Feminism: Perceptions and the Impact of Self Identification among College Freshmen

Sociology
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Bobby Jo Otto

Abstract:
The purpose of this study was to determine whether college freshmen identified as feminists, what perceptions of the term they had, and what they felt influenced their beliefs about feminism. The research indicated that the majority did not identify as feminists, though they believed that men and women should be guaranteed equal rights. The majority of students gave positive definitions of the term, but believed that men and women already had equal rights or felt that feminists were too extreme. The findings indicated that females and democrats were more likely to identify as feminists.

Introduction
Feminism has gained a lot of attention from the media lately. Just last year, the Supreme Court struck down Texas abortion restrictions - the most significant abortion ruling since 1992. This is clearly a women’s rights issue, but feminists are surprisingly on both sides of the abortion debate. This difference in opinion was brought to the public eye right before the Women’s March on Washington. Two pro-life organizations were removed from the partner list because part of the March’s platform was open access to safe, legal, and affordable abortion. This stirred up a debate and drove a wedge between feminists. There has also been increased awareness of pay inequality between men and women in the past few years. Recently, President Trump revoked former President Obama’s 2014 Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Order. With so much commotion in the world of women’s rights and feminism, I was interested to see where college freshmen stood – whether they identified as feminists, what perceptions of the term they had, and what they felt influenced their beliefs about feminism.
My research is guided by liberal feminist theory. My research question is “Do gender and political ideology impact college freshmen's feminist self-identification and their ideological beliefs?” This is important in regards to feminist theory because it will provide some insight about what the term feminist means to college aged students, and further, how it differs by gender and political ideology. I believe that gender and political ideology are highly correlated with feminism because previous research has indicated that these factors play a large role in perceptions of feminism. In this paper, I examine why freshmen do or do not relate with or support feminism, as well as a number of their ideological beliefs. Although my sample may be limited by factors such as enrollment, participation, and diversity on campus, my study is important, as it will contribute to the literature on an important question, one that is even more pertinent post-election.

**Literature Review**

The perceptions people have about feminism are important, as feminism has become a widely controversial topic in today’s society, despite the humble intentions of feminist theory. “Feminism is commonly recognized as a movement driven to grant social, political, and economic equality to both women and men” (Precopio and Ramsey 2017:78). However, as the research shows, perceptions often differ concerning the definition. While some research has shown that people view feminism in a positive light (Bettencourt, Vacha-Haase, and Byrne 2011), others have shown how feminism is viewed more harshly (Jenen et al. 2008). These perceptions, as well as if someone identifies as a feminist, differ based on certain demographic characteristics, such as gender and political affiliation. As shown in the literature, there are a number of influences, including class, race, and religious affiliation. In this paper, I will examine whether college students identify as feminists, how they view the term feminism, and how this identity, as well other as statuses, influence a number of their ideological beliefs.

**Feminism and Gender**

Cree and Dean (2015) looked at perceptions of feminism held by social work students. They found that females were more likely than males to identify with feminism. Still, most of the male
students said that they had a positive or neutral perception of feminism. In open-ended questions, students elaborated that they were not just concerned with the rights of women, but that they agreed with many feminist principles. However, many felt feminism had a bad name, and that they saw feminism as a way of exploiting men using guilt tactics or by expecting men to take pity on women.

In Maurer’s (2016) dissertation on college students’ attitudes toward gender roles, she also found that less males identified with feminism. However, she did see that after given a basic definition of feminism, more males and females identified with feminism. In fact, she saw a 20% increase in the number of females identifying with feminism and a 33% increase in male respondents. Since both her dissertation and Cree and Dean’s (2015) research found similar gender differences in responses, this is an indication that females may be more likely to identify with feminism.

In contrast, Jenen, Winquist, Arkkelin, and Schuster (2008) found that both college aged men and women had definite negative biases towards feminism. Using an Implicit Association Test they found that participants had faster reaction times for feminist-bad pairings and traditionalist-good pairings. They intended for the term traditionalist to mean the opposite of feminist, but acknowledged that all participants may not have perceived it that way. Still, participants paired feminist with bad words (awful, evil, nasty, or terrible) more quickly and traditionalist with good words (happy, joy, peace, or wonderful) more quickly. Both genders showed these results.

