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Conceptualizing Brotherhood and Sisterhood: Does First-Generation and or Being the First Greek Affiliating Family Member Matter?

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Problem Addressed

The research currently in the field regarding brotherhood and sisterhood does not

presently take into account first generation students who belong to greek letter societies and

organizations. This lack of information results in the opportunity to raise awareness and

understanding for this unique student population. First generation students are disproportionately

members from underrepresented groups (Engle, 2007). They are also entering college less

academically prepared (Choy, 2001). They are also more likely to work while in college (Saenz

et al., 2007). These things in combination show inconsistency in the knowledge we have. While

we already know that first-generation college students need specialized attention, we can further

postulate that our first-generation college students who are also greek-affiliated need a

specialized approach as well. With the number of first-generation students on the rise this is a

population we need to further study to understand. This understanding could result in improved

practices for this student population. It is our hope that our research will contribute to the success

of our greek-affiliated, first-generation students.

Literature Review

While there is no research that focuses specifically on first-generation students who also

identify as greek-affiliated, there is some research that can provide us context. Most research

done regarding fraternities and sororities have had a limited focus. Whereas previously the

governing/umbrella organizations were hesitant to research themselves (Hevel et al., 2015) the

organization that serves the interest of Student Affairs professional who work with fraternities

and sororities has adopted a focus on the research of greek-letter organizations. One of the

central values of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors is research. The research topics around fraternities and sororities usually involve the following: alcohol/substance abuse, hazing, sexual assault, etc. There has long been a desire for research that can statistically prove the benefit of fraternal membership on a student's academic performance. This is an incredibly complex question: it is hard to isolate fraternal membership alone to show its effect on academic performance.

The Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS) had successfully conducting interesting research on fraternal membership due to its longitudinal style. The results found that fraternities and sororities have an effect on the GPA of a student but not necessarily the cognitive processes, such as critical thinking. Research even suggests that fraternity membership has a negative effect on a male's critical thinking skills. They did not find a strong enough relationship for the women. (Hevel & Bureau, 2014). Further research has found that students who joined their organization in the second semester performed better academically than those who joined in the first semester (Debard et al., 2006).

Moral reasoning has been another area of research. The WNS found there was no direct relationship between greek membership on a students' moral reasoning (Hevel et al., 2015). This is especially interesting because an important area of the fraternity/sorority experience is the concept of accountability.

A value that greek-letter organizations often espouse is the concept of leadership. When viewing leadership in the lens of the Social Change Model (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996) research shows that greek students show significantly higher levels of leadership according to that model than non-affiliated students (Gerhardt, 2008).

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly to our research is the idea that students in fraternities and sororities can experience the organizations differently. This is important for the sake of our research because our research focuses on just how students experience greek-letter organizations differently. We have decided to focus on the concept of brotherhood and sisterhood in particular.

McCreary and Schutts (2015) published their work focusing on the concept of brotherhood. After presenting this research at a major conference they were approached by the national governing council of 26 organizations (the National Panhellenic Conference) about creating an instrument that could shed more light on the women of their organizations. The instruments were created using focus groups that were coded to find the various schemas of brother/sisterhood.

The research found the following schemas for how fraternity men conceptualize brotherhood:

1. Solidarity – this concept has both bright and dark aspects. The men who scored highly in this area often see brotherhood with a focus on the team. The men stated if they lost a loved one, his brothers were there at the funeral. This is the brighter side of solidarity. The dark side of solidarity could be seen in men who spoke about how if they were in a fight at the bar, his brothers would have his back. When fraternities focus on solidarity (especially during the New Member process) and creating a cohesive team, it can result in higher levels of hazing.

2. Shared Social Experience – this schema represents all of the public aspects of fraternities: parties, letters on shirts, hanging out with women, etc. Men who see brotherhood through this schema also show a higher level of drinking and risky behavior.

