A STUDY OF HAZING: PERCEPTIONS WITHIN RECENTLY ESTABLISHED ETHNIC-BASED GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATIONS

A Thesis

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by

Melissa Allyn Ann Norrbom

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Melissa Allyn Ann Norrbom

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair

José Chávez, Ed.D.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Second Reader

Davin Brown, Ed.D.

Date

Student: Melissa Allyn Ann Norrbom

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this thesis is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the thesis.

, Graduate Coordinator

Geni Cowan, Ph.D.Date

Graduate and Professional Studies in Education

Abstract

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A STUDY OF HAZING: PERCEPTIONS WITHIN RECENTLY ESTABLISHED ETHNIC-BASED GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATIONS

by

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Brief Literature Review

This study examined the creation of the earliest Greek letter organizations, including Black Greek letter organizations (BGLOs) who heavily influenced the establishment of recently established ethnic-based Greek letter organizations (REGLOs). The tradition of hazing through initiation rites/organization rituals remains prevalent today. The historical relationship between Greek letter organizations and hazing activities provides the foundation for studying hazing behaviors and perceptions specific to REGLOs. Theoretical frameworks were used to develop an understanding of student identity development and the impact of influential peer groups in the perpetuation and even increased severity of hazing activities.

Statement of the Problem

While existing research has been able to conclude the overwhelming presence of hazing activities in the earliest fraternities and sororities as well as BGLOs, a large information gap still exists regarding hazing activities in REGLOs. Do the same problems with hazing exist in REGLOs or do these groups experience different problems? Without researching the potential hazing behaviors within these specific communities and the attitudes of the members, administrators are unable to identify the most appropriate methods of addressing hazing behaviors and creating prevention strategies.

Methodology

A population of 345 individuals were identified based on their enrollment and membership in one of the 17 recognized REGLOs at a public, four-year university in California. A quantitative survey was distributed to 342 total participants. One hundred participant responses were chosen for analysis, equating to a 29.24% response rate.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research study concluded that hazing activities do occur in REGLOs. The study findings revealed that missing sleep, singing and chanting in a public situation, and being yelled at by other members are the most common among REGLOs, which differ significantly from those in previously published national data. In addition, participants responded almost unanimously that they understood the definition of hazing and they had not participated in hazing activities; however, the results showed hazing behaviors are still occurring in REGLOs in significant percentages. Large disconnections currently exist between three components: what members know about hazing, what members believe about hazing, and what members actually do that is considered hazing.

, Committee Chair

José Chávez, Ed.D.

Date

dedication

I would like to dedicate the work of this master’s thesis and everything I do to three individuals who have supported me every day during the past three years. Without each of you, this journey would have been impossible.

To my dad: Without question, many of the strengths I possess today have come from years of watching your leadership. You have taught me to treat others with respect and humility, regardless of their background or status. You have shown me the importance of working hard, in the face of both physical and mental limitations. And above all else, you have given me the motivation to pursue my passion for education. Thank you for raising me with the values that have guided me through these last few years. This is for you.

To my mom: You are an incredible woman. Although you may not believe you are well educated or particularly eloquent, no one in this world compares in selflessness, compassion and courage. I have seen you put the needs of others before yourself, even when it was difficult and sometimes disheartening. Thank you for listening to me talk myself into circles during moments of anxiety and exhaustion. Thank you for loving me unconditionally and having faith in my choices. To me, you are everything: my best friend, my mentor, and my soft place to land. Even when I fail to believe in myself, you never stop believing in me. This is for you.

To Kenny: The road has been long and far from easy, but patience has conquered and miles have not mattered. You have stood next to me every day in support and encouragement. With each new challenge, you have pushed me to follow my heart and chase my dreams without reservations or concerns. This work is as much an achievement of yours as it is of mine, and I could not be more grateful and appreciative for the opportunity to share these moments with you. I love you and this is for you.

acknowledgments

Three years ago, I made the terrifying and absurdly impulsive decision to move to Sacramento to pursue a career in fraternity/sorority life and a master’s degree in higher education. With a new job and new home, the first few months were a little more challenging than I had expected, and it took some time to settle in. Little did I know that I would eventually build a new life in Sacramento filled with lasting memories. Looking back on the last three years, I could not have imagined my life any differently.

I want to begin by recognizing my wonderful Student Organizations & Leadership family, including the many professionals and students from the past and present. These truly selfless and committed individuals have welcomed me, included me, and supported me through these past three years. We have shared celebrations and achievements and worked together through many changes and challenges that I will always remember. Because of you, I am inspired every day to provide outstanding service to our student leaders. This extraordinary team would not be what it is without the phenomenal leadership of one very important man. I would like to especially thank Tom Carroll for his dedication to Student Organizations & Leadership and Sacramento State. Tom, your leadership, regardless of title, has inspired many and disappointed none. Thank you for challenging me every day to be the best fraternity/sorority professional I can be and believing in my abilities to do so. I could not be where I am today, as the person I am, without your confidence in me.

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I would like to graciously thank my family and friends for your patience and understanding through these past few weeks and months. I am completely and absolutely aware that I have missed celebrating your birthdays, anniversaries, and other important celebrations with you. Thank you for listening to me talk about my thesis, even though the topic is probably not interesting to you at all. And thank you for sending all of your love and positive thoughts. I promise I will do much better now!

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I also want to thank the Epsilon Psi Chapter of Alpha Chi Omega (University of California, Irvine) for helping me fall in love with Greek life on November 5, 2005, and teaching me to live our Ritual everyday thereafter. *Together let us seek the heights*.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Students on college and university campuses in the United States recognize hazing as a part of the college culture. In fact, 55% of students involved in campus clubs, athletic teams, and other student organizations experience hazing at institutions of higher education, according to the first national study on hazing conducted at the University of Maine in 2008 (Allan & Madden). Furthermore, this national data suggest that with the exception of student athletes, students who identify as members of Greek letter organizations (fraternities and sororities) participate in hazing activities in higher percentages than any other student group (Allan & Madden, 2008). Hazing, as defined by both the California Education Code and the California Penal Code is “conduct which causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to another person” (FindLaw, 2014, Section 48900, para. 19; FindLaw, 2014, Section 245.6, para. 2). The Penal Code goes further to say hazing can occur “in the course of the other person's pre-initiation into, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization” (FindLaw, 2014, Section 48900, para. 2). This definition of hazing is the most widely used and referred to definition in the state of interest for this particular study.

Hazing occurs most frequently as a part of an initiation ritual, which is the process of “indoctrinating new members with the organization's ideals, including, but not limited to, religious values, moral standards, basic principles, and virtues and notions of brotherhood [or sisterhood]” (Campo, Poulos, & Sipple, 2005, p. 137). Hazing was also defined from a sociological approach by leading author in the field of hazing research Hank Nuwer (1999) as “an activity that a high-status member orders other members to engage in or suggests that they engage in that in some way humbles a newcomer who lacks the power to resist, because he or she wants to gain admission into a group” (p. xxv). This concept examines hazing not only as an illegal action, but a psychological form of peer pressure. Nuwer (1999) stated “many students want to join a group, some enough to put their lives or well-being in danger by unwisely consuming large quantities of alcohol or submitting to abuse they would not tolerate under ordinary circumstances” (p. 172).

Hazing activities have been a part of Greek letter societies since the beginning of their creation in the late 1700s and early 1800s. According to Brubacher and Rudy (1997), the concept of hazing or hierarchal servantship began long ago in the colonial times, when America “imported the English school custom of ‘fagging,’ whereby lower class members had to run errands and serve as unpaid servants for upperclassman” (p. 46). Moving through the historical timeline and examining the establishment of the earliest fraternities, the idea of “reminding freshmen of their place in the hierarchy of college” continued (Syrett, 2009, p. 53). The critical elements of exclusion and secrecy within Greek letter societies created a medium for hierarchy and subordination. Hazing became a more recognized and established practice on college campuses in the mid-1800s at the same time that the United States found itself in the middle of a civil war. The first known death from hazing occurred after the Civil War, as men who had previously served in the military began enrolling in nonmilitary colleges, bringing their more physical military hazing experiences with them.

While the earliest fraternities were created primarily for White men from the upper classes of society, as time progressed, African American students also found the need for support systems in the way of brotherhood and sisterhood but were not allowed to join the currently existing organizations. Many of the organizations limited their membership to White males, and some were limited only to those who were also Christian in faith. Because African American students were not allowed to join the current fraternities, they began to form their own based on the tenants of group cohesion and support, along with service to the community. Between 1903 and 1922, the first Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs) were established (Dickinson, 2012; Kimbrough, 2003; McKenzie, 2012; Ross, 2000; Washington & Nunez, 2012). After the establishment of BGLOs, hazing practices became a part of their initiation process as well, with most of these activities stemming from a historical tribute to the African tribal traditions that had been lost as a result of the forced migration of African people to the United States during the slave trade. Such traditions included the concept of initiation or “crossing of the sands” in a “place of testing” (Dickinson, 2012, pp. 15-16). Some of these practices embodied a remembrance of slavery, including new members being given embarrassing nicknames, “beat-ins,” brandings, and auctions (Dickinson, 2012, p. 14). In the late 1980s, these activities were highly criticized for being too dangerous. As a result, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the governing body for nine currently established BGLOs, outlawed hazing within these groups in 1990 (Briggs, 2012).

Over the last 20 years, hazing has become a large and complex social problem in the United States, being publicized with stories and images of rapid alcohol consumption, harassment, physical beating, and humiliation. Hazing reports have frequently surfaced in the national and local media due to extreme mental and physical injuries, as well as tragic student deaths from individuals going to great lengths to become accepted into a recognized social group of their peers. Collegiate and professional athletic programs have also seen significant increases in hazing reports. The infamous hazing allegations (and later charges) of the University of Vermont hockey team in 1999 made national headlines for forcing teammates to participate in the “elephant walk,” in which men paraded around campus holding on to one another’s genitals (Allan, 2004, p. 291). In 2004, it was reported that Patrick Ramsey, who was a quarterback for the Washington Redskins, was taped to a goalpost and had a bucket of ice dumped on his head by teammates. When asked about this experience, Ramsey said, “You almost consider it an honor. You've grown up seeing this happen to rookies and now it's your turn” (p. 494). According to Nuwer (2004), who keeps a frequently updated chronology of deaths as a result of hazing, as of March 2014, 181 total deaths had occurred from hazing activities since the 1800s. In at least 120 of these instances, deaths were a result of participation in the hazing rituals of a Greek letter organization.

Nuwer (1999) wrote, in many cases, if alcohol or another reasonable cause of death is involved, authorities are unlikely to blame hazing. This has been especially true in states with weak or absent laws against hazing. Hollmann (2002) stated that since 1990, “more deaths have occurred on college and university campuses as a result of hazing, pledging, and initiation accidents and fraternal alcohol-related incidents than all recorded history of such deaths” (p. 11). Thirty-five student deaths were recorded from 1838 to 1969, 31 deaths were recorded in the 1970s, 55 deaths in the 1980s, and then 95 deaths in 1900s. The tragedies climaxed quickly with 29 hazing-related deaths between 2000 and 2001 (Hollmann, 2002). Examples of hazing have also been seen in athletic organizations, orientation groups, churches, and marching bands, creating a growing concern among students, families, and campus administrators (Allan & Madden, 2008). Recently, there has been a growing concern for hazing activities in high school or college bands. In 2011, Florida A&M University drum major Robert Champion died “from ‘extensive contusions,’ or bruising, to the chest, arms, shoulder and back and within interior body tissues” (Schwartz, 2011, para. 7). It was later determined that at least a dozen students had been suspended from the band program for perpetuating the culture of hazing in the band’s activities (Schwartz, 2011). Although many policies and educational practices have been put into place to eliminate these activities, hazing traditions still exist on many university campuses. Typically students do not report hazing-related injuries, and deaths are referred to as “unfortunate accidents,” claimed Nuwer (1990) in his book, *Broken Pledges* (p. 27). Many of these cases go unreported, especially if the victim recovers (Allan & Madden, 2008; Nuwer, 1990).

Several authors argue that defining the term “hazing” is itself one of the largest problems associated with the perpetuation of these activities (Hollmann, 2002; Nuwer, 1999). Hollmann (2002) claimed, “the secrecy and extraordinary nature of many hazing activities make it difficult to define hazing and to prevent initially harmless activities from escalating into dangerous and potentially lethal ones” (p. 12). Anti-hazing activists argue current state laws are weak and in some cases absent. Researchers in the field add that because each state has the opportunity to write a separate statute against hazing, each individual law is inconsistent and “confusion and disagreement over a definition have led to a lack of commitment on campuses to address the problem” (Hollmann, 2002, p. 15). Nuwer (1999) agreed with Hollmann’s (2002) perspective and added that although nearly all schools have the ability to suspend students, institution administration is challenged to provide the proof necessary to negate any other explanation. In addition, noncriminal hazing activities, such as wearing pledge pins, asking members to sign undergarments, and lining up without being subjected to verbal or physical abuse, may be interpreted as hazing by one institution and allowed by another, causing vast inconsistencies in enforcement (Nuwer, 1999).

In 2008, researchers Allan and Madden conducted a widespread national study of student hazing. The purpose of the study was to “assess campus climates and to inform best practices for hazing prevention and intervention” and was “the first to examine hazing across a range of student organizations and athletic teams within the context of diverse types of colleges and universities in different regions of the United States” (Allan & Madden, 2008, p. 6). The research provided information on the broader topic of hazing on college and university campuses, while also including specific data on hazing activities within social Greek letter organizations. According to Allan and Madden (2008), 73% of student members of these organizations responded positively to having experienced at least one hazing behavior during their involvement.

Many authors have written extensively about the common hazing activities within historically White Greek letter organizations, as well as BGLOs (Black, Belknap, & Ginsburg, 2012; Briggs, 2012; Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Dickinson, 2012; Nuwer, 1999, 2004; Syrett, 2009; Torbenson, 2012). However, with the current increase of students from more ethnically diverse backgrounds attending college, Greek letter organizations with a special interest in race and ethnicity (including Latino/a, Asian interest, and multicultural) are becoming more prevalent on college and university campuses, and their activities are becoming more of interest. This is especially true in more diverse parts of the country (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). As a result of this phenomenon, it is important to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of hazing behaviors among members of recently established ethnic-based Greek letter organizations (REGLOs) for similarities and differences to the current body of research on hazing. REGLOs, similar to BGLOs, were created to connect students with common backgrounds, promote opportunities for cultural appreciation, and provide service to the general student community. This influence inspired many REGLOs to adopt, and often times mimic, the practices and traditions of BGLOs, including line jackets, calls, and hand signs (Kimbrough, 2003). One of the most replicated of these traditions is that of pledging. In an article cited by Kimbrough (2003) from *Latina Magazine*, pledges of Sigma Lambda Upsilon Latinas Unidas Sorority “were required to march in line around campus…which the paper likened to the African American slave march” (p. 181). Another highly imitated tradition is that of stepping, which has been widely adopted by Asian, Latino/a, and multicultural Greek letter organizations (Dickinson, 2012). Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc., a Latina-based organization established in 1985, credited Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for inviting it to participate in a unity step at Chico State University in 1987. The organization later transformed stepping into its own practice by adding the use of machetes (typically used by Latino males) to represent the empowerment of Latina women in roles not typically meant for Latinas (Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc., 2005). Because so many cultural traditions from REGLOs are significantly modeled from those of BGLOs, this strong relationship creates the framework for examining how hazing behaviors and perceptions may have been similarly adapted. The earliest REGLOs began in the 1920s and 1930s but then diffused until after the civil rights movement in the early 1970s (Cruz et al., 2009; Hsia, 1998). Further background information on ethnic and multicultural Greek letter organizations is discussed in detail in the review of the literature.

Statement of the Problem

While existing research has been able to conclude the overwhelming presence of hazing activities in the earliest fraternities and sororities, as well as BGLOs, a large information gap still exists regarding hazing activities in REGLOs specifically. In fact, very little is known about this particular population of Greek letter organizations in general due to their recent establishment. The interest in establishing new REGLO chapters is spreading across the country with the increased popularity of these focused groups, creating many questions about their similarities and differences to previously existing groups. Do the same problems with hazing exist in REGLOs, or do these groups experience different problems? Without researching the potential hazing behaviors within these ethnic Greek letter communities and the attitudes of the student members, higher education administrators are unable to identify the most appropriate methods of addressing hazing behaviors, creating prevention strategies, and offering education. As campus cultures change and transform, continuous and comprehensive research is needed to adapt.

This study examined the prevalence of hazing within REGLOs by conducting a survey of current member perceptions of hazing, as well as identifying what, if any, hazing activities occur within REGLOs. A review of the literature focused on the history of REGLOs, including the strong influence of BGLOs in their foundation. The study also explored the progression of the hazing phenomenon and its impact on Greek letter organizations in the 21st century. Theoretical frameworks were used to develop an understanding of student identity development and how strongly peer groups can influence the perpetuation and even increase the severity of hazing activities.

To increase the body of research with regard to attitudes and perceptions of hazing behaviors within REGLOs and to recommend further strategies for higher education administrators working with these organizations, the following three research questions were identified for this study:

1. Do student members of ethnic and/or multicultural Greek letter organizations engage in hazing activities?
2. What are the members’ perceptions of hazing activities?
3. If hazing is occurring, which activities are engaged in most frequently in ethnic and multicultural Greek letter organizations?

When answering the above questions, the research study aimed to provide administrators with recommendations for working with REGLOs in the areas of meaningful hazing intervention and education.

Significance of the Study

Many authors and researchers have written about the critical problems of hazing behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions on an institutional and nationwide level. This research has been able to build a body of support for increasing hazing education and awareness, as well as creating and influencing institutional policies and statewide laws prohibiting hazing. While this existing research is beneficial for many higher education leaders working in the field of higher education, student services, and student affairs, this current research does not accurately reflect the demographics of our nationwide college student body particularly with regard to California public universities, whose student population reflects a much more ethnically diverse population. In Allan and Madden’s 2008 study, only 25% of the student respondents identified within an ethnic minority group. In an excerpt from Nuwer’s work, *The Hazing Reader* (2004), Allan explained that most hazing research has examined groups of White men, which has contributed to a definition of hazing as it is reflected among groups of White men, as opposed to women and other ethnic groups. While previous research has proven significant, this study aimed to focus on examining hazing activities and perceptions within REGLOs.

Associations representing over 1400 fraternity and sorority professionals, such as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, as well as the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA) and North American Interfraternal Foundation (NIF), are invested in studying the hazing phenomenon. In 2007, Dan Bureau, a professional awarded for his work with Greek letter organizations by several of these associations, suggested 10 topics for future research on the fraternal community in the 2012 edition of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators newsletter, *Excellence in Practice*. One of these topics was an examination of the hazing culture developing rapidly on college and university campuses (as cited in National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2012). Concurrently in 2007, Allan and Madden began conducting the first national study of hazing across multiple institutions, completed in 2010. Additionally, in the research study conducted by Cokley et al. (2001) designed to create an instrument to measure perceptions of hazing, the authors suggested larger ethnic minority samples should be sought for similar studies with hazing perceptions to examine the cultural differences between types of Greek organizations and how these differences may influence student perceptions of hazing.

