

2021

## The Effectiveness of Rape Prevention and Awareness Programs on Historically Black Colleges and University Campuses

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Walden University  
2021

Abstract

The Effectiveness of Rape Prevention and Awareness Programs on Historically Black

Colleges and University Campuses

by

Lucretia Banks

MA, Norfolk State University, 2009

BS, North Carolina Central University, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

November 2021

## Abstract

As rapes and sexual assaults continue to occur on Historically Black College and University (HBCU) campuses, students remain apprehensive in reporting victimizations to law enforcement, despite the presence of sexual assault prevention and awareness programming. Research has shown that the lack of reporting to law enforcement is based on specific barriers. However, there is little knowledge on the perceptions of program facilitators and administrators on why victims decline to report to law enforcement. This qualitative phenomenological study gathered the perceptions of eight program facilitators and administrators on the effectiveness of rape and sexual assault prevention programming. The community readiness theoretical model provided the foundation to display the culture and dynamics of a university campus. The research questions examined the influence programming has on victim reporting to law enforcement and the capacity of campus community involvement. Through purposive sampling, participants' perceptions were gathered through semistructured interviews and coded through initial, axial, and theoretical coding. As a result, five emergent themes explained significant barriers and support mechanisms in program effectiveness. The results indicated that intimate programming, integrity, and trust in programming and personnel influenced student reporting to law enforcement officials. At the same time, education was imperative for the campus community in instilling and maintaining trust and integrity among students and social support. The results from this study can contribute to positive social change by providing program facilitators and campus administrators tools to implement impactful campus sexual assault programming for campus communities.

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## Dedication

I am dedicating this to my loving and supportive mother, father, and sister that encouraged me to keep going and not give up, regardless of what I encountered. I truly appreciate every encouraging word, prayer and financial assistance given. I love each of you and we did this together. In loving memory of my grandmother, Josephine Ferebee.

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study .....	1
Problem Statement .....	5
Purpose.....	5
Framework .....	7
Research Questions .....	6
Nature of the Study .....	9
Definition of Terms.....	10
Assumptions.....	11
Scope and Delimitations .....	12
Limitations .....	14
Significance.....	15
Summary .....	17
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	19
Introduction.....	19
Overview of the Chapter .....	20
Literature Search Strategy.....	21
Theoretical Framework.....	22
Rape and Sexual Assault.....	24
Alcohol and Sexual Assaults .....	26



Hooking Up.....	28
Rape Myth Acceptance.....	30
Campus Police and Municipal Police.....	33
Law Enforcement and Reporting.....	35
Historically Black Colleges and Universities.....	38
Sexual Assault Prevention Programs.....	41
Improving Reporting to Campus Law Enforcement Officials.....	45
Summary.....	46
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	48
Introduction.....	48
Research Design and Rationale.....	50
The Role of the Researcher.....	51
Methodology.....	52
Participants and Sample.....	52
Instrumentation.....	55
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	56
Data Analysis.....	57
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	59
Credibility.....	60
Transferability.....	60
Dependability.....	61
Confirmability.....	61

Ethical Procedures .....	62
Summary .....	64
Chapter 4: Results .....	66
Introduction.....	66
Demographics .....	67
Data Collection .....	68
Data Analysis .....	69
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	69
Results.....	71
Participants.....	71
Themes .....	73
Theme 1: Importance of Intimate Programming .....	74
Theme 2: Integrity and Trust .....	78
Informal Social Support.....	82
Continuance of Knowledge and Training.....	85
Community Collaboration and Engagement.....	87
Summary .....	89
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	93
Introduction.....	93
Interpretation of the Findings.....	94
Limitations of the Study.....	97
Recommendations.....	98

Implications.....	99
Impacts for Positive Social Change .....	99
Theoretical Implications .....	100
Conclusion .....	101
References.....	103
Appendix A: Interview Questions .....	120

## List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Years of Experience .....	67
Table 2. Themes and Codes .....	74
Table 3. Importance of Intimate Programming.....	75
Table 4. Integrity and Trust .....	81
Table 5. Informal Social Support.....	84
Table 6. Continuance of Knowledge and Training.....	86
Table 7. Community Collaboration and Engagement.....	88

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

College and university administrators must acknowledge the perceptions of program facilitators and administrators that create and implement sexual assault prevention awareness programming. Prevention and awareness programming designed to educate students on how to prevent sexual assault are created in a variety of ways such as on-line and peer-driven (Hubach et al., 2019). The need for such programming is based on the continued annual number of occurrences of sexual assault on college and university campuses. Administrators, program facilitators and law enforcement need to create and implement effective programming based on women experiencing an increased number of sexual assault occurrences during their freshman year (Mellins et al., 2017). Effective programming requires collaboration and knowledge from multiple departments on campus to provide a safe and honest environment for sexual assault reporting.

Establishing positive relationships between students and law enforcement is imperative in creating a safe reporting environment for students. Many sexual assaults of women go unreported to law enforcement officials (Kerner et al., 2017). Honesty and comfort among students and law enforcement officials involve building trustworthy relationships and effective awareness programming and training for students and law enforcement. Specifically, Historically Black College and University (HBCU) campuses provide a home away from home community atmosphere in which students are comfortable in their living and learning environment. Program facilitators and administrators must enlist assistance from the campus community and other community

resources in sharing with students the importance of reporting sexual assault victimizations to law enforcement while addressing such an urgent public health issue. In this study, I explored the lived experiences of program facilitators and administrators responsible for sexual assault prevention programming, and the influence programming had on encouraging students to report to law enforcement officials.

### **Major Sections**

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the background and purpose of this study involving the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention awareness programs. The background section will include an overview of the occurrences of sexual assaults on university campuses and HBCU campuses, the literature gap, and the importance of this study. In the section on the study's purpose, I identify the theoretical framework, outline the research questions, discuss the nature of the study and provide the definitions of terms discussed in the study. This chapter also includes discussion of the significance and review of the study's limitations and the study's potential to contribute to higher education institutions. This chapter concludes with a summary of the major points and an introduction to Chapter 2.

### **Background of the Study**

Sexual assaults on university campuses have been a significant issue over the years, drawing concern and scrutiny over the prevention programs offered to students. Among graduate and undergraduate students, 11.2% of all students experience rape or sexual assault through physical force and incapacitation due to alcohol or drugs (Rainn, 2019). The number of women sexually assaulted on university campuses has not

decreased by much throughout the years (Kerner et al., 2017). In recent years, attention has increased on sexual assaults and university campuses based on legislation and statutes. The Clery Act, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Title IX Education Amendment require universities to publish crime occurrences on campus, assess the campus culture on sexual assaults and create ways to prevent a hostile environment for students that would impact their learning environment (Siefkes-Andrew & Alexopoulos, 2019).

On HBCU campuses, sexual assault and rape prevention programs are not very effective in educating students on the importance of reporting rape and sexual assault victimizations to authorities (Lindquist et al., 2016). HBCUs are higher education institutions created before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide African Americans the opportunity to receive training and education (Holfester, 2019). In 2017, there were 102 HBCUs in 19 states, in addition to Washington, D.C., and The U.S. Virgin Islands; today, there are 101 campuses still in operation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). The female student population at HBCUs in 2017 totaled 142,922, and the male population totaled 83,921 (National Center of Education Statistics, 2019).

College university students continue to have experiences involving different types of victimizations and sexual assaults. The lack of reporting is one of the most significant problems law enforcement officials have on campuses (Moore & Baker, 2018). Every student needs to understand the importance of reporting victimizations to law enforcement officials as soon as they begin their enrollment. Reporting sexual assault victimizations to the proper authorities aids survivors in obtaining the appropriate care

and resources needed (Spencer et al., 2017). HBCU female victims are more likely than their European American counterparts to report their sexual victimization to a friend, only 9.9% report the same experience to law enforcement officers and, 3.4%, report sexual assaults if they were incapacitated due to drinking before the incident, binge drinking or use of drugs voluntarily or involuntarily (Lindquist et al., 2013). Palmer and St. Vil (2018) reported that European American women at predominantly European American institutions report their sexual victimizations to law enforcement officials 16% of the time, which is a 6.1% higher rate than HBCU victims.

In some cases, a cultural barrier to reporting victimizations to the proper authorities is because some cultures rely on close-knit communities, with small populations for support in situations that are private (Brubaker et al., 2017). The support given to victims comes from the community, and in some instances, it is not emphasized that reporting to law enforcement officials is vital. College and universities must offer and mandate sexual assault prevention and awareness programs to the entire student population to decrease potential sexual assault victimizations.

A significant gap in the literature exists between the perceptions of campus administrators and program facilitators on the components of prevention programs that address the importance of reporting sexual victimizations to law enforcement officials. Administrators and program facilitators work with students, some of whom may be victims of sexual assault. Creating the most effective and efficient programming for all students should be an essential factor in increasing victim reporting to law enforcement officials. By understanding the perceptions of administrators and facilitators on the



components that make effective sexual assault prevention programming, this has the potential to influence other universities on the types of programming that will be effective in increasing victim reporting to law enforcement.

### **Problem Statement**

Rape and sexual assaults continue to occur on university campuses, with only a small number being reported to law enforcement officials. Despite the creation and implementation of sexual assault prevention and intervention programs on university campuses, students are still sexually assaulted and reluctant to report their victimizations. Less than five percent of completed or attempted rapes against college women are reported to law enforcement (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2019). The continued problem of sexual assaults affects the HBCU student populations' safety and enrollment as parents may be concerned about sending their child to a school with lax security (Woodward et al., 2016). Many possible factors contribute to this problem, among which are course content for students, counseling staff training, administrators and law enforcement personnel, and programs that address cultural norms of the African American culture (Palmer & St. Vil, 2018). There has been very little if any formal evaluation of the perceptions of campus administrators and program facilitators at HBCUs on why victims do not report sexual victimizations to law enforcement officials.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to better understand the effectiveness of rape prevention programs on HBCU campuses, through the lived experiences of campus administrators and program facilitators. I explored campus

administrators and program facilitators' perceptions of the effectiveness of rape prevention and awareness programs on their respective campuses, and the influence programs have on victim reporting to law enforcement officials. I used semistructured interviews of campus administrators and program facilitators to provide components of prevention programs that influence the choice of victims to report their victimizations to law enforcement. Obtaining accurate perceptions and experiences of administrators and facilitators provided information to university leadership and program facilitators on the components of prevention programs that are effective in victimization reporting.

### **Research Questions**

The university campus serves as a small community with multiple units working together to decrease the number of sexual assault victimizations. Studies have shown that one in five undergraduate women have been sexually assaulted while attending a college or university (Muehlenard et al., 2017). Many universities focus on in-depth sexual assault prevention programming on including the entire university population, including staff. Still, at times certain types of programming did not adhere to the needs and wants of the whole student body population (Hubach et al., 2019). HBCUs as well as predominantly European American Universities, welcome and embrace their students and desire for them to succeed without victimization. Unfortunately, on some HBCU campuses, administrators do not respond to sexual assaults unless the university's image will be tarnished (Njoku et al., 2017). By not addressing the issue, students do not receive the resources and justice needed to overcome their victimization. Students at HBCUs were less likely to report sexual assault victimizations based on lack of knowledge on

how to report, embarrassment, and the desire not to report to law enforcement officials (Collington et al., 2019). I used the following research questions to gain insight from different populations on the effectiveness of prevention programming.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What effect does sexual assault prevention programming have on victim reporting to law enforcement officials?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What role does the campus community play in the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs on HBCU campuses?

### **Framework**

The theoretical base for this study was the community readiness theoretical model (CRM). This theoretical framework is a research-based theory created by theorists Prochaska and DiClemente that focuses on understanding intervention processes in communities (Thurman et al., 2003). Although the method was created to focus on alcohol prevention strategies within a community, it focuses on creating community-based initiatives to foster change (Anderson et al., 2017). For this study, this theoretical framework was most applicable because I focused on how prevention programming is utilized and its effectiveness on a university college campus, sometimes viewed as a small community. The structure of HBCUs, the employees, and the relationships between different departments on the campus concerning sexual assault prevention, awareness, and victim reporting are parallel to the CRM. Sexual assault victimizations on university campuses continue to rise, and by imploring the campus community based on the CRM to create community-based initiatives will potentially decrease the number of victimizations and foster change on the campus. Prevention programming is

equivalent to intervention processes, the main factor of the CRM. By using CRM, one can focus on assessments and change within communities; a university or college can be considered a small community within a broader community located in a city and state. Communities can represent areas such as geographical location, religion, culture, or an individual's ethnic background (Parker et al., 2018). A university founded as an HBCU can be viewed as being its very own community. Camp et al. (2009) found that African American students chose to attend their respective HBCUs to have the opportunity to interact and socialize with students of the same race and ethnic background to learn more about themselves and their racial identity. As students living and commuting to campus, they can live, eat, learn, interact, and work together in a community established for learning.

The initial purpose for creating the CRM was not entirely focused on the typical community depicted in today's society. Initially, this model was used to focus on drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs and later expanded to health, nutritional, suicide, and intimate partner violence prevention programs (Edwards et al., 2000). With this theory, communities can move through the stages of the theory to determine how to address and conquer the issue at hand (Bernai et al., 2003). This approach will show how rape and sexual assault prevention and awareness programs are useful on an HBCU campus community, and how to move the campus community closer to alleviating the occurrences of sexual violence on campus.

The purpose of the CRM is to determine ways to address and improve an issue or problem occurring in a community setting. In the community readiness theory, it is

comprised of nine stages that can be adjusted to adapt to the concerns and issues of society (Oetting et al., 2001). Depending on the community, each of the stages can be accomplished to resolve an issue or create the necessary factors to determine a solution to a problem.

### **Nature of the Study**

For this research study, I used a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of campus administrators and sexual assault program facilitators on HBCU campuses. Researchers use qualitative research to understand the experiences of research participants that have lived through an experience (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). A phenomenological approach was the best design for this study because I used it to engage with administrators and program facilitators. Through this method, I was able to listen to administrators and facilitators' experiences with sexual assault programming and their perception of rape prevention programs' influence on victim reporting, if any. Rudestam & Newton (2015) describe implementing interpretive phenomenology as sharing personal lived experiences so that others can learn from those experiences. In this study, I allowed each administrator or facilitator to share their personal lived experiences so others can learn. I conducted semistructured interviews with administrators and facilitators on HBCU campuses who are responsible for program creation and implementation. I conducted and recorded interviews using the Zoom platform to grasp the detailed perceptions of participants fully. The virtual meetings were composed of open-ended questions in which research participants had the opportunity to share their lived experiences freely, without directed questions. I used purposive sampling to identify 15

campus administrators and program facilitators in the Department of Student Affairs. Daniel (2012) described using purposive sampling to identify participants that fit specific criteria. I used this form of sampling to select a group that fits the study's actual purpose of participants that work and are employees at an HBCU for at least one year. I used purposive sampling to collect data for this study by determining the perceptions of campus administrators and sexual assault program facilitators on the effectiveness of rape and sexual assault prevention programs.

