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How Leaders in Greek Life View Alcohol

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How Leaders in Greek Life View Alcohol

By

Blake Miller

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF

Master of Science in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CHARLESTON,

ILLINOIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS

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following degree be awarded: **M.S. in College Student Affairs**

Date: <u>April 21,2020</u>

Title of Thesis: <u>How Leaders in Greek Life View Alcohol</u>

Academic Advisor:_____

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Abstract

The researcher in this study used qualitative methodology to explore perspectives of undergraduate student leaders in fraternity and sorority life at a mid-sized, Midwest institution on alcohol, especially within the Greek life system. Eight informants participated in semi-structured, open-ended interviews and were asked about their views on and experiences with alcohol, both as a new member and after having leadership experience. Informants were also asked about alcohol intervention and prevention measures. A majority of informants maintained or developed an indifferent or aversive view of alcohol, had decreased their personal levels of alcohol use, had made attempts to change the way members of their organization viewed or used alcohol, and saw a need for more responsible alcohol use in their organization. Recommendations were made for professionals in fraternity and sorority life and in alcohol intervention and preventions.

Key words: *Fraternity and Sorority, Greek Life, Alcohol, Intervention and Prevention, Student Leadership*

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Alcohol use and abuse by college students has reached problematic levels on campuses (American College Health Association, 2019; Core Institute, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2014; Fuertes & Hoffman, 2016). As a result of heavy and frequent drinking, students have been involved in lawsuits, suffered injuries, and have even lost their lives (Kaplin & Lee, 2014). This problem is magnified in the microcosm of fraternities and sororities (Brown-Rice, Furr, & Jorgensen, 2015). The issue of alcohol misuse among college students, particularly students involved in Greek life, has been indoctrinated over time. College students believe that participation in alcohol consumption and binge drinking offers an opportunity to find a sense of belonging (Grant, Brown, & Moreno, 2013), uphold masculine norms (Wells et al., 2014), and explore their inner-selves (Gibson & Vassalotti, 2017), and many other varying and readily available experiences. Many college students, simply put, do not view heavy and frequent drinking and the consequences that come from it as negative experiences (Nguyen, Wyatt, Walters, & DeJong, 2013).

Universities of the modern era have shifted to understand, anticipate, and on some levels, allow a reasonable amount of risk when it comes to student interaction and activities (Lake, 2013, p. 252), and institutional policy has evolved with the intent of helping students, especially students in fraternities and sororities, practice safer alcohol consumption. Fraternity and sorority advisors in the world of higher education seek to "model personal and professional attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with fraternal values and beliefs, and challenge students to model attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with them as well" (Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors, n.d.). In the past, fraternity and sorority advisors have used this line of

thinking and attempted to infuse values clarification to reduce alcohol consumption and improve alignment with organizational and system values. If institutions and professionals alike are committed to helping college students – including if not especially students in Greek life – consume alcohol in a safer and controlled manner, and the trend of dangerous binge drinking still continues, then who else can move Greek organizations away from high risk and harmful drinking?

Purpose of the Study

Student leaders in fraternities and sororities have a tremendous responsibility. They are tasked with guiding their organization both operationally and culturally while they themselves are personally developing. The purpose of this study was to understand how leaders' in fraternities and sororities at a four-year, midsized, Midwestern state university views on alcohol have changed as a result of their leadership experiences, and how these leaders may have played roles in reducing heavy and frequent alcohol consumption in the fraternity and sorority community.

Because this study was qualitative and occured at one research site, its results lack an ability to be generalized. It may be of some use to administrators, faculty, staff, and stakeholders in the individual campus's fraternity and sorority community. Institutions with similar demographics may have an opportunity to replicate the study to contribute to a knowledge base on the subject. Furthermore, while the data will not be able to be generalized, this study can provide valuable insights into alcohol use as a whole, especially in fraternity and sorority life communities with similar demographic characteristics. With this insight, professionals and students may be able to be empowered to use perceptions on alcohol to make changes regarding alcohol use within individual chapters and within the entirety of the campus Greek life system.

