



Exploring the Relationship Between Conversation Using #MeToo and University Harassment Policies

Julianne Zech, Fransiska Dale, Lisa Singh, Jamillah Williams, Naomi Mezey

Georgetown University, University of Maryland



Introduction

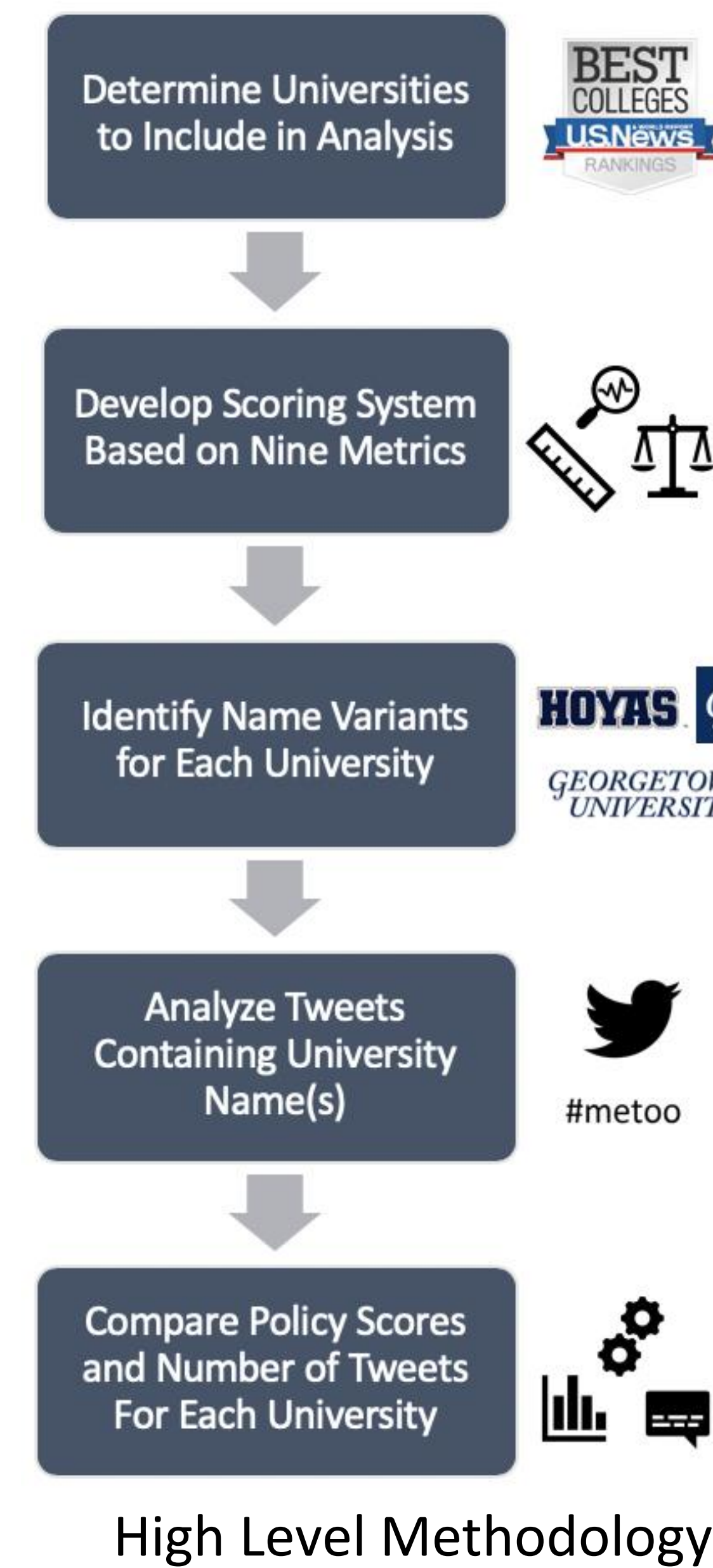
Motivation

- The #MeToo Twitter hashtag went viral in October 2017 and became a global movement highlighting the prevalence of sexual misconduct
- This poster presents a case study to understand if a relationship exists between universities in the #MeToo online Twitter conversation and (a) policies universities have implemented with regards to sexual misconduct, and (b) the role universities are playing to provide resources