Once I collected the data through interviews with the eight participants chosen for the study, I analyzed the transcribed data using NVivo software. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis computer software application that researchers use to analyze all types and volumes of data (Walden, 2020). By using this application, researchers can manage data, manage ideas, visualize the data and perceptions gathered, and report on the themes that emerge by analyzing the collected information (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). I used the themes that emerged from data analysis to determine the collected perceptions of the study's participants.

### **Definition of Terms**

For this study, I used the following terms in reference to sexual assault prevention on university campuses:

*Sexual Assault:* A wide range of victimizations, separate from rape or attempted rape, generally involving sexual contact between a victim and offender (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

*Rape*: Forced sexual intercourse, including physical and psychological force through vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by an offender (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

*Rape Prevention and Education Program (RPE)*: Program that works to prevent sexual violence by providing funding to state health departments while working collaboratively with educational institutions (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).

*Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU)*: A historically black college or university established before 1964 with a mission of education African Americans (U. S. Department of Education, 2019).

*Law enforcement officer*: An employee in a law enforcement agency who is sworn to carry out law enforcement duties, such as preventing, investigating, and apprehending individuals that violate criminal law (Bureau of Justice Statistics, n.d.; U.S. Legal, 2019).

### **Assumptions**

While conducting this research study, I assumed that there is a significant concern about the number of sexual assaults that occur on college and university campuses. Although there is a significant amount of media coverage on sexual assaults in society, such as the #MeToo Movement, some participants may not understand that although there is an increased number of occurrences on campuses, many victims do not report to law enforcement. Each college and university may not create and implement sexual assault prevention programming for various reasons; therefore, I did not assume that

research participants, design prevention programs, and programs are easily and readily available on all campuses. Assumptions that sexual assault prevention programs are less effective based on the culture and designation of the university as historically black may occur. I assumed that research participants would be candid when answering questions as they relate to the effectiveness of prevention programs on their respective campuses. These assumptions were essential for the study to remain credible among readers and provide reader clarity throughout the study.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The number of sexual assault occurrences and the lack of reporting of sexual victimizations to law enforcement officials continue to be a problem, which I addressed in this study. The purpose of rape and sexual assault prevention programs is to provide awareness and prevention strategies for students to decrease assault occurrences and increase reporting. On HBCU campuses, sexual assault victims may face barriers that affect their decision to report, based on the culture of the university. By addressing the culture of the university, prevention programming can address strategies on ways to reduce sexual assault and ways to increase formal reporting to law enforcement officials. Due to the emotional factor of the retraumatization of student victims, I eliminated their perceptions and obtained the perceptions of campus administrators and program facilitators for the study. Experiencing rape and sexual assault is very difficult for students, which may be a reason for their lack of reporting. In sexual assault research, studies recommend that researchers have the proper training to be knowledgeable of the correct terms and settings to make students comfortable in sharing victimizations (Rosoff,



2017). Program facilitators and campus administrators may have pieces of training and can provide their perceptions on how campus programming addresses sexual assault and the importance of reporting. Although the community readiness theoretical framework is the basis for this study, Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory was also relevant to this study. In their theory, learners participate in group activities through collective interaction to obtain information on serious topics (Faltis & Hadjistassou, 2008). Students interact and learn from each other, as well as the program facilitators of sexual assault prevention programming. Facilitators can obtain perceptions of the effectiveness of programming by providing surveys to students and analyzing their comments. The situated learning theory is appropriate for this research, but the community readiness theory, shows how a university campus is a small or large community working together to provide prevention and intervention on a serious subject matter that is occurring nationally. Readers of this study, especially university program facilitators and administrators, will potentially be able to apply the results of this study on their respective campuses. Identifying the perceptions of administrators on the useful components of programs may provide resources that could be effective on other campuses and schools such as K – 12 public and private schools.

As an ethical researcher, to alleviate continuous traumatizing for victims, I obtained the perceptions of facilitators that work one-on-one with students, who may have shared their reasons for not reporting their victimizations. I assured administrators and program facilitators that their data would be ethically protected. Providing protection includes informing participants that they have the option to decline answering the

questions (Oliver, 2010). One way that I upheld individual protection was to inform participants that the nature of the discussion may be traumatic and ensure that they had the right to decline to answer such questions they feel uncomfortable. Obtaining detailed data is an essential goal in research, but protecting the identity and emotional state of participants is an ethical determinant as well. When working in higher education, individuals may establish a network of colleagues to gain a better understanding of the progression of their work. It was imperative to remove any demographic information that would provide identifying characteristics to provide continuous protection of administrators and facilitators participating in this study. In social science research, a guideline has been set to protect and ensure confidentiality, informed consent, research planning, implementation of the plan, and dissemination of collected data to protect participants for any harm (Wienclaw, 2019). I used each element to protect individuals and decrease the chances of any psychological damage or post-traumatic stress.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this study included the research and sampling methods that I chose for the study, the setting for the research, and the limited perceptions potential participants may have. Based on the topic and its importance nationwide, focusing only on the setting of HBCUs may cause readers to find the study not fully applicable to institutions that serve a larger population, such as predominantly European American institutions. The culture at HBCUs is potentially different from the culture and resources at other institutions of higher learning, which may have affected the data collection. To

address this limitation, I noted the potential differences of institutions in the literature review.

This research study was a phenomenological study, which typically has a smaller sampling size. I attempted to address this limitation by obtaining thick and detailed perceptions from participants that work directly with prevention programming. By using purposive sampling, I only identified participants that could offer their perceptions of being student affairs administrators and prevention program facilitators. This limitation restricted the opinions of students and other staff members on their perceptions of the effectiveness of prevention programs on their respective campuses. The detailed descriptions offered by the participants potentially identified program components that are effective on university campuses. Potential biases from research participants present a limitation in the outcome of the study as participants may believe that all the components of their university programs are effective, resulting in participants not being fully honest about program effectiveness.

### **Significance**

Determining the components of rape and sexual assault prevention and awareness programming on HBCU campuses will be beneficial to other HBCUs and other college and university campuses nationwide. Addressing the issue of continued rape and sexual assault on university campuses provides dialogue among potential students, parents, staff, current students, and community members on the needs and resources needed to reduce the continued growth of the issue. Rape myths are an example of one factor that has a potential influence on students and their vulnerability to becoming a sexual assault

victim. Acceptance of rape myths on university campuses has become a part of the campus culture of hooking up (Reling et al., 2018). The results of this study also address the issues of rape myth acceptance on university campuses and the culture of hooking up among students, and how sexual assault prevention programs addressed these issues. Addressing such issues potentially allows universities to construct programs that provide knowledge to students on how to discredit accepting rape myths.

Identifying potential reasons for lack of reporting of victimizations to law enforcement officials provides program facilitators and administrators information on likely dynamics that should be included when creating and implementing programs and policies. Based on the data collected, law enforcement will have the opportunity to review policies and procedures about sexual assault victims and determine if edits are needed to prepare the agency to be more inclusive for victim reporting. Administrators and program facilitators were also able to review program content, policies, and sanctions to determine if each component effectively reduces the number of sexual assaults and educates

Colleges and universities represent the dynamics of small communities. With the results from this study, communities and local public schools will also be able to create and implement programming community-wide to educate community citizens in hopes of decreasing sexual assaults and increasing reporting to law enforcement officials. Sexual assaults do not only occur on university campuses; therefore, educating individuals from all races, gender, and ages will increase their knowledge of sexual assault, and the importance reporting to law enforcement has on victims and all citizens.

The information determined from this study influenced positive social change by providing policymakers, university administrators, campus law enforcement, students, and families the tools needed to prevent and decrease the number of students sexually assaulted while matriculating on university campuses. Colleges and universities can adapt to the evolving changes in society to address sexual assault and create prevention and awareness programs based on the need of their respective campus. In addition, law enforcement officials can develop ways to serve the student population more efficiently and increase communication styles that attract victimization reporting.

### **Summary**

Rape and sexual assaults continue to occur on college and university campuses at an increased rate. Federal guidelines establish a requirement for many universities to create and incorporate sexual assault prevention programming to educate students, faculty, and staff. The content of the programs provides techniques on ways to avoid becoming a victim, resources available to victims, and the importance of reporting such victimizations to law enforcement officials. Universities strive for students to have a safe learning environment, but at times incidents occur where a student may become a victim of sexual assault. Establishing the knowledge base for students on sexual assault and the need to report to law enforcement creates a culture and environment that sexual assault is serious and that the safety of students is a priority. Identifying the perceptions of those responsible for creating and conducting programs provides another layer of effective components that others can potentially use as a guide when creating their respective programs. This research study focused on the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention

programs on HBCU campuses related to reporting victimizations through the lens and perceptions of campus administrators and sexual assault program facilitators.

In Chapter 1, I discussed the problem and purpose of this phenomenological research study. Definitions and key terms were defined for readers to understand the topic and context of sexual assault and the university campus. Also, in this chapter, I provided the need for the study and the limitations and assumptions of the study. In Chapter 2, a review of the literature offers a discussion regarding sexual assaults, HBCUs, law enforcement officials, and the theoretical framework used in the study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

College and university students continue to be victims of rape and sexual assault during their enrollment on campus. The response and proactive strategies from academic institutions have an impact on the victim, students, family members, and potential students (Amar et al., 2014). Rape and sexual assault prevention and awareness programs are vital in teaching students about sexual assault and ways to remain safe. National policies such as The Clery Act and Title IX, an educational amendment, have brought awareness to colleges and universities on the importance of educating students about sex. One of the requirements of Title IX is that all colleges and universities that receive federal funding must provide educational programs and policies to prevent and protect against sexual violence (Streng & Kamimura, 2015). Prevention programming for students has the potential to have a positive or negative impact on students and how they respond to being victimized (Baldwin-White & Moses, 2019). Reporting rape or sexual assault victimizations to law enforcement officials is a difficult task for some sexual assault victims. Learning and understanding the importance of reporting to law enforcement officials is beneficial to all students attending a college or university. By reporting, victims can access community resources, begin to heal from the sexual victimization, and identify the offender (Amar et al., 2014). My goal for this study was to determine the effectiveness of rape and sexual assault prevention and awareness programs on victim reporting on HBCU campuses.

Through this literature review, my goal is to educate campus administrators, senior leadership, students, and parents on the importance of victim reporting and components needed for an effective rape and sexual assault prevention and awareness program. Prevention programming has been launched at the federal, national, and local levels to provide awareness campaigns to individuals to show the seriousness of this widespread problem (Menning & Holtzman, 2015). The phenomenon of rape and sexual assaults on university campuses continues to occur nationwide, with little research on the effectiveness of prevention and awareness programs and its influence on HBCU campuses. The study's goal addresses that on HBCU campuses, victim reporting to law enforcement officials is lower when compared to predominantly European American institutions and the influence prevention programming may have on this problem.

### **Overview of the Chapter**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study explores the perceptions of student affairs campus administrators and rape and sexual assault prevention program facilitators on the effectiveness of rape prevention programs and their impact on victim reporting to law enforcement officials on HBCU campuses. In a study conducted by Collington et al. (2019), they found that on HBCU campuses, a lack of knowledge of on-campus victim resources regarding sexual assault served as a barrier to reporting. The components included in sexual assault prevention and awareness programs are essential in making sure that all students are knowledgeable about sexual assault and ways to receive assistance during their victimization. This literature review provides a summary of rape and sexual assault occurrences and prevention program



efforts on HBCU campuses. In the first section of Chapter 2, I focus on the list of research databases used for this study. The second section focuses on the history of HBCUs and the organizational structure and conclude with a discussion on the lack of reporting on HBCU campuses. The third section focuses on rape and sexual assault prevention programming efforts and the components of programming. The fourth section discusses ways the community has an influence on victim reporting to law enforcement officials and I conclude with a discussion on the theoretical framework.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The research strategy I used for this study began with a broad search of rape and sexual assault on university campuses, resulting in articles based on the occurrences of sexual assaults on university campuses. When I used a more direct search using the terms of sexual assault prevention programs, sexual assault prevention on HBCU campuses, and lack of reporting on HBCU campuses provided additional articles. By using databases such as EBSCO Host, SAGE Journals, Google Scholar, and Taylor and Francis, I located additional literature for this literature review. With the information and results from other databases, such as the Bureau of Justice Statistics, I was able to identify definitions, terms, and statistical information on the occurrences of rape and sexual assault on HBCU campuses. There is very little current research on the occurrences of rape and sexual assault and prevention programming on HBCU campuses produced through database research; therefore, I reviewed HBCU websites to identify potential programming and statistical information if available.

## **Theoretical Framework**

College and university campuses have the dynamics to make up a small community. In some instances, a university campus has the potential to be larger than most communities. Universities and colleges have senior administrative leaders called a president or chancellor, which is parallel to a mayor or government official of a community. Students are citizens of the campus community, as compared to citizens and neighbors of a community. Within a community, prevention strategies should include focusing on working cooperatively with other community agencies that play a part in the overall health of the community (Edwards et al., 2000). On a university campus, multiple departments serve as agencies that work together to make sure that the overall health of students, faculty, and staff is in the overall vision of the university campus community.

The community readiness model is a theory-based model designed to build the community's capability to address a social issue or phenomenon (Kelly et al., 2003). Rape and sexual assault are major social issues facing campuses nationwide daily. The campus community is responsible for providing a safe and secure campus for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, so campuses must take the necessary measures to make sure all students are aware of this social phenomenon.

A community can mean different things to different individuals, depending on the circumstance. Researchers from the Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research at Colorado State University created the community readiness theory to determine how different communities generate and try new prevention strategies (Kelly et al., 2003). Researchers combined Prochaska and Velicer's 1997 transtheoretical model of change

field experience, along with Warren's community model that focused on communities not only being organized by residential barriers (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997, Warren, 1978) to explain the CRM. Through this model, researchers can identify a problem and determine readiness for change (Kelly et al., 2003). This theoretical model was initially created to focus on issues such as substance abuse and violence (Edwards et al., 2000), but has expanded to other social issues facing a community. The CRM involves nine stages that begin with a lack of community awareness of a problem, expanding upon prevention efforts, and assessing prevention programming after programming addresses an issue (Edwards et al., 2000). The stages of the readiness model offer different strategies that can aid in moving the community forward in health and wellness (Kelly et al., 2003).

Prevention programming and readily preparing a community for social issues requires that stakeholders continuously review prevention programming. Assessment is a significant application when implementing the community readiness model. The assessment application is referenced as the heart of the model and entails interviewing critical informants from the community (Kelly et al., 2003). Individuals can assess the communities' readiness for change, which begins with identifying the issue and ending with applying the information learned to other problems the community may encounter from the seven-step process (Carlson & Harper, 2011). Community members are beneficial in reviewing readiness programming and learning from mistakes that may have occurred. Not adequately assessing a program places the community at risk of being unprepared for change.