Media, Family, and Political Ideology as Predictors of Feminist Identity
While gender is an important factor regarding one’s definition of feminism, the media also plays a role. Although not studied in the previous article (Jenen et al. 2008), the media is one possible reason that students might have shown biases against feminists. Maurer’s (2016) research indicated that though media coverage has expanded and more people have heard of feminism, many students are lacking a basic understanding of its roots. On a related note, a book review by Jennifer Senior (2016) criticized Andi Zeisler’s belief that feminism was being used too freely.
Zeisler (2016) wrote: “There’s a mainstream, celebrity, consumer embrace of feminism that positions it as a cool, fun, accessible identity that anyone can adopt” (xiii). Zeisler maintains a very strict interpretation of what feminism is whereas today, we use it as an umbrella term, encompassing many different forms of feminism. This may be another reason why Maurer (2016) found that so many students lack a basic understanding of feminism.

Family is another potential influencer when it comes to identifying as feminist. Bettencourt, Vacha-Haase, and Byrne (2011) found that mothers and grandmothers were not particularly influential in the younger generation’s perceptions though they have been in previous studies (e.g., Eisenberg 1988). Bettencourt et al.’s (2011) study showed that younger women held more positive views towards feminism than their mothers and grandmothers and were more liberal in their political orientation and religiosity. Though the article does not highlight this, the media could be playing a role here. Positive female feminists are advocating feminism more today and the younger generation is more likely to be engaged in this via blogs, news commentaries, and social media. The young women mentioned in Bettencourt et al.’s study were also more likely to be feminists than young men, perhaps due to a difference in media preferences.

In Liss, O’Connor, Morosky, and Crawford’s (2001) study, they found that feminist self-identification was related to not having conservative beliefs. It was also related to having a positive attitude towards feminists. In addition, they found that self-identified feminists were more likely to believe in collective action. Precopio and Ramsey (2017) found that participants in their study who had liberal ideologies supported feminist beliefs as well as feminist collective action. Those who endorsed conservative ideologies had higher scores for antifeminist beliefs, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism.

Feminism and Class
While social media and political ideology are often seen as the most influential factors in shaping public opinion, class also plays a large role. Social class is a prominent divider in the U.S. and
often those in opposite classes have very different opinions on social movements throughout history. For this reason, it seems fitting to include class when looking at perceptions of feminism.

Ferree (1980) interviewed working class mothers and found that employed women were much more likely to be feminists than full time house wives. Part and full time working women favored a change in the traditional gender roles while house wives did not. It is important to note that the full-time women were more likely to have personally experienced discrimination than the others, but part time women agreed that discrimination existed at about the same rate as those working full time. The house wives had drastically lower agreement rates for this belief. Perhaps having a strong tie to home life caused these women to believe that feminism was not necessary because women were being treated fairly. Otherwise, they might have just felt that a woman’s place was in the home being submissive to her husband because of tradition or religion.

Also pertaining to class, Kates (1989) examined the wage gap, pay equity, and feminist unions. She argued that two major victories for feminism - the Equal Pay Act and Title VII - were the result of an alliance between working class and middle class women who shared the common goal of attaining equal economic opportunity for women. Today, even more women are working which allows for a larger percentage of women, unfortunately, to feel as if they have been discriminated against or at least agree that discrimination does indeed exist. There seems to be a correlation between working women and feminist identity based on these two studies. The results indicate that being a female who works is correlated to being a feminist.

Unequal Opportunity for Women

Feminism is “commonly recognized as a movement driven to grant social, political, and economic equality to both women and men” (Precopio and Ramsey 2017:78). Because it is centered around inequality, discussing unequal opportunities for women is vital. Kates (1989) highlighted that though women had won some important battles, the wage gap was still present. In 1981, only a year after Ferree’s study was published, the median wage gap was 35% for full time employees with little or no change since 1961. In 1984 the number remained the same.
Kates (1989) discussed how the figures showed that the wage and income gap both widen with age. With so many more women joining the workforce part time or temporarily, she stresses that women will have to unite across class borders and treat economic exploitation as a common ground. According to The American Association of University Women, a pay gap still exists today with women typically making 80% of what men make (Miller 2017).

Harlan (1994) calls attention to the “sticky floor,” in which women struggle with low-paying, low-mobility jobs. This is a barrier created by the exclusion of women, people of color, and other disadvantaged groups when it comes to opportunities for advancement. This starts with barriers in the educational system that keep these minorities from gaining access to the same education that more privileged individuals receive. It continues with occupational segregation placing women and minorities in the lowest-paying jobs. Lower class individuals also have less connections that could lead to job placements and finally, the work force has gained more part-time and temporary positions. These positions receive lower pay, less stability, and no benefits.