This study examined the establishment of Greek letter organizations in the early 1800s to understand the attractiveness to students and eventually the need to establish organizations centered on a cultural or ethnic foundation. The tradition of hazing through initiation rites and organization rituals is highlighted in the research to identify how powerful and prevalent hazing has become in today’s society. By providing the history of a long-standing relationship between Greek letter organizations and hazing activities, the research was able to provide the foundation for studying hazing behaviors and perceptions specific to REGLOs. This study used a quantitative approach to gain specific knowledge on the perceptions and experiences of hazing activities that may be occurring within a group of 17 REGLOs recognized at a large, public, four-year university in California by distributing a survey to 342 participants. Research produced by several authors has offered recommendations for higher education administrators working with fraternities and sororities to address negative outcomes of hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008; Campo et al., 2005; Cokley et al., 2001; Kimbrough, 2003; National Agenda for Hazing Prevention in Education, 2010). In addition to incorporating the recommendations from previous research, this study also shows the need to analyze data specific to the experience of members of REGLOs.

Definition of Terms

Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO)

Organizations founded by African American students for African American students, rooted in African tradition and heritage, in part due to exclusion from the early White fraternities due to Jim Crow laws. Similar to the original fraternities, BGLOs were established to provide activities for brotherhood (and eventually sisterhood) and maintain contact with students at the college. Commonly referred to as “the divine nine,” or National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations (Dickinson, 2012, pp. 18-21).

Chapter

An organization located/recognized at an individual campus is known as a chapter or “franchise” of that organization (Turk, 2004, p. 3).

Fraternity

A secret men’s extracurricular group founded to create opportunities for students to debate and to engage in activities for brotherhood and fellowship (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 128).

Hazing

Conduct that causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to another person in the course of the other person's pre-initiation into, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization (FindLaw, 2014a).

Initiation (also referred to as Ritual)

The process of “indoctrinating new members with the organization's ideals, including, but not limited to, religious values, moral standards, basic principles, and virtues and notions of brotherhood [or sisterhood]” (Campo et al., 2005, p. 137). Hazing is commonly referred to as a component of initiation (Hollmann, 2002, p. 17; Johnson, 1972, p. 279).

Latino/a

Terms used to identify “Americans who trace their roots to Spanish-speaking countries” (Taylor, Lopez, Martinez, & Velasco, 2012, para. 1). The literature uses Latino/a most often when referring to students within this ethnic group. Greek letter organizations also use this term most frequently to identify their organizations (Evans et al., 2010).

Pledging

For the purpose of this study, pledging is the process of socialization of a new member into a Greek letter organization, by which a new member demonstrates his or her commitment to the organization before being initiated by a series of activities. Pledging is used particularly in BGLOs as a historical term that reflected the “rite of passage” into membership involving often involving abusive and degrading hazing activities (Kimbrough, 2003, p. 37).

Recently Established Ethnic-Based Greek Letter Organization (REGLO)

For the purposes of this study, Latino/a based, Asian based, and multicultural based organizations founded within the last 40 years, after historical events such as World War II, the Vietnam War, and the civil rights movement. This does not include BGLOs.

Sorority

Similar to men’s fraternities, sororities are women’s Greek letter organizations that bring women together to pledge vows of loyalty and sisterhood to reflect their familiar commitment to support and aid one another as they navigate college life (Turk, 2004, p. 2).

Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

This research study is organized into five chapters. Following this chapter, Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature discussing the establishment and development of Greek letter organizations, the progression and significance of hazing as a growing social issue, and the theoretical framework that helps illustrate why hazing occurs within Greek letter organizations. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the research methodology chosen for the study, as well as data collection and analysis procedures. The findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4 along with an interpretation of the findings as they relate back to the review of the literature. Chapter 5 uses the findings presented in Chapter 4 to draw conclusions and make recommendations for educational initiatives and future research on the perceptions of hazing behaviors within REGLOs.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature previously written to create a foundation for examining the research questions:

1. Do student members of ethnic and/or multicultural Greek letter organizations engage in hazing activities?
2. What are the members’ perceptions of hazing activities?
3. If hazing is occurring, which activities are engaged in most frequently in ethnic and multicultural Greek letter organizations?

To better understand the foundation of REGLOs, the first research stream reviewed the historical timeline of Greek letter organizations, paying specific attention to BGLOs and the traditions and values that have been incorporated into REGLOs. This section also focused on the target organizations for the study, which are culturally based organizations founded within the last 40 years that identify as Latino/a based, Asian based, and multiethnic student organizations. The second research stream focuses on the historical progression of hazing behaviors in the United States from the early years to the present, incorporating statistics of hazing deaths, as well as an overview of the most common types of hazing activities. The third research stream examines the perceptions of hazing from a college student point of view, using several foundational theories to help explain the reasons why students may haze one another. Because this study is interested in students involved as members of REGLOs, this section begins with a discussion of multiple racial identity theories, as well as Astin’s Student Involvement Theory (1984) and the theory of student engagement, presented by Kuh (1995). A review of Chickering’s Seven Vectors of Identity Development and Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development (as cited in Evans et al., 2010) are also included to frame the process by which students develop ethical decision making abilities. These theories provide the framework to further examine theories related specifically to hazing and the choice to participate in hazing activities: “Groupthink” and Leon Festinger's Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (as cited in Johnson, 1972). Together, these three areas of the literature review help to frame a methodology that further assesses the research questions within this specific population of student members of REGLOs.

Historical Development of Greek Letter Societies

The Early Establishment of Greek Letter Fraternities

The creation of male fraternities is deeply rooted in the historical timeline of the American college and university system. Stemming from the colonial days of early America, students who attended college were expected to follow the guidelines of the protestant ideology, which meant attending all religious gatherings and often accepting harsh punishments for disobedient behavior (Barnes, 1983). Seeking out opportunities to find freedom from the control and rigor of their studies, students began forming groups among each other for fellowship outside of their courses. In the 1770s, these organizations became known as the first literary societies, providing many opportunities for students to debate philosophy and literature, host gatherings with other students, and become more comfortable in their collegiate environment. Some argue that these groups also allowed men to participate in behavior determined to be unacceptable by the college, such as drinking and gambling (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Torbenson, 2012).

Being that these literary societies were so closely founded alongside ideas of Greek literature and philosophy, naturally students began to name these societies using the Greek language (Syrett, 2009). A fraternity name is typically created using two or three letters of the Greek alphabet, which are chosen for their significance in the fraternity’s secret motto (Baird, 1963). The first Greek letter society, Phi Beta Kappa, was established in 1776 at the College of William and Mary (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Johnson, 1972; Torbenson, 2012). According to *Baird’s Manual of American College Fraternities* (1963):

Phi Beta Kappa had all the characteristics of the present-day fraternity: the charm and mystery of secrecy, a ritual, oaths of fidelity, a grip, a motto, a badge for external display, a background of high idealism, a strong tie of friendship and comradeship, and an urge for sharing its values through nationwide expansion. (p. 7)

Phi Beta Kappa was regarded as being one of the more selective and secretive groups of men. However, secret societies in general were viewed unfavorably by college administrators due to their rebellious behavior (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Torbenson, 2012).

Through the end of the 1700s and in the early 1800s, fraternity chapters of Phi Beta Kappa and others continued to establish at the colonial nine campuses, such as Harvard University and Yale University. Johnson (1972) noted:

In each instance, those getting up new groups thought of themselves as doing something to enhance individual liberties, to broaden the opportunities for student participation, and to correct what they perceived to be abuses, unfairness, and hypocrisy in campus affairs. (p. 19)

However, these groups were not able to sustain long-term development and often closed chapters shortly after opening them (Baird, 1963; Johnson, 1972). In the 1820s, three fraternities started a movement that would change fraternal life in America forever. Union College in Schenectady, New York, referred to as the “Mother of Fraternities,” is home to these three monumental groups (the Union Triad) (Torbenson, 2012, p. 45). Kappa Alpha Society was founded in 1825 and following closely behind came Sigma Phi and Delta Phi in 1827 (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Torbenson, 2012).

The earliest fraternities proved to be an incredible resource for men during challenging times in our nation’s history and would continue to serve this purpose in future years. Syrett (2009) wrote, fraternities

allowed a form of resistance to the control of an overbearing college faculty. At a time in their lives when, by contemporaneous standards, college students were neither boys or fully men and yet were often treated as the former by their instructors, “secret societies” - allowed their members to assert an independence and autonomy that was rarely available to them otherwise. Fraternities provided a way for young men to make the transition to a collegiate world that was sometimes far from home and often foreign and unwelcoming. (p. 14)

Prior to the Civil War, universities operated by the theory of *in loco parentis*, disciplining students in place of parents. However, between the Civil War and World War II, Johnson (1972) argued, the institutions developed a *laissez-faire* model where “extracurricular enterprises of all sorts came into prominence…and fraternity men must be counted among their most avid promoters and participants” (p. 26). As faculty and administration began to deregulate, fraternities and other student groups began to flourish. Some universities believed college dormitories led to rebellious behavior in groups and started dismantling their student housing facilities (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). This trend soon proved to be very valuable for fraternities and sororities as many of them offered residential opportunities for their members to live together in homes purchased by the organization (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). The interest in joining fraternities and sororities began to multiply, and by 1865, the United States had 25 men’s fraternities with sororities on the rise (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

The Emergence of Women’s Greek Letter Societies

The early 1800s brought many controversial discussions around women having access to higher education and the topic of coeducation became very controversial. In Brubacher and Rudy’s text (1997), educators and authors Clarke and Tappan did not believe college was an appropriate place for a woman. Some shared that it would be “dangerous to a delicate woman’s health to operate on such a high intellectual level above the duties of her ‘station’” (Brubacher & Rudy, 1977, p. 65). However, despite these arguments, feminist authors such as Stone and Hamlin, also in Rudy and Brubacher’s work (1977), wrote in opposition to these statements, claiming a higher education would strengthen women physically and mentally. While several women’s colleges had been founded in the early 1800s, the primary aim of these colleges was to teach women the practices that would help them fit into their “role” in society (Brubacher & Rudy, 1977, p. 65). The Southern states were the first to adopt women’s colleges able to confer degrees, including the Wesleyan Female College of Macon, Georgia; Judson College in Alabama; and Mary Sharp College in Tennessee (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). In 1833, Oberlin College opened its doors to the first prototype institution for the coeducation of both men and women (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

During this time, women were faced with many struggles on college campuses and were typically treated by males with “antipathy, resentment, and ridicule” (Johnson, 1972, p. 58). Fraternities faced an important question: Should women be allowed in the fraternities? According to Johnson (1972) and Torbenson (2012), there was not an official ban on female members and a few fraternities offered membership to women on occasion, including Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Beta Theta Pi, Phi Delta Theta, and Pi Kappa Alpha. National organizations debated for a number of years and a few offered women a provisional membership status, which would not include equal rights and benefits to male members. Seeing little changes in the national policies, women began founding their own societies (Torbenson, 2012). Turk (2004) wrote about the founding of one of the first women’s Greek letter societies:

Isolated and denigrated by those who both doubted their intellect and challenged their femininity, the founders of Kappa Alpha Theta recognized that if they bonded together and provided mutual aid to one another, their efforts might quell the hostility surrounding co-education and carve a more permanent place for women within institutions of higher education. (p. 13)

The first three women’s Greek letter societies were Adelphia (which later formed Alpha Delta Pi), I. C. Sorosis (which later formed Pi Beta Phi), and Kappa Alpha Theta. They were founded in 1851, 1867, and 1870, respectively, at all women’s colleges in the South (Baird, 1963; Johnson, 1972; Nuwer, 1999; Turk, 2004). All three organizations remain in existence today.

Growth and Diversification Continues for Fraternities & Sororities

Fraternities and sororities were able to have representation on many campuses by spreading themselves out across the country. According to Torbenson (2012), sometimes members transferred to another college and established their fraternity on their new campus. Oftentimes, students returned to their hometown during holiday or summer recess and encouraged their friends at other colleges to get involved. Students who decided to pursue education past their undergraduate degrees in law school or medical school would create a new organization if one did not previously exist at the campus (Torbenson, 2012).

The Morrill Act of 1862 is notably one of the largest milestones achieved in the realm of higher education by allowing states the opportunity to provide significant funding for Land Grant Colleges. This act stood for the principle “that every American citizen is entitled to receive some form of higher education” (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 64). The idea of “separate, but equal” gave the United States the ability to establish historically Black colleges and universities, as well as Tribal Colleges, essentially community colleges or trade school specializing in nursing, social work, business administration, and education (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 64). By 1898, seven women's Greek letter societies existed; only seven years later, there were 17 total societies (Turk, 2004). More and more students were enrolling at universities and beginning to connect with a number of student groups including clubs, organizations, intercollegiate athletics, fraternities, and sororities (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

In the 1910s, the United States experienced huge changes in regard to national immigration policies. Prior to this time, according to Turk (2004), most students who attended college identified as Protestant or chose to keep their religious or ethnic affiliation secret because they were not welcomed in their communities. With the influx of 3.3 million Jewish immigrants, the number of Jewish students attending college increased dramatically. Many colleges and universities abandoned the use of Greek and Latin exams, which allowed many more Jewish students to submit an application (Turk, 2004). Protestant students expressed concern over the number of Jewish students being admitted. Turk (2004) continued on to say one of the groups concerned was the National Panhellenic Congress of sororities. She said, “believing that some of their members would react negatively to any affiliation with Jewish or Catholic women…organizations largely barred women of these faiths from entry” (Turk, 2004, p. 104). In the end, the decision of the Congress was to continue denying membership to Jewish women at that time. Situations and decisions of this kind would eventually lead to other organizations adopting unfair or discriminatory membership selection practices, including Jewish sororities and historically Black Greek organizations (Turk, 2004). In 1895, the first Jewish fraternity was founded as a protest against exclusion from other organizations (Torbenson, 2012).

Fraternities and sororities also faced great adversity in this period of their history. Due to strong negative opinions that surfaced about selectivity and perceived immorality within Greek letter organizations, an anti-fraternity movement led to legislation in multiple states prohibiting Greek letter societies. South Carolina, Arkansas, Mississippi, and two institutions in Virginia discontinued Greek letter societies in 1897, 1901, 1912, and 1878, respectively (Baird, 1963; Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Like many of the normal operations that halted during the Civil War, many fraternities and sororities were forced to become inactive due to lack of participation. After the war, many of the organizations established in the North were reluctant to reestablish in the South due to tense relationships (Torbenson, 2012). During the Great Depression, students were not able to afford to join fraternities and sororities, and many chapter houses were forced to close their doors (Baird, 1963). However, the groups continued to not only endure, but to grow. Other student-operated groups began to form as well, including religious clubs, music clubs, drama clubs, glee clubs, debating clubs, hobby clubs, and many others (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

Fraternities and sororities gathered large interest for membership during and after World War II but were also challenged by negative press coverage. Baird (1963) explained how many sorority members took on the roles of fraternity members who enlisted in the various military service groups. Sorority women sold war bonds and fundraised for the Red Cross and other critical health care agencies. Baird (1963) estimated 325,000 fraternity men and sorority women volunteered during World War II. At the end of the war, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (also known as the G.I. Bill) allowed many of those men and women to return to their universities and resume their studies, as well as their roles in their Greek letter societies (Baird, 1963). Owen acknowledged in the 20th edition of *Baird’s Manual of American College Fraternities* (1990) that this time period also represented the beginning of diversification for the historically White organizations. Gradually, members started to resemble a wider spectrum of races, ethnicities, and religions. However, Nuwer (1999) recognized many criticisms of Greek life came about during this time also. In a 1959 edition of *Nation,* an ex-fraternity member and writer, Thomson, said:

[Fraternity] demerits are so numerous, their shortcomings so short: they codify snobbery, they pervert values, they corrupt decent instincts. They eat on exclusiveness, they thrive on intolerance, they presume to stratify peoples beliefs, they gorge on stupidity…and they disgorge heartache and viciousness. (Nuwer, 1999, p. 129)

Also during this time, universities began employing campus professionals to work specifically with these organizations to provide service to their college and local communities (Baird, 1963). Steady growth continued and by the mid-20th century there were 77 fraternities and 45 sororities, which now began to include fraternities and sororities with ethnic foundations and values (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

The late 1970s and early 1980s brought about a new generation of fraternity and sorority criticisms. According to Owen (1991):

One chapter after another, first in this part of the country and then in that, was involved in a bad hazing incident or a case of gang rape or a drunken brawl or a drug raid or a racial confrontation or mindless vandalism…And nearly everywhere that there was trouble on a campus, there were plenty of Greek letters on display. (p. 5)

The media captured the rebellious and hazardous acts of fraternity and sorority members at universities across the nation and everyday citizens began to learn about these dangerous activities. In 1979, the movie *Animal House* recreated satirical scenes of parties and hazing and has since become widely known to Americans (Owen, 1991).

Historically Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs)

After the Civil War, African Americans in the United States did not have a smooth transition into the education systems that were previously established. According to Brubacher and Rudy (1997), coming to the United States under enslavement did not offer many opportunities for learning how to read or write. Ninety percent of African Americans lived in the South after the war was over and they received most of their educational assistance through church volunteers who traveled from the North (Christian, including Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist). The Freedman’s Bureau was the first federal agency to engage in discussions around African Americans in higher education. In fact, one of the first historically Black colleges and universities, Howard University, was named after one of the founders of The Freedman’s Bureau, General Oliver Howard (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). However, originally most colleges founded for African Americans were vocational in nature, dedicated to teaching manual labor. Well-known historically Black colleges and universities, such as Morehouse College, Atlanta University, and Talladega College, began this way (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

As mentioned previously in Brubacher and Rudy’s work (1997),The Morrill Act of 1862 allowed for the foundation of many historically Black colleges and universities that are still in existence today. Also, while in the early years of fraternities, the typical college student was male, White, of Protestant faith, and from an upper-class background, the student demographics were beginning to change approaching the 1900s, and increased numbers of African American students were enrolling in colleges and universities (Torbenson, 2012). Brubacher and Rudy (1997) went on to say that the second edition of The Morrill Act, passed in 1890, was a step forward for African Americans in higher education by denying federal funds to universities who discriminated against Black students applying for admission. However, this victory would only last a few years until a monumental decision was made in the landmark case *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* in 1896 (as cited in Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). The determination in this case argued that it was constitutional for Blacks and Whites to access “separate, but equal” facilities, leading to the development of Jim Crow laws in many states (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 64). These legal outcomes led to detrimental effects for African American students at many predominantly White institutions, such as Cornell University and Indiana University (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Dickinson, 2012; Ross, 2000). Although most of the colleges and universities for African American students were located in the South, by this time, more and more Black students were attending institutions in the northern region of the United States (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Discrimination could still be seen everywhere on campuses, however. Black and White students were not permitted to come in contact with one another, and Black students were not allowed to participate in any student activities, including social clubs or Greek letter societies (Torbenson, 2012). Even until 1928 after at least eight BGLOs had formed, half the national fraternities had restrictions on race and religion (Torbenson, 2012). On many campuses, Black students turned to one another for support and fellowship. African American students often worked in fraternity houses cleaning, cooking, or serving, which allowed them to gain an introductory glimpse of fraternity life (Torbenson, 2012).