## **Rape and Sexual Assault**

Over the years, the terms rape and sexual assault are interchangeably used, explaining the sexual victimization of children and adults. Faugno et al. (2016) define rape as occurring when a person is penetrated by an object or body part without consenting verbally to the action or lack of consent due to being incapacitated. A victim of sexual assault experiences any unwanted physical, sexual contact, forced interaction, or engagement in participating or viewing the content of a sexual nature (Faugno et al., 2016). Based on both definitions, sexual assault is more inclusive of unsolicited sexual encounters, when compared to the more direct meaning of physically forced rape.

Determining many definitions of sexual assault will have an impact on victims and those that have to address the issue. Being too exact in defining sexual assault has the potential to exclude sexual acts that some victims view as being nonconsensual, while being too broad may include actions that may not rise to the level of sexual assault victimization (Muehlenhard et al., 2017). Some researchers desire to use the legal definition of sexual assault in comparison to the research definition. Researchers who choose to use the legal definition believe that the public will become more aware of the issue because they are previously aware of the legal term. In contrast, critics of the statutory definition believe the term is only applicable to the more dominant group in the community (Muehlenard et al., 2017). Using a broad definition or a more focused legal term is a focused decision individual states use to define sexual assault.

In the United States, the definitions of rape and sexual assault vary between states. According to the FBI, they initially defined rape based on gender, “the carnal

knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.” (The FBI Uniform Crime Report, 2004, Definitions section). It was not until 2012, under the direction of former U. S. Attorney General Eric Holder, that the definition changed. Currently, the definition of rape excludes gender and describes any type of penetration caused by a body part or object without consent (U. S. Department of Justice, 2018). With the change in definition, the meaning of rape addresses distinguishing between the types of force or penetration used and now addresses both genders, excluding biases and discrimination.

Victims of sexual assault may not always experience the violent nature defined in the meaning of rape. Sexual assault is inclusive of rape and includes other acts such as rubbing, touching, kissing, and fondling a person without that person’s consent (Hovelson et al., 2016). Using the term sexual assault in comparison to rape decreases the harshness of the word, making it easier to admit to being a victim (Donde et al., 2018). The term sexual assault categorizes actions that cannot exclusively be titled rape, but it identifies actions that involve a sexual nature that occur absent of an individual’s consent. O’Connor et al. (2018) found that some women are not sure of the definition of sexual assault or the acts that are considered sexual victimization.

Distinguishing between the meanings of rape and sexual assault may be difficult at times, and the location in which the violation occurred may have an impact. Sexual assaults can occur in places that are neutral to a victim and in areas that have a personal connection. On university campuses today, sexual assaults are the most common violent crime among students (Conley et al., 2017). For female students on campuses, the majority of sexual assaults occur during their freshman year (Mellins et al., 2017). For

first-year students, this causes both a physical and emotional toll accompanied by other stresses of attending a university.

The meaning of sexual assault to African American college students may be different when compared to European American women university students. Zounlome et al. (2019), found that African American women students compared modern-day sexual violence to the acceptance of sexual violence in slavery days when sexually assaulting women was considered normal. As female students learn history from textbooks, movies, and family stories, the frequency of sexual violence and sexual assault has the potential to be the norm.

### **Alcohol and Sexual Assaults**

Consuming alcohol or any other substance that impairs an individual's choice to make sound decisions can result in catastrophic situations. Obtaining and giving consent is a significant component in consensual sex and sexual assault victimizations. Jozkowski and Wiersma (2015) found that when college students consume alcohol, it influences their decision to consent to sexual activity freely. College students that are cognitively under the influence of alcohol are not fully capable of giving consent to sexual activity, increasing their risk of becoming a victim of sexual assault. Moylan and Javorka (2018) found that heavy alcohol drinking on college campuses increases the students' chances of being the victim of sexual violence. Heavy alcohol consumption impacts victims and perpetrators of sexual violence. Drinking alcohol increases the risk of being victimized sexually by affecting the normal cognitive functions of an individual, causing impairment (Lorenz & Ullman, 2016). Once an individual's cognitive functions are impaired,

making sound decisions and judgments becomes more difficult, putting an individual at an increased risk of becoming a victim of sexual violence.

Drinking alcohol heavily or moderately can place an individual at risk of becoming a victim of sexual violence. Ford (2017) found that after moderate drinking, women most likely display actions that someone would interpret as having a sexual interest, in comparison to acts revealed after heavy drinking. Engaging in heavy drinking may cause a person to become too intoxicated to display any type of actions or interests that require interpretation from another. Men and women react differently to the effects of alcohol, potentially affecting an individual's victimization. In some instances, students are not drinking alcohol to engage in sexual gratification only, but to deal with other situations. Nielson et al. (2018) found that for female students, drinking alcohol to deal with stress and anxiety was associated with the likelihood of being the victim of incapacitated sexual assault.

Alcohol consumption and an individual's gender have the potential to increase their chances of becoming a victim or perpetrator. Kirwan et al. (2019), found that before drinking alcohol, men had positive emotions and desired to have sex with women. Still, once they began drinking, men developed more controlling behaviors and used force while engaging in sexual activity. The use of alcohol tends to alter one's behavior that results in actions that may be offensive and violent toward others. In contrast, a study of male college students found that drinking alcohol before engaging in sexual activity with a significant other or a stranger, did not influence exhibiting aggressive sexual behavior toward their partner (Norona et al., 2018). Alcohol can affect persons of the same gender

in different ways, making it difficult to determine the full impact alcohol has on increasing aggressive behavior in sexual assault.

### **Hooking Up**

There are several methods in which sexual assaults may occur; oral, vaginal, or anal penetration. Researchers have begun to research the term hooking up, based on determining that the number of college students acting in this manner makes up between 60-80% of students (Flack et al., 2016). Researchers and college students define hooking up in several different ways. The hooking up culture, as some call it, involves behaviors related to sexual activity and drinking alcohol at increased levels (Sutton & Simons, 2015). Lewis et al. (2013) define hooking up as casual sexual encounters that consist of kissing to actual sexual intercourse. The range between these two can include several different sexual behaviors that have different meanings among students. Lewis et al. (2013) found that three different groups of students sampled had different ideas on what constituted hooking up; one group of students defined hooking up as primarily sex without focusing on specific acts, while another group was distinct in defining hooking up by identifying particular sexual acts. The variety of definitions of hooking up among a student population is dependent on the individual, personal, one on one experiences and interactions with other students.

Hooking up among college students can lead to sexual incidents without consent that rise to the level of sexual assault. Students that hook up show an increase in male sexual assault offending and female sexual assault victimizations (Sutton & Simons, 2015). Female and male students participating in hooking were more likely to experience



sexual assaults when compared to students in monogamous relationships (Mellins et al.,2017). Hooking up does not involve the time needed to establish a lasting relationship, placing an individual vulnerable to becoming a victim or perpetrator. Sutton and Simons (2015) found that a majority of men and women hook up at least once in their lifetime, while less than twenty percent of men report hooking up at least ten or more times. Flack et al. (2016) found that 77.6% of the sample stated that their sexual assault victimization began as hooking up with their offender. Sutton and Simons (2015) found that 43.3% of men admitted to committing some form of sexual assault while over 50% of women report being sexually assaulted, both as a result of hooking up. College students do not initially intend on becoming a victim when engaging in sexual acts with others. Still, in some instances, actions such as hooking up can lead to being sexually victimized.

Students that engage in hooking up may or may not have a previously established relationship with each other. Flack et al. (2016) determined that among acquaintances, former romantic partners, and strangers, hookups among acquaintances more often led to attempted and completed sexual victimizations. Stranger hookups were considered less risky, and less likely to result in a sexual assault because strangers are less prone to let acts progress to that level of a sexual encounter (Flack et al., 2016). The most abundant occurrences among acquaintances may have led to victimizations because of the established relationship and lack of obtaining consent because of previous sexual encounters.

Among some students, hooking up with others involves the use of alcohol before and during the actual encounter (Ford, 2017). With the presence of hooking up and

alcohol increases the risk among students becoming a victim. The correlation between alcohol usage and hooking up among college students provides information on how to address potential sexual assaults. Ford (2017) found that women who were sexually assaulted physically or who were too intoxicated to realize their vulnerability consumed more alcoholic beverages before hooking up with an individual they did not fully know beforehand. Alcohol consumption with a stranger or an acquaintance can lead to incapacitation and a lack of consent, increasing a woman's risk of being sexually assaulted.

The use of alcohol when hooking up is not the only factor that is impactful about an increase in sexual assault victimization. Relationship bonds and interactions with family members and friends influence some. Sutton and Simons (2015) found that men who were recipients of harsh parenting were more likely to engage in hooking up and using aggression when engaging in sexual practices. Witnessing and being the victim of violence from parents during the early years of one's life can develop an attitude that aggression is accepted in personal and sexual relationships.

### **Rape Myth Acceptance**

Rape and sexual assaults are topics that are continuously shown in the media, and at times, secretly discussed in the comforts of one's home. Rape myths consist of stereotypical thoughts and beliefs about victims of rape and those who commit rape that is untrue (Burt, 1991). Adhering to and believing rape myths can harm the thought pattern of individuals that may put them at risk of victimization. In some instances, female rape myths such as, she deserved it, are more prevalent than male rape myths,

such as a man cannot be raped by a woman (Walfield, 2018). Rape myths such as these can be heard in an individual's home, at school, on university campuses, and in the media daily. Studies have shown that the population that more often accepts rape myths are working-class minority males (Hayes et al., 2016). The acceptance of these myths could be due to multiple factors that these individuals encounter daily. The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was first created by Martha Burt in 1980 and continues to be the most widely used scale to display the beliefs of males and females as it relates to rape (Payne et al., 1999). The views and acceptance of rape myths can be passed from generation to generation and throughout different cultures.

Depending on the institution of learning a student may attend, rape myths circulated on individual campuses may affect them differently compared to students who enroll in other universities. At times, student victims personally accept the rape myths circulated on their campuses that make their assaults seem as if they are not worthy of being shared or reported (Mennicke et al., 2019). Hayes et al. (2016) found that male students accept rape myths more often than female students, which could be based on the culture of rape and drinking alcohol on individual campuses. The culture of the university has a potential effect on how students accept myths about rape and how they respond to the legends. Mennicke et al. (2019) found that students that believed organizational rape myths chose not to formally share and report their sexual victimization with officials in fear of receiving poor customer service.

In contrast, in a study conducted by Reed et al. (2019), females that rejected rape myths were more likely to acknowledge being a victim of rape, when compared to males

that accept rape myths, and are less likely to report being sexually victimized. Reporting victimizations to officials is very important for the victim and the community; accepting and rejecting myths will have a strong influence on how the victim responds to being victimized. Taking rape myths has the potential to encourage non-reporting to law enforcement officials because the victim is not sure what constitutes being sexually victimized because of internalizing the rape myths they have been taught (Hahn et al., 2020). By internalizing rape myths and lack of reporting, victims may run the risk of continued sexual victimization.

To reduce the occurrence of rape myth acceptance, some sexual assault prevention programming is designed to address rape myth acceptance. Cadaret et al. (2019) found while evaluating a bystander sexual assault prevention program that it was possible to reduce the rape myth acceptance of students, as well as other factors related to rape culture.

Rape myth acceptance affects victims and has an effect on law enforcement personnel that respond to sexual assaults. Despite campus law enforcement accepting some rape myths, there are ways to discredit such myths. Training officers can avoid taking rape myths, and officers that received training on ways to be more sensitive when dealing with victims were less likely to accept and act on rape myths (Smith et al., 2016). To avoid displaying the negative stigma some individuals have of law enforcement by attending training to focus on how to deal with different populations has the goal of increasing relationships among citizens and law enforcement with the potential to improve reporting of violent sexual incidents.

### **Campus Police and Municipal Police**

In the field of higher education, many colleges and universities have their separate respective law enforcement agency, as well as mutual agreements with city/county law enforcement agencies. The first college campus police agency dates back to 1894 on the campus of Yale University, where the university began providing safety to campus through policing (Gerber, 1972). Before campus police agencies, new police departments, such as municipal police, were first organized in 1838, in the city of Boston (Dempsey & Forst, 2016). It is with the work and cooperation of both agencies that many college and university campuses remain safe. Campus law enforcement officers are comprised of sworn police officers as well as non-sworn officers, and some officers have jurisdiction within the state, county, and city. In contrast, others are limited to campus only (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2020). Depending upon the state and the agency, agencies can work together to provide continuous safety and support for students and the community.

Campus law enforcement officers have many of the same duties and responsibilities as municipal police. Many sworn law enforcement campus police can make a full arrest and carry weapons (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015). When comparing public higher learning institutions with private, public institutions used sworn, armed officers nearly twice more often than private institutions (U. S. Department of Justice, 2015). Unfortunately, private institutions may lack the expertise and staff for full safety monitoring when compared to public institutions. Based on the survey conducted by Reaves (2015), 7 out of 10 campus law enforcement agencies had a signed agreement or memorandum of understanding to aid in the arrest and patrolling of campus through

community policing tactics. With joint efforts, this potentially increases the safety methods and tactics of securing campuses for the safety of students and staff. All campus police agencies are not alike and may differ in size, resources, and jurisdictional responsibilities, but the primary goal for all agencies is to provide safe and secure campuses of higher learning (Allen, 2016). As with all police agencies, municipal and university, the overall goal is to be effective in policing and keeping all citizens safe.

Students, faculty, and staff perceptions of university police and municipal police departments may differ from the actual work both agencies perform. These perceptions pave the way to understanding university policing and attempts to make it helpful and efficient. Campus law enforcement officers perceive their job as ensuring that the campus community is safe for students, staff, and guests that visit the campus (Jacobsen, 2015). To maintain the safety of the campus, officers must monitor students' behavior and punish them when out of order. Jacobsen (2015) found that students understood the duties of officers but felt at times that officers were too strict. Although some students may feel that officers are too harsh, some students believe that this is a function of their job. Allen (2016) found that university students accept police tactics such as stop and question on campus to keep the campus safe, as long as there is a legitimate cause for questioning. Allen (2020) found that students perceived campus police and municipal police differ in several factors, such as training, resources readily available, penalties delivered, and the danger of the job. Although students identified differences in the two, students still view campus law enforcement officers as being real police (Allen, 2020). Students' perceptions of on-campus law enforcement being real police, just like municipal police,

despite differences in training and resources, explain that students understand the duties and responsibilities of both agencies.

A student's perception may not only be due to the day-to-day functions and interactions with campus police and municipal police but ethnicity and race may play a role in how students perceive both types of officers. Allen & Jacques (2020) determined that municipal police many times are racially biased when policing and interacting with students when compared to campus police. Police that racially discriminate against students increase the chances of negatively impacting student perceptions and their interaction with them.