Another problem with unequal opportunity is the perception that it is simply not true. A Glassdoor.com survey, “Global Gender Pay Gap Survey” was conducted in 2016 with more than 8,000 respondents. It revealed that though wage disparities do exist, the majority of employees do not believe their workplace has a gender gap. Seventy % of U.S. employees believe that men and women receive equal pay but fewer women (60 %) than men (78 %) believe so. That is an overwhelming majority of the United States population. It is important to note this kind of finding because it indicates that most Americans simply do not know about the wage gap or they choose to ignore it.

Parental Leave
Another problem within workplaces is parental leave. Though women working part-time and in temporary positions struggle with having no benefits, both men and women struggle with the benefit of parental leave. Arellano’s (2015) article, “Don’t Leave U.S. Behind” highlights the fact that there is no national paid family leave in the United States. The country offers 12 weeks
leave, but with no pay. This makes the U.S. the only country among 41 nations that does not mandate any paid leave (Livingston 2016). Meanwhile, the other 40 nations require about two months paid leave at minimum. In 19 out of the 41 countries, however, much of the paid leave is specifically for maternity leave. In fact, in six countries there is no leave available for fathers.

Even though the U.S. does not offer paid leave, most Americans support the idea. According to the Pew Research Center, Americans widely support paid family and medical leave. Using the Survey of U.S. Adults conducted in the winter of 2016, 82% of participants said mothers should receive paid leave following birth or adoption (Harowitz et al. 2017). For fathers, however, only 69% agreed that they should have paid leave in the same circumstance. The Pew Research Center also points out that Democrats are more supportive of paid leave than Republicans, but both are less supportive of paid leave for fathers.

_Feminism and Abortion_

With the feminist movement gaining momentum, one of the biggest issues at its heels is the abortion debate. Recently, this became a spotlight issue at the Women’s Marches following Trump’s election. This is an issue, not only among feminists, but for those who are unsure if they should self-identify as well. The way that this debate is handled impacts perceptions of feminism. Ziegler (2013) notes that the public discussion of pro-life feminism has been a bitter struggle about who is truly a feminist. One question at hand is whether or not women’s equality can be ensured without access to legal abortion. This is the concern of many pro-choice advocates. Pro-life advocates counter that with the claim that abortion hurts women rather than help them. Ziegler insists that instead of focusing on areas where the two differ, the focus should be on areas that might be agreed on. This could include contraception, equal pay for equal work, or state support for parental leave (2013).

Pollitt (2017) has a slightly different focus. Her main question is whether or not the women’s movement would grow if it gave up its demand for abortion rights. This question is a bit misleading, as she highlights that it most likely would grow, but at a cost that is too high.
Abortion rights are at risk right now and “A political movement that doesn’t defend them and promotes instead some vague notion of ‘unity’ is bound to be weak tea to the women who are the movement’s strongest activists. After all, nothing prevents antiabortion women from being active in other feminist and progressive causes” (Pollitt 2017:6). She concludes by emphasizing that a woman can be antiabortion for herself, but rights and personal ethics are not the same.

As the literature shows, there are many concerns, protests, and issues surrounding women’s rights. Factors such as gender, class, and political ideology, as well as outside influence coming from the media and family’s opinions all seem to weigh in on individuals’ beliefs about feminism. These factors influence the way that they define the term and also sway their willingness to self-identify as feminists.

Methods
In this paper, I examine the perceptions of feminism among freshmen at Lagrange College. My main dependent variable is perceptions of feminism (although I also examine how demographic factors influence ideological beliefs), which I define as the way participants interpret the term feminism. My main independent variables of interest are gender and political ideology because I’m specifically concerned with whether these two factors in college freshmen have a significant impact on their perceptions. I use a mixed methods approach in order to gain a better understanding of how students perceive feminism.

I measure perceptions of feminism through specific survey questions (see survey in Appendix A) with the outcomes being positive, negative, or neutral perceptions. For example, some questions asked were “Do you believe that women are capable of doing well in leadership roles?” and “Do you believe someone can be a feminist and also value men?” I also asked questions to determine where participants stood on male-female relationships in the workplace and in society. Questions include: “Do you believe that men and women have equal rights in terms of pay and
compensation in the workplace?” “Do you believe that men and women have equal rights in terms of opportunities for advancement in the workplace?” and “Overall, do you believe that men and women receive equal treatment?”