Because African American students were not allowed to join fraternities, they began to form their own. Johnson (1972) wrote that by the year 1924, “twelve of the [historically White] fraternities had enacted legislation limiting membership to the majority race, and in eleven others the policy was to invite only men who were both White in color and Christian in faith” (p. 42). According to Dickinson (2012), there are two distinctive reasons for the formation of BGLOs, the first being “the need for solace in group cohesion” and the second being “inspired by a commitment to service” (p. 9). George B. Kelly, founder of one of the oldest BGLOs in existence, spoke to this experience, as cited by Johnson (1972):

The Negro at Cornell…was set aside and we couldn’t do some of the things that the others were doing. But we wanted to help the crowd at Cornell and at other colleges. It happened that few Negroes were going to large universities at that time. We hoped to bind these men together in a way that they could give mutual aid educationally, in their work, and by advice. (p. 41)

As more African American students began to feel the harsh reality of discrimination and exclusion, it began affecting their retention at their colleges and universities. All six of the African American students in the 1904-1905 cohort at Cornell University discontinued their enrollment for the following year (Ross, 2000). Although students faced incredible threats, they knew they needed to continue their educational endeavors “for the good of the race” (Dickinson, 2012, p. 9). Historic African American writer and member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., W. E. B. Du Bois (2012), suggested, “secret societies provided hope for Blacks' uplift through mastering the art of social, organized life” (Harris & Sewell, 2012, p. 66). From their heavy involvement with the church and their community, African American students also knew they had a responsibility to assist in their local communities. Prior to the establishment of BGLOs, fraternities and sororities were very involved with their own members but rarely organized events or projects for the general well-being of others (Dickinson, 2012). According to Kimbrough (2003) and Washington and Nunez (2012), the first BGLO, Alpha Kappa Nu, was created in 1903 at Indiana University. There are very few records of this organization’s existence, and it was closed in 1906. In May of 1904, a second BGLO, Sigma Pi Phi, also known as “The Boule,” was secretly established as an elite BGLO primarily for professional graduates (Kimbrough, 2003, p. 25). Gamma Phi was founded at Wilberforce University in Ohio in 1905 and was able to sustain membership for almost 30 years before closing officially (Kimbrough, 2003; Washington & Nunez, 2012).

The oldest historically African American fraternity currently active today is Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. founded at Cornell University in 1906. In 1908, shortly after the fraternity was founded, the first Black women’s sorority was established at Howard University, named Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Between 1911 and 1922, six additional BGLOs would be established: Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. in 1911; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in 1913; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. in 1914; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. in 1920; and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. in 1922 (Dickinson; 2012; Kimbrough, 2003; McKenzie, 2012; Ross, 2000; Washington & Nunez, 2012). Although Black fraternalism was once defined by eight organizations, argued Kimbrough (2003), there are at least 75 other BGLOs currently in existence today on many college campuses.

The values and traditions of BGLOs were developed mainly from the African and Egyptian heritage that had been lost during the migration to America, mixed with the Masonic foundations of early Greek letter societies. According to Dickinson (2012), many of the practices still recognized today within BGLOs were created during the early years, including branding and tattoos, calls, stepping, South African boot dancing, and the West African dance forms of rhythmic parading in a line or circle. The carrying of canes by young men seeking adult membership into a tribe is an African tradition still embodied in the symbolism of canes used by BGLO fraternities (Dickinson, 2012). Most of the initial pledge rituals and traditions were adopted from the African education system of loyalty, dedication, and values (Dickinson, 2012). However, many of the traditions known to BGLOs today gained most of the momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, including hand gestures, calls, jackets, lavalieres, plots, stepping, and some terminology (Kimbrough, 2003).

Recently Established Ethnic-based Greek Letter Organizations (REGLOs)

As more students began to also feel excluded from fraternities and sororities, a new generation of Greek letter organizations began forming, including students from Asian, Latin, and multicultural backgrounds. In search of a support system, the first Latin American student organization was formed at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Tory, New York, in 1898. The Union Hispano Americana began as a cultural and intellectual society for students from Latin America and Spain based on the ideals of Pan-Americanism (Phi Iota Alpha Latino Fraternity, 2013). Many political figures have defined Pan-Americanism, including James G. Blaine on the Garfield administration, President Theodore Roosevelt, and President Woodrow Wilson, as well as a number of well-known Hispanic American, Chilean, and Peruvian writers. Author of *Pan-Americanism: Its Beginnings*, Joseph Lockey (1970), defined Pan-Americanism as “a moral union of American states founded upon a body of principles growing out of the common struggle for independence” (p. 4). These principles are referred to as independence, community of political ideals, territorial integrity, law instead of force, nonintervention, equality, and cooperation (Lockey, 1970).

During this time of unity between the North and South American countries, the first Latino fraternity, Pi Delta Phi was formed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1916. The next would be Phi Lambda Alpha Fraternity in 1919 at the University of California, Berkeley. Realizing the common goals of Union Hispano Americana, as well as these two fraternities, the three entities merged in 1921 to form Phi Lambda Alpha Latino Fraternity. In the South, similar Latin secret societies had begun around the same time. In 1904, a secret society for Spanish-American students named Sociedad Hispano-Americana was founded at Louisiana State University. This organization later became Sigma Iota Latino Fraternity. In 1931, the union of Phi Lambda Alpha came together with Sigma Iota to form one large Latino Greek Letter Society: Phi Iota Alpha (Phi Iota Alpha Latino Fraternity, 2013).

Like the early fraternities, women’s sororities, and BGLOs, Latino fraternities faced incredible challenges during the World War II era, and membership numbers declined to eventually becoming dormant (Phi Iota Alpha Latino Fraternity, 2013). However, the civil rights movement brought a new hope to Latino fraternities and Latina sororities, and the Latino/a fraternal movement gained momentum. The 1970s brought incredible growth to Latinos in higher education, although very few programs could support the increased number of Latino students on campus (Cruz et al., 2009). The first Latino fraternity to form after World War II was Lambda Theta Phi Latino Fraternity, Inc. at Kean College in Union, New Jersey, in 1975 (Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, 2014). Latinas also identified with feelings of being a minority group on a predominantly White campus. Women seeking inspiration and opportunities for advancement formed the first Latina sorority at Kean College in 1975, called Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. (Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, 2014). The primary purpose of Lambda Theta Alpha was to:

Actively integrate itself into the social, political and community service arena that other students had been involved with. Together, as a united front they could compete, collaborate and assist with any student run programs, thus making their voices as loud and profound as the majority voice; their concerns equally as important. (Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Fraternity, 2014, para. 3)

With the influx of Latin students in higher education between 1970 and today, Latino Greek letter organizations have grown exponentially, and this is the era most focused on in this study. Kimbrough (2003) claimed that in 1976, Latinos represented 3.5% of college students in the United States, and almost 20 years later in 1995, that population had multiplied to 8.2%. In addition to the significant growth seen with regard to Latino/a students in higher education (Kimbrough, 2003), this expansion is expected to continue. The National Center for Education Statistics, as cited by Mmeje et al. (as cited in Harper & Quaye, 2009), anticipates the United States Latin population to be approximately 25% by 2050.

Similar to Latin Americans, Asian Americans in the United States also experienced segregation as they immigrated to the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 restricted many Chinese immigrants from participating in American society and accessing higher education. According to Chen (2009) and Hsia (1988), the Gentleman’s Agreement between the United States and Japan in 1907, as well as the Immigration Act of 1924, made it incredibly difficult for Asian Americans to come to the United States. Despite feelings of discrimination and injustice for Asian American students admitted into colleges and universities, the first Asian-based fraternities and sororities were established. With the exception of Rho Psi, the first Chinese fraternity, established at Cornell University in 1916, the first Asian Pacific Islander American organizations began in the 1920s with small groups of Chinese and Japanese students at public institutions in California (Chen, 2009; Johnson, 1972). In 1929, another Chinese fraternity, Pi Alpha Phi, and the first Japanese sorority, Chi Alpha Delta, were founded at University of California, Berkeley and University of California, Los Angeles, respectively. San Francisco State University welcomed the first Chinese sorority, Sigma Omicron Pi, in 1930 (Chen, 2009; National APIA Panhellenic Association, 2013; Torbenson, 2012).

Through the post-World War II era and the Vietnam War, little activity was seen in Asian-based fraternities and sororities, which may have been caused in large part by increased discrimination against Chinese and Japanese immigrants. In her chapter titled “Asian Americans in Sororities and Fraternities: In Search of a Home and Place,” Chen (2009) gave the example of the unfair treatment using the experience of an Asian-based sorority that attempted to purchase a home for its members to live in but was refused because the women were “oriental” (p. 87). In another example of prejudice, Chen (2009) wrote this about a Japanese American student with the last name Ohara: “Mistaken for being of Irish decent, (O’Hara), she initially won the [Panhellenic] scholarship, but was later denied once it was realized she was Japanese American” (p. 88). These examples illustrated the need for Asian American students to join together to form unions on college campuses safe for their involvement. Hsia (1998) noted the civil rights movement, combined with the reformed Immigration Act of 1965, opened the doors of possibility for Asian American students in higher education, making it illegal to discriminate on many factors including race, color, national origin, and religion. This drastically changed the look and shape of fraternities and sororities after this point in history. The influx of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Pilipino citizens to the United States created even more diversification in the Asian American experience (Hsia, 1998).

Immediately following the civil rights movement, fewer Greek organizations were formed than one would have expected. During the 1970s and 1980s, only seven Asian American organizations were founded (Chen, 2009). Although the current largest Asian American fraternity, Lambda Phi Epsilon, and the largest Asian American sorority, alpha Kappa Delta Phi, were established during the 1980s, little growth continued until the sudden increase in membership of the 1990s (Chen, 2009). Prior to 1990, eight Asian-based fraternities and 11 Asian-based sororities existed in the United States. Between 1970 and 2000, the Asian American population in the United States grew from 1.5 to 11.1 million, which corresponded directly with the growth in Asian-based fraternities and sororities. Today, there are more than 65 Asian American fraternities and sororities recognized at college campuses across the country (Chen, 2009; National APIA Panhellenic Association, 2013). Although Chen (2009) argued that little research has been conducted on Asian American student groups, their networks, and their social lives, connections have been made between the experiences of African American, Latino, and Asian American students, including the feelings of isolation they have shared throughout their history in higher education.

In the 1980s, another type of Greek letter organization began to develop: the multicultural or multiethnic organization. Some organizations took on the identity of a traditional BGLO but also included members from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, while other groups had no traditional foundation but instead embraced students of all cultures, races, religions, and creeds (National APIA Panhellenic Association, 2013; Torbenson, 2012). Similar to the reasons for starting other REGLOs, Hernandez (as cited in Velez, 2009), founder of a multicultural sorority in 1996 stated:

With the mainstream sororities, we really didn't feel like we fit in there, and we were looking for an organization that met our needs. We saw that it was multicultural, not just focused on one culture, but [focused] on how the world is, with different cultures. (para. 12)

The first sorority with an emphasis on multiculturalism and “build[ing] the bridges that connected women from all different parts of the world” was named Mu Sigma Upsilon, Sorority, Inc., founded in 1981 at Rutgers University (Mu Sigma Upsilon Sorority, n.d., para. 2). The first multicultural fraternity, Epsilon Sigma Rho Multi-Cultural Fraternity, Inc., was founded at California State University, Sacramento in 1986 (Velez, 2009). Thirteen multicultural organizations that had expanded throughout the 1980s and 1990s came together in 1998 to form the National Multicultural Greek Council, Inc. (2014) with three main goals, one of which being “to promote the awareness of multicultural diversity within collegiate institutions, their surrounding communities, and the greater community-at-large” (para. 5).

Many of the practices and traditions of REGLOs were inspired by, and often times mimicked, from the common traditions of BGLOs established between 1905 and 1922, including line jackets, calls, and hand signs (Kimbrough, 2003). One of the most replicated of these traditions is that of pledging. In an article cited by Kimbrough (2003) from *Latina Magazine*, pledges of Sigma Lambda Upsilon Latinas Unidas Sorority “were required to march in line around campus…which the paper likened to the African American slave march” (p. 181). Another highly imitated tradition is that of stepping, which has been widely adopted by Asian, Latino/a, and multicultural Greek letter organizations (Dickinson, 2012). Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc., a Latina-based organization established in 1985, credited Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for inviting it to participate in a unity step at Chico State University in 1987. The organization later transformed stepping into its own practice by adding the use of machetes (typically used by Latino males) to represent the empowerment of Latina women in roles not typically meant for Latinas (Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, 2005). Probate shows or “coming out shows” are another type of event modified to fit the REGLO culture (Kimbrough, 2003, p. 53). Because so many cultural traditions from REGLOs are significantly modeled from those of BGLOs, this strong relationship creates the framework for examining how hazing behaviors and perceptions may have been similarly adapted.

Similar to how Johnson (1972) described the formation of historically White Greek letter organizations, REGLOs were founded to “enhance individual liberties, to broaden the opportunities for student participation, and to correct what they perceived to be abuses, unfairness, and hypocrisy in campus affairs” (p. 19). At one time or another, all types of REGLOs felt rejected by previously established historical fraternities and sororities at their college or university due to their race, ethnicity, social standing, income level, or religious affiliation and thusly felt motivated by a need to belong to a group that would be accepting.

Historical Progression of Hazing Behaviors

From the Origins of Hazing to the 20th Century

Nuwer (1999) suggested the concept of hazing actually originates from medieval times, where a “culture of honor” for young men tended to be riddled with threat and violence. Later, in the United States, hazing practices were adopted from a tradition in England, referred to as “fagging” (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 46). As far back as 1667, it was not uncommon to see lower-class students running errands as unpaid servants for upper-class students. A strict hierarchy existed at most institutions in which the freshmen students served the sophomore students as “fags” and were sent on erroneous errands throughout the day (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Kimbrough, 2003; Nuwer, 1999; Torbenson, 2012). Kimbrough (2003) referred to another form of early hazing called “pennalism”—a requirement for freshmen (called “pennals”) to carry additional pens with them to class in case an upperclassman did not have one (p. 39). Brubacher and Rudy (1997) discussed another early tradition where during “rush,” freshmen and sophomore classes would engage in physical fighting, which sometimes turned into an organized wrestling match or football game (p. 47). Briggs (2012) referred to these battles as “bloody brawls” and “class battle royals” (p. 479). Occasionally, a college administrator attempted to assign consequences or penalties to those who participated, but it was not well received by college administration that typically also participated in this behavior (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). In later years, hazing became so violent that faculty and administrators did not have the courage to get involved (Nuwer, 1999).

“Fagging” continued to take place in some of the better-known secret societies, such as the Yale University Skull & Crossbones (Syrett, 2009). Students were asked to do a number of things in order to show their subordination to upper-class students. Freshmen, for instance, often were made to wear hats as well as avert their eyes and step away from the path if an upper-class student was approaching (Syrett, 2009). Syrett (2009) included some additional “fagging” examples in his book *The Company He Keeps*. Freshmen students were subject to:

jeering and teasing, removal of possessions...and ‘smoking out,’ (a process whereby smoke was blown into a room whose keyhole and windows were closed, forcing the student within to exit.) Freshmen were kidnapped, stripped, carried off on trips, painted, shorn of their hair, tarred, feathered, bound, gagged, and left in cemeteries. The purpose, at least as elaborated by those doing the hazing, was to remind freshmen of their place in the hierarchy of college. (p. 18).

Initiation is referred to as a process by which a new member is given official membership in a Greek letter organization by pledging to honor a secret oath. Johnson (1972) described the origins of this process, saying, “in the beginning, members were initiated immediately after being chosen, but the need for a probationary interim was sensed early” (p. 277). He quoted a founding member of a fraternity who said, “There must be something held back – something that will operate as a powerful motive in inducing those initiated to be true to their vows” (p. 277). This led to the beginning of “pledgeship” as we know it today. Pledgeship, which typically lasts for one semester, is the process of socialization of a new member into the organization (Johnson, 1972). Johnson (1972) stated, “to belong fully, [the member] will be expected to assimilate the major values, commitments, and behaviors, which the members regard as acceptable and indeed, indispensable, if their group is to function harmoniously and fulfill its goals” (p. 277).

Moving into the 1800s, increasing numbers of students joining fraternities, sororities, and Greek letter societies began to distinguish themselves as “members of a special college caste” (Syrett, 2009, p. 53). Due to the historical exclusivity of Greek letter societies thus far in their existence, groups used this standpoint to admit only those who met the qualifications to join. During this time, fraternities and sororities were mostly recognized at universities for the wealthy upper class in New England, the mid-Atlantic region, the Midwest, and the South. This began the campus divide, separating the privileged from the poor (Syrett, 2009). Nuwer (1999) wrote that most women who attended college originated from wealthier families, and were therefore those involved in sororities were as well. Hazing within sororities began around this time, but Nuwer (1999) said women’s behavior was “never life-threatening or particularly demeaning” (p. 149).

Fraternity men were aware that being in a fraternity brought prestige, and they wanted new initiates to not only work for their membership but also to appreciate it (Syrett, 2009). To earn a place in the elite group, new members were asked to perform certain tasks to demonstrate their loyalty to the fraternity, ensuring the loyalty would not be betrayed (Syrett, 2009). Younger men were increasingly willing to undergo humiliation and torture for the privilege of membership, knowing that the membership could help them achieve greater accomplishments (Syrett, 2009). In women’s Greek letter organizations, it was also discovered a few of the sororities had adopted “criticism sessions” (Turk, 2004, p. 59). In some cases, particular members served their chapter as “critics,” in which their role was to write down criticisms of the individual chapter members and read them aloud at fraternity meetings (Turk, 2004, p. 59). This relationship provides the foundation for the types of hazing discussed later in this chapter.

