



afa ORACLE

THE RESEARCH JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY | SORORITY ADVISORS

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 2, FALL 2018

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This study assessed students' attitudes towards fraternity and sorority intake processes at a regional Mid-Atlantic University (MU) to gain an understanding of overall attitudes and discern whether students distinguish differences between hazing and initiation procedures. Study results indicated that students understand the general purpose of initiation and the dangers of hazing; however, a general understanding may not translate to an understanding of the specific activities involved in new member initiation processes. Study results specified differences in understanding initiation and hazing are greatest by gender and fraternity/sorority council. Implications for higher education research and student affairs practice are discussed.

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Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors advances the study of college fraternities and sororities through a peer reviewed academic journal promoting scholarly discourse among partners invested in the college fraternal movement. The vision of *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors* is to serve as the premier forum for academic discourse and scholarly inquiry regarding the college fraternity and sorority movement.

Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors is published biannually. Past issues of *Oracle* are available on the AFA website. The ISSN is 2165-785.

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SUBMISSIONS:

Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors accepts submissions focused on articulating research involving fraternity and sorority members at the collegiate, alumni, inter/national organization, and volunteer advisory levels. Manuscripts should be written for the student affairs generalist who has broad responsibility for educational leadership, policy, staff development, and management. Articles on specialized topics should provide the generalist with an understanding of the importance of the program to student affairs overall and fraternity/sorority advising specifically.

Research articles for *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors* should stress the underlying issues or problems that stimulated the research; treat the methodology concisely; and, most importantly, offer a full discussion of results, implications, and conclusions. In the belief that AFA readers have much to learn from one another, we also encourage the submission of thoughtful, documented essays or historical perspectives.

Visit www.afa1976.org for more detailed submission guidelines.

LESSONS FROM TEAM SCIENCE

JAMES P. BARBER, EDITOR

As I write this letter, I'm in Wachapreague, on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, serving as a faculty coach for a research workshop focused on Team Science¹, a field that studies how to bring together scientists from different disciplines to solve complex problems. For three days, I have the pleasure of facilitating a group of graduate students from marine science, education, engineering, law, architecture, and geology (among others) and as they think about coastal resilience in this part of the world.

This may seem like a far cry from fraternity/sorority affairs, but I cannot stop thinking about the parallels to our field. The foundation of Team Science is an assumption that transdisciplinary teams, when trained to work together effectively, develop more innovative solutions to big problems than teams comprised of members from the same discipline. This is easier said than done, as working across disciplines requires learning new methodologies, new frameworks, and new language. Communication is paramount in creating these effective teams; without clear, jargon-free explanations, these diverse groups would struggle to share information and ideas.

We see some of the same patterns in working with fraternities and sororities. We need individuals from different “disciplines” to solve our most complex problems. Chapters that are highly successful have support from many stakeholders: parents, alums, faculty, headquarters staff, university administrators, and local community members. Often the representatives of these support groups cross boundaries of gender, race, and affiliation. Volunteers and advisors may not fit with the historical identities of the chapter.

However, often such diverse groups do not come together in support of a fraternity or sorority because they cannot communicate effectively. Some stakeholders may not want to let go of their old frameworks to envision new approaches to fraternity. Others may not understand what chapters expect from supporters because the language of fraternal organizations, steeped in Greek letters and acronyms is not welcoming to outsiders. Without clear communication across boundaries, broad coalitions to support and innovate fraternities and sororities never materialize.

The authors in this edition of *Oracle* offer several perspectives on the role of clear communication in working across boundaries in fraternity/sorority affairs. Zachary Taylor and Arianne McArdle examined over 47,000 posts from fraternity and sorority headquarters on the social media platform Twitter to learn about how and what national organizations communicate using Twitter. Lucas Schalewski, Jamie Utt, and Bryant Valencia strategized how to improve the quality of survey data on fraternity men by screening out those who don't communicate truthfully on survey instruments. S. Brian Joyce examined how Whiteness is communicated and perpetuated in fraternity systems through the recruitment process. Finally, Keith Tingley, Loni Crumb, Shelly Hoover-Plonk, Wes Hill, and Crystal R. Chambers assessed undergraduates' attitudes about initiation and hazing practices, and identified a lack of clarity between those terms among some demographics.

Take in the findings from these studies and consider how communication plays a role in the teams you create in fraternity/sorority life. Changing the way we communicate may enable us to build more effective, more diverse teams to address the complex problems of the fraternal movement.

¹For more on Team Science, see *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Team Science*, edited by Nancy J. Cooke and Margaret L. Hilton, <https://doi.org/10.17226/19007>

TWEETING IN GREEK: HOW NATIONAL FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES USE TWITTER

ZACHARY TAYLOR AND ARIANNE McARDLE,
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

No extant research examines fraternity and sorority use of social media. This study examines official Twitter accounts of national fraternities and sororities (n=135) and their Twitter usage from July 2016 - July 2017 (n=47,705 tweets). Findings reveal fraternities are less likely to use hashtags, user tags, and URLs to engage their followers than sororities, while both fraternities and sororities rarely release official statements promoting positive behavior of their members or condemning negative behavior of their members, potentially contributing to a sense of “constant media scrutiny” suffered by Greek organizations (Kingkade, 2015). Implications for advisors and future research are addressed.

A large body of research has demonstrated the positive social, economic, and academic benefits of fraternity and sorority membership (Nelson et al., 2006; Pike, 2000; Walker, Martin, & Hussey, 2015). However, an equally large body of research has illustrated the many negative perceptions of fraternity and sorority membership (Grasgreen, 2012; Harris & Harper, 2014; Wells & Corts, 2008), including fraternity- or sorority-related social problems such as alcohol abuse (Soule, Barnett, & Moorhouse, 2015), hazing (Cimino, 2016), eating disorders and poor body image (Averett, Terrizzi, & Wang, 2017), and irresponsible or lewd on- and off-campus behavior (Hevel, Martin, & Pascarella, 2014). As a result, national-level fraternity and sorority organizations have mobilized their public relations and communications offices to mitigate the damage of such research and negative public perception.

For instance, according to the North-American Interfraternity Conference (2017), fraternity chapters' public relations units have charged themselves with sophisticated communication efforts to “counteract the popularized social media platforms” and “constant media scrutiny” which “damages the reputation of fraternities and drowns out fraternities' unified powerful voice” (Kingkade, 2015). Ultimately, in a

reaction to this sense of “constant media scrutiny” and the negative public perception of fraternity chapters and members, national Greek organizations have formally pledged to counteract this negative public perception. However, no extant research exists that examines how fraternities—or sororities—at the national or local level use perhaps the most efficient and effective tools to communicate directly with the public: social media outlets, namely Twitter, which longitudinal research has supported is an especially effective medium for users to share news instantly with a large, global audience (Al-Rawi, 2017; Armstrong & Gao, 2010; Bruns & Burgess, 2012).

Since its inception in the March 2006, Twitter has amassed more than 328 million unique daily users with over 1 billion unique visits monthly to sites with embedded Tweets (Twitter Inc., 2017). For colleges and universities, Twitter use is nearly universal, as countless colleges and universities across institutions types have been using Twitter (Kimmons, Veletsianos, & Woodward, 2017) since its introduction to the public, recognizing Twitter's ability to efficiently and effectively communicate with a wide variety of educational stakeholders and the general public. However, fraternity and sorority use of social media remains a large, important gap in

the literature.

Although social media wields incredible social currency and communicative ability, it is unclear how fraternities and sororities use these technologies, and furthermore, it is unknown whether fraternities and sororities use these technologies to release formal statements to communicate positive events and happenings or comment upon and condemn negative occurrences, thus potentially improving their public perception(s). Therefore, this study examines the official Twitter accounts of 135 national fraternities and sororities associated with six of the largest umbrella organizations in the United States: the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO), National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC), National APIDA Panhellenic Association (NAPA), and the North American Inter-Fraternity Conference (NIC). To fill the gap in the research, this study answers three questions pertinent to the public relations efforts of fraternities and sororities across the United States:

- 1.) Do national fraternities and sororities use Twitter?
- 2.) What types of information do national fraternities and sororities share on Twitter?
- 3.) Do these organizations use Twitter to promote and advertise positive behavior and/or condemn negative behavior performed by fraternities and sororities, thus working to improve their public perception?
- 4.) Do these organizations use hashtags, user tags, and URLs to engage and grow their follower base to communicate with a larger segment of the public?

Entering the study, it is our hypothesis that national fraternities and sororities do not use social media—primarily Twitter—to its utmost capability to promote a fraternity's or sorority's overall positive image and impact on their local or national community. Furthermore, as the

researchers of this study have experience in fraternity and sorority membership and local chapter leadership, we hypothesize that national organizations primarily use social media to share internal news, including highlighting prominent alumni, bestowing organizational awards, and announcing memorials for alumni who have passed away, as were the practices in our prior experiences at the chapter level.

The findings of this study will greatly inform public relations and communications practices as to how fraternities and sororities and their advisors can positively leverage the power of social media to connect with a much larger audience and share the many good deeds and positive behaviors exhibited by fraternities and sororities across the country.

Literature Review

Because this study is the first to examine fraternity and sorority use of social media, this literature review will focus on how various higher education stakeholders use social media and how public and private organizations use social media to promote or comment upon organization-specific events and stories, both positive and negative. Furthermore, these literature reviews are not meant to be exhaustive; the amount of research focused on social media in higher education is voluminous and exceeds the purpose of this study. Instead, these reviews highlight trends in higher education social media use—primarily Twitter—and how social media can be leveraged by nonprofit organizations to promote organization-specific news and initiatives.

Social Media and Higher Education

Since Twitter was founded in 2006, research in higher education has focused primarily on its usage by three groups of educational stakeholders: students, faculty, and institutional marketing and communications professionals.

Students. Jacquemin, Smelser, and Bernot (2014) found college students prefer to use

Twitter for socializing rather than academic purposes, with graduate students demonstrating a strong, negative perception of Twitter's ability to facilitate conducive classroom discussions. However, Tiernan (2014) found that when used during lectures to elicit responses to questions, Twitter was an effective learning tool that for shy, introverted college students to share their opinions and ideas, with related studies demonstrating the positive effects of Twitter usage and academic engagement (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011). Social media also plays a crucial role in college student development, as Dabbagh and Kintsantas (2012) learned Twitter has a capacity to bolster a student's sense of self-regulated learning. Yet, Twitter has also been shown to facilitate racialized microaggressions and race-driven hostility that perpetuates the negative experiences of marginalized populations on college campuses across the country (Gin, Martínez-Alemán, Rowan-Kenyon, & Hottell, 2017), as well as serve as a platform for college students to make inappropriate, immature references to drugs and alcohol (Moreno, Arseniev-Koehler, Litt, & Christakis, 2016).

Faculty. Studies have shown that faculty are less likely to incorporate social media—including Twitter—into their courses due to a lack of training on how to do so (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008), and that faculty are likely to decline social media friend requests from students because of the dangers of crossing unprofessional or inappropriate boundaries (Metzger, Finley, Ullrich, & McAuley, 2010). Many faculty also report there being too many cultural, pedagogical, and/or institutional restraints in an academic setting to integrate Twitter and other social media into their curricula and classrooms (Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

Faculty also tend to prefer traditional modes of communication (email and office visits) over Twitter, as extant research finds that a majority of faculty members have no plans to incorporate social media—including Twitter—into their classes, yet faculty members and instructors who

did use Twitter in their classes reported a having a positive experience (Jacquemin, Smelser, & Bernot, 2014). Furthermore, Veletsianos' (2012) study found that higher education scholars (n=45) frequently and primarily use Twitter to share information related to their professional interests and about their students and courses, with a later study finding that higher education scholars (n=237) participation on Twitter varies wildly from person to person and professors are more likely to use Twitter as a social justice and personal scholarship platform than graduate students who primarily share information relevant to the graduate student experience (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2016).

Institutional marketing and communications professionals. Kimmons, Veletsianos, and Woodward's (2017) study of institutional use of Twitter is largest and most recent examination of the medium, comprising 2,411 unique Twitter accounts and over 5.7 million tweets of U.S. institutions of higher education. Their study found that a majority of institutions of higher education use Twitter to disseminate information instead of eliciting action, while preferring to refer users and followers to internally-hosted web content, such as tweeting links to an institution's .edu website. Like U.S. institutions, Canadian public institutions of higher education also use Twitter primarily as a tool to share institutional news and broadcast positive representations of institutional life, making it difficult for prospective students and faculty to accurately assess campus culture and climate (Veletsianos, Kimmons, Shaw, Pasquini, & Woodward, 2017).

An examination of elite institutions of higher education and their Twitter use found that structural relationships and geographic location had a larger impact on network size and popularity than an institution's global ranking, speaking to the notion that institutions ought to prioritize Twitter content and the attracting of engaged audiences to ensure the success of their social media initiatives (Shields, 2016). Furthermore, related studies suggest that Twitter

is especially effective in recruiting students if institutional Twitter use generates a large number of followers, yet successful institutional use of Twitter is interpersonal and interactive, portraying an image of a popular but socially-accessible institution of higher education (Rutter, Roper, & Lettice, 2016).

Social Media as a Nonprofit Public Relations Tool

Because national fraternity and sorority organizations are not institutions of higher education but are large, nonprofit, 501(c) organizations, it is important to understand how these types of organizations use social media to share news with internal and external stakeholders and promote the organization's culture and societal impact.

Echoing much of the research focused on Twitter use by institutions of higher education, recent studies suggest that large nonprofit organizations also use Twitter primarily as an organizational newsfeed instead of engaging users on a personal level to build social networks and maximize the effectiveness of the medium (Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011). Similarly, a study focusing on nonprofit human services organizations in a six county area surrounding New York City found that nonprofits primarily used Twitter to communicate with current constituencies, market organizational events and activities, and raise community awareness of the organization (Campbell, Lambright, & Wells, 2014). However, emerging bodies of research suggest that non-profit organizations have demonstrated greater organizational interaction through Twitter versus traditional forms of media such as organizational websites, television commercials, and print media, suggesting that growing a nonprofit's online presence should be prioritized on social media over other outlets (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Focusing on the impact of nonprofit organization social media use as it pertains to

social justice and change, Guo and Saxton (2014) found that many nonprofit tweets serve primarily two purposes: calling stakeholders to action and building community around a particular issue relevant to the community. More particularly, effective nonprofit tweets use content-relevant hyperlinks and hashtags to reach a wider audience on Twitter, while simultaneously composing tweets that specifically engage a nonprofit's core constituency and follower base:

Save for the public education and coalition-building tactics, the ultimate advocacy goal involves mobilizing supporters. At this stage, advocacy is mainly a mobilizational practice, with the organization's tweets being used to facilitate public events, direct action, and grassroots lobbying, though perhaps to a more limited extent than might be expected. Tools such as hyperlinks and hashtags are frequently used in conjunction with mobilizational messages at this stage. (p. 73)

Analyzing these uses of hyperlinks and hashtags produced what the researchers defined as a "three-stage pyramid model of social media-based advocacy: reaching out to people, keeping the flame alive, and stepping up to action" (p. 74). Most relevant to national fraternity and sorority Twitter use, Guo and Saxton (2014) articulated that nonprofits communicate with followers in a way that educates the followers into becoming "public education foot soldiers" for the organization's cause, making it critical that nonprofits build their follower base and strategically use hyperlinks and hashtags to portray the organization in a positive light and highlight organizational successes (p. 76).

However, no extant research addresses the paradox facing national fraternity and sorority organizations, primarily the necessity for these organizations to both promote the positive behavior and condemn the negative behavior of its members: this study seeks to fill this gap in the research to inform both fraternity and sorority organizations as well as nonprofits.

Method

This study employs Riffe, Lacy, and Fico's (2014) quantitative content analysis of social media messaging through holistic coding (first round) and subcoding (second round) strategies (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) to analyze national fraternity and sorority Twitter use. Per Riffe, Lacy, and Fico, holistic coding and subcoding are appropriate strategies for a quantitative content analysis of media messages as coder reliability is increased by the coder or a larger research team first defining concepts that emerge from the text (holistic) and reaching consensus on each concept that emerges thereafter (subcoding).