3. Belonging – the feeling of being authentic to one's self and being accepted. This is similar to the original purpose of fraternities: a place for men to be among those who accept them for who they are.

4. Accountability – challenging others/being challenged yourself to be a better person. This is the highest schema of brotherhood.

The research found the following schemas for how sorority women conceptualize sisterhood:

1. Shared Social Experience – the lowest level schema for the women is one that focuses on photos with sisters, social outings, and being known as a member of a specific organization. The research has yet to see a relationship to this and alcohol consumption, but the researchers have stated they would suspect there would be a relationship.

2. Belonging – this area is similar to that of the fraternity schemas, feeling welcomed and feeling that they can be their selves.

3. Support and Encouragement - this concept is the same as the fraternity concept of solidarity, minus the negative aspects.

4. Accountability – this is the concept that members should hold one another to the standards of the organizations.

5. Common Purpose – this is a major change from the schemas for the fraternity men. This schema is the idea that sororities are bigger than one person, one chapter. The idea of "we're all in this together" was heard often. This schema was not found in the fraternity men.

Interestingly enough, the researchers also found that fraternity brotherhood is quite stagnant, whereas sorority sisterhood is a process. Meaning that however a man joins his fraternity and his conceptualization of brotherhood is not likely to change over time. Sorority women often move through the schemas toward Common Purpose with their ideation of what sisterhood maturing as they do. Not surprisingly, many older members and alumnae see sisterhood as a Common Purpose over a Shared Social Experience.

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Our team realized that the affiliation a student shares within their organization's council (National Panhellenic Conference, North American Interfraternity Council, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council) might affect the results of this research. For that purpose, we have decided that regardless of the historical/traditional race/ethnic background of our students, we would look specifically at councils. This is made difficult because many Caucasian students participate in

our historically Black Greek-letter organizations, and many minority students participate in our

traditionally white organizations. This could result in a variance in the results. We believe a

concept of brotherhood or sisterhood would differ by council.

Research Question(s) or Hypothesis

Our research sought to collect data that could be used to further understand the relationship

between schemas of brotherhood/sisterhood and students first-generation or first-greek affiliation

status. Our research team concluded that the way in which students conceptualize brotherhood

and sisterhood could represent the reasoning behind their reasons for joining their organization.

The instruments used by our team were created by Gentry McCreary and Joshua Schutts. The

following were our research questions regarding students at Western Kentucky University:

1. How did 1st generation greek-affiliated students conceptualize brotherhood/sisterhood?

    a. How sorority women define sisterhood

        i. Shared Social Experience

        ii. Support and Encouragement

        iii. Belonging

        iv. Accountability

        v. Common Purpose

    b. How fraternity men define brotherhood

        i. Solidarity

        ii. Shared Social Experiences

        iii. Belonging

        iv. Accountability

2. Did first-generation greek-affiliated students join as sophomores or above?

3. Which Greek council has the highest percentage of first-generation students?

Methodology

In order to complete our research, Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky was chosen as the site for completion of the research process. The targeted population of the research was all greek-affiliated students who currently attend Western Kentucky University. In order to have a comparison group, all members of the National Panhellenic, North American Interfraternity Council, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council were asked to participate. In the survey, the focus was specifically on male and female Western Kentucky University students who: 1. Joined a fraternity or sorority within their respective council's last recruitment cycle. 2. Are not a legacy to an organization. 3. Are attending college as a first generation student.