Research Questions

If student leaders in fraternity and sorority life are to effect change and disrupt the trend of heavy and frequent drinking damaging the Greek life experience, the researcher sought to understand how assuming leadership within a fraternity or sorority impacted perspectives on alcohol and its role within a chapter. To understand their perspectives, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the role of alcohol in Greek life according to a leader in Greek life?

2. What are the expectancies that cause Greek students to participate in alcohol culture according to a leader in Greek life?

3. What are the societal factors that cause Greek students to participate in alcohol culture according to a leader in Greek life?

4. How did members of fraternities and sororities view alcohol and its role within the chapter as a new member?

5. How do leaders in fraternities and sororities view alcohol after having leadership experience in the chapter?

Significance of the Study

This study sought to understand how leaders in fraternities and sororities viewed alcohol and if their perspective had changed as a result of their leadership experiences. Understanding how alcohol is perceived within fraternities and sororities can benefit both students and administrators alike. Professionals in student affairs play an important role in guiding student development (Soria, Roberts, & Reinhard, 2015). Thus, student affairs professionals can shape policy to help student leaders in Greek life make changes toward eliminating the alcohol use

problem in fraternities and sororities. According to Fairlie, DeJong, Stevenson, Lavine, and

Wood (2010), attitudes toward alcohol and alcohol-related behavior among Greek life leaders

vary. However, student leaders as a whole can develop and grow more when provided a space to

discuss personal and political topics with peers who they do and do not agree with (Cohen et al.,

2013). Expression of such ideas can help lead students to reevaluate their own values, beliefs,

and behaviors in order to effect change in others. Therefore, if administrators in higher

education can understand differing perspectives on alcohol in Greek life and provide fraternity

and sorority leaders and non-leaders alike a space to discuss the relationship between alcohol and

Greek life, leaders will likely be able to develop more and move toward reducing the problem of

heavy and frequent drinking in their own organizations.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations impacted this research. First, the informants and research site were a

factor. This study was completed at a four-year, public institution located in a rural setting in the

Midwest with a student population numbering 7,806 in total. The informants were members of

fraternity and sorority life at this institution have who held leadership roles. Because student

experiences vary greatly as a result of their life experiences (Cox, Reason, Nix, & Gillman,

2016) and institutional characteristics, the results of this research will not be able to be applied to

schools in a different geographic setting, with a smaller or larger student population, or at a non-

public institution.

Second, Alva (1998) explored self-reporting of alcohol use by members of fraternities

and sororities. It may be difficult to know the accuracy of information provided by the

informants. Fraternity and sorority members may be reluctant to accurately depict their

experiences with alcohol if the members do not trust the researcher. Greek organizations are

inherently secretive, and their actions often remain secretive (DeSimone, 2009). Furthermore, Grant, LaBrie, Hummer, and Lac (2012) suggest that college students may increasingly underestimate their level of intoxication as their blood alcohol content (BAC) increases. Informants in this study who shared information about their experiences with alcohol may have accidentally misrepresented their experiences or the experiences of their peers.

Third, the researcher was a former leader in fraternity life at another institution who had changed his perspective on alcohol as a result of his leadership experience. While measures were enacted to limit as much bias as possible, complete elimination of bias can never be guaranteed.

Lastly, participation was limited. The research site institution had a total student population of 7,806 students. If the estimated 20% of students were involved in Greek life, and the institution had 23 different Greek-letter organizations (Eastern Illinois University, n.d.), then organizations will had an average of 67 members at the most. Given executive boards are composed of only a few members per organization, it was difficult to interact with the desired number of informants. Because participation was solicited, potential informants may have chosen to exclude themselves from the study. This may have prevented a fully accurate description of the perspectives of leaders in the fraternity and sorority community.

