Sense of Place in an Academic Library

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Libraries are:

• A place for everyone
• Should be welcoming and inviting
• Part of students’ entire academic experience
• A place where students feel:
  • connected
  • helped
  • welcomed
  • respected
  • safe
Library Connections

**Takes what the library has:**
- Services
- Resources
- Spaces
- Interactions with others

**Matches with students based on:**
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Personas
- University status

**Constructs identified in Literature:**
- Belonging
- Connection
- Respected
- Safety
- Talk with library employee
- Welcomeness
A Sense of Place is a measure of several constructs that help a student feel like a part of where they are at.

Purposes of this effort:

1. Identify constructs that make up students’ sense of place in the library
2. Compare and contrast similarities and differences between groups of students
   • Gender
   • Ethnicity
   • University status
3. Determine how the constructs relate to each other
4. Establish a baseline measure for future comparison
Methods

Used 2 surveys
- Survey 1: implied consent, seven rating questions, demographics and link to second survey
- Survey 2: Information for incentive draw (3 - $50 participation incentives)

Invited random, stratified sample of 3,000 undergrad students
- 2 weeks to respond
- 2 reminders to non-responders

IRB approved

Analysis included:
- descriptive statistics and
- Principal Components Analysis
## Results: Response Rate and Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>31% of invited students participated to some extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>More females (5%) than university population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Status</td>
<td>Higher percentage than university population of:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freshmen (4.2%)  Juniors (2.8%)  Super Seniors (8.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>6 of 7 Ethnic groups within 2% of population</td>
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<td></td>
<td>White European overrepresented (7.3%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2 groups (American Indigenous/Alaskan Native and Black or African American had low response (3 &amp; 2) – not discussed individually, but included in BIPOC group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

• Two general measures
  • mean student rating of construct and
  • percentage of students indicating: To Some Degree YES or NO
  • Only discuss YES responses as NO responses are typically inverse
  • Some dissonance between ratings and YES percentages – not yet resolved

• We refer to ratings and percentages or differences between comparison groups
  • All students
  • Female & Male
  • WE & BIPOC
  • Each ethnic group & all students
  • University status & all students

• Brief discussion on PCA
Results- All Students

• 5 of the 6 constructs had strong student mean ratings (5.45-6.34/7)
  • Safety had highest rating
• YES percentage for 5 of 6 constructs was 80.0% or higher
• Connection to Library had lowest mean rating (4.86/7) and YES percentage (64.3%)
• 95.3% of all students felt safe within library
Results - By Gender

• All mean differences were 0.15/7 or less across all constructs
• YES percentages for differed by construct
  • Male percentages lower than females in 4 constructs – belonging, connection, respect, and safety
  • Male percentages higher than females in 2 constructs – Talk with library employee and welcomeness
Results - By Ethnicity: WE & BIPOC

• Mean ratings across all constructs had differences of 0.35/7.0 or less
  • 2 constructs (respect and talk with library employee) were 0.02/7.0 or less
  • Largest differences between connection (0.35) and welcomeness (0.31)
• BIPOC’s YES percentages 6.4% or lower than WE in across all constructs
  • Biggest differences: welcomeness (6.4%), belonging (5.8%), & safety (5.6%)
Results - By All Students and Each Ethnic group

• Mean rating trends found between WE & BIPOC continued when comparing each ethnic group with all students

• Some differences more pronounced.

• **Hispanic** group mean ratings were higher for 4 of 6 constructs
  • respected had highest difference (0.28)
  • The lowest constructs mean ratings were for connected to library (0.4)

• **NHPI** and **Blended** group mean rating differences were lower than all students across all constructs
  • **NHPI** differences ranged from 0.14 to 0.77 (connection had largest difference)
  • **Blended** differences ranged from 0.07 to 0.76 (Welcomeness had largest difference)

• **Asian** lower in all constructs except talking to library employee
  • Differences ranged from 0.29-0.52
Results - By All Students and Each Ethnic group

• YES percentage trends

• **Hispanic** YES percentages lower than all students for connected (6.0%) and higher for respected (5.9%)

• Differences between all other ethnic groups YES percentages and all students were lower, with only two exceptions:
  • The **Asian** YES percentages for connection
  • The **NHPI** YES percentages for belonging

• **Blended** YES percentages had 4 lower differences in excess of 10%
  • Belonging (16.9%)
  • Safety (16.3%)
  • Respect (14.1%)
  • Welcomeness (12.8%)
Results - By All Students and University Status

• For all mean ratings:
  • Freshmen higher than all other groups
  • Sophomore and Super Seniors lower than all other groups

• All mean rating differences across status groups for all but 3 constructs were within 0.20. Exceptions include:
  • Freshmen and connected (0.23 higher)
  • Super Seniors and connected (0.27 lower) and respected (0.24 lower)

• About half of all YES percentage differences across all measures for each status group and all students were within 3%
  • Freshman YES percentages for connected higher than all other groups
  • Senior YES percentages were lower for welcomeness
  • Super Senior percentages were higher for welcomeness
Results: Principal Component Analysis

• Using KMO scores to indicate adequacy:
  Bare minimum 0.5  Mediocre 0.5-0.7  Good 0.7-0.8  Great 0.8-0.9  Superb 0.9 and above

• Gender all in the great range

• Ethnicity
  • Minimum Asian & NHPI (low numbers)
  • Good BIPOC, Blended, & Hispanic
  • Great WE

• All students were good or great
Summary and Limitations

• All sense of place constructs indicate (except connected) indicate strong association between BYU students and library

• Room for improvement, especially in connected construct

• Some reasons for differences
  • Freshmen have a designated area (The HUB) in the library
  • Seniors & Super Seniors are preparing to depart

• Ethnic groups low response prevented full or stronger analysis
  • Low ethnic group numbers on campus

• Other groups may be helpful (e.g., first generation students, grad students)
Future Directions

• Implement changes and re-administer survey to determine effect of change
• Identify other student groups and use in analysis
  • First generation students
  • Other ethnic groups
  • Marital status (single, married, divorced)
• Identify other constructs that may help define sense of place measure
Questions and Thank You

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In God we trust.
Everyone else needs to bring data!

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