The project design for this research was to complete a correlational study to answer the three previously stated research questions. In order to complete our correlational study, we employed a quantitative survey, utilizing Qualtrics to administer the survey to the participants. The correlational research process was first started through the gathering of data of potential participants, specifically email addresses. A member of the research team reached out to Dr. Charley Pride, the Director of Student Activities and Organizations at Western Kentucky University, to obtain the email addresses of all active fraternity and sorority members at Western Kentucky University. The Coordinator of Greek Affairs was not contacted to obtain this data because she was a member of the research team and wished to remain unbiased towards the students she works with. While obtaining data about the potential participants, the instrument and survey questions were being put together in Qualtrics. Once the email addresses were entered into Qualtrics, the survey was distributed to participants. An initial email with a specific link and instructions for each student to participate in the survey was distributed on October 29,

2015 to 2,394 students. On November 1, 2015, another email with a general link and instructions

to complete the survey was distributed to each greek-affiliated president so that they could pass

along the email to their individual chapter members. After potential participants stopped

accessing the survey, it was closed. In the results section, the data pertaining to each question

will be discussed but it is also important to look at data relating to the survey itself. There were

125 participants who accessed the survey and of those who accessed the survey, 121 (96.8%)

participants consented to continue with the survey while four (3.2%) of the participants did not

consent to continue with the survey. Of the 2,394 students that the research team hoped to reach,

there was 115 viable responses, which translates into a 4.8% response rate. It is worth noting the

4.8% response rate is representative of the complete fraternity/sorority community at Western

Kentucky University, and not the number of students who joined their organizations within the

last year. The first survey was taken on October 29, 2015 and the last survey was taken on

November 17, 2015. A majority of the surveys were taken on November 1, 2015 (31 participants

and 24.8% of the surveys accessed) and November 2, 2015 (50 participants and 40% of the

surveys accessed). Within these two days, 82 (64.8%) participants accessed the survey. The

duration mean for completion of the survey was 5 minutes and below is a graph with the top four

durations and the data on how many participants fell into each category.

Minutes needed to complete survey	Number of participants	Percentage of Total Participants (121)
3 minutes	20 participants	16%
4 minutes	18 participants	14%
5 minutes	27 participants	21.6%
6 minutes	23 participants	18.4 %
Totals	88 participants	70%

The survey consisted of eight total questions. The questions that were asked on the survey are as

follows:

1. I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form and desire of
   my own free will to participate in this study.
   a. Participants either consented or did not consent to continue with the survey.
2. Please pick the choice that most accurately describes you:
   a. I am a first generation college student and I am the first in my immediate
      family (parents/siblings) to join a fraternity/sorority
   b. I am a first generation college student but I am not the first in my immediate
      family (parents/siblings) to join a fraternity/sorority
   c. I am not a first generation college student but I am the first in my immediate
      family (parents/siblings) to join a fraternity/sorority.
   d. I am not a first generation college student and I am not the first in my
      immediate family (parents/siblings) to join a fraternity/sorority.
3. What classification were you when you joined your fraternity/sorority?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
4. When did you join your fraternity or sorority?
   a. During the Formal Recruitment process
   b. During the Informal Recruitment process
   c. I do not know if I joined during Formal or Informal recruitment
5. What is your fraternity or sorority affiliation?
   a. All 32 fraternities and sororities were listed along with "other" as a choice.
6. You will now be asked a series of questions regarding your fraternity experience.
   Please click to select your answer (strongly disagree to strongly agree) next to each
   statement:
   a. I would never 'sell out' a brother who did something wrong
   b. I tend to mostly hang out with my fraternity brothers

    c. I take comfort in knowing that my fraternity brothers appreciate me for who I am

    d. I expect my fraternity to confront me if I violate our shared expectations

    e. It is my responsibility to always keep a brother's secret

    f. I tend to mostly do things with my fraternity brothers

    g. I take comfort in knowing that my fraternity brothers allow me to be myself

    h. It bothers me when my fraternity brothers fail to uphold our high standards

    i. My fraternity recruits by showing men that we are brothers for life, no matter what

    j. My fraternity brothers and I do almost everything together

    k. My brother's accept me despite my flaws

    l. It bothers me when I fail to uphold our high standards

    m. Once a brother, always a brother

    n. My fraternity brothers are the people I prefer to spend most of my time with

    o. My fraternity brothers include m in the things they are doing

    p. Brotherhood is best demonstrated when members are held to the chapter's standards