### **Law Enforcement and Reporting**

Acceptance of rape myths not only influences a student's decision to report or keep victimizations to one's self, but myths also affect how law enforcement responds to potential student victims. Rape myths that law enforcement officers accept can affect how officers define sexual assault and their decision to believe that what the victim is reporting is accurate (Smith et al., 2016). Accepting such myths puts the student victim at risk of not receiving the necessary resources and can tarnish their perception of law enforcement officers.

On some university campuses, law enforcement officers are well known and recognizable by the students, establishing a positive or negative connotation. Being acquainted may affect a student victim's experience with campus law enforcement. The way law enforcement officers respond and interact with victims of sexual assault has the potential to have a negative or positive effect on the decision of the case (Venema, 2019).

First impressions are impactful, and on university campuses, a student's first impression of law enforcement officials has the potential to remain during the student's entire university matriculation. When notified of a potential sexual assault, law enforcement typically responds first and is tasked with several duties such as; obtaining the initial statement from the victim, identifying resources to help the victim, and beginning the investigation process (Smith et al., 2016). The moment law enforcement officers respond, students will start to make a first impression that will potentially affect future reporting and the reporting practices of the victim's acquaintances.

There are several reporting entities where students can report sexual assault victimizations on campus, such as law enforcement, university officials, or health professionals. Moore and Baker (2018) found that students were more likely to report a sexual assault to university law enforcement than to a university official. First impressions, the nature of the attack, or the alleged offender influences the decision to report. Students were more likely to report to university police if the assault occurred off-campus by a stranger when compared to reporting to university officials (Moore & Baker, 2018). Students may have felt more comfortable reporting off-campus assaults to campus law enforcement because there was no established relationship and fear of upsetting the alleged offender.

A student's ethnic background and heritage may also affect their decision to report to law enforcement and or university officials. James and Lee (2015) found that non-European American students were less likely to inform law enforcement officers of future sexual victimizations and unwanted sexual touching. The decision not to report



could result in their experience and satisfaction with law enforcement and their perception that race was a factor. Mennicke et al. (2019) found in their study that no students of African American descent chose not to report to university officials and law enforcement because they felt it was a private matter and wanted to forget that the situation happened. The university's culture may impact the student's desire to report and how the media portrays law enforcement.

African American students may have other influential factors other than race and trust in law enforcement that impact their decision to report to law enforcement. Collington et al. (2019) found that 24% of students attending an HBCU did not know how or who to report to that they had become victims of sexual assault. Not knowing the persons equipped to assist students with resources places them at an increased risk of being victimized or entering depression. There are specific barriers, such as trusting campus officials and law enforcement to protect student victims, as well as following the proper procedures when dealing with a sexual assault (Collington et al., 2019). Students that do not believe the handling of their victimization will be appropriate at times may determine that reporting is not worth their continued stress.

In contrast to African American students choosing not to report sexual victimization to law enforcement, European Americans do not face barriers. Moore and Baker, 2018 found that European American students were considerably less likely to report to law enforcement or a university official when compared to non-European Americans. European American students may have different reasons for non-reporting when compared to minority students. Moore and Baker (2018) found that one of the

reasons students desire to report is their trust in police and their desire to obtain services and resources. If students wish not to receive assistance or support, this may have more influence than the student's race or perceptions.

Law enforcement officials can implement several strategies to improve victimization reporting on university campuses to help students become comfortable with reporting. University policies should reflect and address concerns with victim reporting to university law enforcement (Collington et al., 2019). Campus administrators have the responsibility and task to implement policies that encourage student reporting and create ways for students to feel comfortable reporting and sharing victimizations with law enforcement and other university officials. University personnel may also build positive relationships with minority students to identify concerns that have previously discouraged minority students from reporting and seeking resources (Brubaker et al., 2017). Law enforcement and university officials may not be fully aware of concerns and reasons for lack of reporting; therefore, meeting with students that do not report victimizations may help determine their choice not to inform and ways to increase reporting.

### **Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

Historically Black Colleges and Universities have been in existence for hundreds of years and have paved the way for all ethnic groups. HBCUs were first established following the mandated end of slavery to provide an opportunity for African Americans to obtain an education in higher learning (Holfester, 2019). To stay in line with the separate, but an equal mandate, many HBCUs were built in the South from 1876-1974 for African American attendance only (Holfester, 2019). Although African Americans were

free and able to receive an education, they did not enroll with European Americans and had the same opportunities and resources. During that time, many approved African Americans receiving an education but insisted that African Americans remained subordinate to European Americans in hopes of minimizing their chances of gaining equal employment (LeMelle, 2002). These actions continued the dominance of one culture versus another; some belief continues today. Many of the HBCUs founded only provided primary and secondary education to African Americans to learn the basics of schooling denied during slavery (Gasman et al., 2015).

HBCUs have continued to thrive in a society with the same tenacity as predominantly European American Institutions. Over the years, HBCUs have used other categories in identifying how African Americans receive higher education; predominantly Black Institutions, Institutions of Black Plurality, and predominantly European American Institutions, which allowed African Americans to begin attending in 1954 (Holfester, 2019). Despite the category, the goal is to educate African Americans and provide the same opportunities for other races. The first HBCU founded was the Institute of Colored Youth in Pennsylvania in 1837, offering free blacks an education in liberal arts (Holfester, 2019). This university is one of the exceptions to the characteristics of the majority of HBCUs being established in the South.

There are 101 HBCUs operating in society today. Although this is a decline based on the number of institutions in previous years, HBCUs continue to graduate successful leaders as they did in the Civil Rights Movement, in education, and other dominant disciplines (Bracey, 2017). Over the years, several HBCUs have closed due to struggles

of survival. Compared to predominantly European American Institutions, HBCUs do not receive equal funding, and financial difficulties are one reason for the lack of students graduating or remaining at HBCUs (Crawford, 2017). The resources allotted for students affect them financially, but the perceptions and feelings of students on the services provided by the universities affect the way they make decisions on reporting.

The perceptions of African American students attending HBCUs may be different from African American students attending predominantly European American Institutions. Students attending an HBCU found that the professors were genuinely kind and cared about their students' progress, which, as a result, students developed positive relationships with faculty members (Booker & Campbell-Whatley, 2019). This perception may be since some HBCUs have a smaller classroom environment, making it easier to develop close educational relationships with faculty. Students attending predominantly European American institutions felt better prepared for entering the work world by providing them with other educational advantages, such as networking (Hannon et al., 2016). In contrast, some African American students found that attending a predominantly European American institution caused them to battle internal and external perceptions of being too black or not black enough among other black students (Cox, 2020). Enduring internal and external struggles at predominantly European institutions could potentially cause African American students emotional and mental instability. Cox (2020) found that African American students attending a predominantly European American institutions had to deal with numerous struggles such as emotional instability, black authenticity, discrimination, and making sure they acceptably represented their

ethnic group. HBCUs and predominantly European institutions offer different resources and environments for students with the intent of being inclusive to all despite the student's racial identity. Still, unfortunately, campuses are not always successful.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention Programs**

Sexual assault prevention programming is essential in educating students and staff on sexual violence and bystander intervention. A significant amount of higher learning institutions offer some type of sexual assault prevention programming, although, at some institutions, it may not be mandatory for all students (Amar et al., 2014). At the beginning of sexual assault prevention programming offerings on university campuses, they were conducted through workshops, lectures, and social marketing and have now progressed to online programming (Zapp et al., 2018). Bystander intervention is an additional component of sexual assault prevention programming used on campuses. Bystander programs focus on eliminating sexual violence by empowering bystanders to engage in positive interactions with others in deterring sexual abuse and assist those that are victims or at risk of becoming a victim of sexual assault (Kleinsasser et al., 2015). Kettrey and Marx (2019) found that bystander programming should occur and may be more appropriate to target students during the earlier years of college to prepare students with the skills and tools to intervene in potential sexual assaults. On a university campus, having responsible bystanders can decrease the instances of sexual violence for everyone on campus. Providing bystander intervention programs on campuses to other entities other than students may be useful in reducing rape myths and promoting positive behaviors in minimizing the risks of sexual assault on campuses (Hahn et al., 2016).

Increasing the chances of reducing sexual violence campuswide takes collaborative efforts from students, faculty, and staff to understand all facets of sexual violence and ways to cut it.

Sexual assault prevention programming, either face-to-face or online at university campuses, can be helpful or non-effective. Some universities implement online programming compared to face-to-face because of the cost-savings and reliability of programming (Zapp et al., 2018). Hubach et al. (2019) found that mandatory online programming for students was insufficient and did not address the sensitive matter of sexual assault; it only fulfilled a mandated requirement. Instead, in this study, students preferred a program that was lead and facilitated by fellow peers that focused on sexual health and sexual assault prevention (Hubach et al., 2019). Listening and interacting with peers may provide a more comfortable atmosphere for students to share their perceptions and experiences with sexual violence. Baldwin-White and Moses (2019) that online programming may be beneficial in increasing students' knowledge. Still, it does not prove to be effective in changing a student's decision to intercede before or after a sexual assault. In the online program Haven, the program determined that online courses should remain as just one portion of prevention programming, and ongoing approaches and programming should continue throughout the year to continue informing students on sexual assault prevention (Zapp et al., 2018).

Sexual assault prevention programs at some universities occur once per year, while programs occur throughout the school year at other institutions. Bonar et al. (2019) found that a group sexual assault prevention program that included discussions on healthy

relationships at the beginning of a semester was favorable among student participants. Students can receive a significant amount of information through programs that include additional topics within a sexual assault prevention program that will assist them in dealing with sexual violence victimizations. Creating and implementing multifaceted sexual assault prevention program models work to encourage the change in attitudes among students that may influence having healthy relationships and eliminating the potential for sexual assaults (Bonar et al., 2019). Incorporating multiple discussion topics about sexual assaults and relationships appears to engage students in learning how to live healthy sexual lifestyles.

Sexual assault prevention programming can also focus on programs that are nongender specific, females only or males only. Society and culture have shown males to be more aggressive when initiating and engaging in sexual acts when compared to females, creating the assumption that it is acceptable behavior (Wright et al., 2018). Universities typically will offer programs that are more conducive to the culture of their respective campuses. Male focused sexual assault prevention programming may include a focus on psychoeducation, increasing empathy, ways on how society socializes males, its contribution to sexual assault, and ways in which males can develop into good bystanders (Wright et al., 2018). Male centered prevention programs such as The Men's Project is a primary prevention program to prepare male students with the knowledge base to avoid sexual violence and violent sexual situations (Stewart, 2014). Stewart (2014) found that male participants lowered their acceptance of rape myths, challenged sexual assault, and increased their efforts to reduce sexual violence. The program helped males understand

sexual violence and ways in which they could help end sexual assaults. Programs focused on a single-gender can be more effective in altering males' attitudes, behavior, and belief as it relates to sexual assault and sexual violence (Baldwin et al., 2019). Males may feel more at ease discussing and sexual violence around other males versus interacting in a program inclusive of all genders. Zinzow et al. (2018) found when implementing a multifaceted sexual violence prevention program; interventions should focus more on providing outcomes for male students. The multifaceted program represents another example of how gender specific programming may be beneficial for students instead of multiple gender programs. Female specific programs offered to students also have specific outcomes as with male specific programs. Gidycz et al. (2015) found that in a sexual assault risk reduction program, women were more likely to pay attention to their inner self and thoughts and were more likely to pay attention to their body language on dates.

In addition to gender, a student's race may also play a role in sexual assault prevention programming effectiveness on college campuses. Zounlome et al. (2019) found that campus sexual assault prevention programming favored European American female students versus the experiences and perceptions of African American female students. In comparison, African American female students were more susceptible to bystander intervention programming and exhibited more protective factors in sexual violence (Zinzow et al., 2018).

The frequency of sexual assault prevention program offerings to students may also have an impact on students and the decrease in the number of sexual assaults. The



number of times students are provided sexual assault prevention programming has always been a concern. Still, Baldwin-White and Moses (2019) found that the amount of programming offered to students had no real effect on students' behavior. In comparison to content, the frequency of programming may not impact students more than the content of programs offered.

### **Improving Reporting to Campus Law Enforcement Officials**

Reporting sexual assault victimizations to law enforcement is one step closer to reducing the number of occurrences on university campuses. A university's campus climate should be inclusive of victimization reporting. Spencer et al. (2017) found that student victims were more likely to report victimizations if they perceived that their campus had a positive social climate. Therefore, universities must make sure that their campus is welcoming and a haven for students that need to report victimization. Piciotti and Seligowski (2019) determined that victims that used forceful resistance against their perpetrator were more likely to report to law enforcement officials. Learning forceful resistance moves may be beneficial to students on campus. Self defense techniques known by students have been shown to increase the healing time of victims, empower women, and avoid revictimization of students (McCaughey & Cermele, 2017). Empowering females has the potential to enable women campus-wide to report to law enforcement.

The establishment of mandatory reporting laws may also increase the number of sexual assault victims that report to law enforcement officials. Mancini et al. (2016) found that mandatory reporting laws would increase students' likelihood to report sexual

assault victimizations. Students may feel more inclined to report sexual assaults when mandated to report all victimizations to law enforcement officials regardless of who the victim initially told. Students may also not believe that their victimization is worthy of sharing with someone. Spohn et al. (2017) found that universities need to show students that their victimizations should be reported to law enforcement while teaching students that sexual assault is equivalent to rape to increase student victim reporting. Embracing students, being transparent about sexual assault, and letting them know that they should not be embarrassed creates a campus wide culture conducive to victim reporting.

### **Summary**

Sexual assault prevention programming on HBCUs may be different from programming offered at predominantly European American institutions. In this literature review, the research addresses numerous sexual assault prevention programming efforts and delivery methods that students have access to learning. Depending on the gender and race of a student, programming efforts may be effective or less effective. The components of programming efforts implemented by facilitators potentially affect formal student victim reporting to law enforcement officials. The university community, students, law enforcement and student affairs administrators and program facilitators must work together as shown in the literature to create a culture for trustworthy victim reporting. In the following research study, I determine the perceptions of student affairs program facilitators on the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs on their campuses and a correlation between programming and victim reporting to law enforcement officials.

I focused on six major sections in Chapter 2. The chapter began with a brief overview of the literature review and the strategies used to identify literature for the study related to college and universities, the occurrences of sexual assault, the function of campus law enforcement, and the utilization of campus sexual assault prevention programs. In this chapter, I also discussed the differences in rape and sexual assault, the role alcohol plays in sexual assault, and the culture of hooking up. Next, I reviewed the differences between campus police and municipal police and the idea of the rape myth acceptance. I conclude Chapter 2 with a discussion on sexual assault prevention programming and improving reporting of victimizations to law enforcement officials.