As the research team has experience with fraternity and sorority advising, these concepts were made much easier to understand, as the Data Analysis section of this paper outlines. Quantitative content analysis is also appropriate for this particular project as the media of a single tweet is inherently multimodal: a tweet can contain text, an image, a video, or a combination of all three, including social media messaging tools such as URLs, hashtags, and user tags via the "@" symbol followed by the user's Twitter handle. Therefore, having the flexibility to first define concepts (holistic coding) and then redefine concepts as necessary (subcoding) allowed the researchers to appropriately use their prior knowledge to define fraternity- and sorority-related concepts which were then empirically verified through observation and analysis of the Twitter data.

Population and Sampling Frame

To maximize reliability and generalizability, the researchers identified the population of national fraternity and sorority organizations associated with six of the largest umbrella organizations in the United States: the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO), National

Multicultural Greek Council (NMGCC), National APIDA Panhellenic Association (NAPA), and the North American Inter-Fraternity Conference (NIC). This search produced 145 organizations, with 135 having official Twitter accounts. After a small pilot study, the researchers agreed that one calendar year of Twitter data would serve as an appropriate sampling frame, as tweets were collected from July 1st, 2016 until July 1st, 2017, producing a total of 47,705 tweets across 135 Twitter accounts. The researchers justified a one-year sampling frame, as this time period allowed national fraternities and sororities to tweet through all major, yearly events such as summer leadership and awards conferences, pre-school recruitment events, rush weeks, on-campus social activities and gatherings, major fundraising initiatives, and both fall and spring graduations.

Data Gathering

The researchers used RStudio and the *twitteR* package to scrape all 135 national fraternity and sorority organizations' Twitter accounts. RStudio is a free and open-source development program that allows users to write their own software, which can then be used to connect with various social media application programming interfaces (APIs). Social media platforms, such as Twitter, grant researchers access to their API, allowing these researchers insight into how users are generating content on the social media platform. For this study's purposes, the research team employed *twitteR*, an RStudio package with access to Twitter's API in order to access publicly-available Twitter account data, such as handles, user descriptions, dates of access, and tweets.

During this data gathering process, the research team learned that 97% of national fraternities (76 of 79 fraternities) had a Twitter account, with 92% maintaining an active Twitter account (70 of 76 fraternities). For sororities, 100% of national sororities had a Twitter account, with 98% maintaining an active

account (57 of 58 sororities). An active Twitter account was defined as having tweeted at least once over the past year and at least once per year since 2006. Account-specific data included Twitter handle, profile description, tweet count, follower count, favorite count, friend count, URL, and location. This information details the entire Twitter history of the account, dating back to each account's creation, ranging from March 2006 to July 2017. Once this data was extracted from all 135 accounts, the researchers created an Excel database to organize this descriptive information, which can be found in Table 1 of this study.

Using RStudio and the *twitteR* package, the researchers then set a sampling frame of July 1st, 2016 until July 1st, 2017 to scrape every tweet from all 135 Twitter accounts, producing a data set of 47,705 unique tweets. Twitter accounts were coded as inactive if the account had not updated their Twitter status during the sampling frame. From each tweet, the following data was scraped and sorted into an Excel spreadsheet: Twitter handle, tweet text, date, tweet URL, total favorites, total retweets, and total activity (favorites+retweets).

Data Analysis

Using a holistic coding approach, the researchers first coded all tweets blind, then reviewed all tweets collaboratively, producing a double-blind coding procedure to ensure accuracy of the coded tweets. After this collaboration process, the researchers performed a round of subcoding to discover more specific themes of the data. The researchers individually identified—and then collaborated to reach consensus upon—five different types of tweets made by national fraternity and sorority organizations:

- 1.) Internal news addressing organizational members (i.e. notifying members that an alumni has passed away, alerting members to a change in conference programming)
- 2.) Advertisements for jobs, scholarships, and

fundraisers (i.e. directing members toward a scholarship application and including a hyperlink, urging followers to donate to a particular fundraising initiative)

- 3.) Official branding (i.e. tweets that include a picture of fraternity and sorority members socializing, broadcasting a fraternity or sorority motto or logo)
- 4.) Personal interaction (i.e. retweeting a follower's tweet, thanking a follower for following the organization's Twitter account)
- 5.) An official public statement on a positive or negative event or activity (i.e. releasing an official statement regarding the Black Lives Matter movement, condemning gender-related violence against the LGBTQA+ community)

After the round of subcoding, official public statements were identified as falling into four categories:

- 1.) Official statements promoting positive fraternity- or sorority-specific behavior (i.e. announcing the achievement of a major fundraising goal)
- 2.) Official statements condemning negative fraternity- or sorority-specific behavior (i.e. criticizing hazing, reprimanding members' alcohol abuse or criminal activity)
- 3.) Official statements promoting social justice not directly related to the organization (i.e. voicing support for undocumented immigrants vying for access to citizenship)
- 4.) Official statements condemning criminal activity outside of the organization (i.e. the terrorist attacks in Paris, police shootings in Minnesota)

Per Guo and Saxton (2014), the researchers then employed a binary coding strategy (1=yes, 0=no) for each official statement if the statement used a URL, hashtag, or user tag, as these messaging techniques serve to bolster the impact of the tweet within the Twitter community, effectively making the message more visible

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis of Twitter Accounts of National Fraternities and Sororities (n=135 Organizations) from March 2006 to July 2017

<i>Sample</i>	
# of national fraternities	76
# of national sororities	58
# of national coeducational organizations	1
Total	135
National fraternities:	
With Twitter accounts	97%
With active Twitter accounts	92%
Average # of tweets per account	3,317 tweets
High tweets	16,409 tweets
Low tweets	7 tweets
Average # of followers per account	4,342 followers
High followers	21,388 followers
Low followers	8 followers
Average # of friends per account	541 friends
High friends	4,973 friends
Low friends	0 friends
Average # of favorites per account	801 favorites
High favorites	6,603 favorites
Low favorites	0 favorites
Average favorites per tweet	0.16 favorites per tweet
National sororities:	
With Twitter accounts	100%
With active Twitter accounts	98%
Average # of tweets per account	4,565 tweets
High tweets	16,409 tweets
Low tweets	23 tweets
Average # of followers per account	9,066 followers
High followers	31,084 followers
Low followers	39 followers
Average # of friends per account	1,048 friends
High friends	9,037 friends
Low friends	9 friends
Average # of favorites per account	1,943 favorites
High favorites	26,033 favorites
Low favorites	1 favorite
Average favorites per tweet	0.43 favorites

to a larger number of users, regardless if the users follow the fraternity or sorority or not. For instance, a user with zero followers could include the hashtag “#hazing” with the message, “Work with your fellow fraternity brothers to say no to #hazing this fall on your campus!” Even though this message would not be seen by any followers, the message would appear in Twitter’s network search results underneath “#hazing,” which would be visible by the entire Twitter community, comprising 328 million daily users. Here, for the purposes of this study, it is important to learn whether national fraternities and sororities are leveraging the power of Twitter’s network—through the inclusion of hashtags, hyperlinks, and user tags—to share positive news and condemn negative news related to their respective fraternity or sorority, thus working to improve the public’s perception of these organizations.

Delimitations

There are three primary delimitations of this study: population size, sample size, and changes in social media technology. This study does not analyze individual chapters’ tweets, nor does this study analyze individual fraternity and sorority members’ tweets: both of these areas represent areas of research that would inform fraternity and sorority advisors as to how these stakeholders use social media and if strategies could be implemented to improve the impact of positive fraternity and sorority related news shared through these media. However, because many social media outlets such as Twitter and Instagram do not require the user to use their real name or include personally identifying information on a public or private account, future researchers may want to explore qualitative projects in order to identify active fraternity and sorority stakeholders and examine how these stakeholders use social media to share fraternity- and sorority-related news, both positive and negative in nature.

The research team also acknowledges that not

all national fraternity and sorority organizations are represented in this study, however, the data gathering and analysis procedures for the 135 organizations produced over 47,000 unique units of text, representing a rigorous and original contribution that works to fill the gap in literature regarding how fraternities and sororities use social media to project a public image and potentially improve the public’s perception of fraternity or sorority membership and/or involvement. Future research should focus on a larger sample size, perhaps considering a five- or ten-year longitudinal study of social media use across multiple platforms including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, or other popular social media outlets.

Finally, since the completion of this study, Twitter announced a new, 280-character limit for all tweets, beginning in November 2017. Although the research team believes the current study’s sample size is strong, Twitter’s decision to change the length of a tweet provides ample opportunity for future research. Those interested in the social media tendencies of fraternities and sororities could investigate how Twitter’s character limit change affected how these organizations used Twitter from November 2017 to the present. Moreover, because 280-characters allows a Twitter user to literally “say more” with each tweet, fraternity and sorority researchers could examine how Twitter’s longer character limit could allow these organizations to release longer, more detailed statements regarding positive or negative publicity received by the organization.

Findings

A descriptive analysis of Twitter accounts of national fraternities and sororities (n=135 organizations) from March 2006 to July 2017 can be found in Table 1.

Although 76 fraternities and only 58 sororities comprised this sample, data reveal sororities maintain much more active Twitter accounts

than fraternities do. For instance, the average sorority Twitter account has over twice as many followers, nearly twice as many friends, and over twice as many favorites as average fraternity Twitter accounts do. Furthermore, the average follower base for sorority Twitter accounts are nearly three times as active as the average follower base for fraternity Twitter accounts: fraternity tweets average 0.16 favorites per tweet, whereas sorority tweets average 0.43 favorites per tweet. Sororities also tend to tweet more than fraternities do, as the average sorority Twitter account tweeted 4,565 times since the account's inception, whereas fraternities only tweeted 3,317 times.

The sole co-educational organization data was not presented in Table 1. However, this organization tweeted 2,977 times, averaging 0.21 favorites per tweet. This organization also had 1,018 followers and 390 friends: both numbers are markedly lower than fraternity or sorority account data.

A descriptive analysis of Twitter usage of national fraternities and sororities (n=135 organizations, 47,247 tweets) from July 2016 to July 2017 can be found in Table 2 on the next page.

Data reveal that sororities are better at engaging their follower base than fraternities are: fraternities averaged 9.9 activities (favorites + retweets) per tweet, whereas sororities averaged 24.6 activities per tweet. Fraternities are also less likely to use hashtags, user tags, and URLs in tweets than sororities, potentially revealing why fraternity tweets experience less activity than sorority tweets. However, fraternities and sororities use Twitter to share much of the same content, as both fraternities and sororities predominantly use Twitter to share internal news and hold personal conversations: internal news and personal conversations represent roughly 55% and 30% of all fraternity and sorority tweets. Fraternities and sororities also use Twitter to brand their organization and advertise for position openings at a similar

percentage, with less than one percentage point differentiating the two types of tweets.

In terms of making official statements, data in this study suggest fraternities and sororities use Twitter to release official statements in largely the same fashion, however, sororities are nearly twice as likely to tweet to promote social justice not related to the organization than fraternities: 3.5% of all sorority tweets promoted social justice unrelated to the sorority, whereas 1.8% of all fraternity tweets promoted the same type of social justice. Furthermore, fraternities were five times as likely to condemn negative fraternity-specific behavior (0.5%), compared to sororities (0.1%), even though these percentages were easily the smallest subset of any tweet type coded in this study.

Discussion

Ultimately, this study answered all four of the research questions, while also affirming our hypothesis prior to the study.

First, national fraternities and sororities are active Twitter users: nearly every organization in the sample maintained active Twitter accounts. In fact, all national sororities in the sample had Twitter accounts, with 98% of these sororities maintaining active accounts. These percentages were slightly lower for national fraternities, but the data in this study suggest that Twitter is indeed a viable source of national fraternity- and sorority-related information given the high percentage of active Twitter accounts for these organizations. Subsequently, future research should address fraternity and sorority social media use across other platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and others to learn how these organizations use these platforms to support and grow their follower base and organization in general.

Second, data in this study also partially confirm and partially deny a pre-study hypothesis while echoing much of the research focused on Twitter use by large nonprofit organizations

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Twitter Accounts of National Fraternities and Sororities (n=135 Organizations, 47,247 Tweets) from July 2016 to July 2017

National fraternities	
Total tweets:	25,091
Favorites per tweet	7.6
Retweets per tweet	2.3
Total activity per tweet	9.9
Percentage of tweets	
Using hashtag (#)	53.1%
Using user tag (@)	62.8%
Using URL	68.5%
Internal news	58.9%
Personal	30.1%
Branding	3.9%
Advertising	1.1%
Official statement	6.0%
Promoting positive fraternity-specific behavior	1.9%
Condemning negative fraternity-specific behavior	0.5%
Promoting social justice not related to fraternity	1.8%
Condemning criminal activity outside of fraternity	1.8%
National sororities:	
Total tweets:	22,156
Favorites per tweet	17.1
Retweets per tweet	7.5
Total activity per tweet	24.6
Percentage of tweets	
Using hashtag (#)	64.2%
Using user tag (@)	69.1%
Using URL	88.3%
Internal news	52.6%
Personal	33.9%
Branding	4.5%
Advertising	1.9%
Official statement	7.1%
Promoting positive sorority-specific behavior	2.2%
Condemning negative sorority-specific behavior	0.1%
Promoting social justice not related to sorority	3.5%
Condemning criminal activity outside of sorority	1.3%

(Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton, 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011). Prior to the study, our hypothesis held that fraternities and sororities often use Twitter to share internal news. Similar to large nonprofits, national fraternities and sororities tend to use Twitter as an organizational newsfeed before any other purpose: 58.9% and 52.6% of fraternity and sorority tweets were focused on sharing internal news. However, both fraternities and sororities also frequently use Twitter to engage users on a personal level, potentially strengthening their organization's social network, supporting best practices articulated by Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton (2012) and Waters and Jamal (2011). Here, data in this study reveal that Twitter usage of national fraternities and sororities are similar to that of large nonprofits, yet fraternities and sororities tend to personally engage their follower bases more frequently than large nonprofits do. Distinguishing the social media behavior of a large nonprofit from national Greek organizations is important, as national Greek organizations may want to consult the social media best practices of other types of organizations given their potentially unique follower base comprised of former students, current students, alumni, organizational leaders, members of the general public, and others.

Data in this study also reveal how national fraternities and sororities may view the purposes and functions of social media for their organizations. Around 10% of tweets of both national fraternities and sororities were focused on branding, advertising, and making official statements, indicating that these organizations likely use other methods of communication—including other social media platforms—to articulate these organizational needs, messages, and values with their constituents. Furthermore, data in this study suggest that the Twitter follower bases of national sororities are more engaged than the Twitter follower bases of national fraternities. Although beyond the scope of this study, future research should address how fraternities and sororities build their social media follower bases,

articulating best practices to engage these bases and maximize the communicative potential of various social media platforms. National sorority tweets (24.6 activities per tweet) were nearly three times as active as national fraternity tweets (9.9 activities per tweet): this discrepancy should be examined in further detail.