Other questions sought to determine participants’ beliefs on what rights should be guaranteed and to whom they should be guaranteed. These were questions about equal rights for men and women, paid maternity and paternity leave, and abortions. Participants were also given questions about what they believe feminists can do. For example, can they hold traditional gender roles, value men, and/or be pro-life? Because of information pointing out the impact of the media and family in relevant literature, I asked if the media and/or family influenced respondent’s views on feminism. I asked if they considered themselves to be feminists towards the end of the survey and why or why not. Finally, I asked them to define feminism and ended the survey with demographic information.

Participants were Lagrange College freshman who were enrolled in a mandatory cornerstone class. The survey was distributed in these cornerstone classes with the permission of the instructors. Out of 12 cornerstone classes, 8 professors agreed to participate. There was a 75% response rate for those who were included. However, because not all professors agreed to participate and because some students were absent the day of the survey, my results are yielded from only 52% of the freshmen class. Still, I have a representative portion as my male to female ratio is close to that of the entire class (46:53 compared to 49:51), and minority students are overrepresented in my sample.

Professors were asked to pass out the surveys at the beginning of class. Students were told not to put their names anywhere on the survey in order to ensure anonymity. Those not wishing to participate simply left the survey blank. The surveys were returned to a folder and I picked them up from each professor’s office. I was not present for any of these classes and did not have any knowledge of the students in each class. Therefore, I had no means of identifying the students.
individually. Informed consent and Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to the start of the survey.

I gave the options “Male”, “Female,” or “Other” to measure my main independent variable, gender. For my second main independent variable, political affiliation, the options given were “Democrat,” “Republican,” “Neither/No preference,” and “Other”. I also controlled for race and social class. I gave the options: “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “Asian,” “Black or African American,” “Hispanic/Latino,” “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander,” “White,” or “Two or more races” for the category of race. I determined class by asking if participants’ parents’ social class was: “Lower class,” “Working class,” “Middle class,” “Upper class,” or “Don’t know.”

I used a purposive sample, or more specifically, a homogeneous sampling technique. Purposive sampling means that I selected the sample based on my own judgement rather than allowing the sample to be chosen at random. A homogeneous sampling technique indicates that I used a sample of people who share a similar characteristic. In this case, that characteristic was respondents’ freshman standing. Though there are limitations to a non-random sample, I feel that the sampling technique I used is essential to my research. I chose this method because I was interested in looking at variance across students at the same class level and because college freshmen often bring in a range of different beliefs.

I used a questionnaire because it allowed me to reach many people in a small amount of time. It was convenient for participants as it required only about ten minutes of their time. Also, because some individuals may find feminism to be a sensitive topic, it allowed them to comfortably answer questions without feeling judged. I analyzed frequencies and ran cross tabulations using Pearson’s Chi Square values to interpret the results.
Results and Discussion
This study aimed to explore whether factors such as gender and political ideology were related to feminist identity. Media, class, and family influence were analyzed as well. I also looked at relationships between beliefs and feminist identity. The topics included equal opportunity, parental leave, and abortion.

Demographics
My sample was 52.9% female, 46.2% male, and 1.0% male transgender. The racial breakdown was 73.3% White, 15.2% Black, 5.7% Two or more races, 3.8% Hispanic, and 1.9% Asian. Most respondents identified as Christian (85.4%), a few (10.7%) identified as having no religious affiliation, and 3.9% answered “Other.” The Christian category included students identifying as Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Non-Denominational, Baptist, Southern Baptist, Pentecostal, Episcopalian, and Lutheran. The “Other” category included students identifying as Mormon and Wiccan, and the “None” category included students who simply said “none,” or who selected Atheist or Agnostic. Students were asked to identify their parents’ social class as well. A large majority (72.4%) said they were Middle Class, 13.3% identified as Upper Class, another 13.3% identified as Working Class and 1.0% answered “Don’t know.” About half of the students (52.4%) identified as Republicans, 30.5% answered “Neither/no preference,” and 17.1% identified as Democrats.

Descriptive Statistics
On the first survey question, “Do you believe that men and women have equal rights in terms of pay and compensation in the workplace?” 41.4% said yes and 58.7% said no. This is important because it indicates that many respondents believe that men and women already have equal rights. On the next question, “Do you believe that men and women have equal rights in terms of opportunities for advancement in the workplace?” 51.9% of students said yes and 48.1% said no. These results are consistent with previous research that shows that a gender gap is still present.
(Miller 2017) but most employees do not believe a wage gap is present in their workplace (Glassdoor 2016).