Upon the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, the term “hazing” became much more common, and many of the hazing tactics used in the military were brought back to colleges and universities, which increased hazing behaviors significantly. Hazing also stemmed from students who had previously attended the United States Military Academy (West Point) and then transferred to nonmilitary-based colleges (Syrett, 2009). Although hazing deaths had occurred in the early 1800s, hazing became very relevant for the United States in 1873 when a Kappa Alpha pledge member at Cornell University fell to his death while wearing a blindfold at a fraternity initiation ritual trying to find his way home in the woods (Briggs, 2012; Kimbrough, 2003; Nuwer, 1999). The hazing rituals of this era included “painting the body of the victim…‘torturing him with electrical horrors,’ feeding the initiate nauseating concoctions, and beating him” (Syrett, 2009, p. 151).

Heading into the early 20th century, the nation began to see widespread news stories about “Hell Week”—the days just before a formal initiation ceremony in which all of the pledgeship activities “intensify and come to a climax” (Johnson, 2012, p. 278). “Hell Week” was also observed in BGLOs during this time, “where pledges marched around the campus in odd attire singing” (Kimbrough, 2003, p. 44). Between 1950 and 1960, four students were killed from fraternity hazing activities during “Hell Week” or “Hell Night” events. During this time, it was revealed that all fraternities at Stanford University admitted they “tubbed” their freshmen for disciplinary purposes—a process whereby students were stripped and fully submerged in a tub of cold water until they are “strangled” and then released (Syrett, 2009, p. 151). Drout and Corsoro (2003) cited several other authors in their article about hazing deaths, including one story of a freshmen student enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1977, who died from a hazing incident involving alcohol poisoning. Drout and Corsoro (2003) also discussed a fraternity “pledge who died when he was forced to lie naked on a table and receive shocks while his skin was coated with flammable chemicals” (pp. 535-536). As of the late 1960s, there had not been any hazing related deaths involving sorority women (Nuwer, 1999). Nuwer (1999) did say sorority chapters were known to haze in the 1960s, but none of the hazing deaths he reported were a result of sorority hazing.

Although the first law against hazing in California was passed in 1959, Nuwer (1999) stated, “during the 19th and 20th centuries, in order to build school spirit many universities and their surrounding communities tolerated or even encouraged hazing so long as severe injuries or death did not result” (as cited in Johnson, 1972, p. 37). In Greek letter organizations, hazing incidents increased drastically during in the late 1900s. Nuwer’s chronology (1999) included the names of 60 hazing deaths that occurred between 1960 and 1990. Nuwer (1999) claimed far more incidents and deaths involving National Panhellenic Conference sororities were reported from 1988 to 1998 as opposed to 1977 to 1987. In *Wrongs of Passage*, Nuwer(1999) presented 10 examples of sorority injuries in the 1990s, most of which were found to have alcohol involved, but were not necessarily directly associated with hazing.

The Culture of Hazing or Pledging in BGLOs

Hazing in the forms of alcohol abuse, date rape, and road trips have been seen more commonly within historically White fraternities and sororities while beatings and physical tests of endurance are more common in BGLOs (Black et al., 2012; Nuwer, 1999). As previously mentioned in the historical context of this literature summary, REGLOs have adapted their traditions primarily from BGLOs, which reasonably lends to an investigation of hazing within BGLOs as a framework for examining hazing within REGLOs (Black et al., 2012).

Hazing has been interwoven in the history of sororities and fraternities since their inception, and BGLOs are not exempt from this relationship. In fact, the concept of initiation extends back to the historical roots of African culture where young men participated in the “crossing of the sands” in the “place of testing” before becoming an adult member of the tribe (Dickinson, 2012, pp. 15-16). In Dickinson’s chapter from *African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision* (2012), the author gave direct examples of hazing activities developed with West African values in mind. Adapted from initiation procedures (also called “Hell Week”) in the West African/Egyptian culture, new members also called probates “received new names; endured physical or psychological hazing, or both; learned the secrets of the organization; dressed in distinctive, identical clothes; renounced the individuality of their past lives; and learned from their brothers or sisters” (Dickinson, 2012, pp. 15-16).

Black et al. (2012) said many practices of BGLO hazing resemble slavery, including the rituals of giving members embarrassing nicknames, “beat-ins,” brandings, and auctions (pp. 412-413). Kimbrough (2003) referred to the practice of new initiates moving across the campus in a single file line as a reflection of slaves marching to ships on their way to America or Harriet Tubman organizing slaves in a single file line through the Underground Railroad. The 1920s were a very important era for BGLOs as they made a push to separate attitudes of hazing from the accepted practices of pledging. However, Kimbrough (2003) insisted that through the 1930s, many of these pledging activities still included brutal incidents where new members were seen limping around campus or falling asleep in class from exhaustion. Prior to 1990, pledging, and what is now defined as hazing, was widely accepted as a key component of joining a BGLO and has played a major role in the evolution of these organizations (Dickinson, 2012; Kimbrough, 2003). Pledging was a spectacle at many historically Black colleges and universities. Students would cheer on their friends who were joining organizations as they walked by in unison singing and chanting their traditional songs and calls (Briggs, 2012).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, pledging continued the same way with pledges being given items to carry with them that symbolized their organization, moving in a single file line around campus, dressing in uniforms, or wearing beanies called “crabs” (Kimbrough, 2003, p. 53). Members of Omega Psi Phi, known as “Que Dogs” would be seen wearing dog collars, drinking from bowls and barking to one another (Kimbrough, 2003, p. 117). BGLOs played a very important role in the campus community at historically Black colleges and universities, and this process was known to engage the entire study body, but as Kimbrough (2003) noted, “by the time we reached the 1980’s, pledging had a life of its own. The culture…was learned by each new line, and the importance of this ritual became subconscious and habitual for members” (p. 153).

However, as the organizations developed into the latter portion of the 20th century, hazing became an important topic for discussion within the national body of BGLOs—the National Pan-Hellenic Council. Prior to 1990, pledging was an integral part of the Black Greek experience and often encompassed physical abuse, alcohol poisoning, accidental falls, car accidents, broken limbs, burnings, ruptured eardrums, and even deaths (Chambers, Walpole, & Coaxum, 2012; Kimbrough, 2003). Not unique to National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations, other BGLOs also participated in hazing through pledging. Two pledges from a local Black sorority were found dead downstream in the Appomattox River after being told to swim to the center of the river (Nuwer, 1999). These events resulted in many chapters being closed by the national organizations or the institutions. By 1990, there had been a number of hazing-related injuries and deaths in BGLOs, which led to a widespread response in 1990 (Chambers et al., 2012). Throughout the 1980s, a few of the national organizations made changes to their programs that would attempt to curb these behaviors. Delta Sigma Theta adopted the term “membership intake” as opposed to pledging, Omega Psi Phi changed its program to eliminate brutality, and Alpha Phi Alpha established a risk management program (p. 57). However, none compared to Phi Beta Sigma’s statement in 1987, which completely ended pledging (Kimbrough, 2003). Kimbrough (2003) explained that “the new initiates did not walk in line, participate in stepping, or any activities that had become known as a part of pledging” (p. 58).

As a nationwide call to action, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, also called the Divine Nine, prohibited pledging for any of its member groups in February of 1990 (Ross, 2000, p. xvi). Briggs (2012) explained in his chapter from the new procedures:

Pledges were no longer allowed to dress alike, walk in lines, eat together, or be seen as an organized group…prospective members simply attended an interest meeting, submitted a formal application, accepted the invitation to join, participated in a few educational sessions, and were then initiated. (p. 479)

Although pledging had been banned officially by the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the phenomenon of “underground pledging” would continue unofficially through pre-pledging (Briggs, 2012, p. 479). Organizations met their national guidelines by completing the requirements for membership on the surface but proceeded with their unofficial pledge process to be respected by members of the community (Kimbrough, 2003). Two years after the mandate, in 1992, Dr. John Williams conducted a research study with 277 undergraduates affiliated with the National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations. Williams found that a significant amount of chapters were noncompliant with the new policies and had taken their pledge process underground (Briggs, 2012; Kimbrough, 2003).

In the efforts to eliminate all hazing behaviors in the 1990s, a great divide within the organizations began to tear apart brothers and sisters. “Paper” members who had become a member through the formal intake process were seen as unworthy and subordinate to “real” members, which were most likely participating in hazing rituals (Briggs, 2012, pp. 480-481). Kimbrough (2003) noted that high profile incidents continued through the 1990s, including pledges being dripped with hot wax and asked to eat vomit and drink water from a toilet bowl. An average of four instances of underground hazing rituals were reported each year prior to 1990. In 1995, that average number increased to seven per year. The injuries of underground pledging included broken bones, welts, and internal injuries requiring hospital visits (Briggs, 2012).

In the years following the mandate, several large lawsuits were filed against BGLO national offices, including Alpha Phi Alpha in 1990, Kappa Alpha Psi in 1997, and Alpha Kappa Alpha in 2002 (Briggs, 2012). In 1999, Delta Sigma Theta was sued by the family of a student who had participated in “hazing that included sit-ups, drinking hot sauce and vinegar, swallowing her own vomit, and grinding her knees and elbows until they bled” (Kimbrough 2003, p. 78). In Kimbrough’s text (2003), the author accounted for several multi-thousand and sometimes million dollar lawsuits that were filed against these organizations for hazing- and pledging-related deaths. Nuwer (1999), who currently hosts the only running log of hazing deaths, shows that more deaths have occurred in BGLOs since the National Pan-Hellenic Council mandate in 1990 and that physical forms of hazing continue to be the primary cause of deaths within BGLOs today.

In 1999, Kimbrough (2003) decided to replicate the 1992 Williams study to see if 10 years since the mandate would yield similar or different responses from students compared to the 1992 results. Kimbrough (2003) found that although the time had created an increased knowledge and acceptance of membership intake versus pledging, “the basic underlying assumptions about pledging as a part of the Black Greek experience remain consistent” (p. 89). Briggs claimed hazing is “the biggest problem facing these organizations because their extinction is looming if this practice persists…Hazing has not ended” (p. 477).

Hazing Examined in the Present Day

As mentioned in previous areas of the literature review, the last 40 years have seen a rapid increase in the number of hazing incidents involving alcohol and physical injuries, specifically within fraternities and sororities (Chambers et al., 2012; Kimbrough, 2003; Nuwer, 1999). California adopted an anti-hazing law in 1959; however, it was not updated to the current statute until 2006 (Johnson, 1972). Although Stophazing.org shows that 44 current states have anti-hazing statutes (with Michigan being the most recent to adopt in the state Penal Code in 2004), it has been noted by researchers that in the United States, hazing activities continue to occur in amateur and professional athletic teams, spirit groups, marching bands, cult-like groups, high school groups, and youth groups, such as the Boy Scouts of America and Future Farmers of America (Hollmann, 2002; Nuwer, 1999). Several authors have agreed that men in fraternities may engage in different hazing activities than women in sororities based on their assumption of gender roles (Allan, 2004; Hollmann, 2002).

In general, Nuwer (1999) said, “although some violent hazing, alcohol misuse and even branding have occurred in college sororities, hazing has been far less a problem in female clubs than in male fraternities” (Allan, 2004, p. 277). Hazing among men’s fraternities is more likely to be violent in nature, “framed as a test of ‘strength,’ ‘courage’ and ‘determination’” (Allan, 2004, p. 283). Hazing within women’s sororities does typically involve alcohol but usually also incorporates psychological trauma or even the objectification of the sorority women. Allan (2004) gave an example of a hazing activity in which sorority women visited an adult video store dressed in seductive clothing. She also discussed an instance in which

sorority pledges were required to visit each of the 10 fraternity houses (where alcohol was served) and to prove they had accomplished this, the pledges were required to have signatures written on their skin by a member of each fraternity. (Allan, 2004, p. 289)

In the year 2000, there were 23 deaths as a result of hazing followed regrettably by 24 deaths in 2001 and 42 deaths in 2002 (Campo et al., 2005). According to Campo et al. (2005), a range of hazing behaviors currently exists, such as “being kidnapped, transported, and abandoned; participating in drinking contests/games; being deprived of sleep; engaging in or simulating sexual acts; being physically assaulted; carrying unnecessary objects; and being required to remain silent” (p. 137). Several reporters for *The New York Times* have written about high profile hazing incidents within the last few years, which seem to have no pattern of common region or state location. In 2011, a Cornell University student died after a drinking ritual for Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, and the following year, a Florida A&M University student, Richard Champion, was fatally beaten in what the authorities described as a marching band hazing ritual (Kaminer & Southall, 2013). In fact, in March of 2014, Sigma Alpha Epsilon made a national announcement it would no longer allow pledging as a part of the initiation process, similar to National Pan-Hellenic Council groups in 1990. The fraternity had experienced the loss of members in 2011, 2012, and 2013 (Lovett, 2014). The most recent hazing death recorded during the time of this study, took place in December of 2013 at Baruch College (The City College of New York). College first-year student, Chun Hsien Dene (Michael), age 19, attended a trip to the Poconos with fraternity brothers, where he participated in a fraternity ritual game involving carrying large objects while blindfolded that ultimately led to his death from major brain trauma (Kaminer & Southall, 2013). Unfortunately, because each state has the opportunity to create its own laws and consequences around hazing, it can be difficult for students to understand its meaning and difficult for college administrators and law enforcement to punish (Hollmann, 2002). Hollmann (2002) did recognize some states have made positive strides to include consequences for anyone involved in hazing activities, including willing participants of hazing as well as those who witness the activity and do not contact authorities.

The *National Study of Student Hazing* conducted by Allan and Madden (2008) was the first study of its kind to analyze the phenomenon of hazing on a national level, incorporating 53 institutions with various student backgrounds from all over the country. Survey responses from 11,482 individual students were gathered, and more than 300 individual interviews were conducted at 18 of the campuses. The study concluded 69% of college and university students were aware of hazing behaviors at their institution and recognize hazing as part of their campus culture. More than half the students involved in a club or team experienced some form of hazing, and 47% of the students came to college having experienced hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008). Findings of the study also revealed that hazing occurs within a range of student groups. Seventy-four percent of varsity athletic team members, 73% of Greek letter organization members, and 64% of sport club members experienced one or more hazing activities (Allan & Madden, 2008). As mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the largest limitations of the national study was that it could not necessarily prove hazing existed as significantly among students of color or cultural/multiethnic student organizations since 75% of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, while only 25% identified within an ethnic minority group.

The Role of Alcohol in Hazing

Alcohol provides one of the greatest risks to college students in the present day. Drout and Corsoro (2003) referenced results from the 1998 National Institute of Health Study, which found that 82% of college students from that year admitted to using alcohol in the year prior to the study. Further research cited by Drout and Corsoro (2003) found that students living in fraternity and sorority homes in 1997 reported binge drinking during the two weeks prior to the survey at the same percentage (82%). Consistent with this, Nuwer (1999) presented a study conducted by Harvard School of Public Health in 1998, which discovered that “four of five fraternity and sorority members report themselves to be binge drinkers, admitting they engaged in risky behaviors, acted irresponsibly at times, and hurt their academic standing” (p. xxv). Rapid alcohol consumption and abuse involved with initiation and ritual activities in Greek letter organizations has been identified as one of the largest contributing factors involved in hazing incidents today (Hollmann, 2002). As cited by Hollmann (2002), Nuwer said, “while hazing is a major societal problem and alcohol abuse is another…these two separate problems become even more troublesome when they are intimately linked” (p. 13). In fact, Nuwer (1999) began including which hazing deaths in his chronology have involved alcohol as well as physical injury. So far, of the 142 incidents listed since 1970, more than half of them have involved alcohol in some way, whether alcohol was a direct cause of death or the victim was under the influence of alcohol. Thirty-two were a result of physical abuse or assault (Nuwer, 1999). In her article, “Hazing: Hidden Campus Crime,” Hollmann (2002) cited several research studies in which women were more likely to use alcohol that any other form of hazing, which is consistent with the national data.

In the *National Study of Student Hazing* (2008), the most frequently identified hazing behavior by student respondents was participation in a drinking game (26% of the respondents). Looking specifically at those respondents affiliated with a sorority and fraternity, Allan and Madden (2008) also discovered the most frequently reported hazing activity was participation in a drinking game. Of the 73% of Greek-affiliated students who had experienced one or more hazing behaviors, more than half of those particular respondents (53%) had participated in a drinking game. The next most frequently reported hazing activity, at 31% of Greek students, was to “sing or chant by self or with select groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game or practice” (Allan & Madden, 2008, p. 19). Both Hollmann (2002) and Nuwer (1999) argued alcohol abuse and hazing are very closely related, to the point that they both could be addressed in the same way as addictions. Quoted in Hollmann (2002), Nuwer (1999) said:

Hazers…are nothing more than addicts in an addictive system. For hazing to survive within the educational system, as it has for thousands of years, requires dependence and tolerance - the two common characteristics of addiction...on the parts not only of the hazers and the hazed but also on those who survive them. (pp. 114-115).

Attempts to Explain Why Students Haze: The Theories

This section of the chapter begins with a brief overview of several racial identity development theories specific to Latino/a and Asian American college students, Astin’s Theory of Student Involvement (1984), and the theory of student engagement, presented by Kuh. These grounded theories create a broader picture of the college student and his or her frame of mind, paying particular attention to the development of Latino/a and Asian American college students and the importance of student involvement and engagement. A review of Chickering’s Seven Vectors of Identity Development and Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development are also included to frame the process by which students develop ethical decision-making abilities. Using these fundamental student development theories as a foundation, further discussion includes the specific theories that explain the reasoning behind student participation. The two main theories authors use to describe the hazing phenomenon are “Groupthink” or “Greekthink,” according to Nuwer (1999), and Leon Festinger's Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, which describe the power of group influence and the strong correlation between attractiveness of the group and how severe the hazing activity.

Racial Identity Development

Many challenges are presented to students who identify with an ethnic minority group at a predominantly White college or university. Fries-Britt and Turner (2001) referred to these common struggles as the “proving process,” which causes students to feel intellectually inadequate among their White peers (p. 420). Labels of ethnic minority students based on stereotypical imagery lead to discomfort and create barriers to student success. The pressure students may feel as a result of their racial identity causes them to question whether they belong at the institution and obstructs their ability to connect with the campus (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001). The racial identity theories presented by Harper and Quaye (2009) discussed how a student can progress through the stages of his or her personal racial identity. Beginning with little or no interest in their ethnic background, students on a college campus may suddenly become more aware of their identity and often seek out other students from a similar ethnic background to combat their feelings of loneliness (Harper & Quaye, 2009).

Ferdman and Gallegos (as cited in Evans et al., 2010) focused their research on the racial identity development of Latino/a students. As opposed to a linear model of stages through which students move, Ferdman and Gallegos suggested Latino/a students identify within one of six different self-selected orientations ranging from completely “Latino integrated” students to “White identified” students (pp. 264-265). The orientation is based on a number of factors, including familial group, peer group, educational experience, and physical appearance (Evans et al., 2010).