Answering our third research question, national fraternities and sororities rarely release official statements of any kind, with only 2.4% of all fraternity tweets and 2.3% of sorority tweets specifically promoting or condemning fraternity- or sorority-related positive or negative behavior. Most frequently, national fraternities promoted positive fraternity-specific behavior (1.9% of all fraternity tweets) and national sororities promoted social justice not related to the sorority (3.5% of all sorority tweets). Because the data suggest these organizations rarely release official statements on Twitter, it is possible that national fraternities and sororities are not using the medium to promote the positive behavior of their members or condemn the negative behavior of their members, both working to improve these organizations' public perception. Consider this tweet composed by "Theta_Phi_Alpha" on March 27th, 2017:

@lukeswinney We're aware of the allegations, take this matter very seriously and strongly condemn any such behaviors <https://t.co/04nJ0yXja1>

Here, this national sorority addressed a single user to release an official statement condemning the negative behavior of their members. Surely, condemning the negative behavior of organizational members is an admirable effort, yet these types of tweets were very rare in this study, and it is important to note that this particular tweet did not engage a larger Twitter user base by incorporating a hashtag into the message itself. Likewise, consider this tweet composed by "officialsigep" on November 3rd, 2016:

We want to provide an update on the allegations against our chapter at the

University of Nebraska Lincoln: <https://t.co/nnVEKbwy0v>

Again, condemning negative behavior is admirable, but data in this study suggest that official statements could be composed in a fashion that reaches a larger Twitter audience by incorporating a user tag or hashtag in the message. Consider this tweet composed by “DeltaSigmaPhiHQ” on November 2nd, 2016:

“...it is on us, as brothers in Delta Upsilon, to help end sexual violence on college campuses.” #ItsOnUs #Justice <https://t.co/dgBjWmXzne>

We coded this tweet as internal news addressing organizational members, yet it is important to note how this national fraternity used hashtags to reach a larger Twitter audience outside of their follower base. A search of Twitter hashtags reveals that thousands of users employ the hashtag “#Justice” every day, generating an immense Twitter feed. Granted, there is nothing to indicate this tweet is an official statement, but including relevant, impactful hashtags in tweets could help improve an organization’s public perception by introducing organizational values and beliefs to a much larger Twitter audience.

Consider this tweet composed by “alphasigs” on June 22nd, 2017 regarding an anti-hazing initiative:

Hazing hurts everyone. ATO doesn’t haze, #ATOLeads. #NHPW16 @PreventHazing <https://t.co/0AKdfrHti2>

Here, Alpha Sigma Phi used a combination of hashtags and user tags to amplify their message. Although this tweet had only received eight “favorites” during the data collection process of this study, the user tag @PreventHazing has over 7,500 followers, a thousand more than the @alphasigs account. In addition, @PreventHazing is the official Twitter account for www.hazingprevention.org, a large, national, nonprofit organization committed to preventing hazing in fraternity, sorority, athletic, and extracurricular settings. As a result, @alphasigs may have amplified their message to reach a

much larger audience—while promoting a just and worthy initiative—by simply adding a few characters attached to both a hashtag or user tag.

Finally, to answer our last research question, national fraternities and sororities include URLs in their tweets more often than hashtags or user tags—68.5% of fraternity tweets and 88.3% of sorority tweets followed this practice—echoing the research of Kimmons, Veletsianos, and Woodward (2017) who found that institutions of higher education are most likely to include institutional URLs in their tweets to communicate with constituents. Consequently, the national fraternity and sorority practice of including URLs more frequently than hashtags or user tags may be limiting the communicative power of Twitter. Only 53.1% and 64.2% of fraternity and sorority tweets included a hashtag, while only 62.8% and 69.1% of fraternity and sorority tweets included a user tag. Not only does including a hashtag or user tag increase the impact of a tweet by reaching a larger audience, but it is notable that not a single official statement released by a national fraternity or sorority included a user tag of any large, national news source such as NBC, the *New York Times*, or *The Huffington Post*. Seemingly, national fraternities and sororities are missing opportunities to promote positive behavior and condemn negative behavior of their members and amplify their tweets by including hashtags and user tags in these messages.

Ultimately, data in this study imply that national fraternities and sororities do not heed the best practices for nonprofit social media use offered by Guo and Saxton (2014), while mirroring institutional use of Twitter in higher education (Kimmons, Veletsianos, & Woodward, 2017). Guo and Saxton (2014) asserted that nonprofits should communicate with followers in a way that molds a follower base into “public education foot soldiers” for the organization’s cause (p. 76). In this study, national fraternities and sororities rarely promote positive member behavior or condemn negative member behavior

to mobilize their follower base or improve their organization's public perception, instead choosing to share internal news and connect with users on a personal basis akin to institutions of higher education (Kimmons, Veletsianos, & Woodward, 2017). Furthermore, this study suggests that national sororities are more likely to use amplifying messaging techniques such as including hashtags or user tags in tweets than their national fraternity peers, yet both types of organizations could use these strategies to compose Guo and Saxton's (2014) notion of "mobilizational messages" to increase and engage follower bases (p. 73), while working to improve their organization's public perception.

Implications for Advisors of Fraternities and Sororities

Data in this study reveal a number of implications relevant for fraternity advisors and sorority advisors hoping to improve their public image and share the good deeds performed by their organizations with a larger audience.

First, advisors should adopt best practices of nonprofit social media use by engaging users on a personal level to build social networks and maximize the effectiveness of the medium (Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011) while composing "mobilizational messages" to promote their organization's values, beliefs, and social causes (Guo & Saxton, 2014, p. 73). Furthermore, advisors must advocate for the use of social media to promote positive happenings of their organizations, paying a special attention to the use of hyperlinks, hashtags, and user tags to amplify the message far beyond a fraternity's or sorority's follower base. Fraternity and sorority advisors should simultaneously sustain their follower base and work to grow it. Although it is admirable to share good news with current followers, fraternity and sororities must work to improve their public image by addressing much larger audience: using hyperlinks, hashtags, and user tags would likely broaden the impact

of any positive news or official statement shared on social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and others.

While far from a guaranteed strategy, fraternity and sorority advisors should encourage their members to share positive news and user-tag mainstream or local news outlets in hopes that these outlets pick up on the positive news and distribute the news to an even wider network available to these news organizations. Consider this tweet promoting the positive behavior of fraternity members composed by "AEPi" on August 12th, 2016:

We are thrilled to announce that we've raised \$300,000 for philanthropy this year! #AEPi16 #AEPiGivesBack

Here, this national fraternity could have used a more broad hashtag, such as "#fundraising," to increase the audience of the tweet, potentially building the fraternity's social network and growing awareness of the fraternity's good deeds. Furthermore, this tweet could have user-tagged a major news source, such as "@nbc" or "@foxnews" or a local news outlet closer to the headquarters of the national fraternity in hopes of that news outlet retweeting the tweet or connecting with the fraternity to compose a news story. This strategy can be employed by either individual members, an organization's advisor, or the organizational professional charged with social media communications.

Finally, national fraternity and sorority advisors should consider using social media to release official statements meant to speak on the behalf of fraternity and sorority members. This study suggests that around 10% of all fraternity and sorority tweets included an official statement, with a fraction of this percentage condemning negative member behavior. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) asserted that non-profit organizations experience greater organizational interaction through Twitter versus traditional forms of media, rendering social media outlets attractive spaces for making official statements and reaching large, international audiences

through the strategic use of hashtags, user tags, and hyperlinks. Advisors should harness the great power of social media—including Twitter—and use it to the advantage of fraternity and sorority members who may be unfairly maligned by the public’s often-negative perception of fraternity and sorority involvement. However, advisors should use social media to condemn negative behavior of fraternity and sorority members to amplify organizational values and positively shape the public’s perception of the organization.

Conclusion

When the North-American Interfraternity Conference (2017) announced that fraternity chapters’ public relations units have charged themselves with sophisticated communication efforts to “counteract the popularized social media platforms” and “constant media scrutiny” which “damages the reputation of fraternities and drowns out fraternities’ unified powerful voice” (Kingkade, 2015), perhaps these organizations need to address their detractors, naysayers, and opponents where they are: social media. Both fraternity and sorority advisors should re-evaluate their social media strategies to ensure that they are following best practices articulated by extant nonprofit research (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011) and higher education research (Kimmons, Veletsianos, & Woodward, 2017). By effectively using hashtags, user tags, and hyperlinks while informing one’s current follower base and working to grow that base, fraternities and sororities will be better able to share the immeasurable positive impact these organizations have on their local, national, and global communities.

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INCREASING SURVEY DATA QUALITY USING SCREENING VALIDITY QUESTIONS

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Self-report surveys are used frequently in fraternity organizations to collect information from students. A lack of thoughtful or truthful answers on survey instruments threatens the validity of results. The current study evaluates if identifying and omitting invalid responders using screening validity questions improves data quality on two scales among fraternity men: the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance and the Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory. Results indicate invalid responders bias results suggesting using screen validity questions improves data quality. This strategy can help fraternity professionals ensure their programming responds more closely to their member perceptions, attitudes, and experiences.

Increased attention dedicated to understanding and preventing sexual violence within college campuses has become a critical issue often centered on fraternity members. This shift has generated a need for additional research and assessment exploring college student experiences and perceptions of sexual violence. A notable example is Wood, Sulley, Kammer-Kerwick, Follingstad, and Busch-Armendariz's (2016) detailed overview of various administered sexual assault campus climate surveys across U.S. postsecondary institutions that often measured fraternity membership as a factor for analysis. Student affairs administrators on campuses also have increasing expectations to assess experiences and perceptions of fraternity members along with evaluating sexual violence prevention programs for accountability and improvement purposes. One common and convenient method supporting these goals is the use of self-report surveys in assessment and research.

Surveys are able to produce credible results based on the quality of instrument used (Saunders & Cooper, 2009). If a survey is poorly designed, the subsequent results may be biased, leading to misinterpretations or inappropriate uses for informing changes to policy and practices. There is limited research on how survey design and responses among fraternity members should be conducted to ensure valid results. Furthering a

need for research within survey development on fraternity members is how their survey participation commonly measures sensitive issues surrounding their health, sexual violence, alcohol and drug use, and other personal behaviors. Research has shown how sensitive topics on surveys may lead to issues in response rates and misreporting outcomes (Kays, Gathercoal, & Buhrow, 2012; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). This article investigates the use of validity screening questions as a potential method to improve data quality for surveys measuring sensitive topics among fraternity members.

Literature Review

Fraternity Membership: Rape Myth Acceptance and Conformity to Masculinity Norms

The increased attention of fraternity members in regards to sexual violence is partly due to research demonstrating fraternity members' greater acceptance towards rape myths than non-fraternity members (Bleecker & Murnen, 2005; Canan, Jozkowski, & Crawford, 2016; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Foubert, Brosi, and Bannon (2011) further emphasize the importance of such findings by showing rape myth acceptance increases the intent to commit sexual assault among fraternity members.

Past research has also demonstrated a

relationship between fraternity members reporting higher acceptance of rape myths and their commitments to traditional notions of masculinity. Seabrook, Ward, and Giaccardi (2016) found conformity to masculinity norms mediate the relationship of fraternity involvement and sexual violence approval. Further research illustrates fraternity members on college campuses who obey particular masculine norms (i.e., alcohol use, risk-taking) are more likely to validate rape myths and sexually aggressive behavior (Capraro, 2000; Iwamoto, Cheng, Lee, Takamatsu, & Gordon, 2011; Turrisi, Mallett, Mastroleo, & Larimer, 2010). There is thus a demonstrated need to accurately measure both masculinity and rape supportive attitudes among fraternity members within a commitment to addressing sexual violence on college campuses. Additionally, the survey development process should consider the degree of sensitive survey questions and incorporate strategies to increase data quality.

Surveys

Surveys have become a commonly used tool in meeting numeric data needs in higher education and student affairs. The cost-effective method of collecting quantitative data enables budget-constrained offices to conduct important assessment initiatives (Schuh, Biddix, Dean, & Kinzie, 2016; Saunders & Cooper, 2009). Surveys that are nationally recognized and implemented also tend to have the added benefits of validity and reliability, reducing the burdensome process of developing an instrument (Bresciani, Gardner, & Hickmott, 2012). Further, surveys are used to support generalizability through appropriate sampling techniques, allowing for meaningful results with a selected population (Bresciani et al., 2012).

Although surveys are useful in measuring a variety of college student outcomes, it is critical they do so in valid ways. Saunders and Cooper (2009) posit, “The credibility of an assessment depends, in part, on the quality of

the measurement instrument” (p. 122), and the authors further discussed validity as one way to evaluate if an instrument is of quality and thereby supportive of good assessment practices. Messick (1989) described validity in surveys as the degree to which a survey accurately measures what it claims to, based on evidence and theory. One way a survey may lack validity is measurement error, defined as the difference of an estimated value compared to its true value from inaccurate survey responses (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). Inaccurate answers causing measurement error may be due to poor survey design, issues in the data collection phase, or a respondent’s inability or unwillingness to respond in a truthful manner may result in error (Dillman et al., 2014).

Research has shown sensitive topics in surveys influence the degree of respondents’ self-disclosure on question items. Respondents are less likely to respond to questions the more sensitive the questions are perceived to be (Kays, Gathercoal & Buhrow, 2012; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Men, as compared to women, have lower self-disclosure rates on sensitive survey questions when there is a lack of perceived privacy (Joinson, Paine, Buchanan, & Reips, 2008). These studies demonstrate a need to further explore strategies within the survey design process when asking about sensitive topics. The use of screening validity questions has been a method recently explored by other researchers.

Screening Validity Questions

Intentional survey questions measuring survey respondent degree of truthfulness and carefulness in responses have been used in middle and high schools to identify and omit invalid responders in order to increase validity of survey results. For instance, Jia, Konold, Cornell, and Huang (2016) added the screening questions, “I am telling the truth on this survey” and “How many of the questions on the survey did you answer truthfully” to a survey assessing high school student outcomes and bullying to identify invalid

respondents in Virginia public high schools with 52,012 respondents. They found 6.88% of student respondents (n=3,579) in their sample were flagged through the screening questions as invalid responders. The invalid respondents biased the survey findings when included in the analysis. The aggregated data that included invalid responses reported higher risk behaviors, lower GPA, school engagement, and depression compared to when the invalid respondents were removed.

Assessment by Cornell, Klein, Konold, and Huang (2012) on school climate among middle school students (N=7,801) had consistent findings to Jia et al.'s (2016) study. Question items "I am telling the truth on this survey," "I am not paying attention to how I answer this survey," and "The answers I have given on this survey are true" were added to the instrument and analyzed to determine the impact invalid responders may have on measuring school climate outcomes. The survey flagged 11.77% of student respondents (n=918) as invalid and similarly skewed the overall findings toward support of risky behaviors. Cornell et al. conducted a second study using two screening validity questions instead of three on a survey given to ninth grade high school students (N=7,246) assessing general school safety outcomes. Respondents who failed at least one of the screening questions were considered invalid and represented 4% (n=281) of the sample. Results indicated valid responders were more likely to have positive perceptions of the school climate and have similar views as their teachers compared to invalid responders. Cornell, Lovegrove, and Baly's (2014) found similar findings when using the same two out of the three screening validity questions on a longitudinal survey measuring risk behavior, victimization, and school climate among middle school students.

The presented research has demonstrated consistent results that adding screening items on surveys measuring sensitive topics among middle and high school students improves survey

data quality. Common findings within the studies indicates invalid responders are more likely male, students of Color, and report a higher likelihood of endorsing or experiencing risky behaviors (Cornell et al., 2012; Cornell et al., 2014; Jia et al., 2016). No published research or nationally recognized student affairs surveys were identified using similar screening items in surveys of fraternity members or students in U.S. postsecondary education. The present study extends the research by examining the use of screening validity questions in a higher education context. Given that invalid responders are more likely to be men and more likely to commit risky behaviors, the present research used screening validity questions in a survey measuring rape myth acceptance and conformity to masculinity norms among fraternity members.

Method

Screening validity questions were added to a survey distributed to fraternity members at a large, public research university seeking to measure their degree of rape myth acceptance and conformity to masculinity norms. The survey was administered in-person at a series of two-hour workshops on sexual violence prevention in fall 2016 where fraternity chapters were required to have half of their members attend. All attendees were invited to participate in the survey but could choose to opt out of participation. A total of 585 surveys were returned out of 975 fraternity members who attended the workshops from among 1,872 total active fraternity members, indicating a 60% response rate among those who attended the program and 31% of the total fraternity population.

Demographic questions were also asked on the survey. Questions measured live-in status with the fraternity housing, academic class standing, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Of the sample, 28% were considered "live-in" through their fraternity chapter. Most students were

in lower academic classes with 32% first-year students, 36% sophomores, 22% juniors, and 10% seniors. Additional demographics reported 26% of the respondents were students of Color and 5% identified as gay, bisexual, or queer.

Screening validity questions flag invalid responders who indicate they are not reading the survey carefully or telling the truth. Statistical differences between valid and invalid responses were evaluated to determine if adding screening validity questions supports data quality among fraternity members. Based on these differences, inflation rates are calculated which depicts the degree of change in the aggregated responses due to invalid responses.