Definition of Terms

Alcohol Culture. The general trend of college students' consumption of alcohol defining the students' social experience, which often leads to heavy and drinking.

Heavy or frequent drinking. An episode or episodes of five or more drinks in one occasion for males or four or more drinks in one occasion for females, commonly referred to as binge drinking in lay terms. (Courtney and Polich, 2009).

Fraternity and sorority advisor. Any person who works with a fraternity or sorority in a capacity that allows the person to provide advice, input, or guidance to undergraduate members.

Fraternity and sorority life/Greek life. The experience of college students as members of a Greek-letter organization. Fraternities are dominantly male organizations and sororities are dominantly female organizations, and these organizations are led entirely by students at the local level. Each individual group is known as a chapter, and each chapter is a part of the national organization. Greek-letter organizations all promote common values among chapters, and these values are also common to other organizations. Some of those values may include: brother or sisterhood, leadership, service, and learning. The organizations are typically secretive in their deliberations, each having a ritual that is to be used in formal processes and only made known to members of the organization who have undergone the initiation process. The terms fraternity and sorority life and Greek life will be used interchangeably in the study.

Leader. For the purposes of this study, a leader shall refer to a student involved in fraternity or sorority life who holds or has held a position as their organization's president, vice president, or risk manager. Generally, those holding these positions in an organization will have been elected to the role by their peers. A leader may also include a person serving in any leadership role on a governing council, such as the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, or National Pan-Hellenic Council, which are also student-led organizations that govern the

research site's social fraternities, social sororities, and multicultural Greek organizations, respectively.

Role of alcohol. The reasons members use alcohol in Greek-letter organizations, which may include expected results of alcohol consumption, pressure from peers, or any intrinsic trait or external factor experienced by a member. Factors such as residence in a fraternity or sorority house, organizational culture perpetuated over time, the freedom that college offers for members of Greek life to choose to participate in heavy and frequent alcohol consumption, and more may contribute to why alcohol is consumed by this population of student.

Summary

Heavy and frequent alcohol consumption is a growing problem on college campuses across North America, and students in fraternities and sororities drink more on average than the non-affiliated student. The researcher attempted to understand the viewpoint of fraternity and sorority leaders on the use and role of alcohol within their individual chapters and in the fraternity and sorority community at large by conducting semi-structured interviews to find common patterns of beliefs, values, or attitudes.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Overview

This literature review provides a foundational level of knowledge needed to understand college student behaviors and perspectives related to alcohol consumption, Greek life participation, and leadership among college students. Research and student development theories provide insight on how the interaction between alcohol, fraternity or sorority involvement, and leadership affect college students on an individual and organizational. Thus, a review of the available literature can lead to understanding of how college students are affected by alcohol, Greek life participation, and leadership experience as intersectional components of the student experience.

Qualitative Method

Jackson, Drummond, and Camara (2007) considered Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notion that qualitative research uses humans as a tool and a means toward a solution. The researcher is a human, aware of their presence in the research and how it may affect outcomes. Human subjects are relied upon to provide rich recounts of experiences or phenomena, full of depth in order to add to a larger picture. Qualitative research is subjective, requiring what Mills (1959) would describe as a certain amount of imagination to find meaning. As with all research, qualitative research attempts to understand, explain, identify, or learn more about that which is being researched. Because of its subjective nature, there are many different methodologies and practices. The researcher used grounded theory qualitative research in this study.