Researcher Kim (as cited in Evans et al., 2010) directed her focus to Asian American identity development and remains consistent with other researchers on the ideas of identity development stages. Kim presented five stages of Asian American identity development that begin with a student viewing his or her racial identity through those around him or her (ethnic awareness) and progresses all the way to incorporation, where the student is confident in his or her racial identity.

Student Involvement and Engagement

Authors argue student involvement is critical for ethnic minority students to feel comfortable at their college or university (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Harper & Quaye, 2009). Astin’s Student Involvement Theory (1984) defines student involvement as

the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience. Thus, a highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spending much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students. (p. 518)

This theory suggests students participate in valuable learning in and outside the classroom activities, one of which being involvement in student-based organizations, such as Greek letter organizations. Peer groups offer opportunities for students to build relationships with one another and provide support during the collegiate years.

The theory of student engagement, presented by Kuh (1995), also supports the idea that “the other curriculum” outside of the classroom can contribute to the value of the college experience for most students (p. 123). Kuh (1995) reported several studies have shown

participation in extracurricular activities, living in a campus residence, and conversations with faculty and peers have been positively related to persistence and satisfaction and gains in such areas as social competence, autonomy, confidence, self- awareness, and appreciation for human diversity. (p. 124)

Researcher Moffatt (as cited in Kuh, 1995) found that “for about 40 percent of students, the do-it-yourself side of college (what took place outside the classroom) was the most significant educational experience” (p. 124). One of the research questions in Kuh’s 1995 study was: Do the types of out-of-class experiences associated with various outcomes differ by type of institution attended and such student characteristics as sex and ethnicity? A total of 149 students participated: 101 Whites, 30 African Americans, six Hispanics, six Asian Americans, and six international students. After interviewing each of the student participants, the study noted 85% of students identified tasks such as planning, organizing, managing, and decision-making positively contributing to their out-of-the-classroom learning and personal development. The areas where students claimed to have gained the most benefit were *Interpersonal Competence* (self-awareness, social competence, self-esteem, and autonomy), *Cognitive Complexity* (reflective thought and knowledge application), and *Humanitarianism* (a heightened concern for the welfare of others). Students of color reported significantly higher gains in Humanitarianism from their leadership experiences than White students. However, the overall study concluded ethnicity does not account for differences in undergraduate activities and outcomes but that “what matters most is what one does with one’s time outside of class” (Kuh, 1995, p. 146).

Ethical Identity Development

Foundational theories of ethical development and their critiques provide a framework for understanding decision-making processes by ethnic minority students. Chickering’s Seven Vectors of Identity Development provides the idea that students advance in their moral development along seven different pathways (as cited in Evans et al., 2010). A critique of Chickering’s model written by Pope (as cited in Evans et al., 2010) claimed the seven vectors can explain the identity development of White, middle-class students but is not necessarily applicable to students of color. For example, Kodama, McEwen, Liang, and Lee (2001) pointed out the concept of vectors does not necessarily take into consideration different cultural values, such as emotional restraint, which may be more relevant to an Asian American student population.

Lawrence Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development (as cited in Evans et al., 2010) considers three levels that indicate how an individual rationalizes a personal choice. An individual may begin his or her development by making choices to avoid particular consequences or punishments but may progress to making choices based on societal or group norms. Again, cultural differences may exist within Kohlberg’s theory. Several researchers (Iwasa, 1992; Ma, 1989; Miller & Bersoff, 1992) (as cited in Evans et al., 2010) have found that Asian cultures align their moral compass with the law more so than Western cultures.

“Groupthink” and “Greekthink”

For many students, going to college causes feelings of anxiety and instability, especially if they have moved out of familiar environments. Due to this sense of uneasiness, students seek ways to connect with other students for friendship and mentorship. Typically, these students are new to the campus, possibly freshmen students who are away from home and looking for a place to belong. Greek letter organizations will invite these students into their group, and to these young and vulnerable students, the fear of loneliness and the individual need for a support group is worth enduring hazing activities, especially if a student exhibits low self-esteem (Nuwer, 1999). Several researchers have examined the social psychology of group dynamics. Van Raalte, Cornelius, Linder, and Brewer (2007) discussed group identity, group membership, in-group/out-group relationships, and the benefits of affiliating with an in-group, stating “being a member of an ingroup confers a wide range of benefits on an individual, including survival, protection from enemies, status, and access to group resources. Being a member of a group also requires individuals to pay certain costs, such as time, money, and being subjected to social pressures” (p. 495). In regard to ethnic minority students, Hawkins and Larabee (as cited in Harper & Quaye, 2009) claimed some ethnic minority students feel excluded or unwelcome in their institution based on the number of White students and therefore seek out other race-specific groups of students to find a warm and comforting atmosphere. This is often found in ethnic or multicultural student organizations, such as REGLOs.

Female and male students experience different challenges and gender role conflicts within the social peer groups they choose to affiliate with, which can contribute to their ability to be influenced by others. The identity development of a female student relies heavily on the perspective of the social group she joins. A female student will take on these various identities; however, conflict between the different identities may cause the student to experience psychological stress. The male gender role conflict arises due to very defined expectations of male behavior outlined by a specific stereotype of masculinity propelled by other men in a peer group. This pressure causes incredible conflict within a male student (Harper & Quaye, 2009).

Peer influence through group dynamics is one of the most powerful factors perpetuating hazing activities in Greek letter organizations. Drout and Corsoro (2003) said, “While direct peer pressure may involve verbal and nonverbal attempts at persuasion, indirect peer pressure encompasses more subtle forms of influence, such as modeling and vicarious reinforcement” (p. 537). As newcomers become socialized to the group, this peer pressure can lead to conformity of the group norms, which can be both positive and negative (Janis, 2004). In a study involving a group of smokers, two leaders of the group who felt that smoking was “an almost incurable addiction” were able to persuade the rest of the group of their ideals (Janis, 2004, p. 24). Regardless of an individual’s background, Janis reported on multiple studies that all concur that the ability of one to critically think is suspended when influenced by “Groupthink” (Janis, 2004). The concept of loyalty, which appears often in the mission or values statements of Greek letter organizations, is sometimes considered to be the “highest form of morality” in the group (Janis, 2004, p. 26). “That loyalty requires each member to avoid raising controversial issues, questioning weak arguments, or calling a halt to softheaded thinking,” (Janis, 2004, p. 26).

Modeled after Janis’s theory of Groupthink, Nuwer (1999) created the term “Greekthink” to apply Janis’s theoretical framework to specifically Greek letter organizations and their group behaviors around hazing activities and group conformity. Greekthink is

A reference to the less common, but more dangerous, fraternal groups that indulge in reckless behaviors and pledging rituals, display near-delusional feelings of invincibility, fail to heed an individual member’s or their national executive’s moral qualms in the interest of groups unanimity, put a newcomer in harm’s way; and demonstrate post-incidental denial in the face of clear-cut evidence that they have erred. (Nuwer, 1999, p. 50)

According to Nuwer (1999), Greekthink explains that “hazing is an extraordinary activity that, when it occurs often enough, becomes perversely ordinary as those who engage in it grow desensitized to its inhumanity” (pp. 31-32). Because of the strong peer influence and group dynamics of Greek letter organizations, Greekthink allows organization members to participate in activities they may not ordinarily engage in on their own. Nuwer (1999) continued with the idea of group negligence, arguing that when together, individuals fail to recognize the severity of a hazing situation because others in the group, perhaps influential leaders, seem unconcerned with the activities and are probably actively participating in the activity. “While the idea of enduring hazing may be foreign to some people, most have done something they later can't believe they did, because they listened to the urgings of others” (Nuwer, 1999, p. 31).

Nuwer (1999) related the patterns of Greek letter organizations to those of extremist cults because people who tend to join cults also crave relationships and acceptance into a group. In researching cult-like behaviors, Nuwer (1999) found the following similarities: Both cults and Greek letter organizations (a) promise to solve problems or meet needs, (b) instill replacement belief systems that may not be congruent with the individual values, (c) display obsession with control, (d) emphasize familial values, and (e) operate under authoritarian hierarchies (Nuwer, 1999). Sweet (2004) discussed the behavioral concept of symbolic interactionist theory with relation to hazing, claiming, “the self is highly malleable and is constantly being shaped and reshaped” (p. 6). Initiations or rituals take advantage of an individual’s vulnerability by creating a confluence of symbols and manipulated identities that isolate the new member, only allowing them to see themselves as a member of the group. Sweet (2004) claimed this does not necessarily constitute the act of hazing, but this separation alters the frame of mind to the point that one may be more susceptible to hazing. Nuwer (1999) said rituals (hazing) occur in three phases: (a) separation, where the pledge is reminded of his or her separation from the group; (b) liminality, which often occurs during Hell Night or Hell Week that confuses pledges; and (c) reincorporation, where the pledges are greeted with handshakes and hugs and welcomed to the membership (Nuwer, 1999, p. 55).

Leon Festinger's Theory of Cognitive Dissonance

The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (1957) explains why students seek challenging initiation rituals for Greek letter organizations and expect others to complete them prior to membership. Past research cited by Van Raalte et al. (2007) addressed “the effect of effortful initiations on attraction to the group” (p. 495). One of these studies analyzed the response of two groups of students to joining a group after an “initiation” into the discussion group (Van Raalte et al., 2007, p. 496). The findings of the study showed that those students given much more embarrassing or painful tasks created the perception that their discussion group was significantly more attractive, despite the fact that both the affected group and the control group received the same “dull, boring, halting, and inarticulate exchange between group members” (Van Raalte et al., 2007, p. 496).

Several researchers noted that rites of passage, such as hazing or any initiation fulfill the sociological needs of college students (Campo et al., 2005). Hollmann (2002) claimed, “many view hazing as an effective way to teach respect and develop discipline and loyalty within a group, and believe that hazing is a necessary component of initiation rites” (p. 17). Campo et al. (2005) referenced several authors whose work demonstrates that those who believe in the phenomenon of hazing feel that hazing will “increase group cohesiveness and foster organizational respect” (p. 138). Cimino (2011) offered similar arguments in three main postulates; the first is that “hazing generates group solidarity” (p. 243). Cimino (2011) said groups that prohibit new members from interacting with others outside of the group (“silence periods”) believe this will create more cohesion between members of the organization. The second postulate is that “hazing is an expression of dominance” (p. 243). By maintaining a hierarchical structure in the organization between current members and new members, the organization can continue this pattern by the new members becoming the next group of “hazers.” Stout (2005) agreed with Cimino (2011) in a study he conducted with high school men in a pro-hazing environment. Stout (2005) said:

[the student’s] choice to participate in the hazing rituals is an investment that leaves him powerless, but it is with the social understanding that once he proves himself worthy he will then be given power to haze in the future, whereas those who did not participate will forfeit that power. (p. 282)

Several writers, including Nuwer (1999), have made comparisons between those who have been hazed in turn hazing others to those engaged in assault or abuse who display the same pattern. The last of Cimino’s (2011) postulates is “hazing allows for the selection of committed group members” (p. 243). Reflected in this postulate is the same idea that “a high cost induction will presumably discourage those who desire only short-term association,” determining how committed new members are to the organization (Cimino, 2011, p. 243). In a study conducted by Walker (1967) (as cited by Johnson, 1972), the researcher gained participation from 125 young members of 25 different chapters, who agreed to allow the researcher to watch activities during pre-initiation periods. The study revealed evidence that although hazing activities are challenging for new members, “pledges look forward to the unknown perils of Hell Week, get satisfaction from camaraderie engendered during their misery, and often find it all rewarding and memorable in retrospect” (p. 279). The *National Study of Student Hazing* conducted by Allan and Madden (2008) also showed that some students perceive positive outcomes of hazing, including 31% who said they feel more like a part of the group. However, a significantly larger proportion of students do not feel a sense of accomplishment, feel stronger, or perceive themselves to do better in classes.

In most cases, initiation rites make students more attracted to a particular group; however, the argument for group solidarity is refuted by several studies that have concluded this not to be evident in their research. Hollmann (2002) reviewed one research study conducted by Lodewijkx and Syroit that revealed instead of becoming more attractive, the severity of initiation process correlated with feelings of frustration, loneliness, and depression for participants. Regardless of the severity, the study was able to confirm that initiations in general make the group more appealing to newcomers. In a study involving 167 intercollegiate athletes, Van Raalte et al. (2007) explained hazing did not contribute positively to athletic team cohesion, but instead “appropriate team building activities [such as completing a ropes course or team trip] are related to higher levels of social attraction and integration” (p. 502).

Rationale for the Study

Due to their selectivity, secrecy, and traditional values, Greek letter organizations at colleges and universities are one of the groups most affected by negative hazing behaviors. The fragile developmental stages of college students provides the foundation for building situations of peer pressure and group influence, which can cultivate hierarchical relationships, potentially leading to hazing activities. The increased attractiveness of the group based on the severity of the initiation also leads to the perpetuation of hazing. Hazing activities have become ingrained in Greek letter organizations and continue to be a problem for colleges and universities today.

Before higher education administrators can properly create programs and education that address the concerns of hazing behaviors as a widespread issue within Greek letter organizations, it is essential to research further the foundation of REGLOs and the hazing experiences that might be present within their student organizations. Researchers Allan and Madden (2008) have begun this process with the *National Study of Student Hazing*. The national study was able to illustrate a broader picture of hazing through both qualitative and quantitative data. Nuwer has also taken an active interest in past and present hazing concerns through his many interviews with individuals who have been affected by hazing and his wide collection of publications on the topic of hazing. Currently, Nuwer also keeps the only published record of all hazing deaths.

A strong hazing culture has been identified within BGLOs that could not be controlled by restrictions on hazing in the 1990s or firmer California laws on hazing in 2006. Due to the strong connection between BGLOs and REGLOs, the literature suggests the opportunity exists for hazing to occur in REGLOs. Although the literature implies hazing behaviors similar to BGLOs are present in REGLOs due to other similarities in cultural appreciation and tradition, it cannot verify the presence of hazing activities nor what activities are similar or different. The current research studies rarely incorporate equal amounts of members from historically White Greek letter organizations, BGLOs, and REGLOs which means there is a current need for more criterion sampling within future research studies. This study aims to contribute to the current research about REGLOs and hazing through a study conducted at a large four-year public institution in California.

Summary

Both the existence of Greek letter organizations and the phenomenon of hazing have been present in the United States for more than 100 years. Unfortunately, research has shown that when combined, Greek letter organizations and acts of hazing can be a dangerously powerful mix that has led to more hazing deaths than in any other group. The literature reviewed in this chapter provided an important summary of the history and development of Greek letter organizations. It also introduced the first BGLOs, the history behind their foundation, and their strong influence on and inspiration for the creation of REGLOs. The literature also reviewed the progression of hazing behaviors in the United States, beginning with the colonial nine colleges and universities, expanding in Greek letter organizations with the return of soldiers from the Civil War, and further growing the problem in these organizations exponentially in the 21st century. Within the last 40 years, hazing deaths within Greek letter organizations have consistently increased to an alarming level, causing concern for university administrators, families, and legislators.

To explain the rationale for why hazing occurs within Greek letter organizations, the literature review incorporated identity development theories, student involvement and engagement theories, and behavioral theories. Racial identity development theories and ethical identity development theories provide a framework for understanding the progression of ethnic minority students throughout their college experience. The student involvement and engagement theories explain the importance placed on students to find extracurricular activities to engage in outside of the classroom. Groupthink and cognitive dissonance provide the sociological perspective of student participation in hazing activities to explain the need to be a part of a recognized group and the attractiveness of the group based on the initiation into the group.

Hazing concerns have been expressed within historically White Greek letter organizations as well as BGLOs; however, REGLOs formed within the last 40 years have little published on their experiences with hazing. Although the current literature rarely provides trends or information about attitudes and perceptions of hazing behaviors within REGLOs, the literature suggests these activities are most likely occurring. Using the review of the literature as a framework, Chapter 3 introduces a methodology that can be used to assess the research questions specifically addressing REGLOs.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The literature introduced in Chapter 2 included several research studies supporting the idea that hazing activities may exist within REGLOs, reflecting specifically on the significant similarities to BGLOs. However, the limited research on REGLOs in general combined with the narrow research of hazing perceptions within REGLOs leaves a substantial gap in the research specific to hazing practices and perceptions within all Greek letter organizations. The purpose of this quantitative research study was to gain insight on the experiences of REGLOs with regard to hazing by examining the perspectives of members of REGLOs enrolled at a large, four-year public university in California. To better understand the experiences of REGLOs, the study examined the hazing activities they claimed to have participated in, as well as analyzed the opinions of survey participants in regard to hazing. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Do student members of ethnic and/or multicultural Greek letter organizations engage in hazing activities?
2. What are the members’ perceptions of hazing activities?
3. If hazing is occurring, which activities are engaged in most frequently in ethnic and multicultural Greek letter organizations?

Using the literature provided in Chapter 2, this chapter introduces the methodology used to assess the three research questions identified for this study. In addition, Chapter 3 provides further demographic information for the research institution chosen for this study. This research institution is referred to as Delta River University for the purpose of this study. This chapter also addresses the population and sample of the study, research design, data collection timeline, instrumentation, limitations, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. By reviewing the conclusions from this study, higher education administrators who work with REGLOs can create more comprehensive and preventative hazing education programs for student members of all Greek letter organizations.

Setting of the Study

This quantitative study was conducted at Delta River University, a large four-year, public university with over 20,000 undergraduate students located in the state of California. According to the university’s institutional research website (Office of Institutional Research, 2013), the most recent demographic data, which was based on information from fall 2013, showed that 37.7% of enrolled students identified as White, 20.7% identified as Latino/a, 20.5% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% identified as African American, 5.4% identified as multiracial, and less than 5% identified collectively as foreign, American Indian, or Pacific Islander. Fifty-seven percent of the students enrolled identified as women, and 43% identified as men. At Delta River University there are more than 250 recognized student organizations, with 37 identified as social Greek letter organizations. Of those 37 Greek letter organizations, 17 are recognized REGLOs with four identified as Asian interest organizations (including Pilipino/a), four multicultural organizations, and nine Latino/a organizations. Seven of these organizations identify as fraternities, and 10 identify as sororities (Student Organizations & Leadership, 2013). A review of information conducted on nine universities with similar demographics show Delta River University has the second largest number of REGLOs when compared to these institutions, making it an ideal setting for a study focused on these specific organizations.

Research Design

Quantitative research is “explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)” (Aliaga & Gunderson as cited in Muijs, 2004). Because this study intended to compare current quantitative findings provided by existing research, a quantitative method with the use of a survey was selected as the research design.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to gain specific knowledge on the perceptions and experiences of hazing activities that may be occurring within a group of 17 REGLOs recognized at a large, public, four-year university in California. Survey respondents were asked to complete a 12-question assessment that addressed what, if any, hazing activities they had experienced and what attitudes and perceptions these students may have toward hazing. Participants in the study were asked questions that included basic information about their organization (such as ethnic foundation and date of establishment), their attitudes toward several statements about hazing, specific hazing/non-hazing activities they had engaged in, and whether or not they believed they had participated in hazing in their organization.