    q. The top priority of my fraternity's pledge program is to build a unified, bonded pledge class

    r. The first people I ask to do things with me are my fraternity brothers

    s. My fraternity brothers make me feel as if I belong

    t. I believe all members should be instructed on the fraternity's expectations

7. You will now be asked a series of questions regarding your sorority experience. Please click to select your answer (strongly disagree to strongly agree) next to each statement:

    a. Sisterhood is best demonstrated when we do fun things together

    b. Because I have my sisters, I know I am never alone

    c. I would stop what I am doing to help a sorority sister in need

    d. Sisterhood is best demonstrated when members are held accountable to the sorority's high standards

    e. My sisters and I have a sense of pride in our sorority's legacy

f. Having pictures of my sorority sisters and me in letters is one of the best parts of being in a sorority

g. My sorority sisters accept me for who I am

h. I "have my sorority sisters back" and always stand up for them

i. I expect my sisters to confront me if I do something to violate our sorority's shared expectations

j. The values that we hold drawn us together as a sisterhood

k. One of the primary reasons I joined the sorority was to have fun in college

l. I feel very connected to my sorority sisters

m. It is important that sorority sisters are there to support one another

n. It bothers me when my sisters fail to uphold our sorority's high standards

o. Often in our sorority, we find ourselves working together toward a common purpose

p. When I went through recruitment, I picked my chapter, in part, because they seemed to have the most fun

q. My sorority sisters make me feel as if I belong

r. It is important to show up and support my sorority sisters

s. It bothers me when I fail to uphold our sorority's high standards

t. The values of my sorority sisters are generally consistent with my personal values or beliefs

u. My sorority sisters include me in the things they are doing

v. What my sorority stands for is consistent with my personal values or beliefs

w. My sorority sisters often make me feel valued for a talent that I bring to the chapter

x. I am inspired to work alongside my sorority sisters to achieve a goal

y. My sorority sisters are often a great source of encouragement in my life

8. Why did you decide to "Go Greek?"

a. This was an open ended question that survey participants could type in a response.

Questions one through four had 115 (92% of participants who started the survey)

responses from the fraternity men and sorority women. One of these questions (Question five:

What is your fraternity or sorority affiliation?) then took participants to a question specific to either fraternity men or sorority women. The questions that were specific to the fraternity men and sorority women had 20 questions for the fraternity men and 25 questions for the sorority women and they were asked to answer all of the questions according to a Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Question six focused specifically on the fraternity men and there were 39 responses from the fraternity men (31.2% of participants who started the survey). Question seven focused specifically on the sorority women and there were 71 responses from the sorority women (56.8% of participants who started the survey). Question eight was qualitative in nature and asked all participants "Why did you go Greek?" There were 101 responses from participants. Out of the 125 participants who accessed the survey, there were 101 participants who completed the survey in its entirety, which allowed the survey to have an 80.8% completion rate.

Results

The data obtained from the survey showed that we had 121 responses, but only 117 of the respondents agreed to the consent form in question one. Questions two through four had 115 (92% of participants who started the survey) responses from the fraternity men and sorority women. One of these questions (Question five: What is your fraternity or sorority affiliation?) then took participants to a question specific to either fraternity men or sorority women. The questions that were specific to the fraternity men and sorority women had 20 questions for the fraternity men and 25 questions for the sorority women and they were asked to answer all of the questions according to a Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Question six focused specifically on the fraternity men and there were 39 responses from the fraternity men (31.2% of participants who started the survey). Question seven focused specifically on the

sorority women and there were 71 responses from the sorority women (56.8% of participants who started the survey). Question eight was qualitative in nature and asked all participants "Why did you go Greek?" There were 101 responses from participants. Out of the 125 participants who accessed the survey, there were 101 participants who completed the survey in its entirety, which allowed the survey to have an 80.8% completion rate.