Though about half of the students said that women did not have equal opportunities in the workplace, 97.1% said they believed women were capable of doing well in leadership roles. In a question about equal treatment overall, 40.4% of students said men and women received equal treatment, 56.7% believed men received better treatment, and 2.9% believed women received better treatment, but most respondents agreed (95.2%) that men and women should be guaranteed equal rights. Ideally, because feminism is about guaranteeing the rights that 95% of students agreed men and women should have, around 95% of the sample should be feminists. Ironically, this is not the case. In fact, 65.7% do not consider themselves to be feminists. This leaves only 34.3% of the sample identifying as feminists compared to 95.2% who agree with the basic premise of the movement.

Following the questions about equal opportunity, I asked about parental leave. It is made clear in previous literature that this is an issue for both men and women in the United States (Arellano 2015; Livingston 2016). The question was “Do you believe that women should receive at least three months paid maternity leave?” and there was an identical question asking about men. For maternity leave, 94.3% said yes. However, only 61.5% believed men should receive the same amount of paid time off for paternity leave. This is consistent with the literature (Harowitz et al. 2017), which found that 82% supported maternity leave while only 69% supported paternity leave. The irony here is that respondents said men and women should have equal rights, but when presented with a question about giving men the same opportunity that they felt women should have, 32.8% no longer seemed to hold their stance on equal rights.

Abortion is another issue that many people seem to disagree on (Ziegler 2013; Pollitt 2017). In my survey I asked, “Do you believe that women should have the right to choose whether or not to have abortions?” 42.3% of participants said yes, 37.5% said no, and 20.2% said yes, under specific circumstances. When asked if they believed that someone could be a feminist and also

Citations Journal of Undergraduate Research
© May 2017, Vol. 14
believe that abortions should be illegal (also known as being “pro-life”), a large majority (86%) said yes. I expected these results to show the opposite of what they did. Much of the media is swaying to the other side. According to Zeigler (2013), for pro-choice advocates, it is a question of whether women’s equality can be ensured without access to legal abortion. The Women’s March platform confirmed that they stand for open access to safe, legal, and affordable abortion. Even the Supreme Court recently struck down the Texas abortion restrictions, which some interpreted as a pro-choice action.

Respondents also believed that someone could be a feminist and value men (89.3%) in contrast to the way the media often portrays feminists. However, when asked if someone could be a feminist and hold traditional gender roles, only 65.4% said yes. To help them understand what was meant by “traditional gender roles,” they were given the examples: “Men do yardwork and women do housework,” and “Men make the money and women raise the kids.” From the responses to these three questions alone, it would seem that students associate feminism with being opposed to traditional gender roles more so than they associate it with things like hating men or believing women should be able to have abortions.

Finally, students were questioned about outside influences that might have shaped their views. The first question was “Does the media (television, news, social media sites, magazines, etc.) affect your views on feminism?” About half of the participants said no (52.4%), 33.0% said the media had a negative effect, 12.6% said it had a positive effect, and though it was not listed as an answer choice, 2.0% argued that it had both a positive and negative impact. Although media coverage on feminism has expanded, many students are still lacking a basic understanding of its roots (Maurer 2016), so I expected a larger percentage to say that the media had a negative effect. Still, it is not too surprising because feminism has been repositioned as a cool, fun, accessible identity that anyone can take on (Zeisler 2016).

In addition to the media, family is an outside influence that could be shaping students’ views. Previous research shows that this is becoming less true and younger women are holding more liberal ideologies than their mothers and grandmothers (Bettencourt et al. 2011). In my study, the
results were split. 42.3% believed their families have influenced their opinions on feminism while 57.7% do not.

Cross Tabulations
I predicted that gender and political ideology would have a significant impact on feminist identity. More specifically, I hypothesized that females and democrats would be more likely to identify as feminists. The results revealed that there was a significant difference for both characteristics. As shown in Figure One in Appendix B, Republicans were significantly less likely than Democrats and those with no political affiliation to identify as feminists (p < .005) and the association was strong (φc: .32). Additionally, women were significantly more likely than men to identify as feminist (p < .061), however, most women and men do not consider themselves to be feminists (Figure Two, Appendix B). This association was moderate (φc: .24).