The present research is guided by the following research question: Do screening validity questions improve data quality of Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance and Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory? Previous research indicates screening validity questions are more likely to identify males who engage in risky behaviors as invalid responders. Consequently, we hypothesize invalid responders will have higher degrees of Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory and Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance compared to valid respondents.

Measures

Screening validity questions. The questions asked to screen for the validity of outcomes included: "I am reading this survey carefully," "I am telling the truth on the survey," and "The answers I have given on the survey are true." Selected questions were the same or similar questions to previous research (Cornell et al., 2012; Cornell et al., 2014; Jia et al., 2016). The first two questions were asked using a five-point agreement Likert scale with a binary label (1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree). The third screening question was asked with a "Yes" or "No" response option.

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. The scale was revised by Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald (1999), supporting a shorter version scale which was later updated with language relevant

to college students by McMahon and Farmer (2011), leading to the version utilized in the present study. The four subscales which make up the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale include (a) She Asked For It ("When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble"); (b) He Didn't Mean To ("Rape happens when a guy's sex drive gets out of control"); (c) It Wasn't Really Rape ("If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape"); and, (d) She Lied ("A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped just have emotional problems"). The scale is 22-questions with each subscale representing five or six question items on a five-point agreement Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 1; Strongly Disagree=5). Lower scores indicate a higher degree of acceptance of rape myths.

Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory. The Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory (CMNI) was also included to measure fraternity men's relationship with masculinity norms. The inventory was developed by Mahalik et al. (2003) to measure how men adhere to gender role norms negotiated by one's experiences. The present research used a revised version by Parent and Moradi (2011). The CMNI-46 is structured by nine distinct factors: (a) Winning; (b) Emotional control; (c) Primacy of work; (d) Risk-taking items; (e) Violence items; (f) Heterosexual self-presentation; (g) Playboy; (h) Self-reliance; and (i) Power over women. Questions were assessed utilizing a four-point agreement Likert scale (Strongly Agree= 0; Strongly Disagree 3). After recoding reverse scored survey items, lower scores represent respondents who are more conformed to masculinity norms based on a four-point agreement Likert scale.

Results

Descriptive results indicate the percent of students who failed a screening question for each item and the total percent who failed at least one of the three (see Table 1). Students who did not "strongly agree" with the statement "I am reading

Table 1*Screening Validity Questions Descriptive Statistics*

Screening Validity Question	% failed	n
1) I am reading this survey carefully	17.96%	104
2) I am telling the truth on the survey	10.18%	58
3) The answers I have given on the survey are true	1.58%	9
Total respondents who failed at least one question	21.37%	125

the survey carefully” or “I am telling the truth on the survey,” failed the screening questions. Respondents who did not answer “yes” to the third question, “The answers I have given on the survey are true,” were marked as invalid and failed the screening question. A total of 21.37% (n=125) of survey respondents failed at least one or more of the questions which flagged their responses as invalid.

To better understand the relationship between screening validity questions, correlations between the three questions were calculated. The correlations included $r = .44$ between the first and second question, $r = .13$ between the first and third question, and $r = .11$ between the second and third (see Table 2). The positive intercorrelations between the three questions were statistically significant ($p < .01$). Results

Table 2*Correlations between Screening Validity Questions*

Screening Validity Question	1	2	3
1) I am reading this survey carefully			
2) I am telling the truth on the survey	.44***		
3) The answers I have given on the survey are true	.13***	.11***	

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 3*Demographics of Valid and Invalid Respondents*

Demographic	Valid respondents		Invalid respondents		Chi Square
	n	%	n	%	
Ethnicity					0.03
White	331	78.62%	90	21.38%	
Students of Color	113	77.93%	32	22.07%	
Living situation					1.74
Live-in	132	81.99%	29	18.01%	
Live-out	317	76.94%	95	23.05%	
Class academic standing					5.61**
Freshmen & Sophomores	294	75.77%	94	24.23%	
Juniors & Seniors	166	84.26%	31	15.74%	

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

suggest respondents who failed one question were also likely to fail additional screening questions.

Demographic responses were examined for differences between valid and invalid respondents. Juniors and senior students were combined into one category to meet sample size assumptions of the chi-square hypothesis testing (Berman & Wang, 2012). For this same reason, sexual orientation was excluded from significance testing due to only a few invalid respondents identifying as gay, bisexual, or

queer. Results indicate freshmen and sophomore students had a higher likelihood of failing the screening questions compared to juniors and seniors, $\chi^2(1, N = 585) = 5.61, p = .018$ (see Table 3).

To answer the research question of invalid respondents' potential impact on rape myth acceptance and conformity to masculinity norms, mean differences were calculated comparing valid and invalid responses. Inflation rates are also reported which is the percent change of total sample responses that is due to the invalid

Table 4
Invalid Responses Impact on Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance

IRMA Subscale	Total sample			Valid responses			Invalid responses					
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	Inflation Rate	Diff.	p-value
1: She asked for it	562	3.94	0.7	441	3.99	0.7	121	3.74	0.72	-1.27%	0.25	.0004***
2: He didn't mean to	553	3.47	0.71	434	3.51	0.71	119	3.32	0.72	-1.15%	0.19	.0119**
3: It wasn't really rape	545	4.49	0.65	431	4.58	0.53	114	4.15	0.91	-2.00%	0.43	.0000***
4: She lied	549	3.16	0.92	429	3.18	0.94	120	3.07	0.86	-0.63%	0.11	0.23
IRMA total	511	3.76	0.56	404	3.81	0.55	107	3.57	0.58	-1.33%	0.24	.0001***

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

responses. Table 4 reports mean differences between valid and invalid respondents for the IRMA scale and subscales and inflation rates. The overall mean IRMA for fraternity members is 3.76 with a -1.33% inflation rate. A significant difference of 0.24 ($p = .0001$) was found between IRMA mean valid (3.81) and invalid (3.57) responses.

This negative inflation indicates that invalid responders are more likely to have attitudes and beliefs supportive of rape myths. Three IRMA subscales out of the four were statistically significant at conventional levels. Subscale 1: She asked for it (0.25, $p = .0004$), Subscale 2: He didn't mean to (0.19, $p = .0119$), and Subscale 3: It wasn't really rape had the largest difference

(0.43, $p = .0000$) and a related inflation of -2.00%.

Table 5 reports invalid responders have higher conformity to masculinity norms with a near conventional level of significant difference between valid responses and invalid responses of .06 ($p = .0610$) and an inflation rate of -0.40%. Two CMNI factors reported approaching significant differences between valid and invalid responses. Playboy (0.11, $p = .0598$) and Self-reliance (0.09, $p = .0802$) with a ranging inflation rate of -0.70% to -0.82%.

Limitations

Screening validity questions measure self-

Table 5*Invalid Responses Impact on Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory*

CMNI sub-scale	Total sample			Valid responses			Invalid responses			Inflation Rate	Diff.	p-value
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD			
Winning	568	2.06	0.5	444	2.07	0.51	124	2.03	0.45	-0.49%	0.04	0.5263
Emotional control	564	2.59	0.49	443	2.6	0.5	121	2.54	0.43	-0.39%	0.06	0.2256
Work	568	2.32	0.54	449	2.32	0.56	119	2.36	0.47	-	-0.04	0.4649
Risk	565	2.45	0.41	446	2.47	0.43	119	2.4	0.36	-0.82%	0.07	0.1248
Violence	555	2.19	0.54	437	2.2	0.55	118	2.15	0.44	-0.46%	0.05	0.419
Hetero Presentation	546	2.48	0.59	431	2.49	0.6	115	2.47	0.56	-0.40%	0.02	0.8129
Playboy	564	2.45	0.57	444	2.47	0.58	120	2.36	0.52	-0.82%	0.11	.0598*
Self-reliance	564	2.87	0.47	443	2.89	0.48	121	2.8	0.43	-0.70%	0.09	.0802*
Power	555	3.02	0.51	438	3.04	0.51	117	2.96	0.53	-0.66%	0.08	0.1088
CMNI total	470	2.48	0.26	368	2.49	0.27	102	2.43	0.2	-0.40%	0.06	.0610*

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

reported respondent accuracy to answer survey questions truthfully. An unintended outcome of the questions also discussed by Cornell et al. (2012), Cornell et al. (2014) and Jia et al. (2016) may reflect respondents' lack of motivation and attention to read the survey directions, questions, or statements carefully or at all. These screening validity questions do not only measure respondents' truthfulness but also those who may simply write down values without any thought, resulting in inaccurate data. Therefore, it may be possible the invalid respondents are those who fall into a process of satisficing. Krosnick (1991, 1999) describes this process as the level of engagement a respondent has with completing a survey dependent on their motivation. If there is a lack of motivation to accurately review the question, understand what it is asking, reflect on an answer, select the best answer, the respondent may choose to instead select responses that do not have a relationship with the question itself. Screening validity questions still accomplishes the goal of identifying responses that are not

thoughtfully answered and truthful.

The present research included one fraternity community at a large public university and therefore lacks generalizability to other populations outside the institution. The research could be easily replicated at a national level by adding similar questions on nationally recognized surveys assessing fraternity experience to overcome this limitation.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the impact of using screening validity questions on self-report surveys measuring rape myth acceptance and conformity to masculinity norms among fraternity members. Screening questions added to a survey measuring IRMA and CMNI helped flag invalid responses that inflated these constructs. Similar to other studies (e.g., Cornell et al., 2012; Cornell et al., 2014; Jia et al., 2016), screening questions were found to impact the measured outcome and could then

be omitted before additional statistical analysis to improve the validity of results. This study expanded on the past research by including screening questions with undergraduate college students and different measures.

The only significant difference within demographic groups measured on the survey was freshman and sophomore students had a higher number of invalid respondents than expected when compared to juniors and seniors. This was consistent with past research (i.e., Jia et al., 2016) indicating younger grade levels are more likely to be invalid respondents. Previous research indicated consistent findings with middle or high school students of Color reporting more invalid response than White students. The present research did not report a significant difference in this case.

This study was conducted on a population of fraternity men, in part, due to the consistent findings indicating men were more likely than women to be flagged as invalid responders. Results expand on this finding showing men who were invalid responders are more likely to have higher conformity to masculinity norms compared to valid responders. Qualitative research may be well suited to look into why and how masculinity is positively related to responding to self-report surveys in ways that indicate they are not reading carefully or telling the truth.

Cornell et al. (2014) describe one reason why invalid respondents may occur is because, "Immature and rebellious adolescents may be tempted to offer inflated reports of risky behaviors or they may not take a survey seriously and mark it haphazardly" (p. 1). Given immature and adolescent behaviors often times observed among fraternity organizations, this too may be a reason self-report surveys identify invalid respondents. Fraternity members who do not take questions seriously and give a thoughtful answer, future surveys being administered to fraternity members should consider using screening validity questions.

Implications for Practice

College campuses today, more than ever, have seen an increase in needs for accurate information on sexual violence experiences and perceptions (Woods et al., 2016). Fraternity professionals are simultaneously using surveys to assess student programs and services in order to effectively advocate for continued resources and improvement purposes. The present research indicates some fraternity members may not be reading carefully or telling the truth on surveys, which has implications for fraternity organizations that aim to measure attitudes and experiences on sensitive topics.

After all, fraternity professionals will continue to have difficulty designing and evaluating impactful programs on sensitive topics such as sexual violence prevention if participants' lack of truthfulness on assessment measures distorts our understandings of the problem. If including simple validity questions can help practitioners weed out those respondents who are inflating survey results, it is likely that programming or policy decisions drawn from survey results can more effectively meet the target population where they actually are. Thus, research and assessment practices using survey methodology will likely benefit from adopting screening questions to flag invalid responders. Before additional statistical analysis and reporting of the results begin with collected survey data, invalid responders should be omitted from the results to improve data quality and validity of the findings.

Further, the findings of this study highlight the particular importance of validity screening for more sensitive topics in surveys. After all, the IRMA asks significantly more sensitive questions than the CMNI, as the IRMA questions delve deeply into taboo attitudes about rape and sexual assault, and the rates of inflation were considerably more concerning on the IRMA than the CMNI. The present study, then, highlights that professionals ought to be wary of trusting survey data on the most sensitive of subjects when

that data has not been screened for validity in a manner like the method advocated here. After all, in the present study, including invalid responders in the dataset would lead practitioners to think there is a significantly more serious concern about rape supportive attitudes in the population than might be accurate, as those with higher self-reported rates of rape supportive attitudes are the same students who openly admitted they were not reading carefully or telling the truth.

Poor data quality from surveys has considerable negative consequences as the subsequent results may be used to inform policy and practices. More research and consideration should be given to survey design and implementation within fraternity community assessment and research to counter these issues. Surveys are not likely to decrease given their low-cost and ease of collecting quantitative data in assessment and research. Adding screening validity questions may be one simple, yet effective, way to reduce bias and increase data quality.

Simply put, practitioners rely on assessment tools to guide the direction of programs and services, but when those assessment tools are biased by invalid responses, fraternity professionals may very well be directing their resources toward the most problematic responses even though those responses may be a result of lying or inattention. The simple act of including three validity items into surveys and screening out those who fail the validity check can help ensure fraternity professionals are utilizing their limited time and energy in the best and most efficacious ways possible by increasing survey data quality.

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PERCEPTIONS OF RACE AND FIT IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF TRADITIONALLY, PREDOMINANTLY WHITE FRATERNITIES

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This study was constructed as a qualitative case study to explore racialized definitions of fit and how those perpetuate White supremacy within fraternity systems through a critical examination of participants' lived experiences on race. Lived experiences from seven participants were presented to identify two major themes for analysis: (a) the minimization of race and racism and (b) normalizing Whiteness. This study used a social identity theoretical framework to deconstruct the ways in which Whiteness is perpetuated in hegemonic White spaces.

Fraternities hold high social capital on college campuses, as represented by the almost 100,000 male students who join a national/international fraternity annually (North American Interfraternity Conference, 2018b). One unique quality of social fraternities as compared to other types of student organizations is that they have the ability to self-select students for membership, providing students with sole ownership of who is granted membership into the organization. However, fraternities were often scrutinized for racist attitudes and behaviors (Patton, 2008; Hughey, 2010). As a result, the fraternity/sorority communities were the most racially isolating environments for White students.

The culture around race and campus climate issues are more important than ever. According to the *National Center for Education Statistics*, the percentages of the number of Hispanic, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American students enrolled in college have increased (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Since 1976, the number of White students enrolled in colleges and universities went from 84 to 58 percent. Yet traditionally, predominantly White fraternities have remained largely White (Hughey, 2010).

In a study by Park (2014), 97.1 percent of White fraternity and sorority members indicated that their organizations were majority White. Even on racially diverse campuses, traditionally,

predominantly White fraternities and sororities have remained largely homogeneous (Park, 2008). While most fraternities abolished racial discrimination clauses from their membership selection criteria in the late 1960s, changes in recruitment practices failed to occur (Kendall, 2008).

To fully understand why fraternities remain largely homogenous, it is important to understand the production of hegemonic Whiteness. A newer ideology of an inclusive form of hegemonic White masculinity has emerged in the literature, a model based on racial equity among other factors (Anderson, 2007). The new age fraternity man described by Anderson (2007) sought men from diverse backgrounds in their fraternity membership selection processes. However, the increased racial diversity of fraternity environments does not necessarily ensure a lack of discrimination. Higher levels of racial bias and hate crimes are reported on campuses that are predominantly White and with large fraternity and sorority populations (Van Dyke & Tester, 2014). As more and more students of color gain access to White enclaves, such as traditionally, predominantly White fraternities, it is important to understand the ways in which Whiteness reifies and influences the recruitment experience for White men in largely homogenous spaces.

Recent studies on the racial attitudes of

White fraternity men suggested that there was a particular fit understood within each fraternity when recruiting for new members. This study is focused on examining the impact that Whiteness has on notions of fit within fraternity recruitment as it pertains to race and racial attitudes. This study adds to the literature on Whiteness and campus racial environments.