Question two showed that 21% of respondents self-identified as a first-generation college student and the first in their immediate family to join a fraternity or sorority. 2% of respondents self-identified as a first-generation college student who was not the first in their immediate family to join a fraternity or sorority. 43% of respondents self-identified as non-first-generation college students who were the first in their immediate family to join a fraternity or sorority. 35% of respondents self-identified as non-first-generation college student who were not the first in their immediate family to join a fraternity or sorority. Question three showed that 69% of respondents joined their organization as freshman, 21% joined as sophomores, 7% joined as juniors, and 3% joined as seniors. The data in question four showed that 79% or respondents joined their organization during the formal recruitment process, 20% joined during the informal recruitment process, and 1% did not know if they joined during the formal recruitment process or the informal recruitment process.

Question five asked the affiliation of each respondent. The following table documents the data we received from the respondents. Members of National Panhellenic Council sororities totaled 61% of the 115 responses, members of North-American Interfraternity Council fraternities totaled 37% of responses, and members of National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations totaled 2% of respondents.

Table 1
Question Five Results

Affiliation of Respondent in Survey		
Answer	Response	%
Alpha Delta Pi	27	23%
Alpha Gamma Delta	1	1%
Alpha Gamma Rho	0	0%
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.	0	0%
Alpha Omicron Pi	5	4%
Alpha Tau Omega	2	2%
Alpha Xi Delta	3	3%
Chi Omega	15	13%
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.	0	0%
Delta Zeta	4	3%
FarmHouse	1	1%
Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.	0	0%
Kappa Alpha Order	1	1%
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.	0	0%
Kappa Delta	6	5%
Kappa Sigma	0	0%
Lambda Chi Alpha	0	0%
Omega Phi Alpha	3	3%
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.	0	0%
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.	0	0%
Phi Gamma Delta (FIJI)	34	30%
Phi Delta Theta	1	1%
Phi Mu	1	1%
Pi Kappa Alpha	0	0%
Sigma Alpha	1	1%
Sigma Alpha Epsilon	1	1%
Sigma Chi	0	0%
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.	0	0%
Sigma Kappa	4	3%
Sigma Nu	2	2%
Sigma Phi Epsilon	1	1%
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.	2	2%
Other	0	0%
Total	115	100%

The following tables show the mean answer of questions six and seven.

Table 2
Question Six Results

Conceptualizing Brotherhood		
#	Question	Mean Response
1	I would never 'sell out' a brother who did something wrong	2.69
2	I tend to mostly hang out with my fraternity brothers	3.9
3	I take comfort in knowing that my fraternity brothers appreciate me for who I am	4.51
4	I expect my fraternity to confront me if I violate our shared expectations	4.58
5	It is my responsibility to always keep a brother's secret	3.49
6	I tend to mostly do things with my fraternity brothers	3.82
7	I take comfort in knowing that my fraternity brothers allow me to be myself	4.46
8	It bothers me when my fraternity brothers fail to uphold our high standards	4.51
9	My fraternity recruits by showing men that we are brothers for life, no matter what	4.15
10	My fraternity brothers and I do almost everything together	3.62
11	My brother's accept me despite my flaws	4.51
12	It bothers me when I fail to uphold our high standards	4.31
13	Once a brother, always a brother	4.26
14	My fraternity brothers are the people I prefer to spend most of my time with	4.05
15	My fraternity brothers include m in the things they are doing	4.28
16	Brotherhood is best demonstrated when members are held to the chapter's standards	4.28
17	The top priority of my fraternity's pledge program is to build a unified, bonded pledge class	3.59
18	The first people I ask to do things with me are my fraternity brothers	4
19	My fraternity brothers make me feel as if I belong	4.41
20	I believe all members should be instructed on the fraternity's expectations	4.64

