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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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-Feminist

62% Identify as Non-Labeler
5.1% Identify as Feminists

46.2% Identify as Non-Feminists

48.7% Identify as Non-Labeler
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

- SJU
- CSB

Groups:
- Feminist
- Non-feminist
- Non-labeler

Rating Scale:
- 0
- 0.5
- 1
- 1.5
- 2
- 2.5
- 3
- 3.5
- 4
- 4.5
- 5
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.
I owe it to all people to work for greater equality for all.
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><strong>Trends</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference in scores by institution or feminist identity.</td>
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</tbody>
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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?
Where 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


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Thank You!

Any Questions?