Race and Recruitment

Participation in a fraternity or sorority has been negatively related to students' openness to diversity, and rates of interaction and friendship with someone of a different race (Park & Kim, 2013; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996). In particular, White fraternity and sorority members have significantly fewer interracial friendships than their unaffiliated White peers (Stearns, Buchmann, & Bonneau, 2009). In slightly different terms, Park (2014) found that participation in a fraternity or sorority was a negative predictor for having at least one close friend of a different race or ethnicity. As Astin (1993) pointed out, "the student's peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years" (p. 398).

Recent studies on fraternity and sorority members' levels of intercultural competence conflicted with the notion that membership in a fraternity or sorority led to negative deficits in this area. Separate studies by Martin, Hevel, Asel, and Pascarella (2011) and Rubin, Ainsworth, Cho, Turk, and Winn (1999) indicated that fraternity and sorority membership was not associated with measures of intercultural competence. In other words, fraternity and sorority members were neither advantaged nor disadvantaged when compared to their peers. A more recent study by Martin, Parker, Pascarella, and Blechschmidt (2015) agreed that fraternity and sorority membership had no significant impact on levels of intercultural competence. Further studies, specifically those utilizing

qualitative measures, are needed to better understand the impact diversity has on group socialization for fraternity and sorority members and the myriad ways in which students interpret racial consciousness in deciding who gains access into a racially homogenous peer group.

Past studies on race and racial attitudes in traditionally, predominantly White fraternity and sorority communities on southern campuses indicated that fraternity and sorority members were significantly less accepting of students of color than non-members (Muir, 1991). White fraternity and sorority members were more likely to hold stereotypes of Black students than non-members, but fraternity members were significantly more likely to possess negative attitudes than their sorority counterparts (Muir, 1991). Muir's (1991) research suggested that racial attitudes could be gendered. Syrett (2009) outlined how gender, social class, and race are interconnected through performance of masculinity and how privileged White fraternity men maintained an insulated environment through informal discrimination of people of color. Formal membership restrictions limiting membership of traditionally, predominantly White fraternities to White, Christian males were enacted in the early 1900s (Syrett, 2009). Notes from fraternity convention meetings in the 50s and 60s exposed that while formal discrimination clauses were removed because of an acknowledgement of the optics of such clauses, gentleman's agreements were made internally to continue discrimination of people of color during fraternity recruitment processes (Barone, 2014).

Schmitz and Forbes (1994) interviewed sorority members who blamed Black students for any racial segregation existing in fraternities and sororities. Asian American women participating in a study by Park (2008) described the recruitment process as one relying more on fit, denying any association with race as a factor. White participants in Park's (2008) qualitative study described sorority recruitment processes

as race-neutral, but there is limited research on the salience of race in fraternity recruitment practices.

A recent study interviewed 20 senior, White fraternity members on White racial attitudes (Morgan, Zimmerman, Terrell, & Marcotte, 2015). Four themes emerged from their views on race including the minimization of race, the creation of one dimensional views of students of color, a reliance on traditions and history to negotiate and justify the future, and the perception that their fraternities were diverse in comparison to other predominantly White chapters. Within the theme of history, racialized definitions of fit emerged as a potential category for future research. Participants commented on the notion that there was a particular type of person suitable for each chapter. Members exhibited signs of socialization on racial fit through chapter traditions and ideals taught by other members (Morgan et al., 2015). The focus of this study was the perception of fit as it pertains to race for members in traditionally, predominantly White fraternities.

For this study, the concept of “fit” was analyzed as an extension of social belonging, a basic human desire to be socially connected (MacDonald & Leary, 2005). Walton and Cohen (2007) used sense of fit as a measure of one’s feelings of social connectedness and sense of belonging. Participants for this study were asked to define their own definition of fit as it relates to their fraternity membership criteria.

Whiteness

For this study, Whiteness is defined as a privileged social identity (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Reason & Evans, 2007). Whiteness does not refer to White people, but rather an ideology of racial oppression and a way of protecting White supremacy (Cabrera, 2012).

Whiteness can be better understood by exploring a phenomenon that scholars have coined color-blind racism. Bonilla-Silva (2006)

defined color-blind racism as a dominant racial ideology in which race is espoused as no longer significant in United States culture. A color-blind ideology is problematic in that it actually reinforces racist thinking (Wise, 2010).

Bonilla-Silva (2001) explained four dominant frames in which the ideology of color-blind racism is used by White respondents in a study on White racial attitudes. The four dominant frames of color-blind racism are abstract liberalism, or the push for equal opportunity; the “biologization of culture,” or the explanation that people of color have different cultures and values that can explain inequities of race; a naturalization of the effects of White supremacy, or the idea that segregation based on race was described as being natural; and the fourth dominant frame is a minimization of racism. The minimization of racism in particular is a finding consistent with other literature (Cabrera, 2014) that Whites often believed discrimination was no longer present in American culture and most racial issues are the cause of inequities in the individuals themselves (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Meritocracy was used in color-blind ideology to explain disparities among races as the result of deficiency or inferiority, but not racism (Wise, 2010).

White behaviors were often contradictory to their stated beliefs (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Bonilla-Silva (2001) found that White men and women answered survey questions in ways that suggested tolerance or even support for diversity, but their actions often suggested a different story. White men and women interacted infrequently with people of other races, moved from neighborhoods populated with people of color, and opposed school integration efforts (Bonilla-Silva, 2001).

Homogenous White environments have the tendency to normalize Whiteness in a variety of ways. Whiteness and the White experience are normalized for many White students on college and university campuses when they are insulated from students of color on a daily basis (Cabrera,

2012). White becomes the standard for which others are compared when White students are removed from the racial experiences of students of color. This can be particularly prevalent in times of racial strife. Astin (1993) noted “the existence of pervasive racial conflict on the campus tends to balkanize the student body, such that students seek out social organizations whose membership is partly racially based” (p. 179).

Theoretical Framework

This study incorporated a social identity perspective to further analyze individual behavior within the larger group process to identify group socialization patterns. Tajfel and Turner (1979) introduced social identity theory as a way to analyze how individual identity is influenced by intergroup contexts as a way to define one’s own standing in society. Individuals placed themselves and others into social categories to explain the world around them. In turn, the process impacted those in the group and the larger structures in which the group operates. Self-categorization theory evolved from social identity theory to explain cognitive processes of social identity development (Abrams & Hogg, 1999).

Self-categorization theory further explained the in-group versus out-group categorization process of behavior. Individuals placed themselves and others into prototypes based on attributes (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Positive in-group attitudes created a normative ideology of one’s self and other in-group members, but a unified and stereotyped view of out-group members as a whole. These prototypes represented defining characteristics or stereotypes that are applied to all members of the group (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Race was a significant measure of social identity by which individuals categorized themselves, therefore race was a significant mechanism for self-categorization (Goar & Sell, 2005). Drawing on Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, Bonilla-Silva (2006) described how White habitus can create

a “racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates Whites’ racial tastes, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters” (p. 104). Whiteness led White identified individuals to view White as normal, correct, valued, and the standard for beauty, intelligence, and worth (DiAngelo, 2012). Prejudiced views of other races developed more from normalized views and admiration of Whiteness as opposed to any hatred or disdain of others (Lyman, & Vidich, 2000). The White habitus that reinforced hegemonic White ideals validated a constant prejudice of people of color (Bonilla-Silva, Goar, & Embrick, 2006). A social identity perspective with specific attention to the impact of Whiteness and White habitus provided the theoretical lens to view this study.

Method

This study was framed as a qualitative case study analysis to explore racialized definitions of fit and how those perpetuate White supremacy within fraternity systems. Qualitative research studies are helpful when existing theories fail to explain a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Case study allows researchers to “retain a holistic and real-world perspective” while aiding in the understanding of complex social phenomena (Yin, 2014, p. 5). Yin (2014) further described a case study as a method that attempts to highlight a certain decision or set of decisions, while helping to explain why the decision was made, how it was implemented, and what happened afterward. Case study is a popular educational research method because of its effectiveness in understanding “individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (Yin, 2014, p. 5).

This study examined the lived experiences of recently initiated fraternity members to better understand how fraternity members are socialized on race within fraternity culture. The research question that guided this study was as follows:

How do fraternity men describe the notion of fit within their organization?

This study was conducted with two traditionally, predominantly White fraternities, which were given the pseudonyms of Alpha Beta fraternity and Omega Zeta fraternity. Both Alpha Beta and Omega Zeta belong to the Interfraternity Council (IFC), an umbrella governing council for the International and National men's fraternities of the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC, 2018a). Eight fraternities were contacted to participate in this study, and leaders from Alpha Beta and Omega Zeta were the only two who accepted the invitation. Alpha Beta fraternity consisted of 82 total members, of which 7.3 percent were students of color (92.7 identified as White). Omega Zeta had 53 total members, with 13.2% identifying as students of color (86.8 percent White). Omega Zeta was the third most diverse IFC fraternity, in terms of percentage of

students of color, of all 22 IFC chapters.

The institutional site for the study was a large, public, non-profit, predominantly White, land-grant institution in the southeast. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (n.d.) further described it as a four-year, primarily residential, more selective, high research, doctoral granting institution with over 19,000 students. Over 3,000 students (23 percent of the student body) participated in a fraternity or sorority.

The participants consisted of newly initiated members in Alpha Beta and Omega Zeta fraternities. The research invitation for this study was sent to all recently initiated new members, initiating between fall 2015 and spring 2016, through a comparison focused sampling strategy. There were seven total participants. Two additional participants from Alpha Beta fraternity responded to the research invitation, but the researcher was never able to schedule

Table 1

Description of Participants

<u>Name*</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Year in school</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Fraternity</u>
Adam	19	First-year	White	Alpha Beta
Anthony	20	Sophomore	White	Alpha Beta
Brett	18	First-year	White	Alpha Beta
Brad	20	Sophomore	White	Alpha Beta
Sam	20	Sophomore	White	Omega Zeta
Steve	19	First-year	White	Omega Zeta
Scott	24	Graduate Student	White	Omega Zeta

* Name is a pseudonym for the participants' actual name

an interview time. Both participants agreed to participate initially, but after several interviews were conducted with other ABC participants they began to avoid communication and cancel meetings.

There were four participants from Alpha Beta fraternity and three participants from Omega Zeta fraternity. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym. Participants did not choose their pseudonym and the participants are unaware of

the name I assigned to them. The participants were as follows:

Data Collection

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with individual participants and follow up focus group interviews for all participants from each chapter. The initial individual interviews were conducted in a private conference room on campus. All interviews took

place between 30 and 60 minutes, and were recorded with a digital recording device.

One focus group interview was conducted for each of the four participants from Alpha Beta fraternity, and a separate focus group interview was held for the participants of Omega Zeta fraternity. Focus group interviews provided an opportunity to check against the baseline data I received from participants in the individual interviews. Several of the participants changed their stated opinions on race when they were surrounded by other members of their fraternity.

Data Analysis

Data was transcribed verbatim, reviewed, and coded manually, following Creswell's (2014) six steps for qualitative data. Creswell (2014) defined coding as "the process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks... and writing a word representing a category in the margins." (p. 197). An emergent coding technique was used to identify key themes within the participants' statements. During the coding process, notes were made on printed hard copies of the interview transcripts to begin organizing potential themes, consistently comparing the data and my own observations to allow for key themes to emerge.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined four criteria for judging the rigor of qualitative research: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. Credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are believable or credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A method used for this study to address credibility was to triangulate sources in both focus groups and individual interviews to see if conversations shifted or if the data were consistent. This data was triangulated with field notes from observations and the documents collected during data collection.

Credibility was also achieved through a process of member checking, a practice of preserving

the participants' explanation of their actual experiences (Creswell, 2007). I emailed each participant a transcribed copy of the interview for their review following each interview. They were asked to review in full detail for accuracy and respond back to me with any comments or suggestions.

Limitations

The qualitative nature of the data and the specific setting and region of the institutional site limits the generalizability of this study. The study was conducted at a large, public university in the southeast region of the United States where several racial incidents occurred at the time of the study. The racial climate on campus limits the findings of this study to this particular environment at this particular time. The small sample size and limited scope of the research further limits the generalizability of these findings.

Whites' racial attitudes are underestimated based on a desire to appear non-racist (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000). Many White men and women in the United States claim to live in a post-racial society, an environment and context in which race is no longer significant (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Through what Bonilla-Silva (2006) described as color-blind racism, White individuals often criticize and express resentment toward people of color through covert and institutionalized systems rather than name calling or overt ways of the past. These semantic moves as Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) called them, enable individuals to say something like, "I am not racist, but..." followed with a negative statement about people of color. Interpreting what Bonilla-Silva (2006) referred to as the *rhetorical maze* of color-blind filled semantic moves, was a challenge in analyzing the data.

Positionality

It is important to discuss my identity as a White male as salient to this project and my

interactions with the participants. I suspect the participants were more comfortable in speaking to me about race than they might have been speaking to a scholar of color. I identified myself as White prior to each interview, and informed the participants that my objective was to learn more about race and how race is experienced within predominantly White fraternities.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to critically examine the concept of fit during fraternity recruitment practices from male fraternity members in traditionally, predominantly White fraternities. This chapter presents the results of the current study. The results were divided into two major themes: (a) the minimization of race and racism and (b) normalizing Whiteness.

The Minimization of Race and Racism

Participants minimized race and racism in two significant ways. The first was to utilize color-blind tendencies to explain their lack of bias toward students of color during the recruitment process. Participants repeatedly insisted that race was not a salient issue in their experience, and particularly during fraternity recruitment. The second way in which participants downplayed the significance of race was the view that their fraternity is relatively diverse when compared to comparable organizations or the larger institutional or societal demographic numbers. These two methods make up the first major theme, which is the minimization of race and racism. The two subcategories under the minimization of race and racism theme are (a) color-blindness and (b) reframing diversity.

Color-blindness. The subcategory of color-blindness fits into the minimization of race and racism theme because of the way that participants spoke about the perception of race as a non-issue in their fraternity operations. Brett spoke about the sense that race does not matter in his lived experiences in Alpha Beta fraternity, stating, “It’s

just not really an issue at all within the fraternity.” Anthony pointed out that race has never been salient to him when he said, “Honestly, I can’t say that it’s ever been an issue in my past experience.”

Brett spoke about a lack of attention given to race during the recruitment process, saying, “It’s all about whether we like him and whether we think he’ll be a good fit in our fraternity. Race isn’t really brought up at all.” Sam spoke about the pursuit of other values in Omega Zeta fraternity’s recruitment of potential new members, but he also indicated that race was not a factor:

We just take whoever we think is best regardless of race, nationality, background, or anything like that. We just take who fits our ideals, who we think would blend into the fraternity well, who would be beneficial to us improving as an entire group, and who would be part of a brotherhood that we’re all proud of. I don’t think we really look at who we recruit based on nationality or anything like that.

When asked if he wished Alpha Beta fraternity would be more racially diverse than it currently was, Brad expressed no desire to change. He said, “Honestly, it doesn’t really matter to me. I like everybody who’s in it. I don’t really have a problem.”

The lack of a specific focus on recruiting students of color and the indifference to diversity in general have left both fraternities as largely White. Scott indicated that conversations about race and diversity were limited in a largely homogenous environment. When thinking about the impact of diversity on Omega Zeta fraternity, he stated, “Their idea of diversity is that we don’t all look at everything the same. I don’t know that they look at it from a standpoint of how it impacts any way we function other than that there are people who are different from themselves in the group.”

Reframing diversity. The subcategory of reframing diversity is the perception that

one's organization is diverse compared to the rest of the institution or compared to other organizations. Despite a lack of racial diversity, participants described their members as possessing diverse viewpoints on multiple issues, and applauded diversity in these settings. For several participants, diversity was reframed to allow the organization to fit within those new parameters and refocus the conversation on diversity to other areas.