Table 3
Question Seven Results

	Conceptualizing Sisterhood	
#	Question	Mean Response
1	Sisterhood is best demonstrated when we do fun things together	4.2
2	Because I have my sisters, I know I am never alone	4.37
3	I would stop what I am doing to help a sorority sister in need	4.66
4	Sisterhood is best demonstrated when members are held accountable to the sorority's high standards	4.41
5	My sisters and I have a sense of pride in our sorority's legacy	4.63
6	Having pictures of my sorority sisters and me in letters is one of the best parts of being in a sorority	3.14
7	My sorority sisters accept me for who I am	4.54
8	I "have my sorority sisters back" and always stand up for them	4.44
9	I expect my sisters to confront me if I do something to violate our sorority's shared expectations	4.6
10	The values that we hold drawn us together as a sisterhood	4.56
11	One of the primary reasons I joined the sorority was to have fun in college	3.23
12	I feel very connected to my sorority sisters	4.3
13	It is important that sorority sisters are there to support one another	4.57
14	It bothers me when my sisters fail to uphold our sorority's high standards	4.51
15	Often in our sorority, we find ourselves working together toward a common purpose	4.5
16	When I went through recruitment, I picked my chapter, in part, because they seemed to have the most fun	2.59
17	My sorority sisters make me feel as if I belong	4.41
18	It is important to show up and support my sorority sisters	4.49
19	It bothers me when I fail to uphold our sorority's high standards	4.46
20	The values of my sorority sisters are generally consistent with my personal values or beliefs	4.44
21	My sorority sisters include me in the things they are doing	4.3
22	What my sorority stands for is consistent with my personal values or beliefs	4.53
23	My sorority sisters often make me feel valued for a talent that I bring to the chapter	4.34
24	I am inspired to work alongside my sorority sisters to achieve a goal	4.46
25	My sorority sisters are often a great source of encouragement in my life	4.5

After reviewing all the responses to question eight, responses were compiled into a word cloud. The following figure shows the most used words in the responses.

Figure 1: Most common words used in response to question eight

Our research team used both Qualtrics and statistical software Statistical Analysis System (SAS) to analyze the data. Qualtrics was used for gathering basic data for graphs and determining minimum and maximum value, mean, variance, standard deviance, and total responses. Our research team then pulled the data from questions six and seven and converted them into excel tables to compare responses from first generation identifying students to non-first generation identifying students. The questions from six and seven were also broken down into the different schemas of brotherhood and sisterhood, as set by Gentry McCreary and Josh Schutts. In addition to Excel and Qualtrics, our research team utilized SAS system to run tests to

determine if the data was statistically significant. For the qualitative question in the survey, a word cloud was utilized.

Discussion

When the data from questions six and seven was broken down into schemas and classification of first-generation and non-first generation, differences started to appear. With first-generation fraternity men who were the first in their family to join a greek organization, we found that the mean response of 4.37 was highest in the accountability schema. Fraternity men who were not first-generation college students and not the first in their family to join a greek organization scored highest in the schema of belonging with a mean of 4.56.

Table 4
Fraternity Schema Responses

Determined by classification and schema					
Classification	Solidarity	Shared Social Experience	Belonging	Accountability	# of respondents
First Gen/First Greek	3.36	3.65	4.25	**4.37**	7
Not First Gen/Not First Greek	3.62	3.96	**4.56**	4.51	15

When the same process was completed with the data from sorority members, the same difference was found. Accountability was scored higher with a mean of 4.63 in sorority women who were first-generation college students and the first in their family to join a greek organization. Support scored higher with a mean of 4.55 in women who were not first-generation college student and who were not the first in their family to join a greek organization.