I asked students, in an open-ended question, to define the term feminism so that I could better understand their perception of feminism. As expected, those who identified as feminists gave positive definitions along the lines of “The belief that women should have equal rights and the same opportunities as men.” None of the feminists gave negative definitions. Surprisingly, the majority (63.5%) of the non-feminists gave positive definitions. Only 36.5% gave negative definitions such as “Women being too extreme about not having equal rights. Suck it up and work like a man if you have to,” and “The belief that women deserve more just because they are women,” among others. The cross tabulation results (Figure Three, Appendix B) showed that feminists were significantly more likely to give positive definitions (p < .000) and the association was strong (Φ: .43). The opposite was true of Republicans (p < .010 and φc: .32).

Based on Kates (1989) and Harlan (1994) I anticipated class having some association with feminist identity, but it did not (φc: .03) and it was insignificant (p < .956). The literature on feminism and abortion lead me to believe that feminists would be more likely to be “pro-choice.” As shown in Figure Four (Appendix B), non-feminists were significantly less likely to be “pro-choice” (p < .001) and the association was strong (Φ:.37). I also hypothesized that Democrats
would be more supportive of the right to choose. The results showed that of those who did not support the right to choose, Republicans made up 82% and the other 18% consisted of those who had no party affiliation (p < .000) and the association was strong (φc: .39). My hypothesis was correct. All Democrats either said “yes” or “yes, in some situations.”

Party affiliation also had an impact on views on opportunity for advancement. As displayed in Figures Five and Six (Appendix B), Democrats were significantly more likely than Republicans to believe that men and women do not have equal rights in terms of opportunities for advancement in the workplace (p < .004) and the association was strong (φc: .33). Additionally, feminists were significantly more likely than non-feminists to believe that men and women do not have equal rights (p < .000) with a strong association (Φ: .45).

**Conclusion and Implications**

Feminist theory is concerned with the lack of equality for women and how this inequality is structured at the macro and micro levels. The objective is equal rights for women. As a society, we will not meet this objective if the majority does not share this vision. Because of this, it is important to know how people perceive feminist ideals.

In addition to the definitions students provided showing their biases for or against feminism, I asked them to select all the reasons they were or were not feminists. All of those who were selected “I believe that women and men do not have equal rights but they should.” About half (55.4%) of non-feminists selected “I believe that men and women already have equal rights,” and 53.9% (students could select as many reasons as they chose) selected “Feminists are too extreme.”

This tells us that non-feminists are choosing not to self-identify because they do not think that gender inequality exists. In turn, they do not believe that women’s rights need to be advocated for. Alternatively, respondents may see gender inequality but are unwilling to self-identify as feminists because they feel that all feminists are radical. Knowing this, it could be beneficial for
feminists to share personal experiences of inequality when discussing it with others rather than using statistics. A practical implication is for feminists to combat the negative definitions by explaining the basic meaning of the term and letting others know that all feminists are not radical man-haters. Otherwise, this false definition continues to keep people from joining the movement. I believe the most effective policy change to combat this would be an educational one. If students were taught more about inequality from the start, they would be more empathetic and more prepared to enter the workforce surrounded by people different from themselves.

References


perceptions-dont-match-reality-7-countries-majority-employed-adults-men-women-company-paid-equally/).


Ziesler, Andi. 2016. We Were Feminists Once: From Riot Grrrl to CoverGirl®, the Buying and Selling of a Political Movement. New York: PublicAffairs.
APPENDIX A: SURVEY

Instructions: Check one box for each question.

1. Do you believe that men and women have equal rights in terms of pay and compensation in the workplace?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Do you believe that men and women have equal rights in terms of opportunities for advancement in the workplace?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Do you believe that women are capable of doing well in leadership roles?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Overall, do you believe that men and women receive equal treatment?
   - Yes
   - No, I believe that men receive better treatment.
   - No, I believe that women receive better treatment.

5. Do you believe that men and women should be guaranteed equal rights?
   - Yes
   - No
6. Do you believe women should receive at least three months paid maternity leave?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Do you believe men should receive at least three months paid paternity leave?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Do you believe that women should have the right to choose whether or not to have abortions?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Other/Comments (Please explain in the space below):

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

9. Do you believe that someone can be a feminist and also believe that abortions should be illegal?
   - Yes, someone can be feminist and believe that abortions should be illegal.
   - No, someone must either be a feminist or believe that abortions should be illegal.
   - Other/Comments (Please explain in the space below):

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
10. Traditional gender roles include thoughts such as “Men do yardwork and women do housework” and “Men make the money and women raise the kids.” That being said, do you believe that someone can be a feminist and also hold traditional gender roles?