Several participants mentioned the institution's racial diversity numbers as a justification of the homogenous environments within their fraternity. When asked to describe the racial demographics of Alpha Beta fraternity, Anthony pointed out the relative racial diversity of Alpha Beta fraternity in comparison to the low racial diversity at the institution. He said, "Yeah, I'd say predominantly White, but I think that goes along with the percentages here at (the University) at the current time. I think we're only six percent African American at this point." Brett concurred with Anthony's point about the racial makeup of the school when he claimed, "We kind of fit the demographic of the school and Greek Life as a whole. It's not like we're excluding other races, there's just not that many other races that come out to rush (recruitment) or go to (the University) at all."

In comparison to other fraternities, Anthony pointed out that Alpha Beta's recruitment of students of color exceeded the numbers recruited by other fraternities, with which he compared. "In the past four or five years I've only seen three African American brothers, but that's a lot more than a lot of other fraternities on this campus." He admitted, "I would like to see more African American brothers, but like, compared to others that is significantly more."

Steve admitted that Omega Zeta fraternity was primarily White, but he countered that they possessed a diverse group of White identified individuals. Steve said, "It's a diverse group of White people, so to speak. They're from all over the country and what not, but they're all

White." Anthony also spoke about the diversity in his brothers' backgrounds when he was asked if his views on race were different than other Alpha Beta fraternity members when he said, "My fraternity in particular is very, very diverse from the entire eastern seaboard to the entire country to the west coast. We have guys from everywhere."

Normalizing Whiteness

Whiteness can be normalized in settings like traditionally, predominantly White fraternities through the acceptance of only those students who assimilate into the already established culture, and through the continued reinforcement of norms and values that contribute to the fraternity culture. The two subcategories under the normalizing Whiteness theme explored here are (a) assimilation and (b) tradition and history.

Assimilation. Several participants spoke of the acceptance their fraternity culture breeds for all students, including students of color, if they assimilate into the already established culture of the organization. Anthony spoke about the type of fit that he looks for in a potential Alpha Beta member when he said, "I think a lot of what we look for in a guy is like one if they mesh with the current guys that we have, you know."

Participants discussed the combination of attributes they look for in a new member. Anthony talked about what he looks for in a potential Alpha Beta member while acknowledging the difficulty in determining fit in the short amount of time fraternities have during the recruitment process. Anthony spoke about relying on first impressions and appearance, "When you come out to rush (recruitment) it's all about first impressions unfortunately. We only have those two hours for two days at smokers before we give you a first round invite so it is like all about first impressions, you know." Anthony also admitted that there is a certain level of fit expected. He said, "Part of it, you want to hold yourself to a certain standard, you look nice, look presentable, coming out and you can hold a conversation with

the brothers. We want guys there who can get along with us.”

Brad relied primarily on gut feelings when determining fit for potential new members in Alpha Beta fraternity. He said, “Just someone who’s not really over the top. Just a nice, friendly person who doesn’t seem too weird to me.” Steve admitted the incongruence between selecting new members based on fit when the majority of the established fraternity members are homogenous in identities when he talked about the qualities Omega Zeta fraternity looks for in recruitment, “It’s a social group, it’s a group of friends, so you’re looking at a person and saying do I want to be friends with this person and hang out with them. And so to a certain degree, I guess, you are going to choose people more similar to you because that’s how people work.”

Steve explained that he expects each new member for Omega Zeta to contribute to the fraternity, regardless of identity. Steve stated, “So I’d say yeah, we like diversity, but we’re not specifically striving for it, we’re just striving to have good, you know each member that we look at letting in we look to have each member be a good part of the group.” Scott wondered out loud during the Omega Zeta focus group interview if he would have been an accepted member of the group if he did not contribute as much as he did in his role with the fraternity. Scott claimed, “I proved myself as a valuable member of the group by getting involved and helping people out and doing those things, so I don’t think that that was an issue, but I think if I wasn’t it might have been more of an issue, I don’t know.”

Tradition and history. Tradition and history were important talking points for participants within both fraternities. The way things have always been done guided a lot of conversation about the way things are now, and the way they would be in the future.

When discussing recruitment, participants in the Alpha Beta focus group discussed why their organization remains racially homogenous. Adam said, “But I mean it’s just kind of the way

it works out, most of the White kids rush (go through the membership recruitment process).” History was prevalent in the conversations with Alpha Beta fraternity members. Brett explained, “IFC rush (recruitment) is a predominantly White thing, and it’s always going to seem racist when you have a group where 95% of the kids are White, but that’s not, even if you take all the minorities that come through rush, you’re still going to be a 95% White fraternity. And that’s not necessarily, that doesn’t mean you’re racist. It’s just the way it is.” Anthony felt that the past was a major influencer. “I think that’s just the history,” he said. “It’s not even necessarily a thing that anyone does on purpose, but it’s just the way the south evolved through the 60s and 70s. It’s just how Greek life came to be.”

Adam suggested the reason some students of color are unwilling to commit to predominantly and traditionally, predominantly White fraternities is “Just because it’s not something that people do that often.” Brad suggested that it might be more because of recent racially charged incidents that occurred nationally. “Probably they have seen things like the Oklahoma thing (Sigma Alpha Epsilon racist incident at Oklahoma University) on social media and probably intimidated by it, and things like that. I know I wouldn’t be excited to join a fraternity if I saw something like that and I was another color.”

Some of the Alpha Beta participants blamed the institutional culture for the low percentage of students of color within the University’s fraternity and sorority membership. Anthony said, “I think part of it is getting the numbers up for students. If the numbers aren’t there for the student population then they’re definitely not going to be there in the Greek system because I mean the Greek system is how many percent of the students? It’s an unbelievably low number of the students.”

Adam suggested that Alpha Beta’s reputation as a “southern fraternity” could impact the willingness of students of color to consider going through the recruitment process. “We

do sometimes get the reputation as a southern fraternity. We do have a lot of guys from the south, but we're pretty diverse. So they could hear that and not come rush (seek membership from) us or something like that, but that's not how it is." Anthony also thought southern history had something to do with the current racial climate. Anthony stated, "Greek life in the south especially is very traditional. Father – son, mother – daughter, stuff like that. Legacies and all that. I think the tradition just carries on. That's a lot of it. I think it's just about breaking down those traditional values." Brett could not quite put his finger on the reason, but he also pointed to southern culture as an influencing factor in race relations. He explained, "I'm from up north and it's a lot more liberal. I don't know. It's not that I've come across people who are racist down here, there's just not as much diversity. I couldn't tell you why that is, to be honest. It's definitely different, but I'm not sure what the reason is."

Similar to Alpha Beta fraternity's conversation about the south, Omega Zeta fraternity participants discussed the notion of fraternity culture reflecting the society in general. Sam claimed, "I think it's more of a society issue because the fraternities represent the societal view of the region they're from more than anything. So I wouldn't necessarily narrow it to the fraternities. I think they just reflect the society as a whole." Steve agreed. He said, "So I think it's fraternities aren't segregated because they're fraternities, they're segregated because our country is still a bit segregated, you know, with White people generally hanging out with White people and Black people generally hanging out with Black people."

Brett expanded beyond southern culture to talk more about exclusivity within fraternities in general. He claimed, "I don't think the problem is that they're southern, I just think that they're just really exclusive and if they're exclusive in one area, then they probably are in another." Brett further explained the exclusivity factor within what he called "upper tier" fraternities.

He explained that he was not invited to several exclusive fraternities because of where he was from. He said, "Yeah, so as a northerner, I guess, there's only certain fraternities you can rush (seek out membership). I think those ones that are all southern or all from one area, they're also in general the better ones - the higher tier."

As a result of the selectivity of fraternity recruitment, participants discussed how racialized fraternity culture can be. Brett said, "Yeah, I don't know, like they may only take kids from one area of high schools where everyone knows each other. That might be a White area. So they don't get a lot of kids coming out to rush (recruitment)." Steve suggested that racialized culture in fraternities is perpetuated because of legacies. He said, "I think, you know, just to start off, fraternities, culturally, have been a White, southern thing. So it's something that the White southern parents would tell their kids about when they were in it."

Some Omega Zeta fraternity participants turned inward to reflect on the fraternity culture of racism that has developed rather than relying solely on institutional or regional culture. Scott expressed, "I think that there is definitely this thought of I think whether or not we do it intentionally there is definitely praise for being the frat guy, right?" Steve agreed, "I do think it's more of a culture problem of everything than it is a fraternity problem, but I have seen other instances of things where I think a specific fraternity culture develops."

Discussion

Participants discussed race as having no impact on their recruitment of potential new members to the fraternity. Participants re-centered the discussion of recruitment entirely on fit, explaining that they carried "no biases" concerning race. However, their primary concern was that students fit in with the rest of the group, the majority of whom were White, meaning they were looking for new members who looked and

acted as they do. Fit was emphasized as the most desired trait for potential new members, even though participants struggled to define exact characteristics of that fit. Participants of Alpha Beta fraternity explained fit as someone who was “cool,” well “liked,” someone people “like to hang out with,” and a “good guy.” Omega Zeta participants also struggled to define fit although they were slightly more descriptive. Participants of Omega Zeta described fit as someone who “fits our ideals,” contributes to “a brotherhood we’re all proud of,” someone who is able to focus on academics with “decent to strong grades,” and a student who is also able to accumulate “involvement” on campus. Neither definition of fit celebrates difference in any way.

The concept of fit during fraternity recruitment became a mechanism through which White students knowingly or unknowingly reinforced hegemonic Whiteness. The White habitus that the White students in this study constructed removed them from the experiences of students of color and normalized the White experience in unhealthy ways. Rather than seek out racial diversity, the participants stereotyped the out-group and shifted membership practices to qualities of fit as described by in-group members.

Participants explained that racial diversity was not a desired trait within their fraternity, so neither fraternity had any plans to change their current recruitment strategy to recruit more students of color. The lack of racial diversity within each fraternity was rationalized because of the lack of racial diversity at the institution and within the other IFC fraternities.

Both Alpha Beta and Omega Zeta participants mentioned the diversity in their group by reframing the context of diversity and presenting it as relative to the culture within which they operate. Participants mentioned the regional diversity within their fraternity, while also speaking about the advantages of a diverse membership with different ways of thinking about issues. Participants described diversity as

a positive when thinking about White brothers from regional areas outside of the south or White brothers who have a different way of viewing the world, but racial diversity for brothers identifying as a race other than White was not assigned the same value during the recruitment process. Participants reiterated again and again that racial diversity was not a trait they sought during their recruitment of new members.

Fit was racialized in other ways. Participants described exclusive fraternities as recruiting from only select high schools, generally private schools that admit a high proportion of White students. Steve explained that fraternity men look for people like them during recruitment, so it was only natural that White men continued to seek out other White men for membership.

Participants emphasized the importance of sameness in a variety of ways. While not explicitly addressing race, participants explained that they were looking for someone who could “mesh” with current members, a characteristic both fraternities expressed would create one cohesive brotherhood. However, not all participants felt included in the cohesive unit. Scott pointed out that he contributed to Omega Zeta fraternity through leadership roles, attendance at events, and a primary role in service projects, but he was concerned that he would not be accepted if he was not such a positive contributor. Scott also explained that he felt excluded from Omega Zeta fraternity because he is older, gay, and a graduate student. He was confident he would not have been recruited into the fraternity if his fraternity brothers made the decision rather than full-time staff members from Omega Zeta headquarters. Participants spoke about difference as being a positive during recruitment, but the culture within clearly valued assimilating into one united organization.

I consistently used the term student of color when referring to any student who did not identify as White. While both participating fraternities consisted of students of color identifying as Asian or Pan Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic or

Latino, and mixed race, participants referred to a Black and White binary when discussing race. This suggests a lack of multicultural competence and awareness of the intersectionality of racial identity, and indicates a need for additional training and education.

During the focus group interviews, participants discussed the perceived political nature of discussing diversity and inclusion, acknowledging that made it more difficult for them to engage in group discussions about race. During the group interviews, some of the members who spoke of acceptance during individual interviews espoused racist views in front of their peers. One example was Brett, who in individual interviews claimed that he was accustomed to being around people of color but was not very knowledgeable about race issues and wanted to learn more. Then, in focus group interviews, he lambasted multicultural education sessions as being “politically correct” and assuming the worst intentions of White people.

The racial culture on campus was seen by many of the participants as hostile and divisive, caused by students of color. They presented students of color as combative and as fabricating racial incidents in the past. Because of this perceived level of combativeness, the participants were hesitant to engage with students of color, and insisted on blaming students of color for the high level of racial tension on campus.

Participants explained how reliant they were on first impressions and appearance to make recruitment decisions because of limited time allotted during the recruitment period. Participants expressed that they often relied on gut feelings about a prospective new member, but many admitted having stereotypical or negative views of students of color. The participants described limited interactions with students of color in their daily lives, as well as their high level of discomfort when they did enter into conversations about race. The current fraternity recruitment format at Southeastern

and other universities with a Fall recruitment period leave little time for potential recruits to get to know existing fraternity members beyond first impressions and gut feelings.

Implications for Practice

This study presents the fraternity recruitment process as a racialized socialization process that normalizes structures of Whiteness, as described by Bonilla-Silva’s (2006) explanation of White habitus. Participants in this study claimed to be open to racial diversity one moment, but acknowledged their reluctance to engage with students of color because of increased racial tensions on campus in another. Participants were hesitant to engage in controversial topics on race, thus the current racial climate at the University impacted how some of those participants viewed students of color on campus. This study suggests that campus administrators should engage in dialogue, education sessions, and trainings with traditionally, predominantly White student organizations, particularly at times when race is a prevalent national or campus topic.

The insular nature created by these IFC fraternities left the White participants as unfamiliar with the racial experiences of their peers of color on campus. Because they had little experience with race and because they were largely removed from the experience of students of color, they were skeptical of racism and racist incidents on campus. This lack of awareness led participants to unify and stereotype out-group members.

Fit in traditionally, predominantly White fraternities was described by participants as having connection to history and tradition. Participants discussed how White is the norm in IFC fraternities. Some pointed to the concept of legacies, or students who have family members who were a member of the fraternity or sorority in the past, as a way that history perpetuates itself. Legacies are given preferential treatment during the recruitment process for fraternities.

Hegemonic White culture perpetuates itself through the continued search for members who fit the already established mold through the fraternity's history. Removing any formal preference or advantage for students who have legacy status would not unfairly position history and tradition as preferential factors in the fraternity recruitment process. Fraternities should give thought to the way in which the organization values legacies in a way that does not de-value those who do not have a familial history with the organization.

Most participants described recruitment as relying solely on first impressions. However, creating cross-racial friendships takes considerable time, especially on campuses where this is not the norm. There are a few changes to the recruitment process from a staffing perspective that could change the cultural environment. Fraternity and sorority life professionals should investigate ways to standardize recruitment processes, such as providing all potential new members the same t-shirt to wear during recruitment activities. Providing standardization around dress could eliminate differences based on first impressions made on appearances, as described by Anthony as a routine fraternity recruitment strategy. In addition, a deferred recruitment process could provide potential new members the opportunity to build relationships based on more than appearance, but additional research is needed to determine if deferring the process leads to additional perspective on race or only delays the same membership decisions. Fraternities should consider involving advisors more in the recruitment process as well, as advisors in this study were described as being extremely helpful but very hands off in recruitment decisions. However, advisors and chapter leaders cannot be assumed to be culturally competent. Both advisors and chapter leaders should engage in education and training around cultural competence prior to making recruitment decisions.

The fraternity education process was lacking

in a stated commitment to diversity. The fraternity and new member education processes for both fraternities focused on values of respect, honesty, and integrity, but did not specifically address race or diversity directly. Participants were satisfied with their current level of education and did not see a need to expand cultural awareness education because they had not observed or heard of bias or discrimination in their fraternity. Participants indicated that there were not cultural awareness educational requirements from the school either, but they acknowledged that there were optional sessions that they declined to participate in. Fraternity and sorority life staff should give consideration to required trainings since most White students will opt out of any optional offerings.

National fraternities and sororities should give thought to carefully examining and analyzing espoused organizational values. The participants in this study explained that diversity was not a value of their organization nor a desired component of organizational success. Stated values of diversity would go a long way in dismissing the notion that engagement with diversity is not a goal or outcome of fraternity membership.