In Chapter 3, I outline the use of a qualitative, phenomenological research design for this study. The chosen approach describes in detail the selected sampling options and recruitment of participants. I conclude Chapter 3 with a review of the strengths and weaknesses of the study and the ethical procedures utilized in the study.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this research study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of campus administrators and program facilitators that implement sexual assault programming about the effectiveness of rape prevention programming on their respective campuses. In this chapter, I described the research design and rationale used to conduct the research study. In this research study, I discussed and provided information on the population, sample size, sampling procedures, recruitment strategies, and data collection methods implemented during the study. I used a phenomenological study to explore employees' lived experiences that work directly with students and sexual assault prevention programming. In this study, I also discussed the internal and external threats to validity and ways to decrease such risks while conducting the study. I address ethical considerations in the study and how they impact the research study.

In research studies, it is essential to address the internal and external threats to validity. O'Sullivan (2017) defines internal validity as focusing on an independent variable causing change to a dependent variable in a research study. A researcher should try to decrease the number of threats to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the research study to others that may read or recreate the study. The threats to internal validity are history, selection, maturation, statistical regression, experimental mortality, testing effects, instrumentation, and design contamination (O'Sullivan, 2017). For this study, the potential internal threats to validity were history, maturation, and selection.

Sexual assault prevention programs occur multiple times of the year, with each program possibly sharing different types of information. The threat of history could occur as other programs or events in society are shown in the media. Events such as the #MeToo movement can impact or serve as a potential threat to the study's validity. The threat of selection based on the way cases are selected impacts the independent variable (O'Sullivan, 2017). Selecting program facilitators and campus administrators for this study and eliminating other staff and students caused a potential threat to validity. Maturation was the last potential threat to validity in this study. As program facilitators and administrators mature and endure certain situations in life, this may impact their perceptions of how effective programs are compared to society and programs at other universities.

It was my goal to address and limit external threats to validity. O'Sullivan (2017) noted that external validity focuses on making sure the study is appropriate, and the findings can be generalized to individuals in society that are not a part of the original study. The external threats to validity are the effects of setting, effects of selection, unique features, effects of history, effects of testing, and reactive effects (O'Sullivan, 2017). Before conducting the study, I addressed the external threats to validity. In this study, the potential threats to external validity were the selection of participants, the setting of the research study, and the effects of history. The selection of only program facilitators and campus administrators to determine their perceptions did not determine how other staff members may view the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs on respective campuses. My choice to use only HBCUs may have caused a potential threat to external

validity, as other types of university campuses were excluded from the study. Historical events such as televised documentaries, campaigns, and marches concerning sexual assault may pose an external threat, as research participants may participate in such activities that may affect their perceptions. As I identified potential threats to internal and external validity, I made sure to address each threat before the study as much as possible.

### **Major Sections**

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the rationale for the chosen research design, the role of the researcher, and the methodology used to determine the participant sample size used in the study. In this chapter, I also discuss the instrumentation used and the validity of the data collection and data analysis used in the study. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the methodology of the study and an introduction to Chapter 4 and the results and findings from the study.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

This research study used a phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of campus administrators and prevention program facilitators on HBCU campuses. The research questions that drive this research study are as follows:

RQ1: What effect does sexual assault prevention programming have on victim reporting to law enforcement officials? ;

RQ2: What role does the campus community play in the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs on HBCU campuses

The central phenomenon of this study is to determine the effectiveness of rape prevention programs on HBCU campuses through the perspectives of the administrators

and facilitators that provide sexual assault programming. The number of sexual assaults being committed on college campuses continues to increase despite the presence of sexual assault programming (Kerner et.al, 2017). Through this study, facilitators and administrators were able to share their experiences with programming, what changes, if any, programming needed to address, and potential reasons for the lack of program offerings to all students.

This phenomenological research was used for me to gather the lived experiences of administrators and program facilitators through interpretive phenomenology. Researchers define interpretive phenomenology, also known as hermeneutic phenomenology, as being humans revolving, ever-changing individuals, requiring one to interact with them to determine their lived experiences (Given, 2008). The study uses this tradition to understand better the experiences administrators and program facilitators have with sexual assault prevention programming. Administrators were able to provide data on the number of sexual assaults that occur on their campuses, as well as the number of programs offered. Program facilitators provided data on the components of the factors and their effect on students. Facilitators also shared possible reasons, if any, for programs being non-effective. The experiences and perceptions of those who work hands-on with the students and programming provided reliable data on their respective programming for their student population.

### **The Role of the Researcher**

For this study, I ask open ended questions to research participants of the study. I observed participants' responses during question responses, particularly their

mannerisms, body language, and tone. The goal was to conduct this research study ethically, alleviating any biases that may arise during the collection of data for the study. My role was to make sure that all participants understood that their participation in the study was voluntary and that any information they shared would remain confidential.

As an employee at an HBCU, many times, I must work in conjunction with program facilitators that provide programming for sexual assault prevention. Although there is a working relationship with program facilitators at an HBCU institution, I do not have a working relationship with all universities used for this study. As the Title IX Coordinator at an HBCU, I depend on sexual assault prevention and awareness programs to be effective, to assist in decreasing the number of campus-wide sexual assaults. The expectation is that programs ensure that students understand the importance of reporting and the different ways to report if they become a victim or witnessed victimization. Having an open mind when interviewing research participants managed any potential biases toward participants' program components. I did not allow thoughts and biases to dictate the transcription of data or any follow-up questions. I did not research my respective university of employment to alleviate biases. Although other universities within the state were studied, letting participants know my occupation first hand and the purpose of the study attempted to alleviate any conflict of interest or ethical issues.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants and Sample**

The population for this research study consisted of senior campus administrators and sexual assault prevention program facilitators at HBCU campuses in the State of



North Carolina. Due to the lack of participation in the state, I broadened the study location to include HBCUs in the United States of America. In North Carolina, there are currently 11 HBCUs, five public institutions, and six private institutions. Based on the low number of universities in the state, I contacted each university to recruit participants for the study. In the United States, currently, there are 107 HBCUs; 56 are controlled privately, and 51 are public institutions. After receiving a low response, I sent invitations to other HBCUs soliciting their participation.

Using purposive sampling, I identified senior campus administrators and sexual assault prevention program facilitators for the study. Daniel (2012) determined this sampling method is best when selecting a group to fit the study's actual purpose with specific criteria for participants. There are numerous administrators and program facilitators; it was vital to identify campus administrators responsible for student well-being and supervise individuals identified as program facilitators of sexual assault prevention programming.

Participants chosen for this study include the following criteria: Participants must have been employed at an HBCU; program facilitators must work directly with sexual assault prevention programming, and campus administrators must directly supervise program facilitators or have the direct responsibility of a student's health and well-being. Participants must have worked at their current HBCU for at least 1 year to provide data on one school cycle of students participating in sexual assault prevention programming. Law enforcement officers at each campus also received an invitation to participate in the

research study to provide their perceptions of sexual assault prevention programming on their campuses.

After identifying the institutions through purposive sampling, I reviewed each university's website and obtained contact information for the vice-chancellor or president for student affairs. I also checked the contact information of staff members in the division to determine the administrators and individuals responsible for sexual assault prevention programming. Some information was not easily identifiable, and I contacted the Division of Student Affairs to receive the names of the individuals responsible for those duties and tasks. Once I identified individuals, I searched the university directory to determine email addresses inviting potential participants to participate in the study. In the email, I introduced myself as a doctoral candidate seeking to conduct a study on the effectiveness of rape and sexual assault prevention programs on HBCU campuses. I also described the research and the potential benefits for campus administrators and program facilitators on HBCU campuses in the invitation. Due to the lack of responses by the due date, I sent a second email to each individual describing the study and requesting their participation. The third attempt via telephone was the following method of contacting and recruiting participants; telephone calls included a brief synopsis of the study. After receiving enough responses, I proceeded to schedule interview dates and times.

Once I received responses from participants, I checked the university site to confirm participant job titles and responsibilities. Verifying participants included checking the website or requesting a job description from each participant to ensure that he or she is an administrator responsible for supervising program facilitators or program

facilitators responsible for creating, preparing, and facilitating sexual assault prevention programming for students.

There are currently 11 operating HBCUs in North Carolina. I asked each to participate with hopes of at least fifteen individuals agreeing to participate in the study to provide more than half of the total number of HBCUs in the state. Due to the lack of participation in North Carolina, additional participants from other HBCUs were invited and agreed to participate. Saturation was reached, with eight participants providing data on their respective institutions, and there was no need to continue researching and interviewing potential participants. In qualitative studies, it is crucial to have the necessary sample size so that once saturation is met, there is no need to continue with identifying and interviewing participants in this study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In qualitative research, sample sizes are typically not large in number. In a phenomenological study, the sample size consists of no more than 20 participants (Suter, 2012). For this study, saturation was achieved with eight participants.

### **Instrumentation**

In qualitative phenomenological studies, the lived experiences of participants are captured. To capture the lived experiences of campus administrators and program facilitators, initially, face-to-face open-ended interviews would have taken place, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted through the Zoom platform and recorded for clarity. Usher and Jackson (2014) describe that asking open ended questions eliminates any potential leading problems that may not provide relevant data. Strout et al. (2014) conducted a study using an instrument that included questions from Karjane et al.

in 2005, which included a sample of approximately 2,500 colleges and universities in the United States and Puerto Rico (Karjane et al., 2005). Strout et.al (2014) added a question to their instrument when interviewing their potential sample of 85 staff members of university women's center directors and coordinators. In using this instrument, participants provided their lived experiences of creating and implementing sexual assault prevention. Allowing participants to answer the questions without being coerced or forced provided more reliable data. By using open-ended questions, participants gave responses that are thick, with definitive answers to provide their full lived experiences in supervising, creating, and implementing prevention programming. The original study conducted by Karjane et al. (2005) included all HBCUs in the sample of participants, eliminating any issues of the instrument containing potential biases.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

Data were collected from HBCU campus administrators and program facilitators responsible for sexual assault prevention programming for students on and off-campus. Recruitment for potential participants began with sending emails to prospective participants employed in the respective positions. After a lack of response, I attempted to make a second contact with administrators and program facilitators, requesting their participation.

I collected data from research participants by conducting open-ended interviews to obtain their lived experiences. I conducted each interview via Zoom or telephone, which lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Interviews for data collection occurred in a one-time setting without the need for any follow up or continuation. I

recorded each participant interview via the Zoom platform or tape recorder, along with notes written. Interview participants were informed that I would record the conversation at the beginning of the discussion, and each participant consented for the video or tape recording. Participants were assured that their recordings would be safeguarded and protected in a secure location and only destroyed after ten years. The video recording captured the entire conversation between the researcher and the participant, and the notes taken during the interview enhanced the transcript and identified any mannerisms, tones, or behavior.

After the study, each participant could review a transcript copy of their interview to provide edits or address anything misinterpreted during the data collection phase. After the full study, a debriefing was held with each participant to answer any questions regarding the research study. Again, the interview transcript would remain secure and coded not to reveal the identity of the participants.

### **Data Analysis**

For this research study, I used a phenomenological approach to gather the lived experiences of program facilitators and campus administrators of sexual assault prevention programming. Through open-ended interviews and observations, the lived experiences provided perceptions and insight on how each respective group felt about the effectiveness of prevention programming on their campus. Clark and Vealé (2018) describe that coding in qualitative research provides the transitional process between collecting data and analyzing the data while doing so through encoding or decoding. NVivo, a qualitative data-analysis computer software program, was used to assist me

with coding and analyzing the data gathered during the study. The data were transcribed by hand and then entered into, NVivo for full coding and analysis. NVivo was created to help researchers organize and analyze historical information while identifying and creating relationships of significant themes and concepts. In coding significant themes and concepts in this research study, three processes took place. First, while conducting the initial interview, I precoded to identify certain code words and themes repeated by participants throughout the interview. Precoding assisted me in the next phase of open coding began. During the first review of the data collected, open coding will occur, attempting to identify initial codes to condense the full and large amount of data gathered during interviews (Neuman, 2000). During open coding, I highlighted key terms and themes in specific colors based on the topic on field notes and the transcribed data. Field notes dictated the emotions, facial expressions, and mannerisms that were absent via the transcribed interview.

After open coding, I used axial coding to focus on a second review of the data. Axial coding requires the researcher to organize the themes and concepts identified in open coding and focus on those concepts instead of the entire data collected (Neuman, 2000). During this phase, I reviewed, identified, and connected the themes and codes from the perceptions of facilitators and administrators of sexual assault prevention programming. During axial coding, links between themes and codes are identified, bringing forth possible new questions and associations (Neuman, 2000).

The last coding phase for this research study was selective coding focusing on a final review of the data. Selective coding involves scanning the data one last time while

also examining the already identified themes to make any comparisons or contrast among the data gathered (Neuman, 2000). The themes and concepts defined by facilitators and administrators were reviewed again and generalized to reflect any differences among race, gender, or any other characteristic identified through data review.

Gathering and transcribing data is very tedious in a qualitative phenomenological study. Therefore, the software was beneficial in data analysis. Researching the lived experiences of research participants presented a large amount of data that required it to be organized, sorted, and coded in a structured manner. The NVivo software handled a large amount of non-numerical data and assisted with identifying significant themes and concepts for the study.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research has several components that are influential in the integrity of the study and the researcher. Trustworthiness in qualitative research ensures readers and fellow researchers that the research and procedures used to conduct the study are credible and valid (Morgan & Ravitch, 2018). In this research, I establish trustworthiness by ensuring the procedures were reliable, accurate, and dependable. Reliability began by ensuring that the instrument chosen to conduct the interviews of participants was reliable and able to be used again if needed. One of the aspects of reliability is making sure that a reliable instrument will exhibit close results if used in different research studies (Juni, 2007). A reliable interview instrument for participants is vital in conducting a beneficial and equitable study in research. Accuracy from the beginning of the study through the end ensures that the researcher is fair, absent of biases that could appear while

interviewing participants and analyzing the data. Maintaining consistency and treating all participants the same throughout the study showed that the study and procedures were accurate. I was trustworthy with ensuring that the data gathered would be used for the purpose taken.

### **Credibility**

Establishing credibility in a phenomenological research study focuses on making sure that the data presented by research participants is valid and trustworthy. In phenomenology research studies, to establish credibility, strategies such as bracketing, auditing triangulation, member checking, and thick descriptions are used (Flynn, 2018). For this research study, I establish credibility by using the reflexive approach. Reflexivity encompasses the researcher identifying and sharing his or her own biases and perceptions, and they influence the study being conducted (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). As an employee at an HBCU, as I collaborate with individuals employed as program facilitators, it is imperative to acknowledge and share any biases and perceptions I may have concerning the study.

### **Transferability**

Transferability in research studies includes using the research study results and transferring them to another setting, relying on thick descriptions. The data collected in the interview were full descriptors to give a complete detailed look into the lived experiences and perceptions of research participants so that those reading the study will feel as if they were experiencing the same lived experiences. In establishing transferability, the reader of the study is responsible for determining if the study can be



transferred to their setting (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The detailed thick descriptions from the study will need to be clear for campus administrators and program facilitators from other universities to determine if the study could also be conducted and useful on their respective campuses.

