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Feminist identification, actions, beliefs and commitments at CSB/SJU

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Feminist Identification, Actions, Beliefs & Commitments at CSB/SJU
2014-2015 Hynes Scholars
Institute for Women’s Leadership

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Laura Rhude
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What is the Hynes Scholars Mission?

A competitively selected cohort of sophomore women interested in engaging in dialogue and scholarship about gender and leadership, social justice, self-awareness, and the challenges facing women today.
Research Question

Does self-identification as a feminist, non-feminist, or non-labeler, affect actions, beliefs, and commitments regarding feminist ideals?
1. Research/Background

- Skeleton of background information
- Previous similar research
- How is our research different/important?
- Why is our research important for CSB/SJU?
Why This Study?

- Interested in feminist beliefs – unique campuses
- Separate campuses – exposed to feminist topics differently
  - Bennie/Johnnie Day, IWL/MDI have different events for men and women
Why This Study?

- Is there any dissonance between identifying with feminist beliefs and identifying with the feminist label?
- Will our data give us insight into education about feminist ideas at CSB/SJU?
- Is the “feminist” label stigmatized on our campuses?
Smith College

- Surveyed Baby Boomers & Generation Xers

- Identified themselves as: feminists, non-feminists and non-labelers

- More individuals from Generation X identified as non-feminists and non-labelers, more Baby Boomers identified as feminists

- Is there a new wave of feminism occurring with our own generation, Generation Y/Millennials?
Fischer et al.

- Used different feminist identity scales to determine validity of each scale

- Using this, our survey was based on the Feminist Identity Composite found in Fischer et al’s scholarly article

Purdue University

- “Women’s movement” or “feminist movement”

- Studied students’ reaction to the label of feminism in the college setting

- Is the feminist label stigmatized at CSB/SJU?
How Is Our Study Different?

- Previous studies have surveyed women, our study surveys both men and women
- Our study is surveying mostly first year college students
- Unique campus environment may show different results than previous research
2. Study Design and Data Collection

- Determine method for data collection
- Write up methodology and procedure
- Submit IRB approval form
- Create survey questions and survey form design
- Responses converted into Excel and SPSS formats
Methods/Participants

- Introductory Psychology Students
  - First years and sophomores
- 79 females and 39 males, total 118 people surveyed
- Demographic at end of survey
- Questions reworded to be gender neutral
- Goal: Determine who identifies as feminists, non-feminists and non-labelers, and differences between their data
- 3 categories of questions:
  - Actions
  - Personal Beliefs
  - Commitments
4. Data Analysis

- Conduct statistical analysis of collected data
- Discover and analyze trends according to three categories and larger research question
- Does self-identification as a feminist, non-feminist, or non-labeler, affect actions, beliefs, and commitments regarding feminist ideals?
Bennies n=79

26.6% Identify as Feminists

11.4% Identify as Non-Feminists

62% Identify as Non-Labeler
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify as Feminists</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify as Non-Feminists</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify as Non-Labelers</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Johnnies*  
*n=39*
Action Questions

1. If I were married and my spouse was offered a job in another state, it would be my obligation to move in support of his/her career.

1. I regularly attend women’s sporting events on campus.

1. I often post about women’s issues on social media.
Action Scale

Average Action Scale Rating by Group

- Feminist
- Non-feminist
- Non-labeler

Types:
- SJU
- CSB
Interpretation of Action Scale

- No difference in scores by school or feminist identity
- All self-identifications either act in a non-feminist manner or in a feminist manner
Belief Questions

1. I believe things are fine the way they are. I do not want women to have equal status as men.

1. I think that men and women had it better in the 1950s when married women were housewives and their husbands supported them.

1. I don’t see the point of questioning the general expectation that men should be masculine and women should be feminine.
I believe things are fine the way they are. I do not want women to have equal status as men.
I think that men and women had it better in the 1950s when married women were housewives and their husbands supported them.
I don’t see the point of questioning the general expectation that men should be masculine and women should be feminine.
Interpretation of Belief Scale: Bennies

- Non-feminists were most likely to agree with “traditional” views/statements, followed by non-labelers, then lastly feminists.

- Feminists were more likely to hold less traditional beliefs.
Interpretation of Belief Scale: Johnnies

- Same pattern as Bennies

- Non-feminists were most likely to agree with “traditional” views/statements, followed by non-labelers, then lastly feminists

- Feminists were more likely to hold less traditional beliefs
Overall Interpretation of Beliefs

- *Bennies* were more likely than *Johnnies* to agree with the beliefs that the traditional system in place should remain the same.

- These traditional beliefs were felt most strongly by non-feminists, followed by non-labelers, and the least by feminists (Non-Feminist had more traditional views, Feminists had less traditional views, and non-labelers fell in between).
Commitment Questions

1. I owe it to all people to work for greater equality for all.

1. I want to improve women’s status.

1. I am committed to working for a fair and just world for all.
Commitment Scale 1

I owe it to all people to work for greater equality for all.
Commitment Scale 2

I want to improve women’s status.
Commitment Scale 3

I am committed to working for a fair and just world for all.
• Overall feminists had the higher score on the Commitment Scale followed by non-labelers, and lastly non-feminist, which means that feminists were most highly committed to equality and justice for all.
Interpretation of Commitments: Johnnies

• Overall feminists had the higher score on the Commitment Scale followed by non-labelers, and lastly non-feminist, which means that feminists were most highly committed to equality and justice for all

• Johnnies had slightly higher scores on Commitment Scale than Bennies

• *Again, SJU Feminist labelers, n=2*
Overall Interpretation of Commitments

- Feminists are more committed to world changes towards equality, followed by non-labelers, and lastly non-feminists.
Influence of Identification

- Identification did not strongly affect their actions
- Identification correlated to the type of beliefs held by the individual
- Identification correlated an individual’s level of commitment to equality
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trends</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No difference in scores by institution or feminist identity.</td>
<td>Significant differences by both institution and feminist identity.</td>
<td>Significant differences by both institutions and feminist identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Presentation/Further Analysis**

- Compile data, graphics and organization of all materials
- Prepare presentation format and distribution of responsibilities
- Discuss implications of studies and suggest further analysis and action
What words come to mind when you think of feminism?
Bennies

misunderstood
aggressive
Unhappy bra burning
empowerment
Gender Gap
Sexist
Inspire
Argumentative
Fight for their rights
women's movement
Independent
overbearing
Dedicated
Justice
women's rights
putting
Courageous
Closing
support
Closing
extreme
woman
strength
Opinionated
women
equality
权利
Brave
Women's Rights
women
pushy
gender
powerful
controversial
society
power
unfair
activist
fight
haters
overreacting
individual
Confident
opportunity
women's power
assertive
Stereotypes
pro
strong
equality
opportunities
power
assertive
man
powerful
women
rude
relentless
empowerment
girl power
career beliefs
activists
driven
bossy
supremacist
feminist
committed
unfair
fight
victims
change
activist
hateful
gender
powerful
empowerment
social media
Here do we go from here?

- Educate first year students about roots, origins and meanings of feminism
- Encourage first year students to attend gender related campus events
- Promote an open dialogue about gender related issues between both institutions
Recommendations for Future Studies

- Conduct similar study with upper class students, paying particular attention to seniors
- Compare our results with first year students with the results from senior student data
- Analyze how perceptions of feminism change through the college experience and how our institutions can better educate about gender related issues


A Special Thank You

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Hynes Scholars Student Coordinator

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Thank You!
Any Questions?