that your title and/or role changed as a result of the 2020 changes to Title IX? If so, please describe the changes you have or expect to experience as a result of the changes.

15. Please share with me any additional views you have regarding sexual assault policy as it relates to your experiences working with students on a university campus.

Appendix B: Sample Excerpt of Researcher's Journal

It is noteworthy to mention that the use of the video camera seems to be a good move with some people and others want to see my face. I didn't expect this, but I am glad that have been consistent in telling everyone that I am expressive with my face and do not want to impact their responses. I am also glad that I know this about myself to be able to relay it. After having a few people who work in campus security/police it was surprising to see the contrast today from a person in the Title IX office. I believe that several of the response were read from policy as to not give the wrong answer. They were less anecdotal overall, and this continued until the end of the interview when I asked for personal perceptions dealing with students – they said that this is a serious topic that should not be so secretive and less political. It was a good interview and I believe that I obtained the information I need; however, I feel like I am a better interviewer in person and allow people to be comfortable when they interact with me in-person. This process is a bit colder than I prefer.

Appendix C: NPF Coding Characteristics and Descriptions

NARRATIVE ELEMENT CHARACTERISTIC	CHARACTERISTIC DESCRIPTIONS	P000				
		#9	#10	#11	#12	#15
Character - Victim	Victim - those who are harmed by action or inaction.					
Character - Villain	Villain - Those who create harm, inflict damage or pain, upon a victim.					
Characters - Hero	Hero - Those who act with purpose to achieve a policy solution.					
Causal Mechanism - Mechanical Cause	"Causal Mechanism: Mechanical Cause" narrative relays intended consequences by unguided actions with a policy problem					
Causal Mechanism: Accidental Cause	"Causal Mechanism: Accidental Cause" narrative relays unintended consequences by unguided actions with a policy problem.					
Causal Mechanism: Inadvertent Cause	"Causal Mechanism: Inadvertent Cause" narrative relays unintended consequences by purposeful action with a policy solution					
Causal Mechanism: Intentional Cause	"Causal Mechanism: Intentional Cause" narrative relays intended consequences by purposeful actions with a policy problem.					
Plot - Controlled by Victim	"Controlled by Victim" narrative describes the plot as moving from fate to control but locates the control in the hand of those suffering from the problem					
Plot - Change is Only an Illusion	"Change-Is-Only-an Illusion" narrative describes the plot describes that improvement or decline was an illusion					
Plot - Conspiracy	"Conspiracy" narrative described the plot as moving from fate to control, but revealing a small group had control it all along					
Plot - Story of Decline	"Story of Decline" narrative describes the plot as things are getting so bad that something must be done.					
Plot - Story of Helplessness and Control	"Story of Helplessness and Control" narrative describes the plot as not great, but the situation must be acceptable because seems unchangeable, but still describes how change can occur					
Plot - Stymied Progress	"Stymied Progress" narrative describes the plot as hero making improvements to situation, but things are worsening because something/someone is interfering with the hero's work.					

Appendix D: Interview Analysis Summary Form

NARRATIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK
Interview Analysis Summary

In each response note if narrative text remarks on the following Characters, Morals & Beliefs = Plot, Causal Mechanism and specify type referenced per codebook.

Participant Number: **Date of Interview:**   **Setting:**
Interview Question (9): Please describe your level of involvement with the implementation of Title IX on your university campus.
Response:
Interview Question (10): Describe the best practices you use to implement Title IX as a campus support professional.
Response:
Interview Question (11): Describe any barriers that you have encountered as a campus support professional implementing Title IX.
Response:
Interview Question (12): Describe how your implementation best practices or barriers change depending on the status of when either respondent or the complainant (examples might be if an employee, athlete, or community member is either the respondent or complainant).
Response:
Interview Question (15): Please share with me any additional views you have regarding sexual assault policy as it relates to your experiences working with students on a university campus.
Response:
Final Notes:

Appendix E: Interview Script

Hello this is Rachel Cromheecke thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today.

Before we begin there are a few important items that I need to address:

- First, I want to make sure you are comfortable proceeding with the interview today and remind you that if you want to stop at any point – just let me know.
- Second, I want to remind you that your privacy is very important, and I will not be disclosing your identity or your participation with this study.
- Third this privacy extends to any specific information you may provide during the interview. The information sought is your overall experience but if there is a slip and specific information is accidently provided, it will be deleted.
- Fourth, I will be keeping my camera off as I am very expressive with my face and do not want my expressions to impact your responses.
- Finally, just a reminder and as stated in the consent document all participants will receive a summary of the findings at the conclusion of the dissertation process.

That concludes my housekeeping items do you have any questions?

Ok - We will then begin with the demographic questions.

Appendix F: Midwest university system Sample Internal Policy

All state specific references have been removed to preserve participants' anonymity.