### **Dependability**

In qualitative research, reliability is referred to as dependability to determine the consistency of the components of the research study. Kortjens and Moser (2018) define dependability as participants verifying the stability of the data over time, remaining consistent throughout their interpretations and evaluations of the study. In each interview, I establish dependability by ensuring each interview was consistent in the questions asked, the manner asked, the transcription method, and how the data was collected and secured. The data were explained and documented thoroughly to be clear enough for other researchers to conduct the same research in a different environment if they desired to do so. I also establish dependability by allowing another researcher, separate from the study, to conduct an internal audit to determine if they, too, could perform the study based on the steps demonstrated in the original research study. Kortjens and Moser (2008) state the audit trail should provide a list of notes on all strategies utilized during the research study, including the method of sampling and the chosen method of collecting.

### **Confirmability**

In this study, to establish confirmability, I must confirm that the data collected is a true reflection of the findings from the study. Kortjens and Moser (2008) define

confirmability as a process in which the results of the research can be confirmed by other researchers and not just the thoughts and perceptions of the researcher. In this study, I present the findings of the data, interpret the data from the viewpoints of the participants only, and eliminate any potential biases. I utilized reflexivity to identify and remove any potential biases that may occur before and during the conducting of the study. Detailed notes taken during the interview and any details on the settings and tones were documented during reflexivity to support the data gathered from research participants during the meeting.

In addition, I used intracoder reliability since I was conducted all coding and analysis of the data instead of intercoder reliability that involves more than one researcher coding information.

### **Ethical Procedures**

As with research studies, ethical concerns should be addressed to ensure that there is no conflict between the researcher and research participants in the study. In this research study, one ethical concern that may arise during the recruitment of participants would be the manner in which participants were identified and contacted. As an HBCU employee, I work in a division that manages sexual assault prevention initiatives, and someone may view that as a conflict of interest in researching other fellow institutions' practices and perceptions in the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programming. In data collection, an ethical concern that may have caused concern among research participants is the fear of losing their job based on their participation and responses in the research study. Based on the fear of potential research participants, campus

administrators, and program facilitators, some may have refused to participate, not knowing if their job would be affected based on the outcome of the study.

I addressed potential ethical concerns for potential participants and current participants by assuring individuals that there would be no identifiable information in the research study that would alert their employer or supervisor of their participation. Each participant received a code only identifiable for them and the researcher, which remained throughout the study. I also assured participants that the data collected would remain secure and encrypted for the entire study.

Data collected from each research participant remained confidential throughout the entire study, with participants remaining anonymous and not knowing any identifiable information about other research participants participating in the study. All participants should remain unknown to eliminate the risk of influence from participants representing their institutions. Data were stored in a secured data box that will only be accessible through a lock and key. Each transcript was stored in a large envelope and sealed once the data was transcribed. The video recording and files located on a jump drive were included with each transcript and kept sealed in the secure data box. I am the only person with the key to access the secured data box, and the data will remain secure until ten years after the research study has concluded.

As I am an employee at an HBCU in eastern North Carolina, ethical concerns may arise that the research study will affect my job environment or that it serves as a conflict of interest since I work with sexual assault victims at the university. For this

purpose, I excluded my employer from being in the study to eliminate any potential conflict of interest to the related topic.

### **Summary**

In Chapter Three, I focused on the research methods portion of this phenomenological research study. I explained in detail the method of research chosen, the process of sampling and obtaining research participants, the gathering of data, and data analysis. I attest that the data collected was done so in an ethical and trustworthy manner. I reviewed the data collection method and how it was collected for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This process ensures that the participants and I provided and shared valid data and that the study is concise enough for fellow researchers to conduct the same research if desired. In any research study, it is imperative to conduct the study ethically. As such, I identified any biases or conflicts of prior to the beginning of the study to uphold the ethical standard of research. After choosing the participants through purposive sampling, the data were gathered and assured for validity; and analyzed using NVivo, a data analysis software. NVivo was used to analyze broad, thick, described data by organizing the data, sorting the data, and identifying themes and concepts gathered through the analysis process. Once the data were and themes were determined, a final review of the data identified any new themes or questions that had arisen.

The perceptions of participants gathered and analyzed in this study will be useful for HBCU campus administrators and program facilitators in determining the components of sexual assault prevention programming that is effective on HBCU campuses. It also

showed factors that are not effective so that when creating and implementing programming, administrators and facilitators will know the components to include in programming to be useful for their campus community. Researchers, campus administrators, and program facilitators will review this study to implement positive and productive programming that will potentially decrease the occurrences of sexual assault on their respective campuses.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the findings of this research study. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the recruitment, demographics, and data collection strategies used to gather data for data analysis. The chapter concludes with the evidence of trustworthiness and results of the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

With this qualitative study, I aim to determine the effectiveness of rape and sexual assault prevention programs on HBCU campuses. This approach captured program facilitators' and administrators' perceptions and lived experiences responsible for creating and implementing prevention programming. I used the following research questions to guide the study:

RQ1: What effect does sexual assault prevention programming have on victim reporting to law enforcement officials?

RQ2: What role does the campus community play in the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs on HBCU campuses?

### **Major Sections**

In this chapter, I explain in detail the demographics of participants and their years of experience and data collection and analysis methods. This chapter also includes a detailed discussion of the five major themes derived from the study, a discussion on the evidence of trustworthiness, and a detailed description of the study's results. In Chapter 4, I summarize the results and include an introduction to the conclusion, discussion, and implications of social change in Chapter 5.

### **Setting**

This research study consisted of semistructured interviews via the Zoom platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants could relax in their own desired space as I conducted interviews via a video and telephone platform. Participants chose to participate

in their convenient areas during their scheduled time, such as in their homes, offices, and automobile. As I began to conduct interviews, I reminded participants there would not be identifiable information in the video recording transcription. The convenience of the video platform was beneficial for participants. Using the Zoom platform resulted in being unable to fully observe participants' demeanor and body language during the interviews, which is observable during face-to-face interaction.

### **Demographics**

The research participants in this study consisted of six women and two men currently employed at an HBCU, with years of experience ranging from 1 year to 20 years. All participants are employed as a program facilitator or campus administrator responsible for creating, implementing, or supervising sexual assault prevention programming for students.

Table 1

*Participant Years of Experience*

	Years of Experience
Participant 1	9
Participant 2	2
Participant 3	2
Participant 4	1
Participant 5	6
Participant 6	4
Participant 7	3
Participant 8	20

### **Data Collection**

I conducted semistructured interviews via the Zoom media platform with five participants and three participants via telephone instead of face-to-face interviews due to COVID-19. Six of the participants are employed at HBCUs in North Carolina, while the two other participants work at HBCUs in Alabama. Participant recruitment was amended from North Carolina and broadened to include all HBCUs due to lack of participation and participant response.

I conducted and recorded interviews via Zoom and saved the recordings to a Sandisk jump drive. The telephone call interviews were recorded via the Rev Call application and downloaded to a Sandisk jump drive. The semistructured interviews with participants lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. After the interview, participants were thanked for their participation and invited to reach out to me if they had additional information. I transcribed each interview by hand and typed the transcription in Microsoft Word, identifying each participant by the numerical number assigned at the beginning of conducting interviews. Individual folders were created on the Sandisk jump drive based on each participant to house the Microsoft Word transcription document and the media recording. I also included handwritten personal notes describing mannerisms and tones in the respective folders. Participant folders also include the emailed consent forms sent by participants. The transcription documents, printed consent forms, and the Sandisk jump drive were locked in a small file cabinet and will remain for 10 years.



### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data for this study consisted of recorded interviews that were self-transcribed and entered into Nvivo software. Interviews were color-coded on paper and within the software to reflect the codes based on the perceptions shared by each participant, representing initial coding. Through initial coding, also known as open coding, is the first segment in identifying broad categories, establishing a starting point in understanding the participants' perceptions ( Saldana, 2016). Through open coding, I coded general categories that reflected the participant's perceptions and compiled those that had similar meanings. After initial coding was completed, I included a second more focused round of coding using axial coding. Through axial coding, I reduced the number of broad categories for a more focused approach to identifying emerging themes. Once categories began to emerge into themes, I incorporated theoretical coding for a more detailed approach. During theoretical coding, more defined categories finalized the themes compiled from research participants' perceptions.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative phenomenological research study requires several steps toward validation. Biases can appear amongst participants when speaking on the effectiveness of prevention programming and training on their campus. After collecting the data, I identified any biases among participants and myself to ensure that the research study maintained credibility. As the researcher and an employee of an HBCU, it was necessary not to allow my perceptions and interactions with program facilitators to influence my interaction and note-taking during interviews. Before each

interview, I explained to participants my employment status at an HBCU and that it would have no bearing on interview questions, notes taken, or coded categories.

Participants were encouraged to focus and respond solely on experiences involving their campus and not the campuses of peer institutions to avoid biases.

After completing coding and identifying themes, the questions asked and the answers provided by research participants showed thick, detailed descriptions of how prevention programming is influential and effective on their campus. The detailed responses show that the same questions may be asked on any college and university campus to determine their campuses' effectiveness in providing prevention and awareness programming to students and staff, establishing transferability.

The dependability of a study is vital to the researcher, the participants, and those who will read the study. To establish dependability, each participant was asked the same questions in the same order, and I transcribed each interview immediately to alleviate any biases. A fellow researcher reviewed the steps, including the requested amendment used to conduct the study, from sampling, solicitation, and data analysis. Once the audit trail was complete, it showed that the steps were free of any known biases and that the data remained secure at all times.

The last step in maintaining a credible study involved confirming that the data were collected and accurately represented the research participants' perceptions. The results shared represented information from the interviews and the themes that emerged through coding. During the interviews, detailed notes were taken and kept in a secured location. Due to having to conduct the interviews via Zoom due to COVID-19, the

settings and tones were neutral and free of any biases that may have influenced responses from participants, such as the interview location or background setting.

## **Results**

Through data analysis, five themes emerged from the perceptions of research participants in this phenomenological study. These themes: (a) importance of intimate programming, (b) integrity and trust, (c) informal social support, (d) community collaboration and engagement, and (e) continuance of knowledge and training, consist of categories supported by detailed narrative passages from participants included in the following sections.

### **Participants**

Participant 1 is a female HBCU employee in North Carolina and has been employed for the past 9 years as a program facilitator and administrator. Participant 1 loves working in the capacity of creating and implementing programs for students. This was evident in the passion shown through voice and shared specific interactions with students.

Participant 2 is a female HBCU employee in North Carolina and has been employed as a prevention program facilitator for 1 year full-time and previously served as an intern. This participant is very passionate about the department's work to assist students in learning more about sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence. Participant 2 also attended the HBCU, in which they are now employed, and enjoys sharing experiences with students and staff on best practices.

Participant 3 is a male HBCU employee in North Carolina and has been employed as an administrator at respective HBCU for 2 years, but has served at other HBCUs in the same position for a total of 18 years. Hard work and dedication are just a few factors that make administrators great, according to Participant 3.

Participant 4 is a female HBCU employee in North Carolina and has been employed as an administrator at respective HBCU for 1 year, but has served at other HBCUs in North Carolina for 3 years. Participant 4 holds two administrator positions that both require creating and managing prevention and awareness programming for students and staff. Participant 4 had numerous ideas on what would be effective, but the lack of resources has played a factor in programming offerings.

Participant 5 is a female HBCU employee in North Carolina and has been employed as an administrator at respective HBCU for 6 years, but has served as an administrator at another North Carolina HBCU for 1 year. Participant 5 has extensive experience in managing employees that are responsible for creating programs and applying policies.

Participant 6 is a female HBCU employee in North Carolina and has been employed as a program facilitator and administrator for 4 years and has worked in higher education at other institutions as a program facilitator 6 six years. Participant 6 enjoys working with students and being able to give back to the institution where they received their degree.

Participant 7 is a male HBCU employee in the state of Alabama as an administrator at that respective institution for 3 years and as an employee and staff

member at other HBCUs for a total of 9 years. Participant 7 has a very limited amount of resources but strives to provide effective programming for students and staff.

Participant 8 is a female HBCU administrator and has served at the institution for nearly 20 years. Participant 8 has seen a number of effective and ineffective programming and its effect on campus life.

### **Themes**

In this research study, five themes emerged from the lived experiences and perceptions of program facilitators and campus administrators responsible for campus prevention and awareness. The themes were intimate programming, integrity and trust, informal social support, continuance of knowledge and training, and community collaboration and engagement. Table 2 represents the main themes and the codes frequently shared by participants to create the central theme.

Table 2

*Themes and Codes*

Themes	Codes	Frequency
Importance of Intimate Programming	Small groups, Comfort, Role-playing, Ability to ask questions	68
Integrity and Trust	Policies, Processes, Staff, Faculty, Programming, Culture, Law Enforcement	185
Informal Social Support	Peers, Friends, Family Members, Athletic Coaches, Advisors, Faculty	168
Continuance of Knowledge and Training	Pro-Active, Title IX training, Training of Faculty and Staff, Monthly programming for students and staff, Law Enforcement	87
Community Collaboration and Engagement	Student Health Services, Campus Police, Athletics, Rape Crisis Center, City/County Police, Counseling Services, Community Organizations, Peer Programming, Student Affairs	113

***Theme 1: Importance of Intimate Programming***

Prevention and awareness programming on university campuses is one way to inform students on the importance of reporting sexual assault and sexual violence to law enforcement. In RQ1 I seek to determine the effect sexual assault prevention programming has on victim reporting to law enforcement officials. A common theme from participants was that intimate programming on their campus is more effective in sharing the message and encouraging students to report victimizations to law enforcement. Personal programming allows students to be in a more intimate setting and comfortable sharing their experiences and asking questions related to sexual victimization. In the study conducted by (Hubach et al., 2019), they identified two themes that focused on retracting traditional programming and focusing on programming that

provides an atmosphere that is more comfortable in discussing sex. Several participants believed it is best to provide programming that is best suited for their campus, which often included smaller-scaled, more focused programs. Participant 2 expressed that they noticed that more intimate programming, where they can really discuss what assault looks like and the different types of assault, makes it more comfortable for students because they have a more private space to discuss sexual assault for them better understand. Participant 6 agreed on the importance of smaller intimate programming and the need for student presentations, such as using student ambassadors to assist with linking administrators with students to build a relationship and explain reporting and the processes involved. Students working in smaller groups among their peers provide the opportunity to talk personally with someone that they feel more comfortable asking questions or sharing experiences.

Table 3

*Importance of Intimate Programming*

Codes	Perceptions
Small Groups Comfort Role-Playing Ability to Ask Questions	Facilitators and Administrators preferred small groups in order to provide comfort to students through role-playing and question asking.