Glaser and Strauss were the formulators of grounded theory research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), originally and often called the "constant comparative method (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 273)", and their work helped to legitimize qualitative research as valid and rigorous. In grounded theory research, the continual collection and analysis of data allow for theory to formulate and grow during the research. Researchers may bring previous experiences or research into current studies to guide current research, though using previous knowledge or research "must be rigorously carried out (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 273)". Grounded theory research is similar to other forms of qualitative research in the variety of modes that can be used for data collection, the types of data that can be used or collected, and the need for inclusion of interpretation of data not only by research, but the inclusion of interpretation of data provided by informants as well (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated that grounded theory "induced from diverse data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 238-239)" is allows theory to both be related to and more closely define the reality of daily life. A key factor of grounded theory is that it is open to change in order to further develop theory. For example, "The general procedure is to ask, 'What is the influence of gender (for instance)… on the phenomena under study? – then to trace this influence as precisely as possible, as well as its influence flowing in reverse direction (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 276)". In simpler terms, application of time and spatial context to research can help researchers better understand data. The importance of development of theory as an aim of grounded theory is central to the success of the research; theory is defined as "plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 278)". Grounded theory, therefore, is "designed to guide researchers in producing theory that is conceptually dense – that is, with many conceptual relationships (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 278)". Grounded theory is focused on finding

commonalities across data, rather than singular instances among singular data points, and

seeking multiple perspectives is crucial for the richness of the research results. The coding

process prevents the researcher from imposing their own interpretation and meaning on data,

when done thoroughly and properly. The researcher is both the researcher and a factor in

research that can influence data in grounded theory studies, both affecting and being affected by

the informants. (Strauss and Corbin, 1994)

Creswell (1998) expanding upon the ideas of Corbin, Glaser, and Strauss, defines

grounded theory qualitative research as "a method that is used to generate or discover a theory

relating to a particular situation." The situation is one in which individuals interact, take actions,

or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon. To study how people act and react to this

phenomenon, the researcher collects primarily interview data, makes multiple visits to the field,

develops and interrelates categories of information, and writes theoretical propositions or

hypotheses or presents a visual picture of the theory. The goal of a grounded theory study,

according to Creswell (1998), is to develop or generate a theory closely related to the context of

the phenomenon being studied. Creswell (1998) described the process of grounded theory

research as a "zigzag", a cyclical process where the researcher continually goes to the field to

conduct interviews and collect data, then returns to analyze the collected data, followed by

another return to the field.

In qualitative research, interviews are a technique by which the researcher conducts

"intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives

on a particular idea, program, or situation (Interviews, 2019)." There are three types of

interviews that may be conducted. These include structured interviews, when the researcher asks

all informants the same pre-determined questions; unstructured interviews, when the researcher

does not prepare questions and collects data informally; and semi-structured interviews, when

the researcher asks pre-determined questions, but may ask additional clarifying or probing

questions to gather more data (Interviews, 2019). Stage (1992) provided some tips for

conducting interviews as part of qualitative research. The researcher should begin the interview

by providing the informant or informants a document that can be signed by the informant to gain

consent for participation and recording. Interviews are generally recorded with the use of

technology, collecting a video or the interview or the audio of the interview, in order to preserve

the data collected by the researcher. Stage (1992) recommends telling the informant how the

data will be recorded during the interview in order to gain consent and develop trust. Next, the

researcher should always plan for the recording device to fail, and should always have a

secondary means of recording. The researcher should do her or his best to limit the length of the

interview in consideration of the informant's time. Lastly, Stage (1992) recommends taking

notes to remember relevant information or behavior during the interview.

Notes taken during an interview in the qualitative research process are called field notes.

Bogdan and Knopp Biklen (2007) define two types of field notes; descriptive field notes detail

the observed setting, people, actions, and conversation of the interview; reflective field notes

capture the researcher's frame of mind, ideas, and concerns. Descriptive field notes ideally will

use concrete descriptive words and include as much depth as possible. Reflective field notes are

an opportunity to record observations that are more abstract, and may help the researcher

examine her or his own biases or mistakes. Bogdan and Knopp Biklen (2007) and Phillippi and

Lauderdale (2018) outline some best practices for organization of field notes. All field notes

should be titled to detail which number of interviews was conducted (i.e., first, second, etc.)

along with identifying information of the informant being interviewed. Field notes should be

recorded either during the interview or observation or as close to the interview or observation as possible after completion. Field notes should be well organized based on subject matter and chronological occurrence, and should be more extensive in the earlier stages of field exploration. Continual addition to field notes after the first instance, especially when identifying nonverbal behavior or personal reflection from the researcher, can be useful.