Population and Sample

Because the study’s focus was specifically on the opinions of students involved in REGLOs, the participants of the study consisted of currently enrolled (as of spring 2014) students of Delta River University who were active members of the 17 recognized student organizations that identify as ethnic Greek letter organizations founded within the past 40 years. Working with the University Registrar and the Division of Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, the researcher was able to identify 345 students who fit the participant criteria as students who identified as Asian, Latino/a, or multiethnic and were active members of REGLOs at Delta River University. Of those 345 students identified, 342 email addresses were secured and sent an electronic survey.

Design of the Study

A quantitative method was selected for the design of the study. Considering the respondents of the study were students, it was important the level of commitment to the study was manageable for busy college students. For this reason, a quantitative study was selected that could be completed in approximately 10 minutes. One of the benefits of utilizing a quantitative research design, claimed Muijs (2004), is that “the number of phenomena we can study in this way is almost unlimited, making quantitative research quite flexible” (p. 3). Quantitative research can also be used to measure qualitative attitudes and perceptions—the intended outcome of this study in particular. An anonymous electronic survey was selected as the form of quantitative data collection allowing the students the option to end the survey at any time they felt discomfort or desired not to continue. This research design was consistent with the *National Study of Student Hazing* conducted by Allan and Madden in 2008, which also used an electronic survey distributed to students enrolled at 53 different college and university campuses. Questions from this study were adapted and sometimes copied directly for consistency. To compare the national study, which incorporated 25% of students who identified with an ethnic minority group, to those who specifically identify within one of these groups, questions on this survey were taken/adapted from questions asked in Allan and Madden’s (2008) national study. The survey instrument was sent to all 342 identified students with a participation goal of at least 20%. This would equate to approximately 68 student participants.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher completed the necessary documents, submitted the required forms, and was approved to begin the study involving human subjects by the Delta River University Institutional Review Board. The process for data collection began in April 2013 and included three stages. See Table 1 for a comprehensive timeline. The stages of data collection were as follows:

**Stage one**. This stage included submitting the required documents to the Institutional Review Board and awaiting approval to proceed with the study.

**Stage two**. This stage included identifying the participants and sending them an electronic survey (see Appendix A). During the fall 2013 semester, prior to survey distribution, the researcher had the opportunity to meet with 30 representatives from the various organizations during a regularly bimonthly meeting of the organizations. It was during these meetings the researcher worked to solicit the participation of students in the study. The survey was distributed at the beginning of the fall 2013 semester using the university email addresses collected from the University Registrar. The survey questions were transferred and formatted online using the selected online data-collecting tool SurveyMonkey. The survey was available for participants to complete for three weeks.

**Stage three**. This stage included the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Table 1

Data Collection Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Date |
| Stage 1: IRB Submission | April, 2013 |
| Stage 1: IRB Approval | September, 2013 |
| Stage 2: Participant Identification | December, 2013 |
| Stage 2: Survey Distribution (3 weeks) | January-February, 2014 |
| Stage 2: Survey Concluded | February, 2014 |
| Stage 3: Data Analysis | March, 2014 |

Instrumentation

Due to several limitations and ethical considerations for the study, including the participants’ comfort levels with the survey questions as well as the potential fear of consequences to themselves or their organization, an informed consent agreement was created. Participants were provided an explanation of the necessary survey details and asked to acknowledge their understanding of the survey terms prior to participation. The informed consent addressed many aspects of participation, including the purpose of the study, what they participants are doing, benefits of the study, risks of personal discomfort, organizational risk amnesty, confidentiality and anonymity, option to leave at any time, how the findings would be used, and contact information (see Appendix B).

The survey instrument consisted of 12 questions: five demographic questions and the remaining designed to answer the three research questions. Upon testing the instrument, the survey would take respondents approximately 5-10 minutes to completely read and understand the informed consent agreement and all the survey questions. See Table 2 for a brief description of each survey question.

Table 2

Survey Question Outline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question Number | Description |
| 1 | Informed Consent Agreement |
| 2 - Demographic | Level of Education Based on Units Completed |
| 3 - Demographic | Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity (write in option) |
| 4 - Demographic | Fraternity or Sorority Membership |
| 5 - Demographic | Greek Letter Organization Type (cultural/ethnic affiliation) |
| 6 - Demographic | Scope of Organization Recognition (regional, national, etc.) |
| 7 - Demographic | Organization Establishment |
| 8 | Anti-Hazing Statement |
| 9 | Hazing Perceptions |
| 10 | Hazing Activities |
| 11 | Definitions of Hazing |
| 12 | Additional Participant Commentary |

Question 9 aimed to answer the second research question: What are the members’ perceptions of hazing activities? The question asked respondents to select their level of agreement using a Likert-type scale (*Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neutral*, *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, or *N/A*) in response to seven statements about hazing that were adapted from Allan and Madden’s national study (see Table 3).

Table 3

Survey Question 9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. You may select Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or N/A | | | | | | |
| Answer Options | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | N/A |
| I understand the definition of hazing. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| Hazing is okay as long as no one is being injured. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| I have been hazed. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| Hazing activities teach important values such as respect and unity. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| I was introduced to hazing prior to joining a Greek organization. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| Hazing activities are never acceptable. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| I have hazed someone else. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |

Question 10 was also adapted from the national study conducted by Allan and Madden (2008) and was included to answer the first and third research questions: Do student members of ethnic and/or multicultural Greek letter organizations engage in hazing activities? If hazing is occurring, which activities are engaged in most frequently in ethnic and multicultural Greek letter organizations? A list of the most commonly reported hazing practices was developed through focus groups held for the national study that included undergraduate students, a review of the literature, and a Research Advisory Group. The list of common hazing behaviors was taken directly from Allan and Madden’s national study (2008) and scaled down from the original 30 items to the 13 items identified as most commonly reported by members of fraternities and sororities. In addition to the 13 items, the survey also included four items that would not be considered hazing by the California Penal Code (such as memorizing information about the organization and take weekly tests and quizzes). The control items are in boldface type in Table 4 and included the following activities: take weekly tests and quizzes, attend mandatory events throughout the week, memorize information about the organization, and participate in ceremonies and organization rituals (see Table 4).

Table 4

Survey Question 10

|  |
| --- |
| Have you participated in any of the following activities? (Please note: Not all of these activities may be defined as hazing.) Please check all that apply. |
| Answer Options |
| Attend a skit night where other members might be embarrassed |
| Sing or chant by yourself or with a few select members in a public situation |
| **Take weekly tests or quizzes** |
| Wear clothing that is embarrassing |
| Wear clothing that is not part of the required uniform/attire |
| Be yelled at by other members |
| Participate in a drinking game |
| **Attend mandatory events throughout the week** |
| Get a tattoo, brand, or piercing of a body part |
| Run errands for other members |
| Associate with specific members or groups of members only |
| **Memorize information about the organization** |
| Ignore specific members or groups of members |
| Endure harsh weather without the proper clothing |
| Miss sleep |
| **Participate in ceremonies and organization Rituals** |
| Be transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location |

Question 11 asked respondents to read the two definitions of hazing used in the state of California: California Education Code, Section 48900, and California Penal Code, Section 245.6 (FindLaw, 2014a, 2014b). Both these definitions define hazing activities as “causing serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm” (FindLaw, 2014b, Section 48900, para. 19). The question stated: Based on either of these definitions, do you feel you have participated in activities, which could be defined as hazing? Respondents could select from the following options: (a) Yes, (b) No, or (c) I’m Not Sure. Lastly, Question 12 allowed respondents the opportunity to offer any additional comments with regard to hazing activities and/or hazing perspectives, or even give feedback to the researcher for future studies.

Data Analysis Procedures

This quantitative study utilized the online data-collection tool SurveyMonkey, which conveniently allowed the researcher to distribute the questions, collect responses in an anonymous way, and analyze the results in various formats. SurveyMonkey also had the ability to track the respondents’ completion time, which was helpful for this study in order to eliminate the first 22 respondents who were unable to answer one of the questions due to a technical difficulty. The data collected is listed in Chapter 4 in the order the survey questions were presented to participants. The results are analyzed in the order of the research questions beginning with demographic identifiers. Question 10 corresponds with the first research question, which asks whether REGLOs engage in hazing activities, as well as the third research question, which asks about what hazing behaviors are specifically prevalent in REGLOs. The responses to Question 9 correspond with the second research question, which asks about perceptions of hazing. Other questions from the survey, along with any additional comments from Question 12, were analyzed in conjunction to provide any other relevant information. Unfortunately, due to complications with the matrices in Question 9, the first 22 survey responses were eliminated (with the exception of the comments, which were kept), which brought the total survey responses to 29.82%.

Limitations of the Study

There were several important limitations to consider in reporting the findings. Because hazing behaviors are generally viewed negatively within Greek letter organizations on a national level and because hazing can cause physical and mental harm for those who have experienced the phenomenon, students often avoid discussing openly their views or experiences with hazing. Student participation in an assessment focused on hazing may be limited depending on participants’ comfort levels with the questions. Although the percentage of respondents met the goal of 20% and was representative of a large proportion of student members of REGLOs at Delta River University, those students who felt most comfortable sharing their experiences may have not experienced hazing in their organization and had no reservations about completing the assessment. In addition, using quantitative data for a study on hazing activities and perceptions does not allow students to share the intimate details of a story worth telling to contribute to the research. Although commentary was accepted at the end of the survey, the nature of the study focused on quantitative data. Qualitative data or a mixed methods approach could be used in the future to better share individual accounts of hazing in REGLOs. Lastly, a significant technical difficulty with the matrices in Question 9 created complications for participants who attempted to complete the survey during the first day of distribution. Participants were not able to make multiple selections on the vertical and horizontal axis of the matrices. This caused the researcher to abandon the first 22 responses, with the exception of Question 12, which limited the total number of responses that could have been included in the data analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher used caution in the study and implemented a thorough Informed Consent Form to account for a few different ethical considerations. Since the study involved human subjects, special care was taken to provide as much accurate information to the participants as possible at the beginning of the survey, including the purpose of the study, potential risks to the individual and the organization, and how the findings would be used. Because the topic of hazing has the opportunity to affect students negatively, the researcher needed to think about potential emotional triggers that could affect participants and let them know in advance. The researcher of the study shared at least one of the identities of the students being surveyed and this personal relationship to the subject could have led to a conflict of interest or potentially one that was felt by survey participants. The researcher also had a prominent position on campus, which could have made participants feel forced into participation in the survey despite the Informed Consent Form. Although the informed consent agreement stated there would be no risk to a member’s organization of affiliation, participants may have still been fearful of possible consequences sanctioned against themselves or their group for their honest participation.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the methodology used to formulate this study. The setting of the study was a large four-year public institution in California with an enrollment of more than 20,000 undergraduate students. Three hundred forty-two participants were selected based on their affiliation with one of the 17 recognized REGLOs at the university and were sent an electronic survey via an online data collection tool. The survey incorporated demographic information, as well as questions that asked about students’ perceptions of and involvement in hazing activities. A total of 122 responses were collected from the survey, but only 100 of them were analyzed in the next chapter as a result of a technical difficulty. The data collected from the survey is presented in the following chapter along with the findings from the study that apply to the three research questions.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS and FINDINGS

Introduction

Using the methodology explained in the previous chapter, Chapter 4 begins by presenting the data collected from 100 total survey responses. The presentation of the data has been organized in the order of the survey questions beginning with demographic information about the participants followed by an outline of each question, which includes the number of respondents, information gathered, and in most cases, a table to represent the data collected. Following the presentation of the data, the next section of the chapter provides the findings and interpretation of the data in the order of the three research questions:

1. Do student members of ethnic and/or multicultural Greek letter organizations engage in hazing activities?
2. What are the members’ perceptions of hazing activities?
3. If hazing is occurring, which activities are engaged in most frequently in ethnic and multicultural Greek letter organizations?

Presentation of the Data

The final number of respondents was 122—35.67% of 342 individuals who received the survey. Unfortunately, due to a technical error, the first 22 survey responses were not included. Therefore, the final number of respondents for the survey was 100—29.23% of the total sample. These respondents reviewed the statements in the Informed Consent Form, agreed to participate in the study voluntarily and had the opportunity to complete the survey in its entirety. With the exception of the respondent commentary in Question 12, the data presented does not include the first 22 participants’ responses because they were not able to answer one of the questions appropriately.

Demographic Representation

Table 5 shows the respondents’ level of education based on their number of units completed at the institution (n = 88). The highest percentage of respondents identified as seniors at 44.32% (n = 39). Following seniors, 31.8% of respondents were juniors (n = 28), 11.36% were alumni (n = 10), 7.95% were sophomores (n = 7), 3.41% were graduate students (n = 3), and 1.14% were freshmen (n = 1) (see Table 5).

Table 5

Level of Education Based on Units Completed

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please select your level of education based on your units completed. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Freshmen | 1.1% | 1 |
| Sophomore | 8.0% | 7 |
| Junior | 31.8% | 28 |
| Senior | 44.3% | 39 |
| Graduate | 3.4% | 3 |
| Alumni | 11.4% | 10 |
| *answered question* | | 88 |
| *skipped question* | | 12 |

Question 3 asked the respondents to identify their race/ethnicity by writing in an answer. As the methodology expected, respondents answered very differently to this question. The highest number of respondents (54 out of 79 total responses) identified themselves as some form of Latino/a or Hispanic at 68.35% (Hispanic, n = 24; Latino/Latina, n = 15; Mexican/Mexican American, n = 9; Chicano/a, n = 3; Salvadorian, n = 1). Fourteen respondents (17.72%) identified within a form of Asian identity (Asian, n = 8; Hmong, n = 2; Filipino/a, n = 2; Vietnamese, n = 1; Punjabi, n = 1). Five respondents (6.33%) identified as a mixture of races/ethnicities (Mixed Race, n = 2; African American and Cherokee Indian/Native Californian, n = 2; Mestizo, n = 1). Three respondents identified as “Black” (3.40%), two identified as White or Caucasian (2.53%), and one identified as Italian (1.27%) (see Table 6).

Table 6

Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please write in your race/ethnicity. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| **Latino/a or Hispanic** | **68.35%** | **54** |
| Hispanic |  | 24 |
| Latino/a |  | 15 |
| Mexican/Mexican American |  | 9 |
| Chicano/a |  | 3 |
| Salvadorian |  | 1 |
| **Asian** | **17.72%** | **13** |
| Asian |  | 8 |
| Hmong |  | 2 |
| Filipino/a |  | 2 |
| Vietnamese |  | 1 |
| Punjabi |  | 1 |
| **Black** | **3.40%** | **3** |
|  | | |
| Table 6 continued | | |
| Please write in your race/ethnicity. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| **Mixed Race/Ethnicity** | **6.33%** | **5** |
| Mixed Race |  | 2 |
| African American & Cherokee Indian/Native Californian |  | 2 |
| Mestizo |  | 1 |
| **White/Caucasian** | **2.53%** | **2** |
| **Italian** | **1.27%** | **1** |
| *answered* | | 79 |
| *skipped* | | 21 |

Table 7 shows the number of respondents who identified as a member of a fraternity (men’s organization) or sorority (women’s organization). Eighty-six students responded to Question 4; 56 respondents identified as a member of a sorority and 30 identified as a member of a fraternity (see Table 7).

Table 7

Fraternity or Sorority Membership

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please identify if you are a member of a fraternity or sorority. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Fraternity (men's organization) | 34.9% | 30 |
| Sorority (women's organization) | 65.1% | 56 |
| *answered question* | | 86 |
| *skipped question* | | 14 |

Table 8 reflects the responses to Question 5, which asked participants to identify the type of Greek letter organization of which they are members (Asian interest including Pilipino/a, Latino/a, Multicultural, or write in another answer). Eighty-four respondents answered this question, and three participants chose to write in another type of Greek letter organization. The percentage of participants who identified as members of Latino/a organizations and Multicultural organizations were very close with 42.86% of respondents and 41.67% of respondents, respectively (Latino/a organizations, n = 36; Multicultural organizations, n = 35). Thirteen students identified as members of Asian interest organizations, including Pilipino/a organizations (15.48%). Two of the respondents who wrote in answers identified within a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) Greek letter organization, and one wrote in “Latina, but also multicultural” (see Table 8).

Table 8

Greek Letter Organization Type

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please identify which type of organization you are a member of. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Asian Interest (including Pilipino or Pilipina) | 15.5% | 13 |
| Latino/Latina | 42.9% | 36 |
| Multicultural | 41.7% | 35 |
| Other (please specify) | | 3 |
| *answered question* | | 84 |
| *skipped question* | | 16 |

Question 6 asked participants to identify the scope of the organization—whether it was recognized internationally, nationally, regionally, statewide, or locally. This question collected 85 responses and they are represented in Table 9. A total of 52.94% of respondents reported that their organization is recognized on a national level (n = 45), 20% of participants are members of regionally recognized organizations (n = 17), 14.12% are members of internationally recognized organizations (n = 12), and 12.94% are members of organizations that are only recognized in California (n = 11). None of the participants identified as members of local organizations (see Table 9).

Table 9

Scope of Organization Recognition

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please identify which type of organization you are a member of. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| International | 14.1% | 12 |
| National | 52.9% | 45 |
| Regional (Western United States) | 20.0% | 17 |
| My organization is only recognized in California. | 12.9% | 11 |
| My organization is only recognized at Sacramento State. | 0.0% | 0 |
| Other (please specify) | | 1 |
| *answered question* | | 85 |
| *skipped question* | | 15 |

Table 10 represents the participants’ responses to Question 7, which asked when their organization was first established at a college or university and provided seven time frames from which to choose. Eighty-four participants responded to this question. The decade of 1981 to 1990 had the largest percentage of responses at 46.43% (n = 39). Following closely behind was the decade of 1991 to 2000, which had 34 respondents (40.48%). There were several outliers represented in this table; six respondents indicated their organization was founded prior to 1950, two indicated a founding date between 1971 and 1980, and one respondent chose each of the following eras: 1951-1960, 1961-1970, and 2001-2010. The data are consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, which shows that most REGLOs were founded within the last 40 years (see Table 10).

Table 10

Organization Establishment

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| In what year was your organization first established? (This may not necessarily be the founding date of your organization on this campus. This might be called your 'Alpha' Chapter or Founding Chapter.) | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Before 1950 | 7.1% | 6 |
| 1951-1960 | 1.2% | 1 |
| 1961-1970 | 1.2% | 1 |
| 1971-1980 | 2.4% | 2 |
| 1981-1990 | 46.4% | 39 |
| 1991-2000 | 40.5% | 34 |
| 2001-2010 | 1.2% | 1 |
| After 2010 | 0.0% | 0 |
| *answered question* | | 84 |
| *skipped question* | | 16 |

Table 11 represents the number of participants who said their organization has an anti-hazing statement. Eighty-five respondents answered this question and 84 respondents answered positively to this question, claiming their organization to have an anti-hazing statement (98.82%). Only one individual indicated that the organization did not have an anti-hazing policy (1.18%). Although there was an additional option to select if the umbrella organization (such as a national or regional group) did not have an anti-hazing statement but the local group did, none of the participants chose this option (see Table 11).