Programming may also occur amongst oneself, increasing intimacy in programming, which brings additional awareness among students and in a confidential manner. Participant 1 shared that their campus holds programming such as “the Clothes Line Project” and “Denim Day,” which is awareness programming where students may

engage in specific activities in the privacy of their home or residence hall to learn and bring awareness to sexual assault. Students who decide to participate in the Clothesline Project can decorate a t-shirt and express themselves while sharing their stories related to sexual assault and sexual violence. Decorating a corresponding t-shirt can be done privately and dropped off to a location in a confidential manner. If students feel like sharing their awareness efforts and support virtually, they may also snap a photo wearing denim and share it via their social media sites. Denim Day brings national awareness by sharing to social media, and it may also be done in a more private and intimate setting.

Participants all agreed that prevention and awareness programming is important, but there were differences in the programming's size and its effect on the student population. In contrast to smaller intimate programming, increasing the audience size to include new student orientation was the perception of a few participants. Participants 3 and 4 believed that awareness should begin during freshmen orientation programming to share awareness and prevention techniques. They believed that starting with orientation and offering programs with student organizations during orientation weeks helps with prevention and awareness efforts. New student orientations on university campuses represent an informal space where students learn about resources and departments on campus that assist them as they matriculate. During these orientations, facilitators and administrators discuss safety, introduce mobile safety applications, and introduce other staff members responsible for programming and other processes related to sexual assault. Sharing awareness resources and contact information with students during orientation is



the first opportunity to share with students information on remaining vigilant and aware of their surroundings and different ways to avoid sexual violence.

Among participants, I found it interesting that, like others nationwide, COVID-19 changed the way universities offered programs. All participants had either switched to all prevention awareness virtual programming or no programming at all. The majority of the participants expressed that student programming efforts and attendance had been minimal, making it more challenging to share prevention programming and its importance. As a follow-up question, I asked if there was one gender that was more receptive to virtual programming. The migration to virtual programming had assisted one participant in reaching a specific group, which may not have been met in a face-to-face programming effort. Participant 2 stated that “what is interesting is that during virtual programming, there are a lot of male-identified folks who prefer to participate in those types of programming.” From this, I infer that male-identified students may feel more comfortable with programming that is virtual and more intimate, in comparison to open, face-to-face programming, where the capability to blackout the camera is not an option.

Although the participants differed on the size of the student audience, they all agreed that prevention and awareness programming is necessary and valuable in introducing students to the term sexual assault, ways to avoid sexual violence, staff members to report victimizations to, and the process to follow if victimized. Staff and students agree that prevention programming efforts are important and necessary in being effective in addressing sexual assault on campus, this is very important when establishing

campus culture. Worthen and Wallace (2017) found that in comparison to European American students, minorities were more accepting of sexual assault prevention programming. Since minorities are more accepting to prevention programming and learning about sexual assault, it is the university's responsibility to provide such efforts to educate the campus community. Through programming efforts, facilitators and administration have the opportunity to share information, experiences, resources, and policy procedural methods that encourage reporting while establishing trust and integrity among students and leadership.

### ***Theme 2: Integrity and Trust***

Establishing and upholding integrity and trust among law enforcement and throughout the reporting and adjudication process was shared among all participants. Programming efforts should also be created and implemented with trust and integrity. All participants believed that it is crucial to establish trust among the student population and leadership to establish comfort in reporting victimizations when sharing prevention and awareness programming with students. Brubaker et al. (2017) found that issues of trust have been a barrier in reporting, and campus staff has to establish a protocol to reestablish such trust. Participants 6 and 7 felt that having a thorough process is one way to establish trust among the student population and law enforcement. Participant 6 expressed that students trust campus administrators and those responsible for sexual investigations to follow through the process fairly, efficiently, and effectively. Engaging in those actions sets the framework for establishing trust and integrity among students and the campus officials and ultimately trusting law enforcement officials. In agreement,

Participant 7 believed that having a swift follow-up and follow-through, thorough investigations, and proper confidentiality increase trust between students and law enforcement. Displaying consistency and transparency among the students and law enforcement and engaging in positive actions to change the culture shows students that they can trust campus law enforcement to follow the process and obey the policies and procedures put into place.

Prevention and awareness programming encompassing trust and integrity is an integral part of making students feel comfortable reporting to law enforcement and not only sharing their experiences with their peers. Creating a comfort level among students and law enforcement can make it less frightening for students to report to law enforcement. Law enforcement must also be comfortable and welcoming to students that need to report to increase the comfort level for both parties. Educating students, faculty, and staff on the process through programming allows students to be less apprehensive about opening up and reporting, and faculty and staff the opportunity to validate the process, increasing trust among all groups. Participant 4 shared that by educating students on the steps of the process, they would not badmouth the process or the officials involved. They would share their feelings of trust with their peers to increase trust throughout the entire student population. By helping students understand their rights and the responsibility of identified officials, they establish integrity among the university that will be clear and visible on the campus.

Culture is another factor that some participants felt influenced the trust and integrity students have for programming efforts and reporting to law enforcement. Many

HBCUs are located in the southern part of the country, where some individuals may have experienced a negative interaction with law enforcement, or they've viewed negative interactions in the media. Participant 6 felt very strongly about the reason students do not report to law enforcement. Participant 6 stated, "Speaking specifically to HBCU campuses, I think it's a cultural thing; I think culturally we just don't run to the police." A similar sentiment was shared by Participant 2, "because we are a majority-black school because we are in the Bible belt, there is a lot of different factors working against us in pushing the conversation forward; they do not feel comfortable reporting to law enforcement."

Participants who spoke on culture believed that trust in law enforcement diminished among persons attending HBCUs because of the treatment of their peers, family members, and others. Students have previously shared with participants that they believe law enforcement will not believe them or take them seriously and be judgmental, so they decide it's best not to report. The culture of how minorities and law enforcement engage has been stressed heavily over the past few years, as shown in the news media. Unfortunately, the increase of stress shown in the media of experiences of others and personal experiences makes it more challenging to trust law enforcement. In an effort to change the culture among students, trust and integrity must be visible in programming, and law enforcement must take initiatives to earn the trust and respect of the student population.

Table 4

*Integrity and Trust*

Codes	Perceptions
Policies Processes Staff/Faculty Programming Culture Law Enforcement	Policies, processes and personnel that are trustworthy strengthen relationships with students and changes the culture with law enforcement.

All participants expressed that establishing and maintaining trust and integrity among law enforcement officials increases the chances of student victim reporting on campus. Through creating and implementing trustworthy awareness programs and prevention efforts aids their departments in establishing the quest to create positive and loyal relationships. The policies and procedures responsible for carrying out the process once it is reported must also be of trust and integrity. As Participant 7 shared, having faith and trust in the process and follow-through establishes a positive culture among students that will make them comfortable reporting because they know law enforcement will handle their victimization appropriately. The more opportunities that allow students, faculty, and staff to become comfortable meeting and reporting victimizations to law enforcement officials will establish the trust needed as shared by participants. In efforts to create and develop trust among students and law enforcement, other personal relationships on campus may assist in making the connection and showing its importance.

### ***Theme 3: Informal Social Support***

As students begin to matriculate on campus, and in some instances prior to arrival on campus, students begin to establish relationships with staff. These relationships, in many cases, encourage the student to reach out to law enforcement and other support resources. All participants believed that students most likely report their victimization to someone that they are comfortable with and trust. Reporting victimizations to peers and close friends was a common theme among the majority of the participants:

Participant 1: “Most likely, they are going to share their first experience with a close friend.”

Participant 2: “I would say that most students are keeping it to themselves or just telling their peers, and by peers, I mean like a close friend and will go to law enforcement last.”

Participant 3: “In reality, when it comes to our university, it is either they report to no one, or they report to someone that they really trust or a close friend.”

Participant 4: “Initially, it would be their peers, their friends, or roommate.”

Participant 7: “On our campus, victims report to friends of the victim.”

Participant 8: “In my experience with sexual assault victims, female victims are more likely than males to disclose their experience to a friend or close family member who may convince them to report the experience to the authorities.”

It is evident that the majority of the participants believed that students receive support from family, friends, or staff members that they have established a strong and supportive relationship. Participant 1 has even established strong relationships with students and

provided the opportunity to eat meals and provide financial assistance in times of distress to establish the foundation of trust. Those same students have shared private incidents that they would not normally share with individuals, especially law enforcement.

In addition to reporting to close friends and peers, some participants stated that victims are more likely to report to faculty or staff. Participants 5 and 6 stated that in many instances, victims go to a trusted faculty member. Participant 6 explained that victims are more likely to report to someone they see daily, usually their professor. As students begin to enter their course of study, students begin to have the same faculty members and create relationships. These relationships Several participants also felt that student-athletes were more likely to report to their athletic coach in cases of victimization. Participant 3 believed that the connection and personal relationship between the coach and the student-athlete begin well before becoming a student, establishing trust during recruiting and continuing during matriculation. In addition to the previously stated individuals of support, some participants also believed that students report to a close family member, staff members in Student Affairs, staff in the Title IX Office, the Dean of Students, Counseling Services and Residence Life based on trust and comfort they have in their respective offices. To feel comfortable reporting, students must feel comfortable, and participants believed that such offices on their campuses make students comfortable to discuss any issues they may encounter.

Table 5

*Informal Social Support*

Codes	Perceptions
Peers Friends Family Members Athletic Coaches Advisors Faculty Parents	Students and survivors look to close family, friends and confidants for support based on cultural barriers and prior negative experiences between students and law enforcement.

In contrast to all of the participants' perceptions, some studies have shown that students report to law enforcement and officials first. Moore and Baker (2018) found that students were more likely to report to law enforcement in their desire to seek justice. This finding could be based on the cultural perspective of the college or university and how their student population feels about law enforcement or previous interactions with them. Based on the perceptions of HBCU facilitators and administrators, law enforcement is the last resort students seek to report, and if they do report, it is at the encouragement of peers, family, or staff to seek justice.

Individuals who serve as support sources for students while providing them with information on reporting are essential in establishing a positive and trustworthy connection between students and law enforcement officials. Participants believe that trust and the importance of reporting come from providing the necessary training annually for students, faculty, staff, and family members of the victims.



#### ***Theme 4: Continuance of Knowledge and Training***

A constant theme that continued to emerge throughout participant interviews was the continued need for training for students, faculty, and staff members. If everyone on campus is not aware of how to report victimizations or who to report victimizations to, it is more challenging to establish a campus culture of trust related to sexual violence. In the study conducted by Spencer et al. (2017), students were more inclined to formally report their victimization if they had received training on the process and procedure. Participant 4 believed that a major way to get students to report to law enforcement goes back to training; “I don’t think our faculty and staff know what to do, they don’t know who to talk to, even though the information is posted on the website.” Faculty and staff who lack training make it difficult for students to feel comfortable reporting to university officials and law enforcement officials because they don’t feel the process will be conducted properly. Participant 6 stated that “training is important, and staff needs to know their job and duties to reduce human error due to lack of knowledge and lack of preparation.” With increased training among all groups assists administration in establishing a culture of trust and integrity. Participant 5 believed that faculty on campus need to be more aware so that they can help students and point them to the right resources; training is not just for students, but for employees also. As other participants shared the importance of annual training, Participant 2 agreed and felt strongly while stating, “I know for a fact there needs to be more training, workshops, and overall education and awareness for the people who are mandatory reporters.” Embracing the need and providing continued training throughout the year is a significant effort to

provide effective programming practices and adequate training for staff to perform their duties and responsibilities accurately.

Table 6

*Continuance of Knowledge and Training*

Codes	Perceptions
Pro-Active Faculty and Staff Culturally Relevant Law Enforcement	Creating and implementing on-going culturally relevant programming for students and staff to be effective in educating the campus community.

A consistent theme among participants was the amount of training students should receive. All felt that student training should not only occur during new student orientations for freshmen students, but all student classifications should be aware and reminded of sexual violence and the manner in which to report victimizations every year. Training and programming that is engaging and informative can make students more prone to listen, understand and effectively follow the process. Participant 1 engages in fun and proactive training, such as role-playing and situational scenarios, to provide a fun atmosphere for students to feel comfortable in interacting and asking questions about sexual violence. In addition to making training fun and engaging, participants believed that training should be culturally proficient. Participant 4 stated that “the bigger institutions use vendor companies, but they are not culturally competent, we don’t have to create our own training, but if we find other culturally competent training out there, I think that will help our students.” The more prominent universities that can use vendor

base companies also have the financial resources to purchase programming and training, which at many HBCUs, especially the participants' institutions, the same financial resources are not available. All training is not applicable and effective when working with students at HBCUs, so it is essential to ensure that the programming and training for students are culturally relatable to experiences of the same cohort. To provide continuance training and effective programming, campus and community partners should collaborate to achieve the set goal.

***Theme 5: Community Collaboration and Engagement***

Collaborative efforts and engaging the campus community and the off-campus community are necessary for providing effective and efficient programming and training efforts among students and staff. A consensus theme in addressing RQ 2 among participants was their need to collaborate with multiple campus community groups to share awareness and provide training successfully. Participants engaged in on-campus collaborations that included Student Affairs, Title IX, Residence Life, University Police, Women's Center, and Athletics; these efforts had the potential to increase the number of students that participated in the programs offered. Participant 3 shared that they partner with the Office of Title IX at their institution to provide prevention programming and during the investigative process if reported to law enforcement officials. Collaborations with student organizations are also essential; Participant 4 believed that by partnering with student leaders, programming with residence hall leaders, athletics, faculty, and staff increased awareness on policies and procedures students and staff must follow. All participants agreed that the goal is to educate and provide awareness to students and the

campus community to end sexual violence. Not only do on-campus partnerships increase this awareness, but off-campus community partnerships are just as important.

Table 7

*Community Collaboration and Engagement*

Codes	Perceptions
Student Health Student Counseling Campus Police Rape Crisis City/County Police Community Organizations Peer Programming Student Affairs Residence Life Administration	On and Off-campus community collaborations is beneficial and necessary in increasing prevention and awareness engagement and educating the campus community and student body.

Community partnerships represent another outlet for victims and survivors to find comfort and assistance in reporting to law enforcement officials and provide supplemental prevention programming. Participant 8 believed that it takes both on-campus and off-campus partners to be successful. Participant 8 stated, “it is important to ensure buy-in from all campus and community stakeholders, partner with health services, create intergenerational committees and continue ongoing collaboration with other programs.” Maintaining community partnerships is important to ensure that students have multiple options to seek assistance with the process of reporting and investigations. Participant 2 stated, “on our campus, since there are a lot of students who do not report on campus, they go to community organizations if they don’t feel comfortable reporting on campus.” From that statement, I infer that upholding and maintaining community

partnerships is vital in ensuring students have an outlet to report and seek assistance where they feel comfortable. Many participants also included outside agencies to provide prevention and awareness programming during group settings and fairs. Allowing outside agencies to provide programming provided students with another chance to learn from different faces and understand resources available in the community.