Contributions

- Discern to what extent Twitter users are discussing incidents or experiences that have occurred at universities and categorize the content of these dialogues
- Analyze the types of policies and resources universities have about sexual harassment and misconduct
- Determine whether a relationship exists between the amount of discussion about a university using #MeToo and the clarity and accessibility of the university's sexual misconduct policy on their website and online resources
- Use accessibility and clarity of the policies and resources as a proxy for attentiveness to the this issue

Methodology



University Name Variant Lists

- Since Twitter users commonly use abbreviations and acronyms, counting tweets that contain the official school name likely provides an underestimate of the number of tweets in which each school is mentioned
- We created two lists of names for each of the 57 universities in our analysis: the first contains only the official name and the second contains informal name variants derived from two Wikipedia lexicons, one containing colloquial names and the other sports team nicknames



List 1: Official University Names
Michigan State University
University of California Los Angeles
Claremont McKenna College
Howard University

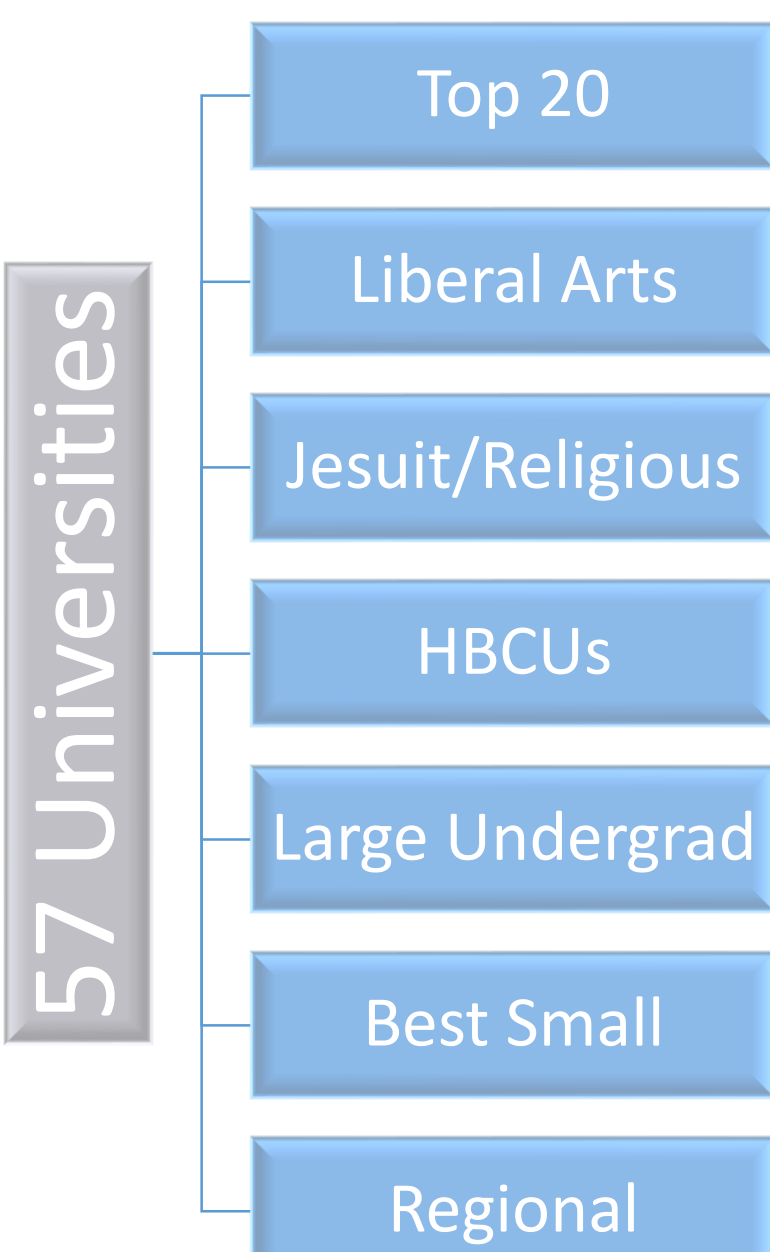
List 2: University Name Variants
Michigan State, MSU, Spartans
UCLA, Bruins
Claremont, CMC, Athenas
Howard, Bison