Finally, fraternity and sorority practitioners should consider tracking racial demographics for the community and for each chapter, if this is not already being done. An updated list of demographic numbers is an important step toward helping chapters accurately evaluate their racial diversity.

Conclusion

Participants re-centered discussions of diversity during fraternity recruitment to focus on fit. Subscribing fraternity recruitment patterns to a color-blind approach in which students of all races were welcome, as long as an individual was a good fit with the existing fraternity members, removed the focus on the lack of racial diversity in the fraternity and placed

the focus on the qualities and characteristics in the individual.

These findings contribute to the larger discussion on Whiteness and its prevalence in campus culture. It is clear that there is significant work left to disrupt Whiteness in hegemonic White spaces, but traditionally, predominantly White fraternities could be spaces to change the racial division on campus instead of further perpetuating it.

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SORORITY AND FRATERNITY ATTITUDES TOWARDS INITIATION AND HAZING

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This study assessed students' attitudes towards fraternity and sorority intake processes at a regional Mid-Atlantic University (MU) to gain an understanding of overall attitudes and discern whether students distinguish differences between hazing and initiation procedures. Study results indicated that students understand the general purpose of initiation and the dangers of hazing; however, a general understanding may not translate to an understanding of the specific activities involved in new member initiation processes. Study results specified differences in understanding initiation and hazing are greatest by gender and fraternity/sorority council. Implications for higher education research and student affairs practice are discussed.

Taking on a mythical appeal in popular culture with films such as *Animal House* (1978), *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), *School Daze* (1988), *Legally Blonde* (2001) and the more recent comedy-drama series *Greek* (2007-2011), fascination with fraternity and sorority initiation captures public imaginations. Mythology aside, there is ongoing concern regarding student safety in recruitment and intake processes (Bittner, 2016). In 2017, the alcohol fueled, hazing related death of a 19-year-old fraternity member at Pennsylvania State University made national headlines leading to criminal charges against 26 associate members of the fraternity (Deak, 2018; Flanagan, 2017). In a lawsuit filed against the fraternity members, the student's parents alleged that he was forced to drink large amounts of alcohol as part of a hazing ritual (Deak, 2018). Similarly, four students at Louisiana State University were indicted with criminal charges in the alleged hazing death of an 18-year-old student at fraternity house (Andone & Burnside, 2018). It is estimated that one fraternity associate member has died nationally every year since 1970 due to dangerous hazing rituals (Filip, 2012; Nuwer, 1990, 2017). Given the breadth of hazing and related deaths, *The Huffington Post* has dedicated an entire webpage to informing publics on and off campus about hazing and its hazards ("Fraternity and Sorority

Hazing," 2017).

In this study we examine fraternity and sorority student members' attitudes towards initiation and hazing at Mid Atlantic University (MU), using the Survey of Attitudes About Fraternities and Sororities (SAAFS) instrument designed by Cokley et al. (2001). Our purpose was to determine whether students could distinguish differences between hazing and initiation so as to better effect educational programming for positive change.

Review of the Literature

Definitions

Definitions are useful in understanding the idiosyncrasies of initiation processes in fraternity and sorority communities. For the purposes of this study, hazing is defined as an illegal set of procedures which can inflict mental and physical harm (Nuwer, 1999). Binge drinking, deviant sexual behavior, and violence are often associated with hazing processes and draws negative media attention to the respective organizations and campuses (Foster, 2008; Gumprecht, 2006). Following this further, coerced destruction of personal property, tattooing, sleep deprivation, and performing acts of servitude are also forms of hazing which could cause physical or

psychological harm to those involved (Foster, 2008; Hansen, 2004).

Initiation is not necessarily a negative venture and is an important aspect of fraternity and sorority communities. Initiation processes typically involve social gatherings and the successful completion of activities for induction (Foster, 2008). Recruitment and intake are forms of initiation that do not inherently demean or dehumanize persons seeking membership. The use of the term “pledging” is diminishing overtime given traditional connections with hazing and the notion of “pledges,” persons bullied as they seek fraternity or sorority membership (Kimbrough, 1997, 2003).

The process for joining a fraternity or sorority varies depending on the umbrella under which the organization exists. For fraternities that are members of the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and sororities under the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), new members go through a recruitment process. This process allows men and women to see all organizations through a mutual selection process, where the organizations are evaluating the potential new member (PNM) and the PNM is also evaluating each organization. Once accepted as a new member, members of IFC and NPC organizations go through a new member orientation period, traditionally this has been considered pledging. Although national organizations have moved away from this title because of its association with hazing. IFC organizations such as Lambda Chi Alpha, Sigma Phi Epsilon, and Beta Theta Pi among many others have worked to eliminate any form of a new member period. Other IFC organizations, most notably, Phi Kappa Psi and Sigma Alpha Epsilon have shortened their new member period that range from a few days to a few weeks. NPC new member periods vary but most are less than eight weeks.

Member organizations of the National Pan-Hellenic Conference (NPHC) go through an intake process. This process consists of interest meetings, an application, and educational

sessions before one is initiated as a full member. Multicultural fraternities and sororities often use a process similar to intake, but some do have a recruitment process similar to IFC organizations. NPHC and MGC organizations often coordinate intake in clusters. The purpose of the clusters is to group a few chapters from the same region to have the same intake experience. This is a way to try to take the intake experience from being run on the local level to be more consistent with the national organization and eliminate any chance of hazing.

Negative initiation processes may be the largest cost to individuals associated with fraternity and sorority membership (Biddix, Matney, Norman, & Martin, 2014; Kase, Rivera, & Hunt, 2016; Simmons, Bauman, & Ives, 2015). In fact, for students, the line between hazing and positive team building may be blurred, which points to a need for additional research in this area (Campos, Poulous, & Sipple, 2005; Cimino, 2011). While some college student affairs personnel advocate to rid college campuses of sororities and fraternities due to perpetual fatal incidents of hazing, overall the costs and benefits of membership to individuals and institutions is mixed (Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009; Biddix, Singer, & Aslinger, 2016; Martin, Parker, Pascarella, & Blechschmidt, 2015; McGinley, Rosependa, Liu, & Richman, 2016; Morgan, Zimmerman, Terrell, & Marcotte, 2015; Walker, Martin, & Hussey, 2015). Much research attests to the positive benefits of fraternity and sorority membership, ranging from higher graduation rates, partaking in prominent campus leadership positions, greater civic engagement, and greater alumni involvement (Ahren, Bureau, Ryan, & Torres, 2014; DeSantis, 2007; Gumprecht, 2006; Hevel, Martin & Pascarella, 2014). In addition, given social connections, fraternities and sororities produce prominent and generous alumni (Lara & Johnson, 2014). As such, the institutional relationship with these organizations can be considered symbiotic, with fraternity and sorority offices providing a bridge, mediating

relations (Gumprecht, 2006). Unfortunately, the positive aspects of fraternity or sorority membership are often overshadowed by negative facets, the foremost of which is hazing.

Scope of the Problem

Hazing is an issue globally, non-unique to the United States (Guerrero, Johnson, & Holman, 2016; Silva, Caldeira, Mendes, Botelho, & Martins, 2016) or to fraternities or sororities (Bourke, 2016; Silveira & Hudson, 2015), or even to modern generations (Butt-Thompson, 1908; McCarl Jr., 1976; Schlegel & Barry, 1979). Hazing is thought to engender solidarity, solicit individual commitment to an organization, and exert dominance over those seeking to become members (Cimino, 2011). However, the result of hazing activities can result in psychological and physical damage to an individual, even death. In addition, known hazing activities are risky for higher educational institutions as well as sororities and fraternities as they can result in lawsuits generating millions of US dollars in compensatory and punitive damages (Alvarez, 2015; Merriweather, 2016; Parks, Jones, Ray, & Hughey, 2015).

In 2009 Allan and Madden published an extensive mixed methods study on student hazing: 1,482 college students at 53 U.S. institutions, along with 300 staff and student interviews at 18 of the institutions. They found that students perceived hazing prevention messaging by campus actors limited to “hazing is not tolerated” overtures. However, not all students agreed that hazing is a problem and it was found that there is tacit acceptance of hazing practices on campuses beyond fraternities and sororities. In fact, Allan and Madden found that there were more students who recognized hazing as a positive rather than a negative consequence which is corroborated by other literature casting hazing as a “rite of passage” to adulthood ritual (Hansen, 2004). As phrased by one fraternity member in Govan (2001), “...No devotion or loyalty for our organization can be learned

through a no-pledge intake process” (pp. 708-709).

In terms of the prevalence of hazing, Allan and Madden found 47% of students had experienced hazing. They also found that 9 out of 10 students who experienced hazing acts did not consider the experience as hazing (Allan & Madden, 2009). Moreover, 95% of students who acknowledged they had been hazed did not report the actions to campus authorities. Students acknowledged hazing as part of campus culture, with almost 70% of students reporting they knew hazing existed in other organizations in addition to their own organization. These results were replicated in Allan and Madden (2012) and are corroborated by Gose (1997) who found that some students who expressed that hazing was mild and worthwhile for the bonding it engendered (Campos, Poulos, & Sipple, 2005; Gose, 1997) and membership benefits accrued (Cimino, 2011).

Hazing Consequences

Regardless of form, hazing is illegal in most states (44 out of 50), can be prosecuted as assault, battery, or other criminal statutes in the remainder states, is banned on campuses and expressly forbidden by national fraternity and sorority councils through documented policies (Alvarez, 2015; Parks, Jones, & Hughey, 2015). For example, the NPHC banned hazing in 1990 and reaffirmed this ban in 2003 (Foster, 2008). As part of this ban on hazing, NPHC has abolished new member pledging and now conducts intake programs; however, it is unclear to what extent this policy change has impacted the frequency and nature of hazing. Underground hazing continues to exist and poses a significant challenge for administrators (Nuwer, 1999; Salinas & Boettcher, 2018).

Under the Cleary Act, many campus professionals are bound to disclose criminal incidents on campus annually, including hazing incidents of a criminal nature. With increasing liability for unchecked hazing practices, most

colleges and universities are compelled to address hazing allegations. Some institutions have created hotlines for potential hazing cases to be reported. Many institutions regularly impose restrictions on new member intake processes, student organization status and other privileges in response to hazing and other campus violations. Colleges and universities also have the option of closing chapters permanently, especially in the face of severe, repeated hazing incidents including but not limited to those resulting in fatalities. In the absence of closure, organizations can acquire a bad reputation that may be difficult to change. For example, due to negative publicity surrounding a hazing incident at the University of Texas, Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity membership declined from 80 to 12 members (Gose, 1997).

Nevertheless, in spite of decades of negative publicity including research, trade, and news articles on hazing, binge drinking, drugs, smoking, and rape, since the early 2000s, fraternities and sororities have increased in popularity among first-year college students (Ingraham, 2015). Moreover, researchers have difficulty estimating the exact number of hazing related fatalities because, in an effort to manage institutional risks and publicity, college fraternities and sororities rarely acknowledge the truth associated with hazing related deaths (Allan & Madden, 2009; Alvarez, 2015).

Theoretical Framework: Belonging

According to Strayhorn (2012), belonging in a campus environment regards a student's perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group [e.g., campus community] or others on campus [e.g., faculty, peers].

For many students, the college experience is the first opportunity away from parental

oversight but is also a point of distancing from the life students traditionally knew, cultures and environments in which minimally there is the safety in the routine ordinary. Joining a fraternity or sorority broadens a student's sense of community and gives emotional safety as well as a sense of belonging as one traverses college experiences (Giacolone, 2018; Soria, Troisi, & Stebleton, 2012; Strayhorn, 2012). In addition, joining fraternity and sorority communities further encourages that independence through the decision to join a social organization of highly influential peers (Keating et al., 2005). The contention is that campus social dynamics, along with student desires for acceptance, render many new members, especially first year students, vulnerable to hazing by associate members in fraternity and sorority communities (Keating et al., 2005; Pershing, 2006). In fact, many students may be unable to discern the difference between initiation processes and hazing (Cimino, 2011) as they seek a space on campus to belong.

Research Method

Given ongoing hazing concerns, and particularly the educational need of students to be able to discern the difference between acceptable initiation processes and hazing, the present study assessed students' attitudes towards hazing and initiation at a large, research extensive, multiculturally diverse institution in the Mid-Atlantic region of the US (MU). The purpose of the present study was to create a baseline assessment of student attitudes towards hazing prior to the conduct of a university level inquiry into fraternity and sorority life more broadly, and implementation of educational programming to address campus hazing. As such, we examined whether students can distinguish differences between hazing and initiation processes to inform on campus processes.

Instrumentation

The primary research question in this study

was what are the attitudes of MU fraternity and sorority members towards initiation and hazing? The authors used Cokley et al. (2001) Survey of Attitudes About Fraternities and Sororities (SAAFS) to assess the attitudes of fraternity and sorority members at this institution. Cokley et al. (2001) conducted a study at a Midwestern University and gained 258 respondents. Note that given the timeframe, positive initiation in the survey is measured by the term pledging and while the survey was distributed unaltered, our interpretations are with the more contemporary term, initiation.

Forty-seven items were included on the survey, which can be digested down to six factors: purpose of pledging (initiation), impact of pledging (initiation), conformity to pledging (initiation) rules, perceptions of fraternities and sororities, moral concerns about pledging (initiation), and beliefs about pledging (initiation) difficulty. Scores ranged from 1 to 5 with higher scores on the purpose and impact of pledging (initiation) items indicate a positive disposition towards initiation for the individual and the group. Higher scores on the conformity to pledging (initiation) rules factor indicate the degree to which students believe in rigid conformity, which for some represents mild hazing to the extent activities are internalized as demeaning. Higher scores on the beliefs and perceptions factor indicate student positive esteem of fraternities and sororities. Higher scores on the morality factor indicate student willingness to report discomfiting or illegal activities. Finally, higher scores on the difficulty factor indicate student beliefs that initiation should be hard. The latter two factors appear to reflect student tolerance for hazing.

Utilizing a principal axis factor extraction and direct oblimin rotation, Cokley et al. (2001) found that the SAAFS scale with an additional scale regarding student beliefs about alcohol use (2.8%) accounted for 52% of the variance in student attitudes about initiation: 24.7% purpose of pledging (initiation), 11.4% impact

of pledging (initiation), 3.6% conformity to pledging (initiation) rules, 3.5% perception of fraternities and sororities, 3.0% moral concerns about pledging (initiation) and 2.5% difficulty of pledging (initiation). In terms of reliability, the factor regarding beliefs about alcohol was dropped as the coefficient was determined to be uninterpretable due to the extremity of its negative skew. Alpha coefficients for the remainder ranged from $\alpha = 0.527$ (moral concerns) to $\alpha = 0.867$ (purpose of pledging[initiation]), with all but one of the remainder, conformity ($\alpha = 0.639$), registering an alpha greater than $\alpha = 0.70$. As such, the reliability of the purpose of pledging (initiation) factor was good with the conformity and moral concerns factors registering a questionable reliability. All other factors registered at an acceptable level (see Kline, 2000).

A secondary research question was whether there were differences in student attitudes towards initiation and hazing by race or gender? Like Cokley et al. (2001), we collected data on student race and gender. We also added an indicator for fraternity/ sorority council. While we considered an indicator of the exact fraternity/ sorority, we considered that specific identification of participants by chapter would increase the risk of individual identifiability, especially in smaller chapters. In addition, we did not want to discourage candor from participants out of the fear of identification.

Cokley et al. (2001) found that race and gender was a factor in the way initiation processes were perceived by students in fraternities and sororities. In particular, Cokley et al. found that African American students had more positive attitudes toward the purpose and impact of initiation and that Latino/a Americans thought that initiation should be easier, as compared to their European and African American counterparts. They also found that women had more positive attitudes towards initiation than men. Owen, Burke, and Vichesky (2008) found fraternity members more likely to be hazing

victims than sorority members, which may contribute to the more favorable disposition of sorority members towards initiation.