Table 5

Sorority Schema Responses

Determined by classification and schema

Classification	Shared Social Experience	Belonging	Support	Accountability	Common Purpose	# of respondents
First Gen/First Greek	3.5	4.5	4.57	**4.63**	4.59	14
Not First Gen/Not First Greek	3.2	4.3	**4.55**	4.53	4.53	25

To determine if this data was statistically significant, our research team utilized the help of Dr. Bob Cobb of Western Kentucky University's Educational Leadership Doctoral Program. With his help using the SAS system, we were able to determine that the data from both fraternity men and sorority women did not have statistically significant differences. When comparing the schema of belonging to all fraternity respondents who identified as non-first generation college students, with a population of 32, as opposed to those who did identify as first generation college students, with a population of 7, non-first-generation responses had a mean of 22.375 with a standard deviation of 2.21 and first generation responses had a mean of 21.28 and a standard deviation of 2.62. The equality of variances was 0.5584 and was determined not statistically significant by the pooled equal value of 0.4014. For accountability in fraternity men, non-first generation college students had a mean of 22.2813 with a standard deviation of 2.275 while first generation college students had a mean of 21.857 with a standard deviation of 3.532. The equality of variances was 0.0999 and was also determined not statistically significant by the pooled equal value of 0.6892. With sorority women, all schemas were also compared. The two that previously showed difference were focused on. In support, non-first generation sorority

women, population of 54, had a mean of 18.0556 with a standard deviation of 2.166 and first generation sorority women, population of 16, had a mean of 18.250 with a standard deviation of 1.61. The equality of variance was 0.2078 and was determined not statistically significant by the pooled equal value of 0.7409. With the accountability schemas questions, non-first-generation sorority women had a mean of 17.78 and a standard deviation of 1.79 while first-generation sorority women had a mean of 18.68 with a standard deviation of 1.95. The equality of variance was 0.6244 and was determined not statistically significant by the pooled equal value of 0.0859.

While our research team did not find a statistically significant difference of how first-generation college student conceptualize brotherhood or sisterhood, data did show that means were higher in accountability for both fraternity men and sorority women. Non-first generation men scored higher in belonging while non-first-generation sorority women scored higher in support. We found that most first generation college students were more likely to join as freshman and the National Panhellenic Council sorority women had the highest percentage of first-generation students.

Conclusion

At Western Kentucky University, the data shows that more students who are going greek are the first in their family to go greek even if they are not a first generation student. In addition, most of these students are participating in recruitment through the formal recruitment process. This means that the recruitment counselors, greek life advisors, and other student affairs professionals need to be educating incoming greek students on what all is involved with the greek system, and how they can be successful. Also as student affairs professionals we can change how we approach the recruitment process. It is typically marketed to entice students into

belonging to a group but through our research we found that first generation greek students are looking for accountability in their greek experience.

Our research team would like to continue doing this research. For the future, there are several aspects of the design that we would change. We would expand our reach to engage a larger sample size. We would also like to have had a closer representation between the three councils (NIC, NPC, NPHC). Our research team would also consider re-phrasing some questions to ensure clarity from participants. In addition, we would continue our work with the SAS system. We only compared first generation to non-first generation college students, and we would like to have compared them to all four classifications: first generation college student and first to join a fraternity/sorority, first generation college student but not the first to join a fraternity/sorority in their family, not a first generation college student but to join a fraternity/sorority, and not a first generation college student but not the first to join a fraternity/sorority in their family.

Limitations

Our research team incurred several limitations during our research process. While trying to figure out how to send emails to the potential participants, we included names in the emails. By doing this, the names of the participants were displayed on the results. In our informed consent form we ensured participants that they would remain the anonymous. When our team sent out a reminder email, a generic link was included so student names were not included. In the analysis of our survey results, we felt that we might not have worded the questions the best we could do that the participants understood fully what we were asking. For example, one question asked what classification students were when they joined their organization, but students likely interpreted this to be what their current classification. Our team also hoped that we would get

more of a sampling of first generation greek students across the councils. Of the participants who completed the survey many of them were members of Panhellenic council. We strongly feel that population size and the difference in size of first-generation college students to non-first generation college students was a limitation to our data.

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