Confidential Employee. Any employee, who is a licensed medical, clinical, or mental health professional, when acting in that role in the provision of services to a patient or client who is a university student or employee. A Confidential Employee will not report specific information concerning a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment received by that Employee in the Employee's professional capacity unless with the consent of the reporting individual or unless required by the Employee's license or by law.

Confidential Resource. Individuals or agencies in the community, whose professional license or certification permits that individual or agency to preserve the confidentiality of the patient or client.

Incapacitation. As it applies to this policy, the state of being unable to physically and/or mentally make informed rational judgments and effectively communicate, and may include unconsciousness, sleep, or blackouts, and may result from the use of alcohol or other drugs. Where alcohol or other drugs are involved, evaluation of incapacitation requires an assessment of how the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs affects a person's decision-making ability; awareness of consequences; ability to make informed, rational judgments; capacity to appreciate the nature and quality of the act; or level of consciousness. The assessment is based on objectively and reasonably apparent indications of incapacitation when viewed from the perspective of a sober, reasonable person.

Office for Civil Rights. The U.S. Department of Education office that is responsible for enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and other education-based discrimination acts. http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaints-how.html

Responsible Employee. Any employee other than a "confidential resource":

1. Who has the authority to take action to redress sexual misconduct;
2. Who has been given the duty of reporting incidents of sexual misconduct by students or employees to the Title IX coordinator or other appropriate school designee; or
3. Who a student could reasonably believe has this authority or duty. April 29, 2014 "Dear Colleague Letter", *available at* http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/qa-201404-title-ix.pdf.

Retaliation. An adverse action taken against an individual in response to, motivated by, or in connection with an individual's complaint of discrimination or discriminatory

harassment, participation in an investigation of such complaint, and/or opposition of discrimination or discriminatory harassment in the educational or workplace setting.

Sex Discrimination. Discrimination on the basis of sex or gender. Sexual harassment and sexual assault are forms of sex discrimination. [*See* 20 USC §§ 1681-1688]

Sexual Harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or educational experience, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such an individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment. [Adapted from 29 C.F.R. § 1604.11 (1980)].]

Sexual Violence. The phrase, as used in this policy, refers to incidents involving sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, and domestic violence.

Title IX. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. sec. 1681 et seq.; 34 C.F.R. Part 106) (as amended) is a federal law that states, "[n]o person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a).

Title IX Coordinator (and Deputies). An employee designated to coordinate compliance with Title IX, who plays an in important role in an institution's efforts to ensure equitable opportunity for all students and employees, and who works with school officials to remind the school community that students and employees must have equal access to all programs.(Adapted and revised from April 24, 2015, "Dear Colleague Letter" available at http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201504-title-ix-coordinators.pdf).

Trauma-Informed Care. Trauma-informed care reflects an understanding of trauma and emphasizes creating services and programs that are sensitive and directly responsive to the trauma that many victims and survivors experience following a violent crime. Trauma-informed care programs identify and limit potential triggers to reduce their re-traumatization and protect their mental and emotional health. https://www.justice.gov/ovw/blog/importance-understanding-trauma-informed-care-and-self-care-victim-service-providers.

Trauma-informed care is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. Trauma-informed care also emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety for

both consumers and providers, and helps survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. *See also:*
http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/SAMHSA%20TIC.pdf; and http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_guides_building- cultures-of-care.pdf

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Federal law enacted in 1994, which promotes the investigation and prosecution of violent crimes against women, among other objectives. Recently, it affected amendments to the Clery Act, through the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE) provision, Section 304.

Appendix G: Sample Transcript Excerpt

(R = Researcher and P = Participant)

R: Please describe best practices that you used while implementing Title 9 on your campus at the campus support professional.

P: Uh, participating in the required training annually, I think that's an important part and function of it. And then, for me personally, in my role as an advocate for students of color is understanding the role that race and racism plays in their experience in the process. So, for me personally, understanding the nuances associated with the intersectionality of race and sexual assault and how that has just recognizing the additional impacts that may be at play. And advocating for resources even though we have a signal, we are predominantly white institution, advocating for additional resources for our most marginalized students.

R: Uh huh. Please describe any barriers that you encounter implementing Title 9.

P: Uh, I think that would be one of the barriers, that helping colleagues and faculty to understand what a student in their class who may have experienced sexual assault. Is experiencing and how they may need additional resources. I think that's a barrier. The changes and regulations with our current Education Secretary and the, the constant changes. And then in this case, the ambiguity about when we would begin enforcing the new regulations, I think that has is a barrier and going backwards, we made progress and going backwards is another barrier.

R: Can you say going backwards what does that mean?

P: With the new regulations and the changes nationally and expectations related to Title 9.