A significant limitation of this tool is its age and lack of update over a decade in which there were many developments in fraternity and sorority initiation processes, updates and consistency in terminology, as well as heightened attention nationally on campuses and beyond. This tool is used contemporarily (e.g., Hamilton, Scott, LaChapelle, & O'Sullivan, 2016; Ladd, 2016) and according to Google Scholar the work was cited 38, including in important volumes such as *The Influence of Fraternity and Sorority Involvement: A Critical Analysis of Research (1996-2013)* (2014), *Black Greek-Letter Organizations 2.0: New Directions in the Study of African American Fraternities and Sororities* (2011), and *Critical Perspectives on Hazing in Colleges and Universities: A Guide to Disrupting Hazing Culture* (2018). As such there is an underlying value the needs for updating notwithstanding. As a baseline assessment, we found the tool to be valuable and execution of the tool to be helpful towards the development of a new instrument befitting of fraternity and sorority life contemporarily.

Site Selection and Participants

To assess contemporary student attitudes towards initiation and hazing, the authors distributed an online survey to all undergraduate fraternity and sorority members enrolled at Mid-Atlantic University (MU), a large, public, doctoral extensive institution, in Spring 2012 (N=1,589). The time selected was just past the initiation period to optimize participation rates, tapping into the enthusiasm of new members. In addition to reasons of convenience, the campus selected has attributes of multiculturalism, including equitable graduation rates by race/ethnicity, a large commuter population in addition to on campus residents, as well as a significant number of lower socioeconomic status and first-generation college students.

IRB approval for distribution at MU was

obtained (UMCIRB 11-001062). The survey was available for four weeks with three prompts urging student completion and the Office of Greek Life offered a \$50 Best Buy gift card to encourage participation. The total number of students participating was 197, yielding a response rate of 8.07%. Generally, response rates to paper surveys have been on the decline, at a high of 60% in the 1960s to about 21% in the 1990s (Dey, 1997). Response rates for online surveys are notoriously low, with some estimates as low as 10%; nevertheless, there is little research confirming response bias due to low online survey participation rates (Nair & Adams, 2009).

The sample garnered was reasonably reflective of fraternity and sorority demographics at MU. At MU, the NPC has 822 members, the IFC 602, the NPHC 90, and the MGC 29. In the current sample, NPC members constitute 48.7%, IFC 39.5%, NPHC 9.2%, and MGC 1%. Racial/ethnic minorities make up 13.8% of the sample. By gender, women make up nearly 59% of the sample. See Table 1.

Data Analysis

Qualtrics software was used to issue the survey. Survey results were imported into IBM PASW (SPSS) for analysis. A missing values analysis was calculated, revealing that there were no more than 2.5% skips per survey item. By individual, there were four respondents omitted for skips greater than 4%, including one test entry by one of the researchers. The remainder of skips on the SAAFS was imputed to the mode. No demographic skips were imputed. There were three skips by council and one by gender which coincided with a council skip. There were no skips by race. The effective sample size was $n = 195$. In addition to descriptive statistics, a Student's *t*-test was calculated to discern gender differences. A one-way ANOVA was used to identify differences by race/ethnicity and council. Tukey post-hoc tests were used to further probe differences by race/ethnicity

Table 1*Sample Demographic Characteristics*

	Total (N= 195)	By Gender (N=192)		By Council (N=192)			
		Men	Women	IFC	MGC	NPHC	NPC
Race/ Ethnicity							
Asian/ Pacific Islander	3 (1.5%)	2 (1%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	0	2 (1%)	0
Black/ African	10 (5.1%)	4 (2.1%)	6 (3.1%)	4 (2.1%)	0	6 (3.1%)	0
Caucasian/ European	168 (86.2%)	67 (34.9%)	100 (52.1%)	65 (33.9%)	1 (0.5%)	8 (4.2%)	91
Latino/ Hispanic	7 (3.6%)	3 (3.1%)	4 (2.1%)	3 (3.1%)	1 (0.5%)	0	3 (3.1%)
Multicultural/ Multiethnic	7 (3.6%)	4 (2.1%)	3 (3.1%)	4 (2.1%)	0	2 (1%)	1 (0.5%)
Total	195	80 (41%)	115 (58.5%)	77 (39.5%)	2 (1%)	18 (9.2%)	95 (48.7%)
Missing							
Gender	1 (0.5%)						
Council	3 (1.5%)						

and council. Cohen's *ds* were calculated to determine effect sizes. Using a Cohen's *d*, effect sizes can be interpreted as follows: 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, and 0.8 = large (Cohen, 1988).

Results

Overall, students reported strong, positive attitudes towards the purpose of pledging [initiation] ($M = 4.41, SD = 0.43$) and impact of pledging [initiation] ($M = 4.40, SD = 0.48$), with mean scores above 4 on a 5-point scale. Students were least likely to report strong attitudes towards conformity to pledging (initiation) rules ($M = 2.63, SD = 0.87$) and beliefs about pledging (initiation) difficulty ($M = 2.92, SD = 0.82$), both being indicators of student tolerance for hazing. That said, for both items are above the half-way mark on the 2.5 scale. In addition, student variation in reporting on these measures

is more widely distributed than the former two. The most variation occurred within the measure of student moral concerns about pledging ($M = 3.38, SD = 0.99$), one of the two factors found not reliable but retained in Cokley et al. (2001), the other being conformity to pledging rules. Overall student beliefs and perceptions about fraternities and sororities were positive ($M = 3.83, SD = 0.56$).

Gender differences were found for four of the six factors. Women felt slightly stronger about of the impact of pledging (initiation) than men ($M_{women} = 4.48, SD_{women} = 0.45; M_{men} = 4.28, SD_{men} = 0.52; d=0.411$). Men felt stronger about conforming to the rules of pledging (initiation) than women ($M_{men} = 2.95, SD_{men} = 0.88; M_{women} = 2.4, SD_{women} = 0.79; d=0.658$). Men agreed more strongly about the beliefs and perception of fraternities and sororities than women ($M_{men} = 3.98, SD_{men} = 0.58; M_{women} = 3.73, SD_{women} =$

0.53; $d=0.45$). Men showed a slightly higher moral concern about the pledging (initiation) process than women ($M_{men} = 3.62$, $SD_{men} = 1.08$; $M_{women} = 3.4$, $SD_{women} = 0.9$; $d=0.221$). Men agreed much more strongly about the difficulty of the pledging (initiation) process than women ($M_{men} = 3.25$, $SD_{men} = 0.82$; $M_{women} = 2.69$, $SD_{women} = 0.76$; $d=0.708$). Regarding gender differences, the effect size for moral concern was small, but for pledging (initiation) difficulty, the effect size was large. All other effect sizes were moderate.

ANOVA results indicate significant differences in pledging/ hazing attitudes race/ ethnicity and council ($F(4,187) = 5.39$, $p \leq .05$). Racial/ ethnic differences in attitudes towards the purpose of pledging were found using at Tukey. There were significant differences between African American and European American/ Caucasian students as well as African American and Latinx/ Hispanic students. African American students felt less strongly about the purpose of pledging (initiation) than their European American/ Caucasian and Latinx/ Hispanic peers ($M_{African American} = 3.86$, $d=0.76$; $M_{European American/ Caucasian} = 4.44$ (reference group); $M_{Latino/ Hispanic} = 4.61$, $d=0.90$; $p \leq .05$). These effect sizes are large. No other racial differences were found.

The ANOVA also indicated significant differences by council ($F(3,188) = 2.70$, $p \leq .05$). On the purpose of pledging indicator, results of the Tukey's test mirror results on race. IFC members felt more strongly about the purpose of pledging than NPHC members ($M_{IFC} = 4.45$ (reference group); $M_{NPHC} = 4.15$, $d=0.538$; $p \leq .05$). This effect is moderate. Significant differences by council were also found in perceptions of the importance of conformity to pledging (initiation) rules, beliefs in the importance of pledging (initiation), and how difficult the pledging (initiation) process should be ($F_{conformity}(3,188) = 6.46$, $p \leq .05$; $F_{beliefs}(3,188) = 3.67$, $p \leq .05$; $F_{difficulty}(3,188) = 7.29$, $p \leq .05$). However, these differences arose between the IFC and NPC. IFC members felt more strongly about conforming to pledging (initiation) rules

than NPC members ($M_{IFC} = 2.93$; $M_{NPC} = 2.37$; $d=0.392$, $p \leq .05$). IFC members felt slightly stronger in their beliefs and perceptions of fraternities and sororities than NPC members ($M_{IFC} = 3.99$; $M_{NNPC} = 3.72$; $d=0.295$, $p \leq .05$). There were also differences in beliefs regarding the difficulty of pledging (initiation) with IFC registering stronger attitudes ($M_{IFC} = 3.23$; $M_{NPC} = 2.67$; $d=0.416$ $p \leq .05$). Each of these effect sizes is small, with the effect size regarding difficulty approaching moderate. See Table 2.

Discussion

We found that students understand the general purpose of initiation as well as the individual and collective positive impacts of joining a fraternity or sorority. In addition, beliefs about fraternities and sororities were overall positive. However, a general understanding may not translate to the specifics of initiation processes, especially when they bleed into hazing. The results indicate that students have a tolerance for hazing as shown by their responses to conformity to pledging (initiation) rules and difficulty in pledging (initiation) scales. That said, there are wider variations in student responses to the scales with white men and IFC members more likely to strongly agree to rule conformity and initiation difficulty. In this vein, our results are similar to Cokley et al. (2001). Additionally, both studies found that women felt that pledging should be a more positive experience than men.

It is clear from both studies that there is a gender effect in pledging/ hazing perceptions. IFC members in particular were more likely to believe in strong conformity to pledging rules, which may indicate greater complicity with mild forms of hazing. They also are more fervent in their beliefs that pledging processes should be difficult, although it should be noted that the effect sizes are small, approaching moderate. While a broader, cross-institutional study could produce more widely applicable results, these results important, especially given that the

Table 2
Results

	Overall Mean	By Race			By Gender		By Council			
	(N=195)	<i>MSB</i>	<i>MSW</i>	<i>F</i>	Men	Women	<i>T</i>	<i>MSB</i>	<i>MSW</i>	<i>F</i>
Purpose of Pledging	4.41 (0.43)	0.93	0.17	5.39*	4.46 (0.45)	4.37 (0.42)	1.44	0.5	0.18	2.7*
Impact of Pledging	4.4 (0.48)	0.27	0.24	1.14	4.28 (0.52)	4.48 (0.45)	-2.78*	0.54	0.23	2.32
Conformity to Pledging Rules	2.63 (0.87)	0.53	0.77	0.69	2.95 (0.88)	2.4 (0.79)	4.55*	4.53	0.7	6.46*
Beliefs & Perceptions of Greek Organizations	3.83 (0.56)	0.18	0.32	0.55	3.98 (0.58)	3.73 (0.53)	3.2*	1.12	0.31	3.67*
Moral Concerns about Pledging	3.82 (0.99)	0.71	0.99	0.72	3.62 (1.08)	3.4 (0.9)	-2.62*	1.78	0.97	1.83
Beliefs about Pledging Difficulty	2.92 (0.82)	0.37	0.69	0.53	3.25 (0.82)	2.69 (0.76)	4.85*	4.55	0.63	7.29*

more publicized hazing accounts are typically more violent and involve men. Nevertheless, men were slightly more likely than women to raise moral concern, indicating a willingness to report illegal activity or question activities with which they are uncomfortable. This latter finding may be attributable to differences in how men and women perceive their own abilities to voice concerns in life, fraternity/ sorority life notwithstanding (Gilligan, 1993). By contrast, women more likely to approach initiation processes more positively overall and may have fewer moral concerns.

Results in this study and in Cokley et al. (2001) varied in both magnitude and direction with respect to race/ ethnicity. Cokley et al. found that African American members had more positive beliefs about the purpose of pledging than Caucasian/European American and Latinx/ Hispanic members. In this research, we found the opposite: African American members had

fewer positive beliefs about the purpose of pledging than Caucasian/European American and Latinx/Hispanic members. It is unclear whether these differences may be real, reflecting differences evolving over time and space, or the result of sampling error, and/ or attributable to differences in survey administration (online as compared to face to face). Survey terminology itself may be part of this possible time conundrum. NPHC organizations banned pledging in favor of intake processes before Cokley et al.'s (2001) survey administration; however, it takes a longer time to change culture than policy. As such, the results we see may be reflective of a culture shift emanating from that ban.

Study Limitations

Limitations of this study as indicated above include the limited response rates of online surveys, verbiage within the instrument, as well as the questionable construction of at least two of

the survey scales. However, the wide variations found in those scale may be the distinction between students who are hazing tolerant and those who are not. In addition, this study is limited to a single large, doctoral, research extensive institution. Yet, results are consistent with the Cokley et.al study almost two decades ago. For our purposes, this indicates that there is work to be done on our campus and our hope in light of these findings is that other campuses are prompted to reflect on the attitudes of students towards initiation and hazing, tailoring campus programming to meet students where they are developmentally.

Conclusion

This study assessed students' attitudes towards fraternity and sorority intake processes at a regional Mid-Atlantic University (MU) to gain an understanding of overall attitudes and discern whether students distinguish differences between hazing and initiation. Our research questions were what are the attitudes of MU fraternity and sorority members towards initiation and hazing and whether there were differences in student attitudes by gender, race/ethnicity, or council? Results indicate that students understand the general purpose of initiation and the positive impacts of fraternities and sororities; however, this general understanding does not translate to an understanding of the specifics activities involved in new member induction processes. In addition, we found that specified differences in understanding the hazing and pledging processes are greatest by gender and fraternity/sorority council.

Implications for Future Practice and Research

Regarding the survey itself, we have several suggestions towards its reconstruction. First, terminology in Cokley et.al. (2001) is problematic. We recommend a revision of the survey questions as the terminology in fraternities and sororities communities is constantly changing, so

the survey questions should change as well, using procedures mapping across survey iterations that will allow researchers to compare results over time. Second, the questionnaire uses the terms "pledging" and "hazing" almost interchangeably. As discussed previously, these are defined and recognized as separate processes, and questions should reflect this clear delineation. Moreover, as the term "pledging" has negative connotations as well, it too should be replaced with a term such as "initiation" (Biddix et al., 2014). Third, this survey is long and several items are not relevant to hazing. These should be revised or deleted and replaced with relevant questions that will be easier for students to interpret. We suggest utilizing a focus group consisting of faculty members, fraternities and sororities professionals, students, and researchers to design a questionnaire that is more indicative of the current language used by students in fraternities and sororities.

With respect to practice, hazing continues to be a major problem in fraternities and sororities. The first priority of campus administrators must be the safety of students, including those who choose to join a fraternity or sorority. Ongoing education should be a major priority that begins before the members even join and should be a major part of the intake process. However, these messages seem to be delivered as blanket, no-tolerance policies having little effect on students' choices and behavior. In particular, women need to feel empowered enough to question practices that give them discomfort. More importantly, they need to feel that not only *should* they report illegal activity to appropriate campus personnel, but that it is the right thing to do ethically. For men, education may need to be more extensive. Males can learn that while participation in a fraternity yields significant benefits, that one cannot recoup those benefits if one is dead. Men at this age may also need education along the lines of understanding one's personal physical limits.

Colleges and universities can help sororities

and fraternities devise creative means to curb hazing. A long-standing program with a track record of positive results is Oregon State's Sigma Phi Epsilon chapter's Balanced Man Program (BMP) (Moody, 2006). In the BMP process, recruits become members immediately who work collaboratively across organization classes to enact membership development opportunities such as workshops on proper etiquette, yoga, and cooking skills. Moody (2006) reported the advantages for the students as well as the university that have come since the implementation of the BMP, including an 11% increase in recruits since 1990, a 50% reduction in alcohol related incidents over a five-year period, and an average grade point average of 3.0, the highest among fraternities on campus (Moody, 2006). The key is that as new classes of students enter campus and join organizations, educational initiatives must be ongoing given the cyclical ebb and flow of the hazing phenomenon. Beyond educating students, campus administrators as well as other faculty and staff involved in fraternity/ sorority life must not only talk zero hazing tolerance, but enforce it. Ongoing educational initiatives and accountability are essential elements to help eliminate hazing in fraternities and sororities.

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