☐ Yes, someone can be feminist and hold traditional gender roles.

☐ No, someone must either be feminist or hold traditional gender roles.

11. Do you believe that someone can be feminist and also value men?

☐ Yes, feminists can value men.

☐ No, feminists cannot value men.

Instructions: Select one answer. Use the space provided to give additional information.

12. Does the media (television, news, social media sites, magazines, etc.) affect your views on feminism?

☐ Yes, the media has a positive effect on my views on feminism

☐ Yes, the media has a negative effect on my views on feminism

☐ No, the media does not affect my views on feminism

In more detail, please explain your answer below.

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

13. Do you believe your family has influenced your opinion on feminism?

☐ Yes

☐ No
In more detail, please explain your answer below.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

14. Do you consider yourself to be a feminist? (If yes, skip to question 16)
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

Instructions: Select all that apply. Use the space provided to give additional information.

15. If you do not identify as feminist, select the reasons why you do not. (Once answered, skip to question 17)
   ☐ I believe that men and women already have equal rights
   ☐ Feminists are too extreme
   ☐ Feminists are anti-men
   ☐ I am a man so I cannot be feminist
   ☐ I have been taught that feminism is bad
   ☐ Other (Please explain using the space below):

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

16. If you do identify as feminist, select the reasons why you do.
   ☐ I believe that women and men do not have equal rights but they should
   ☐ I am a woman so I must be a feminist
   ☐ I hold the same values that I believe feminists hold
   ☐ I have been taught that feminism is good
17. How do you define feminism?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Instructions: Please select one option.

18. What is your gender?
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female
   ☐ Other: ________________

19. What is your parents’ social class?
   ☐ Lower class
   ☐ Working class
   ☐ Middle class
   ☐ Upper class
   ☐ Don’t know

20. What is your political orientation?
   ☐ Democrat
   ☐ Republican
21. **What is your race/ethnicity?**

- [ ] Neither/No preference
- [ ] Other: ________________

- [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native
- [ ] Asian
- [ ] Black or African American
- [ ] Hispanic/Latino
- [ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- [ ] White
- [ ] Two or more races

22. **What is your religion?**

- [ ] Protestant
- [ ] Catholic
☐ Orthodox Christian
☐ Mormon
☐ Jehovah’s Witness
☐ Jewish
☐ Muslim
☐ Buddhist
☐ Hindu
☐ Atheist
☐ Agnostic
☐ None
☐ Other: ____________________________
Figure One: Feminist Identity by Party Affiliation

![Bar chart showing percent identifying as Feminist by Party Affiliation]

- Democrats: 62.50%
- Republicans: 21.15%
- Neither/No preference: 21.15%
- Non-Feminist: 78.85%

Figure Two: Feminist Identity by Gender
Figure Three: Perceptions (Based on Definitions) of Feminism by Feminist Identity

- **Feminist Identity by Gender**
  - Feminist: 23.91% Males, 42.31% Females, 100% Male Transgender
  - Non-Feminist: 76.09% Males, 57.69% Females, 0% Male Transgender

- **Perceptions of Feminism by Feminist Identity**
  - Feminists: 100.00% Positive Perception
  - Non-feminists: 0.00% Positive Perception, 36.50% Negative Perception

---

Citations Journal of Undergraduate Research
© May 2017, Vol. 14
Figure Four: Pro-Choice Beliefs by Feminist Identity

![Pro-Choice Beliefs by Feminist Identity](chart)

Figure Five: Views on Opportunity for Advancement Based on Political Orientation
Figure Six: Views of Opportunity for Advancement Based on Feminist Identity

The bar charts illustrate the percentage of respondents holding beliefs about opportunity for advancement, categorized by political orientation and feminist identity.

**Political Orientation**
- Democrats: 16.67% for equal opportunity, 83.33% for no equal opportunity.
- Republicans: 57.41% for equal opportunity, 42.59% for no equal opportunity.
- Neither/No preference: 62.50% for equal opportunity, 38% for no equal opportunity.

**Feminist Identity**
- Feminists: 23.53% for equal opportunity, 76.47% for no equal opportunity.
- Non-feminists: 70.31% for equal opportunity, 29.69% for no equal opportunity.