Metrics (Scored from 0 to 5)

Harassment and sexual misconduct policy in student handbook
Harassment and sexual misconduct policy in faculty handbook
Training and/or tutorials for new students
Sexual misconduct policies are detailed and specific
Policies and resources are easy to find from Homepage
Multiple resources provided for help and support
University conducted a recent internal review
An on-campus office exists for gender-based misconduct
Clearly delineated sanctions for policy violations

University Policy Metrics

- Universities were selected from 7 categories to ensure reasonable diversity
- Each university was assigned a score from 0 to 5 for each metric and an overall letter grade based on an evaluation of the official policies and website



Results

#MeToo and Universities

- When only full names were used, universities in our sample were rarely mentioned
- 30% of the universities were not mentioned at all and only 4 were mentioned more than 100 times (Figure 1)
- We analyzed the content of tweets where full names were used (Figure 2) and found that nearly 17% were experiences
- When using the name variants and the mascot, the numbers increased substantially (Figure 3): 34% of the universities were mentioned at least 1,000 times

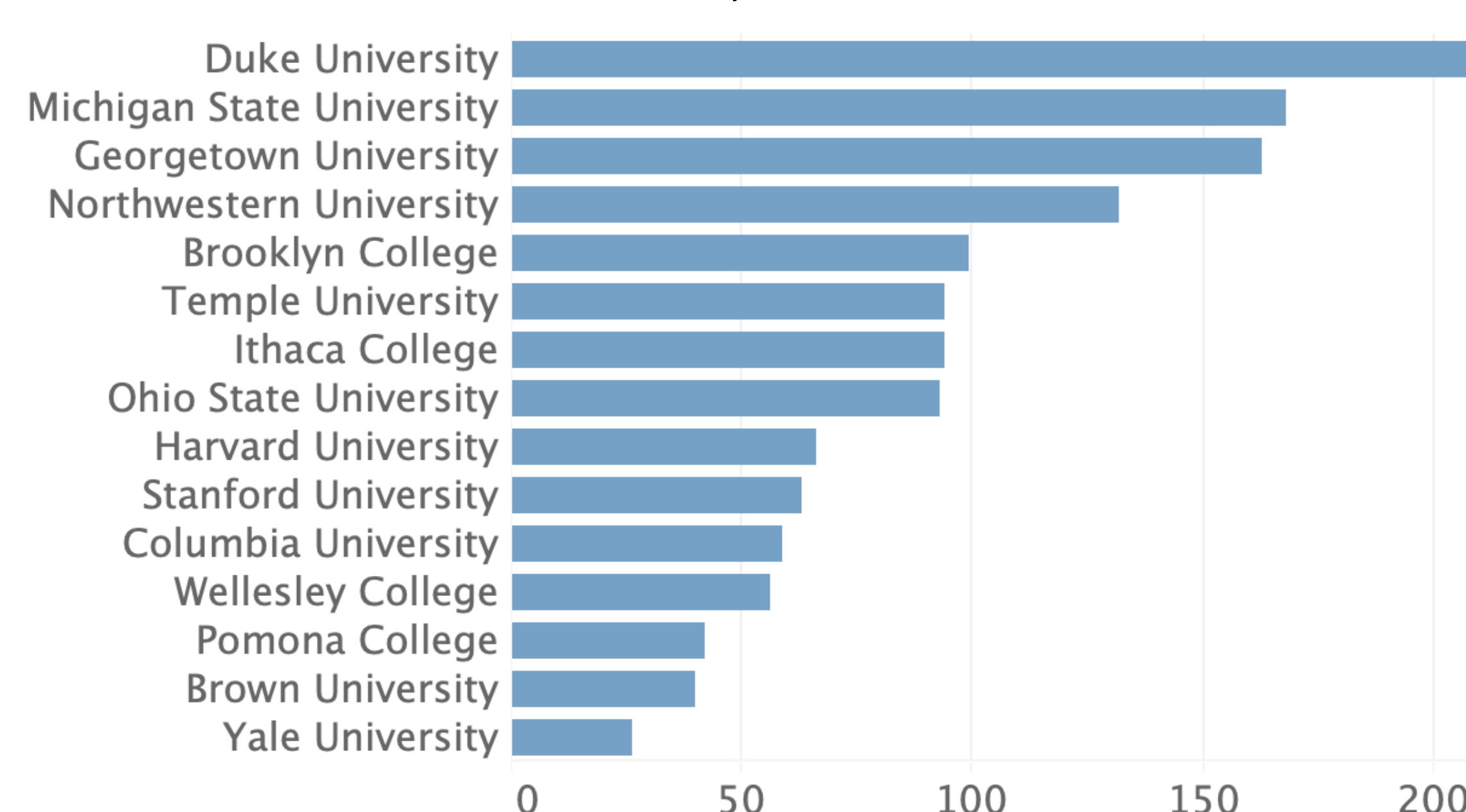


Figure 1: Universities with Official Names Mentioned in 20+ Tweets

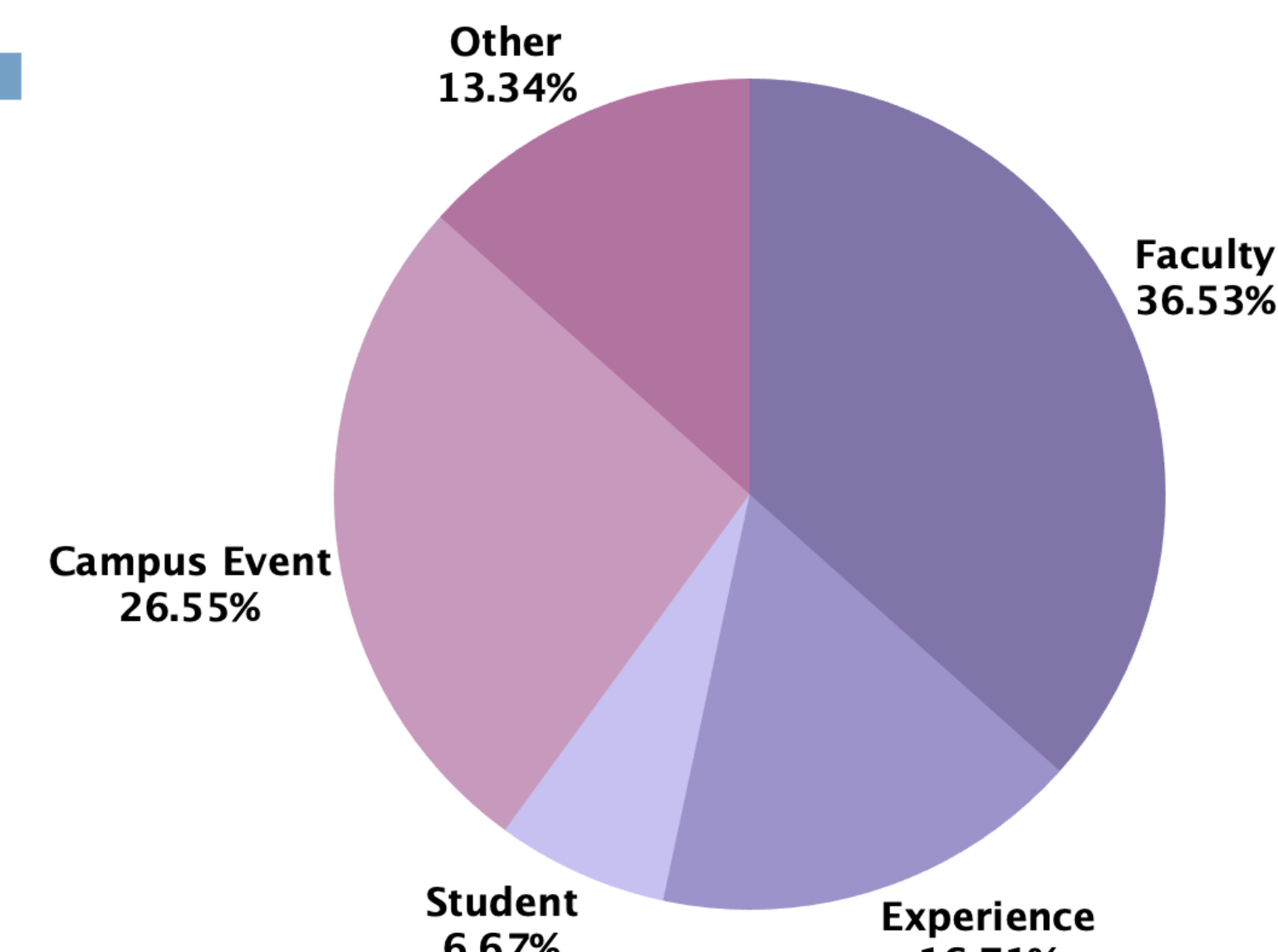


Figure 2: Content of #MeToo Tweets that Mention University Official Names

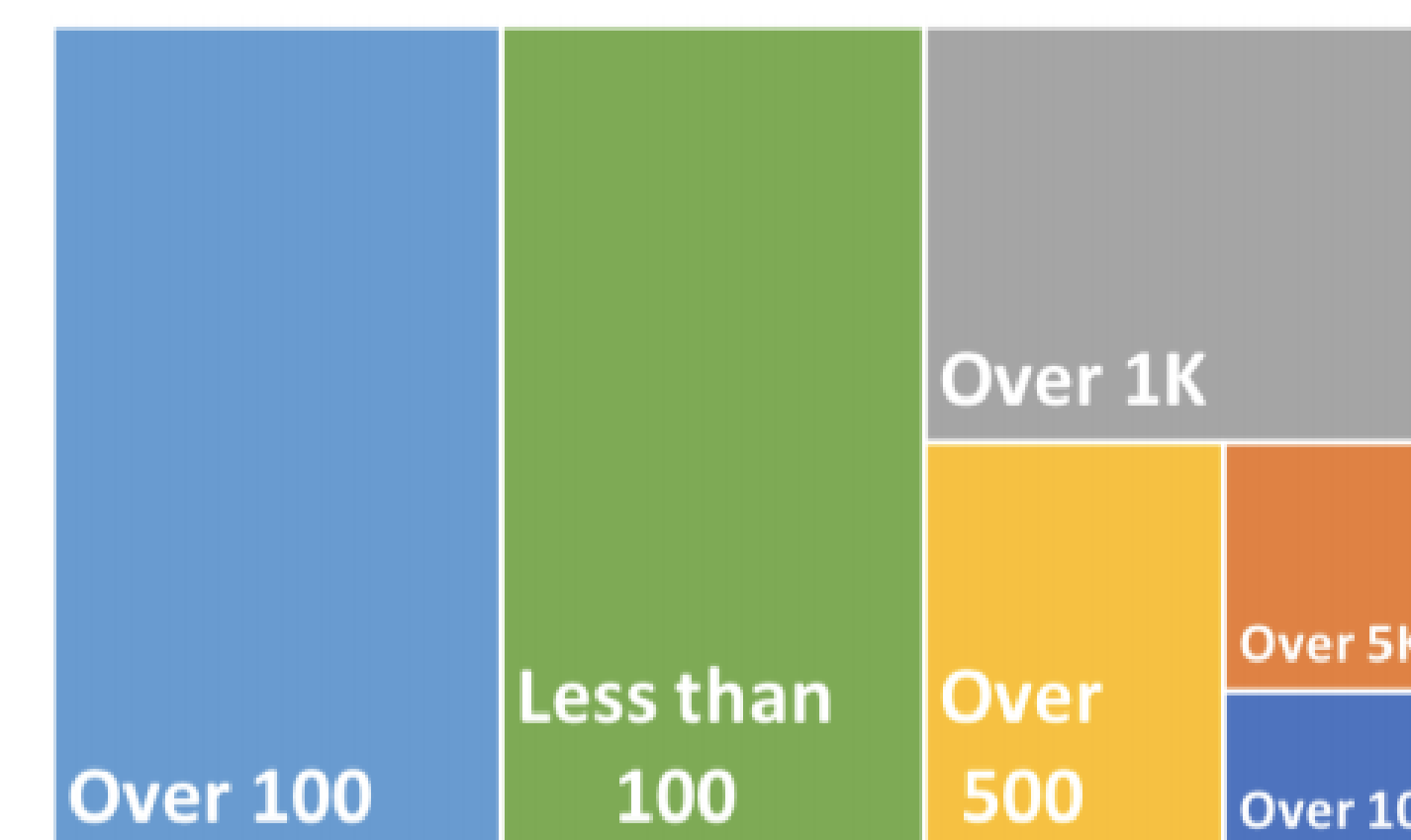


Figure 3: Proportions of Universities with Different Total Name Variant Mentions

Policy Analysis

- The majority of the 57 universities had grades in the A (90 - 100%) and B (80 - 89%) range (Figure 4)
- Only one university had a failing grade (<60%)
- The lowest overall metric across our sample was the inclusion of sexual misconduct information in the faculty handbook (Figure 5)



Figure 4: Distribution of University Grades for Sexual Misconduct Policies and Resources