Community partnerships can be strengthened through a Memorandum of Understanding, contracts, and partnership agreements, which should be reviewed annually to remain compliant and efficient for student use. All participants had some form of MOU or agreement with community agencies to strengthen prevention and awareness offerings and resources offered to students. Participants, especially those who lacked resources, depended upon these community partnerships and collaborations to provide programming and resources to students due to the lack of on-campus offerings their department provided. The participants and the community organizations work together annually to make sure students are aware and understand sexual assault and how to report to the necessary individuals.

### **Summary**

HBCU campus communities must continue to understand that prevention and awareness programming plays a major role in encouraging students to report sexual victimizations to law enforcement officials. Colleges and universities may determine the effectiveness of programming by student response and increased reporting to law enforcement. University campuses have a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for their students. The themes that emerged from the perceptions of the

participants show that intimate, confidential programming; establishing trust and integrity among responsible staff; the importance of training and informal support, and the need for campus and community stakeholders is needed on HBCU campuses to be successful and effective in educating students and staff on sexual violence.

Participants felt that in some instances, programming had a tremendous effect on student reporting because once students are trained on how to report, where to report and who to report to, they become more confident about the process and are more open to reporting. Establishing and providing programming built on trust and integrity allows students to feel more comfortable reporting to law enforcement officials or other individuals such as a peer, faculty member, or athletic coach that will assist them in reporting.

The size of the programming offered to students can strongly influence victim reporting to law enforcement officials. Based on program facilitator participants, more intimate programming is effective because students can become more engaged in learning the definitions of sexual assault and the importance of reporting victimizations to receive resources and support. Experiencing role-playing and everyday scenarios as performed by their peers, increases trust among the student population, administration, and law enforcement. Although some participants felt that larger programming such as new freshmen student orientation is more effective when providing sexual assault prevention programming, all participants believed that prevention and awareness programming should be ongoing for all students, and training of faculty and staff should be held on an annual basis.

Collaborating and increasing the involvement of campus community partners and off-campus community organizations is influential in continuing knowledge gain and providing other avenues for students to utilize when seeking resources and support. The findings showed that involving and partnering with the campus community departments such as; Title IX, Student Affairs, Student Health Services, Residence Life, Athletics, and University Police all offer students the opportunity to receive awareness programming from multiple areas on campus that may have a different delivery method, but the same goal of encouraging student reporting and maintaining a safe campus. Displaying a united front among the campus community and administration is a way to establish the trust and integrity needed in effective programming. Off campus community partnerships are also an important aspect, because as stated earlier, some students may not feel comfortable reporting victimizations on campus. Still, they feel more comfortable at an off campus location. Sharing off-campus organizations and resources with students continue to build on the trust and integrity of those responsible for providing programming and awareness resources.

College and university campuses are tasked with maintaining a safe learning environment for their students. In an effort to keep the campus safe, creating and implementing sexual assault prevention and awareness programming for students and staff is one way to educate the campus community in that quest. On HBCU campuses, prevention and awareness program facilitators and campus administrators have taken the initiative to create inclusive, engaging, and informative programming while educating students and staff on sexual violence and the importance of reporting to those who can

navigate through the judicial process. These initiatives bring campuses one step closer to decreasing the number of victimizations and increasing the number of student reporters.

In this study, I posed two research questions, the effect and influence prevention programming has on reporting to law enforcement and how the campus community plays in providing effective programming. Based on the responses from research participants, the findings address the factors that contribute to effective programming and reporting to law enforcement and ways the community assists in programming.

In Chapter 4, I described the method for data collection, data analysis, and the themes derived from the lived experiences of program facilitators and administrators in the study. I will provide a discussion on the conclusion of the findings, recommendations for future research, and share implications for social change determined from the findings of the study in Chapter 5.



## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

Within this research study, I focused on determining the effectiveness of rape and sexual assault prevention programming of HBCU campuses and the influence programs have on victim reporting to law enforcement officials. To assess the effectiveness of prevention programming and its influence on victim reporting, I gathered the lived experiences of prevention and awareness program facilitators and campus administrators employed on HBCU campuses. I conducted semistructured interviews virtually and provided qualitative data to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What effect does sexual assault prevention programming have on victim reporting to law enforcement officials?

RQ2: What role does the campus community play in the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs on HBCU campuses?

The data analysis showed that all participants agreed that prevention and awareness programming is beneficial and effective for students and should occur on an annual basis for all students, not just incoming freshmen. There was a difference in the type of program setting that is most beneficial, an intimate setting, compared to a larger setting such as new student orientation. Several program facilitators felt that a more intimate setting provided students space to really learn and ask questions without being judged. Other participants shared that new student orientations were a better fit because they can provide programming and updates as soon as the school semester begins. In the study conducted by Baldwin-White (2021), college students had some knowledge about

sexual assault, but there were inconsistencies in all aspects that involve sexual violence, such as reporting and the rate at which victimizations occur. Continuing the entire conversation on sexual assault, either during orientation or more intimate settings, is necessary in educating the campus population on sexual assault, what it entails, and the process in reporting. Providing this knowledge is necessary for students to thoroughly understand the importance of the public health topic.

Thematic analysis also showed that trust and integrity among programming and informal social support resources, such as peers, faculty, staff, and athletic coaches, are important factors in encouraging students on the importance of reporting victimizations to law enforcement personnel. A final and consensus theme among all participants was the continued need and importance of on-campus and off-campus community collaborating and training opportunities for students and staff. By collaborating, shows a united front and builds on the establishment of trust and integrity throughout the campus community. Continued training keeps the campus up to date on the changing legislation and best practices to use in decreasing sexual violence and increasing reporting to law enforcement.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings of this study confirm that there is a continued need to provide effective prevention and awareness rape prevention programming to students as victimizations continue to occur. Program facilitators depend on prevention programming and training for students when educating them on sexual assault and the reporting process. Inconsistencies in information among students on the rate at which rapes are

continuing to occur, and the violent nature of rape is a result of the lack of proper education and knowledge sharing (Baldwin-White, 2021). Colleges and universities that provide consistent prevention and awareness programming and training for students educate the student and campus community population on a national public issue. Participants in this study believed that without prevention and awareness programming and training on campus, students do not fully understand sexual assault, how to access resources, how to address cultural barriers with law enforcement, and how to seek justice as a survivor. At times, students who do not fully understand sexual assault may not realize that they have been victimized or decline to call it sexual assault in fear of not being believed.

Participants shared different identities of individuals that students feel more comfortable reporting to, alleviating law enforcement. Students may only report to their friends, professionals, or keep it to themselves and not report it law enforcement (Khan et al., 2018). The culture at an HBCU, when compared to predominantly European American institutions, has an influence on student reporting to law enforcement. The idea of reporting to law enforcement is influenced by the culture and how law enforcement is portrayed in the media, especially law enforcement portrayal within the past few years. Reporting to only friends, peers, coaches, faculty, and staff, or not reporting at all may also be highly due to lack of knowledge on how and who to report to, which was confirmed as a concern expressed by some participants.

Culture also sets the foundation to trust and integrity. Establishing and maintaining trust and integrity in programming and law enforcement is imperative in

encouraging students to report victimizations to law enforcement. The culture at some HBCUs is to report to other individuals and not law enforcement based on the negative experiences of family, friends, and other actions by police seen in the media. A few participants expressed having trust in and following through in the process was one of the barriers for student reporting to law enforcement. Barriers such as a student's lack of trust in officials and the process are one of the reasons to not officially report to law enforcement (Collington et al., 2019). Trusting the process and displaying transparency among law enforcement has an effect on the entire campus community that will influence student victim reporting positively or negatively.

Changing the campus community culture to embrace trust is possible through collaborating and training among students and staff. Training is a mandate for some faculty and staff on some campuses, but all participants believed that training is a requirement for all to be effective. Rosoff (2017) found that proper training is needed among staff to handle student victim reporting adequately. Creating an atmosphere of comfort and trust campus-wide can be obtained by continuously gaining knowledge and requiring that all staff attend trauma-informed training.

At times, college university campuses may work with the off-campus community to strengthen the resources and offerings available to students. These efforts may be due to the lack of resources available or the desire to embrace and engage the entire community. The community readiness theoretical model focuses on providing prevention and intervention programming for those within the community. Colleges and universities are smaller communities within a larger community in which they were founded.

Universities in this study relied heavily on campus community supporters in their prevention efforts. They also relied on off-campus community organizations to provide additional resources or another outlet for victim reporting. Obtaining and maintaining community relationships and partnerships is beneficial in providing a diverse and inclusive campus for students. Working together with on campus and off campus community stakeholders can increase the effectiveness of rape prevention and awareness programming by providing additional positive support and resources for students and the campus community.

### **Limitations of the Study**

A significant limitation of the study was that most of the participants worked at HBCUs within two states. Originally, the main focus was on HBCUs in North Carolina, but the geographic location increased to include Alabama due to low participation. By focusing only on HBCU campuses, external validity may not be fully successful. In reference to the questions asked in this study, transferability may be easy to accomplish on other HBCU campuses, but it may be challenging to ask the same questions and receive thick descriptions from a predominantly European American institution based on cultural differences. Programming efforts and their effectiveness may be different based on culture, availability of resources, and more positive interactions with law enforcement.

I accomplish saturation based on continued emerging themes from research participants. Still, many participants may not have agreed to participate to avoid shedding a negative light on their prevention programming efforts. Although participants could

share positive, effective efforts on their campuses, excluding negative measures does not display full transparency on what has proven to be effective and non effective.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations for this study derive from the themes of participants and the limitations of conducting the study. The first recommendation is that future researchers should focus on the perceptions of actual students and their views of the effectiveness of rape prevention programming on their campus. By determining the perceptions of matriculating students can provide a more detailed description of their experiences with prevention programming and if programming was influential in reporting or not reporting to law enforcement officials. Students know what they like and what will keep them engaged; learning from students on the topics and types of engagement activities they desire in discussing sexual assault and sexual violence has the opportunity to educate program facilitators, administrators, and the public on how to provide effective programming.

Another recommendation is that future researchers should also focus on having all HBCU campuses participate in studies that focus on effective programming and reporting efforts to law enforcement. Having all HBCUs participate in research will allow universities from all financial tiers to participate, not only those with smaller budgets and access to resources. HBCUs do not have the same economic status; there are some institutions that have more resources. Including campuses that are larger, more financially stable, and capable of providing numerous resources would be beneficial in sharing best practices on prevention programming to their sister institutions with the

same financial availability. Only focusing on smaller institutions shows how to do more with fewer resources, but offering the larger picture to include all HBCUs will provide information for all campuses on how to be effective.

A final recommendation is that a research study should be conducted that includes interviews with law enforcement to understand their perceptions of the lack of student reporting. Learning and understanding the perceptions of law enforcement on effective programming efforts, training, and processes can provide information to program facilitators and campus administrators on how to create effective programming to include law enforcement to change the culture of the campus and establish trust among students and law enforcement.

## **Implications**

### **Impacts for Positive Social Change**

Throughout this phenomenological research study, potential opportunities for social change were present. The continuance of rapes and sexual assault on university campuses is both a criminal and a public health concern. This study focused on ways prevention programming can be effective while encouraging students to report victimizations to law enforcement officials. College and university personnel and administrators can learn the best methods used on campuses and implement them to provide students with positive and effective prevention and awareness programming. Establishing and maintaining trust and integrity in programming and reporting processes among campus administrators and students provides law enforcement the opportunity to

be seen positively, resulting in students receiving the assistance, support, and justice needed.

The continued need for obtaining knowledge and training is another implication for positive change shown in this research study. Creating and attending training is always beneficial for individuals that work with the public daily. With such a serious subject matter as rape and sexual assault, as stated in this study, students, faculty, staff, and even families should receive training on sexual assault and reporting processes to best serve the student and community population. Knowing how to speak with a student and making them feel comfortable in reporting victimizations will help other students feel comfortable in reporting by listening to the positive experience of their peers.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The community and its capability to serve and provide intervention to the citizens it serves is important when encountering a situation that needs resolving (Edwards et al., 2000). In this study, program facilitators and administrators employed at HBCUs have seen the need to provide prevention efforts to their students and train staff to be effective and successful in reducing the number of victimizations on campus. The campus community and off campus community stakeholders play a major part in providing positive and effective programming to students to increase student victims reporting to law enforcement. One person can not accomplish the task alone; it takes the community working together to provide prevention opportunities and impact social change.



## Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to obtain the lived experiences and perceptions of HBCU prevention and awareness program facilitators and administrators on the effectiveness of rape prevention programming and the influence of victim reporting to law enforcement. As sexual assaults and rapes continue to occur on university campuses, as shown in the study, students need to understand what sexual assault is and what they should do if they become a victim. Sharing this knowledge with students can be accomplished through intimate programming, orientations, or other collaborations with campus community stakeholders that understand the importance of educating persons on sexual assault and the need for reporting to law enforcement. As seen in the literature and the study, students feel more comfortable sharing their victimization experience with a friend, peer, athletic coach, or family member than communicating with law enforcement. The comfort and trust students have may be influenced by the culture of the HBCU, but there is always the opportunity to adjust the culture to establish and maintain trust and integrity among students and law enforcement. Prevention programming will need to continuously incorporate the importance of reporting to law enforcement with students to understand the importance of sharing and how sharing can assist with resources, justice, and keeping the campus community safe from further student victimizations.

Based on the findings in this study, maintaining trust and having a transparent and thorough process is one way to begin increasing reporting of victimizations to law enforcement personnel. Continuously providing programming and training to students

and staff and not only during the beginning of freshmen orientation will keep the conversation of sexual assault visible in case a student happens to become a victim. Rape and sexual assaults on university campuses are an issue and topic of discussion on all campuses. Being a student at an HBCU may bring forth cultural differences among students and the campus community, but it is important to break the cultural barriers that are prohibiting the progression and safety of all that are present in the campus community.

Sexual assault prevention and awareness programming is a federal mandate requirement for many higher education institutions that serve students and, for other colleges and universities, programming is just an option. Although it may be an option, it is no less important for students to understand such a serious topic and have access to resources. The campus community and off-campus community stakeholders have the opportunity to educate students on sexual assault so that they do not become victims or perpetrators of sexual violence. Not one HBCU or other university campus is the same. However, each campus has the opportunity to be effective in prevention programming, law enforcement student reporting, and providing a safe and educated learning environment. It will take collaborative efforts between program facilitators, campus administrators, students, faculty, staff, and other community organizations to maintain effectiveness in combating this criminal and public health issue. Through continuous training and knowledge gain of the campus and community, this goal can be achieved.

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## Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. To whom do you think that victims are most likely to report sexual assault? Why?
2. If an assault is reported to a campus healthcare professional, what is your institution's procedure at that point?
3. What kinds of campus sexual assault policies and practices do you think make victims of sexual assault more likely to report an incident and follow through with charges?
4. What kinds of campus sexual assault policies and practices do you think make victims of sexual assault less likely to report an incident and follow through with charges?
5. What concerns about institutional liability play out in the development of sexual assault policies?
6. In an ideal world, what practices or strategies would be best for sexual assault survivors?