Table 11

Anti-Hazing Statement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Does your organization have an anti-hazing statement? | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 98.8 | 84 |
| No | 1.2 | 1 |
| Not our umbrella organization, but our chapter at this campus has an anti-hazing statement. | 0.0 | 0 |
| Other (please specify) | | 0 |
| *answered question* | | 85 |
| *skipped question* | | 15 |

Question 9 shows how respondents felt about seven individual statements related to hazing activities. Seventy-nine participants completed this question, with the exception of the one of the statements: “Hazing activities teach important values such as respect and unity” had 78 responses. Seventy-eight participants (98.73%) agreed they understood the definition of hazing (Strongly Agree, n = 58; Agree, n = 20; Neutral, n = 1) (see Table 12). Sixty-two participants (78.48%) disagreed that “hazing is okay as long as no one is being injured” (Strongly Disagree, n = 48; Disagree, n = 14); four agreed with this statement (Strongly Agree, n = 1; Agree, n = 3), 11 responded neutrally, and two selected no answer. Sixty participants (75.95%) disagreed they had been hazed (Strongly Disagreed, n = 46; Disagree, n = 14), 11 agreed they had been hazed (Strongly Agreed, n = 4; Agreed, n = 7), seven responded neutrally, and one selected no answer. Fifty-three participants of 78 total for this question (67.95%) disagreed with the statement “hazing activities teach important values such as respect and unity” (Strongly Disagree, n = 38, Disagree, n = 15), 11 agreed with this statement, 12 had no answer, and two chose not to answer.

Thirty-five participants (44.30%) agreed they were introduced to hazing before joining a Greek letter organization and similarly, 31 participants (39.24%) opposed this statement, claiming they were not introduced to hazing prior to joining. Eleven felt neutrally and two did not answer this statement. Fifty-six (70.89%) of the participants agreed, “hazing activities are never acceptable” (Strongly Agree, n = 37; Agree, n = 19). Seven participants (8.86%) disagreed with this statement (Strongly Disagree, n = 5; Disagree, n = 2). Sixteen of the participants (20.25%) felt neutrally about this statement. When asked about hazing others, 61 participants (77.22%) disagreed they had hazed someone else (Strongly Disagree, n = 51; Disagree, n = 11). Eleven participants (13.92%) agreed they had hazed someone else (Strongly Agree, n = 4; Agree, n = 7). Four responded neutrally and two did not respond (see Table 12).

Table 12

Hazing Perceptions

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. You may select Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or N/A | | | | | | | |
| Answer Options | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Answer | Response Count |
| I understand the definition of hazing. | 58 | 20 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 79 |
| Hazing is okay as long as no one is being injured. | 1 | 3 | 11 | 14 | 48 | 2 | 79 |
| I have been hazed. | 4 | 7 | 7 | 14 | 46 | 1 | 79 |
| Hazing activities teach important values such as respect and unity. | 6 | 5 | 12 | 15 | 38 | 2 | 78 |
| I was introduced to hazing prior to joining a Greek organization. | 11 | 20 | 11 | 9 | 26 | 2 | 79 |
|  | | | | | | | |
| Table 12 continued | | | | | | | |
| Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. You may select Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or N/A | | | | | | | |
| Answer Options | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Answer | Response Count |
| Hazing activities are never acceptable. | 37 | 19 | 16 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 79 |
| I have hazed someone else. | 4 | 7 | 4 | 11 | 51 | 2 | 79 |
| *answered question* | | | | | | | 79 |
| *skipped question* | | | | | | | 21 |

Table 13 represents the participants’ involvement in hazing activities by showing how often these activities occur within REGLOs at Delta River University. Of the group of 100 participants, only 67 of them chose to complete this question. In examining the controlled items in boldface type that would not be considered hazing, these items seem to be very prevalent in these organizations. A total of 44.8% of participants have taken weekly tests and quizzes (n = 30), 79.1% have attended mandatory events throughout the week (n = 53), 88.1% have had to memorize information about the organization (n = 59), and 79.1% have participated in ceremonies and organization Rituals (n = 53). Of the hazing behaviors adopted from Allan and Madden’s national study (2008), the most prevalent among this sample group was missing sleep at 41.8% of respondents (n = 28). Singing and chanting alone in a public situation also received a large percentage of responses with 40.3% of respondents claiming to have done this (n = 27). A group of 29.9% of participants reported being yelled at by other members (n = 20). A group of 16.4% of participants had been transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location (n = 11). Of the remaining nine hazing activities included in this question, at least one—but not more than 10 participants—reported having been involved with these activities, and all nine of these activities had at least one respondent (see Table 13).

Table 13

Hazing Activities

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Have you participated in any of the following activities? (Please note: Not all of these activities may be defined as hazing.) Please check all that apply. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Attend a skit night where other members might be embarrassed | 9.0% | 6 |
| Sing or chant by yourself or with a few select members in a public situation | 40.3% | 27 |
| Take weekly tests or quizzes | 44.8% | 30 |
| Wear clothing that is embarrassing | 6.0% | 4 |
| Wear clothing that is not part of the required uniform/attire | 9.0% | 6 |
| Be yelled at by other members | 29.9% | 20 |
| Participate in a drinking game | 7.5% | 5 |
| Attend mandatory events throughout the week | 79.1% | 53 |
| Get a tattoo, brand, or piercing of a body part | 1.5% | 1 |
| Run errands for other members | 11.9% | 8 |
| Associate with specific members or groups of members only | 11.9% | 8 |
| Memorize information about the organization | 88.1% | 59 |
| Ignore specific members or groups of members | 10.4% | 7 |
| Endure harsh weather without the proper clothing | 4.5% | 3 |
| Miss sleep | 41.8% | 28 |
|  | | |
| Table 13 continued | | |
| Have you participated in any of the following activities? (Please note: Not all of these activities may be defined as hazing.) Please check all that apply. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Participate in ceremonies and organization Rituals | 79.1% | 53 |
| Be transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location | 16.4% | 11 |
| *answered question* | | 67 |
| *skipped question* | | 33 |

Question 11 presents participants with two definitions of hazing, one from the California Education Code and the other from the California Penal Code. After reading these definitions, participants are asked if based on these definitions, they believe they have participated in activities that could be defined as hazing. Seventy-seven respondents answered this question. Table 14 shows how respondents felt about their behaviors based on the definitions presented. A total of 87.01% of participants did not feel they had participated in hazing activities (n = 67), 7.79% felt they had participated in hazing activities (n = 6), and 5.19% were not sure if they had (n = 4) (see Table 14).

Table 14

Definitions of Hazing

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Based on either the definitions of hazing by the California Education Code and California Penal Code, do you feel you have participated in activities that could be defined as hazing? | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 7.8% | 6 |
| No | 87.0% | 67 |
| I'm not sure | 5.2% | 4 |
| *answered question* | | 77 |
| *skipped question* | | 23 |

The last question provides an opportunity for students to share commentary they may have with the researcher to benefit the study. This section includes commentary from the first 22 original respondents whose responses were not included in the presentation of the data for Questions 1-11 (see Appendix C).

Findings and Interpretation of the Data

The findings of the study have been presented and interpreted using the framework provided by the research questions, beginning first with a discussion of the survey participant demographic. Based on the findings of the data, it made sense to combine Research Questions 1 and 3 into the same interpretation of the most common hazing activities, using the responses from Question 10. Question 9 was used to analyze Research Question 2, which asked about the respondents’ perceptions of hazing activities.

Demographic Representation

The first important factor to include in the findings is that only 67-79 participants responded to each question. The researcher is unaware if 21 respondents began but did not complete the survey or if not every participant completed every question. As mentioned in the limitations of the study, some individuals may not have felt comfortable completing some of the survey questions. Most of the survey respondents identified as juniors and seniors, accounting for 76.1% of survey respondents (n = 67). In addition, almost half as many fraternity men responded to the survey as sorority women.

The data are consistent with the expectations of the study since Delta River University tends to have a very high population of transfer students, more than half of the students enrolled are women, and there are more sororities that identify as an REGLO than fraternities. In addition, the data show that an overwhelming amount of respondents (68.35%) identified as a form of Latino/a or Hispanic, while a lesser percentage (17.72%) identified as a form of Asian. Due to the sampling method used for this study, this is not an accurate representation of the student body at Delta River University but does mirror the REGLO population and sample, which tends to lean more heavily toward the Latino/a and Hispanic population. Of 84 participants who responded to Question 5, 77 of them indicated they were in fact members of organizations founded within the last 40 years. Specifically, 46.4% identify in an organization founded between 1981 and 1990 (n = 39) and 40.5% between 1990 and 2000 (n = 34).

In comparison to the ethnic identity demographics of the respondents, the results of Question 5 are very interesting, showing that most of the respondents (84.61%) identify as a member of either a Latino/a REGLO (42.9%) or a multicultural REGLO (41.7%). This could mean that about half of the Latino/a or Hispanic identified respondents are actually members of multicultural organizations. A group of 15.5% of respondents identified as members of an Asian interest REGLO, consistent with the REGLO demographic at Delta River University. Based on the demographic data of the survey participants, this study was able to reach the desired sample and will be able to offer conclusions related to members of REGLOs.

REGLOs Engagement in Hazing Activities: Research Questions One and Three

The findings of Question 8 and Question 11 reveal that 98.8% of the 85 respondents (n = 84) said their organization has an anti-hazing statement, and 87% of the 77 respondents (n = 67) said they had not participated in hazing activities to the best of their knowledge. Although these percentages indicate respondents have an awareness of their organizations’ hazing policies and do not believe they have participated in hazing activities, Question 10 shows that hazing activities (as identified by researchers of the national study) are in fact occurring within these organizations. As expected, students selected the four controlled activities in large percentages as most Greek letter organizations engage in similar activities. However, significant percentages also selected hazing activities they had participated in. Of 67 total participants, 48% of them claim to have missed sleep as a part of their organizations activities (n = 28). Twenty-seven participants selected “sing or chant by yourself or with a few select members in a public situation” as an activity of their organization (40.3%). Almost 30% had been yelled at by other members (n = 20), and 16.4% said they had been transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location (n = 11).

Table 15 shows the most common hazing behaviors selected by respondents. Nine other hazing activities were selected by at least one individual, indicating these activities are present in the REGLO organizations at Delta River University. Although the results do not indicate a large number of students are affected by hazing, at least one respondent experienced each of the activities listed on the survey. As indicated by the literature, these selected items were only the most commonly selected by students who participated in the national study. However, it may be reasonable to expect that if members of REGLOs are engaging in these hazing activities, they may be participating in others that were not included on this list as well.

One of the biggest differences seen between this study and the *National Study of Student Hazing* was the response to “participate in a drinking game.” While in the national study, 26% of respondents selected this activity, only five individuals in this study (7.5%) selected this activity. Consistent with the literature that suggests the similarity of REGLOs to BGLOs, alcohol may not be as significant of a factor in hazing within REGLOs as much as historically White Greek letter organizations. Instead, physical acts of hazing may be more prominent in REGLOs recognizing the similarity to BGLOs.

Table 15

Most Common Hazing Activities in REGLOs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Have you participated in any of the following activities? (Please note: Not all of these activities may be defined as hazing.) Please check all that apply. | | |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Miss sleep | 41.8 | 28 |
| Sing or chant by yourself or with a few select members in a public situation | 40.3 | 27 |
| Be yelled at by other members | 29.9 | 20 |
| Be transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location | 16.4 | 11 |

In addition to the quantitative data, several comments from respondents indicate hazing is present in REGLOs. “Although the majority of Greek organizations know what hazing is, they still tend to do it,” alleged one of the respondents, claiming that in his or her perspective, hazing is occurring in REGLOs. Offering one of the reasons for justifying hazing activities, another respondent said, “One of the things that I feel that is often said by members to those wishing to join is that they wouldn't do something they themselves wouldn't do. In their eyes, this no longer makes it hazing.” Another respondent confirmed his or her participation in hazing activities with this statement: “I believe everything I did to become a member helped create bonds that have lasted a long time and will continue to last. Also I feel like I have earned my place here and became a stronger individual.”

All of the statements confirm the awareness of hazing activities on campus at Delta River University and the commitment of some members to continue them. Reflecting the unsure point of view, one respondent hesitated:

I have questioned my organization's intake process several times during my own intake process and since watching the intake processes of new members. My primary finding is at times it impedes academic success and healthy eating/sleeping patterns. However, I have concluded the cause of those specific problems is not the process itself but the time management and organizational skills of both parties (the members administering the process and the members-to-be undergoing the process)…I believe that the process now is a positive experience not intended in any way to degrade or harm participants neither physically nor mentally.

Perceptions of Hazing in REGLOs: Research Question Two

The selections to the Likert-type scale statements in Question 9 showed that many respondents had ethical perceptions of hazing. However, each of the statements, with the exception of two, also had groups of respondents who questioned their viewpoints on the statements. All respondents (with the exception of one neutral response) agreed they understood the definition of hazing. This accurately reflects the 98.8% of respondents who said their organization had an anti-hazing statement or policy. Almost the same amount of respondents felt they were introduced to hazing prior to joining a Greek letter organization (35%) than those who were not previously introduced (31%), which could mean the need exists for further education prior to enrollment at a college or university, perhaps in high schools. The remainder of the statements had significant numbers of respondents who were unsure of their feelings toward hazing or felt neutrally, and some even supported hazing statements.

Fifty-six respondents stated hazing was never acceptable, but seven disagreed with that statement and 16 felt neutrally. This indicates some REGLO members may feel hazing does have a place in Greek letter organizations or they may not be ready to either dismiss or commit to the idea of hazing yet. Sixty-two respondents disagreed “hazing is okay as long as no one is being injured;” however, four agreed, 11 disagreed, and two had no answer. This also reflects that some members might feel hazing activities are okay when physical harm is not present or are unsure if they agree or disagree with this statement. Fifty-three respondents disagreed hazing teaches important values such as respect and unity, but nine agreed with the statement, 12 felt neutrally, and two did not answer. Again, these numbers reflect the viewpoint that some members believe important values come from hazing activities. This also supports the idea of Groupthink and Greekthink presented in the theoretical frameworks of the literature review and supported by Hollmann (2002) who stated, “many view hazing as an effective way to teach respect and develop discipline and loyalty within a group, and believe that hazing is a necessary component of initiation rites” (p. 17).

Sixty of the respondents felt they had not been hazed, but 11 respondents claimed to have been hazed, seven felt neutrally, and one did not answer. Although a majority felt they had not experienced hazing, at least one-tenth had experienced hazing. Based on the survey, this research would not be able to indicate if this type of hazing was physical or psychological but still finds cause for concern. Also, 62 of the respondents disagreed with having hazed someone else, but again, 11 responded they had hazed someone else, four were neutral and two did not answer. This shows that not only have at least one-tenth of the participants felt hazed, but have also hazed someone else in their organization. These responses call for additional education to not only minimize, but also eliminate hazing within REGLOs.

In addition to the quantitative data represented, comments provided by the respondents presented insight into the perceptions of hazing from REGLOs. One respondent said, “It's part of history and Greek life itself,” directly reflecting the findings of the literature review, which discussed the strong correlation between Greek letter organizations and the tradition of hazing and initiation practices. Several of the respondents mentioned the confusion with current definitions of hazing from the California Codes, which have potentially allowed for the “lines” to be blurred. One respondent stated:

Though this stated the definition of hazing, it has become much more broad. Some consider memorizing an organization's information to be hazing due to mental strains, or even having mandatory events. The lines become harder to distinguish and many people consider themselves to be 'hazed' when in fact, they are not.

Another student echoed this perspective, believing, “Hazing is so broad. Almost EVERYTHING can be defined as hazing. It def still exists!!!!! It unfortunately has just become normalized behavior/actions/expectations for many Greek organizations.” Other respondents explained that different individuals could interpret hazing in different ways, therefore creating differences between organizations and their practices based on an individual’s comfort level. They said

I believe hazing is a very tricky and very thin line, what one person may find embarrassing and degrading another may find fun or a challenge. For example reciting information by yourself may be humiliating for one person and it can be a cake walk for the next. it all has to do with comfort levels and the individuals level of self esteem.

As reflected in the literature review, the challenge of a broad or indescriptive definition of hazing has caused difficulties for law enforcement, university administrators, and student members of Greek letter organizations.

Some of the respondents even created some recommendations of their own. One respondent suggested offering workshops that help refocus on organizational values would help this process.

It is still a process in the works and needs the help of the university by continuing the focus of bringing positive information and alternative methods of unification and respect. Such as workshops that focus on building on self-respect and self esteem. As well as conflict management and dealing with gender roles within the student body, specifically the Greek community…It is important to focus on the happiness of the individual to achieve the happiness and productivity of the group.

Addressing the need for first-year students to gain more education before joining a Greek letter organization, one respondent said, “I think as college students we should take the time to educate incoming freshmen about the pros and cons of going Greek so they can make informed decision.” One respondent suggested that another survey be distributed to gain further insight on student definitions of hazing, analyzing those results for future studies. Together, the quantitative survey provided enough information to be able to reflect on the research questions, but the qualitative commentary at the end of the survey was also highly beneficial for drawing conclusions about the study, as well as providing recommendations for education and further research.

Summary

The participant pool for the study was representative of the desired population to be able to draw conclusions with regard to the research questions. A large percentage of the respondents (86.9%) identified as a member of an organization founded between 1980 and 2000. Referring to the literature review, this reflects the same time frame at which hazing started increasing exponentially in the United States, as well as when the National Pan-Hellenic Council expelled pledging. Although almost every respondent felt his or her organization had an anti-hazing policy and he or she understood the definition of hazing, the data collected revealed hazing is undoubtedly present within REGLOs recognized at Delta River University. This may also indicate the need for more or different hazing education in Greek letter organizations.

The most prominent hazing activities participants reported engaging in were missing sleep, singing or chanting by themselves or with a few select members in a public situation, being yelled at by other members, and being transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location. Participant data revealed that equal amounts of respondents were and were not introduced to hazing prior to joining Greek letter organizations. In addition, while most (50% or more) participants responded they disagreed with hazing (even when it was not physically harming), were not hazed, and had not hazed others, a significant amount of respondents (at least one-tenth) had positive views of hazing, believing it led to respect and group unity; and as a result, they hazed others and/or were hazed themselves.