Average Metric Score (out of 5)	
On-Campus Office	4.7
Specific Policies	4.7
Resources	4.6
Access from Homepage	4.2
Training/Tutorials	4.2
Sanctions	4.1
Student Handbook	4.0
Internal Review	3.5
Faculty Handbook	3.4

Figure 5: Average Metric Scores for all Universities in Sample

Data

- All tweets in the first year of the #MeToo Twitter stream from the Twitter Streaming API from October 1, 2017 to October 10, 2018
- Total volume of approximately 11.2 million tweets posted by 3.1 million accounts

Examples of Approximate Experience and Non-Experience Tweets

Experience

"I was harassed on campus #MeToo."

Non-Experience

"The #metoo movement is spreading 🙌🏻"

Experience

"I just listened to @TaranaBurke share her experience of assault. No words 🙄🙄 #metoo"

Non-Experience

"the UN reports that 23% of female undergraduate university students reported having experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct in a survey across 27 universities in the US in 2015 #metoo"

Conclusions

- Initial results do not show a clear relationship between quality of university policies shared online and amount of online discussion
- US universities are not a significant part of the #MeToo conversation
- Not all stories and experiences go viral, and many of those that do not still need discussion and analysis

Ongoing Work

- Classifying experience and non-experience tweets
- Creating online portal with rating system available for more universities
- Mapping events in the #MeToo movement, such as a popular protest or the arrest of a new high-profile abuser, to tweet volumes of daily experience and non-experience tweets to determine which types of events prompt experience-sharing
- Understanding the international #MeToo movement
- Comparing the types of experiences shared online to the types filed in EEOC complaints

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Massive Data Institute (MDI) and the Gender*Justice Initiative (G*JI) at Georgetown University for supporting this project.