Currently, hazing activities are affecting REGLOs at the institution for at least one-tenth of the participants of the study. Participant commentary offered insight on some of the student experiences of hazing in REGLOs, including why some of these practices are happening. Respondents felt hazing was a part of the Greek experience, that there are positive and negative ways to haze organization members, and that they believe in their hazing experience. Respondents also felt the definition of hazing was broad and unclear, which has potentially led to a spectrum of hazing activities that members have justified as “not-hazing.”

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The first part of Chapter 4 presented the findings of the quantitative research study, examining the perception of hazing activities occurring within REGLOs at Delta River University, which is a large, four-year public university in California. The study reviewed the survey results of 100 participants, in which 67-79 participants answered each of the 12 survey questions. Participants were enrolled student or alumni members of REGLOs recognized at the institution, and most were juniors and seniors. A majority of the respondents identified as Latino/a or Hispanic and as members of Latino/a or multicultural Greek letter organizations.

The quantitative study was designed to gain insight into the experiences of REGLOs with regard to hazing to determine if hazing occurs within these organizations similarly to other Greek letter organizations and if so, the activities most commonly occurring. The study also aimed to gather perceptions of hazing within members of REGLOs. The literature review garnered the rationale for creating the quantitative survey focused on gaining responses from student members of REGLOs. Understanding the formation and background of Greek letter organizations, as well as the progression of hazing activities over time, offered the need to study hazing within organizations that have recently formed within the past 40 years. The *National Study of Student Hazing* provided the framework for conducting a similar study on a local level, specifically using the population of REGLOs at the institution of study. Along with Allan and Madden (2008), researchers and theorists who have discussed hazing and group behavior extensively like Allan (2004), Nuwer (1990, 1999, 2004), Kimbrough (2003), and Janis (2004) inspired the research surrounding hazing within this group of student organizations.

Using the literature as a framework, this research study intended to gain a deeper understanding of the following research questions:

1. Do student members of ethnic and/or multicultural Greek letter organizations engage in hazing activities?
2. What are the members’ perceptions of hazing activities?
3. If hazing is occurring, which activities are engaged in most frequently in ethnic and multicultural Greek letter organizations?

By surveying students identified as members of REGLOs currently enrolled at a large, diverse, four-year public university, the researcher wanted to gain the perspectives of these individuals on hazing activities. The study also aimed to identify which behaviors, if any, are most commonly occurring within the organizations and if they are similar or different to trends within the national study and other relevant literature. Participants were asked to self-identify as members of an REGLO, to select their viewpoints on seven hazing statements, and to select which hazing activities they have participated in as members of their respective organizations.

An analysis and interpretation of the survey results were also discussed in Chapter 4. The research examined the organization founding dates, whether or not the members’ organization had an anti-hazing policy, member perceptions of hazing, participation in individual hazing activities, and any additional commentary added. All the participants were selected for their affiliation with an REGLO at the institution of study. The target population chosen for the study was 345 students, for which the University Registrar and the Division of Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs were able to provide university email addresses for 342 enrolled students. Of the 342 students who were emailed the survey, 100 voluntary participants had the opportunity to complete the survey in its entirety and those responses were analyzed.

Conclusions

This study, along with previous literature reviewed on the topics of Greek letter organizations and hazing, suggests hazing to be a large social problem affecting all types of Greek letter organizations. Despite the type of hazing activities happening, whether physical or psychological, hazing is still relevant at colleges and universities today, causing lasting injuries and the loss of more lives than ever before. As mentioned throughout the study, there has been a growing popularity for Greek letter organizations, causing exponentially more students to join current existing groups, as well as creating new groups specific to a cultural or ethnic foundation. Along with the increased growth in membership numbers, the attractiveness of fraternities and sororities has grown to certain groups due to the perceived severity of an initiation process that typically involves proving self-worth and loyalty to the group.

These conclusions point to the need for influential leadership and social change in Greek letter organizations with respect to hazing education and awareness. For higher education administrators to be able to address this rising problem, it is important to gain a better understanding of each of the Greek letter organizations on their campuses, what types of hazing activities are affecting these groups, and what the general attitudes toward hazing are in their communities. Although similarities can be found between all types of Greek letter organizations, differences are also present and should not be ignored. This foundational information can lead to conversations about changing the accepted norms of Greek letter organizations. Recognizing hazing as a complex, socially constructed experience, a more holistic approach could be a better option to addressing hazing as opposed to a simple “stop-hazing” or “no hazing” policy.

On a broader level, university administrators, law enforcement, legislators, and umbrella Greek letter organizations need to work together to examine the many varying definitions of hazing and unite under one clear and inclusive definition or social expectation. Current definitions have been criticized for being both too broad and too narrow, allowing for inappropriate hazing behaviors to be justified by those individuals perpetuating them. Stophazing.org has collected the 44 different state statutes that refer to hazing. In addition to these, the website has collected definitions created by Alfred University (which conducted a hazing survey of college student athletes), Hank Nuwer (hazing researcher), and the Fraternal Information and Programming Group (whose mission is to educate Greek letter organizations on risk management education). Among these definitions are many individual university policies that define hazing for students at a particular campus. This creates confusion among the network of Greek letter organizations, many of which are desperately grasping for common understanding of hazing, what is acceptable, and what is not.

In this research study, members of REGLOs expressed with confidence that their organization had an anti-hazing policy (98.8%), they understood the definition of hazing (98.73%), and they would not consider any of their group activities to be hazing (87%). Although participants felt certain about their awareness of hazing, smaller—yet significant—percentages of respondents felt hazing could be okay in certain situations that did not involve physical injuries or felt hazing taught important values such as respect and unity (less than 30%). In addition, between 0% and 20% of participants were unsure about their attitudes toward hazing based on their experiences. Between 16% and 42% of respondents noted they had been expected by their organization to miss sleep (41.8%), sing or chant by themselves with only a few members in a public situation (40.3%), be yelled at by other members (29.9%), and/or be transported and dropped off in unfamiliar locations (16.4%). Commentary of the participants supported the idea that definitions of hazing are difficult for students to comprehend and can cause differences in organization activities. These conclusions confirm the need to turn attention to hazing activities within REGLOs in addition to all other types of Greek letter organizations.

Hazing activities have become deeply rooted in historically White Greek letter organizations, as well as BGLOs, and have contributed to negative outcomes, such as physical and mental injuries and even the loss of lives. However, based on this research study, hazing activities are likely to occur within REGLOs as well. While participating in drinking games might be prevalent among all Greek letter organizations nationally, the findings of this study reveal that missing sleep, singing and chanting in a public situation, being yelled at by other members, and being dropped off in an unfamiliar location are the most common among REGLOs. In addition, the study found that the perceptions of members’ knowledge and awareness of hazing was not as certain as some believed. Participants responded almost unanimously they understood the definition of hazing and they had not participated in hazing activities, yet the results showed hazing behaviors are still occurring in REGLOs in significant percentages. Large disconnections currently exist between three components: what members know about hazing, what members believe about hazing, and what members actually do that is considered hazing. In fact, it was found that some REGLO members felt that in some situations, hazing can be acceptable, (i.e., when no one is at risk of getting hurt). A portion of respondents also seemed unsure or felt neutrally about their views on hazing, which further suggests additional education and awareness are necessary.

Recommendations for Further Study

Several authors and researchers have offered recommendations for higher education administrators working with fraternities and sororities to address negative outcomes of hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008; Campo et al., 2005; Cokley et al., 2001; Kimbrough, 2003; National Collaborative for Hazing Research and Prevention, 2010). Some of these recommendations, such as those included in the *National Study of Student Hazing*, specifically outline considerations for further research on the topic of hazing. Ideally, future research for this study would continue to investigate the topic of hazing perceptions within REGLOs on a national level. A future study would continue to include the quantitative research design while also incorporating the involvement of more qualitative pieces, including focus groups, individual interviews/group interviews, or a mixed methods approach.

The commentary in this study was insightful, and because hazing is a social construct, the topic would benefit from additional guided qualitative responses and anecdotes to accompany the existing research. This study found that many of the REGLOs at Delta River University were founded between 1980 and 2000, at the pinnacle of hazing growth. Further research may also investigate more deeply the founding of REGLOs and the incorporation of hazing during this time period of mass hazing publicity. Further research may also consider including more alumni in the research design as often times alumni may feel less connected to the loyalties of the organization and feel more comfortable sharing their undergraduate experience. As expressed in this study through the literature and the findings, REGLO members have struggled with the definition of hazing and how it is applicable to their organization. It will be important for critical stakeholders, such as higher education administrators and legislators, to assess the current definitions and statutes that address hazing activities to make them consistent across all states and organizations. Research focused on the social norms or sociological constructs of hazing can also be used to further programs and education around hazing prevention.

appendices

Appendix A

Instrumentation

*Page 2*

All of the questions asked in this survey will be focused on the activities of your Greek letter organization. Please answer the questions from the scope of your organizational activities.

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**Question 2**

Please select your level of education based on your units completed.

* Freshmen
* Sophomore
* Junior
* Senior
* Graduate
* Alumni

**Question 3**

Please write in your race/ethnicity.

**Question 4**

Please identify if you are a member of a fraternity or sorority.

* Fraternity (men’s organization)
* Sorority (women’s organization)

**Question 5**

Please identify which type of organization you are a member of.

* Asian Interest (including Pilipino or Pilipina)
* Latino/Latina
* Multi-Cultural
* Other Type Greek Letter Organization (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 6**

Please identify which type of organization you are a member of:

* International
* National
* Regional (Western United States)
* My organization is only recognized in California.
* My organization is only recognized at Sacramento State.
* Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Page 3*

All of the questions asked in this survey will be focused on the activities of your Greek letter organization. Please answer the questions from the scope of your organizational activities.

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**Question 7**

In what year was your organization first established? (This may not necessarily be the founding date of your organization on this campus. This might be called your 'Alpha' Chapter or Founding Chapter.)

* Before 1950
* 1951-1960
* 1961-1970
* 1971-1980
* 1981-1990
* 1991-2000
* 2001-2010
* After 2010

**Question 8**

Does your organization have an anti-hazing statement?

* Yes
* No
* Not our umbrella organization, but our chapter at this campus has an anti-hazing statement.
* Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Page 4*

All of the questions asked in this survey will be focused on the activities of your Greek letter organization. Please answer the questions from the scope of your organizational activities.

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**Question 9**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. You may select Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or N/A | | | | | | |
| Answer Options | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | N/A |
| I understand the definition of hazing. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| Hazing is okay as long as no one is being injured. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| I have been hazed. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| Hazing activities teach important values such as respect and unity. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| I was introduced to hazing prior to joining a Greek organization. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| Hazing activities are never acceptable. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |
| I have hazed someone else. | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ | ⬜ |

**Question 10**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Have you participated in any of the following activities? (Please note: Not all of these activities may be defined as hazing.) Please check all that apply. | |
| Answer Options | Select |
| Attend a skit night where other members might be embarrassed | ⬜ |
| Sing or chant by yourself or with a few select members in a public situation | ⬜ |
| Take weekly tests or quizzes | ⬜ |
| Wear clothing that is embarrassing | ⬜ |
| Wear clothing that is not part of the required uniform/attire | ⬜ |
| Be yelled at by other members | ⬜ |
| Participate in a drinking game | ⬜ |
| Attend mandatory events throughout the week | ⬜ |
| Get a tattoo, brand, or piercing of a body part | ⬜ |
| Run errands for other members | ⬜ |
| Associate with specific members or groups of members only | ⬜ |
| Memorize information about the organization | ⬜ |
| Ignore specific members or groups of members | ⬜ |
| Endure harsh weather without the proper clothing | ⬜ |
| Miss sleep | ⬜ |
| Participate in ceremonies and organization Rituals | ⬜ |
| Be transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location | ⬜ |

*Page 5*

All of the questions asked in this survey will be focused on the activities of your Greek letter organization. Please answer the questions from the scope of your organizational activities.

**Question 11**

The definition of hazing in the California Education Code is “any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization or student body, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to any former, current, or prospective student of any school, community college, college, university, or other educational institution in this state.”

The definition of hazing in the California Penal Code is “conduct which causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to another person in the course of the other person’s pre initiation into, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization.”

Based on either of these definitions, do you feel you have participated in activities that could be defined as hazing?

* Yes
* No
* I’m not sure.

*Page 6*

All of the questions asked in this survey will be focused on the activities of your Greek letter organization. Please answer the questions from the scope of your organizational activities.

**Question 12**

Are there any comments you would like to share for the benefit of this survey?

Appendix B

Letter of Consent to Research Participants

Welcome! Thank you for participating in this study. Below you will find additional information before you answer any questions.

Purpose of the Study:

This is a study on hazing perceptions and activities that is being conducted by Melissa A. Norrbom, a graduate student in the Educational Leadership & Policy Studies program at California State University, Sacramento. The purpose of this study is to gain information about potential hazing perceptions and activities within ethnic and multicultural Greek letter organizations and to suggest possible educational methods for addressing hazing behaviors.

What will be done:

You will complete a survey, which will take 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about your perceptions of hazing in general as well as activities that you may have participated in with members of your organization. We also will ask for some demographic information (e.g., type of organization) so that we can accurately describe the general traits of these perceptions and activities.

Benefits of this study:

You will be contributing to research within the field of fraternity and sorority life by providing knowledge about the role hazing activities play in specific types of Greek letter organizations.

Personal risks or discomforts:

No risks or discomforts are anticipated from taking part in this study. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can skip that question or withdraw from the study altogether. If you decide to quit at any time before you have finished the questionnaire, your answers will NOT be recorded.

Organizational risks:

There are no risks to your organization by participating in this study. Your answers will be kept confidential and there will be no identifying questions that could lead to an investigation of your organization’s activities.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept confidential to the degree permitted by the technology used. However, no absolute guarantees can be given for the confidentiality of electronic data. We will NOT know your IP address when you respond to the Internet survey and every effort will be made not to trace your individual responses. Only the researcher and faculty advisor will see your individual survey responses and the results of the data analysis. After we have finished data collection and have sent you a copy of the results of the study, we will destroy all of the online data.

Decision to quit at any time:

Your participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. If you do not want to continue, you can simply leave the website. If you do not click on the “submit” button at the end of the survey, your answers and participation will not be recorded. You also may choose to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. If you complete this survey and submit it, the researcher will be unable to remove anonymous data from the database.

How the findings will be used:

The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only. The results from the study will be presented in educational settings and at professional conferences, and the results might be published in a professional journal in the field of Student Affairs/Services and Fraternity/Sorority

Life. Student Organizations & Leadership at Sacramento State may use the findings of this data to suggest further methods of community education.

Contact information:

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact Melissa A. Norrbom at mnorrbom@csus.edu or Dr. José Chávez at chavez@csus.edu in the Educational Leadership & Policy Studies Department.

By beginning the survey, and checking the box below, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research, with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

**Question 1**

Do you agree to participate in this study?

* Yes, I have read the statements above and voluntarily agree to participate in this survey.

Appendix C

Survey Question 12 – Comments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Response Text |
| 1 | It's part of history and Greek life itself. |
| 2 | Well honestly, What makes me mad about this survey is that everything we do on campus is consider hazing. The loss of sleep well then me as a biology student Im being hazed. I love my frat and I told them that I was gay and they accepted me as me as a person. My fraternity I feel more welcome and i love my brotherhood. |
| 3 | I believe everything I did to become a member helped create bonds that have lasted a long time and will continue to last. Also I feel like I have earned my place here and became a stronger individual. |
| 4 | Though this stated the definition of hazing, it has become much more broad. Some consider memorizing an organization's information to be hazing due to mental strains, or even having mandatory events. The lines become harder to distinguish and many people consider themselves to be 'hazed' when in fact, they are not. |
| 5 | The definition of hazing that includes holding office or being a member of an organization is too vague and it places student reorganizing in a negative light. Hazing is real. It happens within the Greek community but there are organization that have transition into a more civilized group that focuses on helping individuals identify their strength and enhance them verses breaking down a person to rebuild them to fit the mold of the organization. That's what a cult does. That is never the right thing to do. It is still a process in the works and needs the help of the university by continuing the focus of bringing positive information and alternative methods of unification and respect. Such as workshops that focus on building on self respect and self esteem. As well as conflict management and dealing with gender roles within the student body, specifically the Greek community. As a founding sister this is a goal for/within my own organization. It is important to focus on the happiness of the individual to achieve the happiness and productivity of the group. |
| 6 | Hazing is so broad. Almost EVERYTHING can be defined as hazing. It def still exists!!!!! It unfortunately has just become normalized behavior/actions/expectations for many Greek organizations. |
| 7 | Interpretation of hazing can be very biased depending on an organization acceptable culture. I see organizations target freshmen, who sometimes join due to norms or in order to be accepted or wanted by society and most of the time don't know what they got themselves into. I think as college students we should take the time to educate incoming freshmen about the pros and cons of going Greek so they can make informed decision. |
|  |  |
| 8 | I believe hazing is a very tricky and very thin line, what one person may find embarrassing and degrading another may find fun or a challenge. For example reciting information by yourself may be humiliating for one person and it can be a cake walk for the next. it all has to do with comfort levels and the individuals level of self esteem. |
| 9 | our national board of directors take an absolute zero tolerance police towards ANY form of hazing up to including immediate revocation of a charter so we do not even come close to the hazing line. it is not worth the national consequences no the psychological consequences to a member or potential member of our frat. |
| 10 | One of the things that I feel that is often said by members to those wishing to join is that they wouldn't do something they themselves wouldn't do. In their eyes, this no longer makes it hazing. |
| 11 | Although the majority of Greek organizations know what hazing is, they still tend to do it. One thing I have learned over time is that, even though we keep the same rituals/events established by our founding chapter, we can always be better prepared just in case something happens. Also, always remember the difference between stupidity and courage. |
| 12 | The dry pledge process has been a great tool to avoid situations that would involve hazing activities. |
| 13 | I have questioned my organization's intake process several times during my own intake process and since watching the intake processes of new members. My primary finding is at times it impedes academic success and healthy eating/sleeping patterns. However, I have concluded the cause of those specific problems is not the process itself but the time management and organizational skills of both parties (the members administering the process and the members-to-be undergoing the process). I have learned that my organization's process has evolved from when it was first founded to now in a positive way by eliminating many former components that would have been undoubtedly considered hazing. I believe that the process now is a positive experience not intended in any way to degrade or harm participants neither physically nor mentally. |
| 14 | I think hazing has many many definitions. According to older members of my organization, hazing is considered any activity that you ask one member to do that they would not otherwise do on their own, such as memorizing information about the organization. This is the definition upon which my answers came from. The definition stated in the survey differs from my own, and therefore justifying my answer stating my organization does not haze. We do not engage in activity that is meant to humiliate, embarrass, harass, or harm potential member. I think it best to ask survey participants to define what hazing is to them and analyze those results for future studies. |

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