Creswell (1998) notes the importance of using technology in efficient ways that help the researcher organize collected data. Backups of data should be created, high quality recording devices should be used when possible, maintaining a master list of collected data aids in organization and tracking, and anonymity of participants should remain among the most important tasks of the researcher.

Creswell (2009) presented an outline for data analysis in qualitative research. First, the researcher gathers raw data via interviews and field notes. As detailed above, that raw data is stored via recording or other means and organized by transcribing the recording (Merriam, 2009). The data then is rigorously checked for validity through various and progressing methods. The researcher transcribes the recorded data into text format in order to analyze what was said during an interview. Merriam (2009) provides an example transcription, noting the importance of numbering each line of text for referential use. Transcriptions and recordings can be checked for accuracy with the informants via member checking (Creswell, 2009), a process by which the informant is presented with the revised recording and/or transcription, allowing the informant to confirm what was said while providing input as to what she or he meant to say or felt as they were speaking, if there are any differences. Allowing other researchers to evaluate the transcript and recordings and using descriptive and in-depth phrasing also allows for accuracy. The next step in the validity check is coding the data. Coding helps to organize data

and define common themes in data that may not be immediately apparent based on informant responses or observed phenomena (Saldaña, 2013). Creswell (1998) provides four types of coding. First, open coding helps the researcher "form initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information" (Creswell 1998, p. 57). The researcher finds common characteristics among these categories. Second, axial coding "assembles the data in new ways after open coding" (Creswell 1998, p. 57). The researcher looks for a "central phenomenon, explores causal conditions, specifies strategies, identifies context and intervening conditions, and delineates consequences" (Creswell 1998, p. 57). Third, selective coding allows the researcher to explore a "common story line that integrates the categories in the axial coding model" (Creswell 1998, p. 57), and it is during this coding that hypotheses may be formed. Lastly, conditional coding incorporates external conditions and contexts into the phenomenon. After coding, Creswell (1998) notes the next step of data analysis to be identification of themes and descriptions of phenomena which are then integrated with the research. Finally, the data, research, themes, and descriptions are interpreted.

Qualitative research is not without its limitations. In all research, finding participants may be a challenge. Kelly, Margolis, McCormick, LeBaron, and Chowdhury (2017) found that incentives, particularly in the form of financial compensation, may boost participation. Ngozwana (2018) explored ethical dilemmas in qualitative research, citing the need for confidentiality, anonymity of participants, gaining consent, and offering opportunities to exit the study at any time as struggles for researchers. In an article arguing for the need to share qualitative data with other researchers, parties or persons interested research, and the general public, DuBois, Strait, and Walsh (2018) articulated some issues with qualitative research. Dubois et al. (2018) stated qualitative data is subjective, giving it little use when applied to

populations outside of the one that was researched. Qualitative researchers are research tools themselves, and it may be difficult for another researcher to understand the entire scope of the researcher's perspective. Anonymization of data, especially regarding gender, may lead to confusing results. Many qualitative studies are funded by institutions or companies, calling into question the ownership of data. Lastly, DuBois et al. (2018) noted that confidentiality of participants can be breached. When data is shared, especially on a public level, researchers may struggle to decide which variables or confidentiality barriers are to be maintained. Englander (2019) expands upon the notion that qualitative data can rarely be made as a general claim because of complications with both decisions of what parts of data and research can be generally applied and to which populations it can be applied as well.

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed the ecological systems model, also referred to as the socio-ecological model, as a means for identifying the environments in which a human interacts. Bronfenbrenner categorized five systems, but began by noting that the individual is at the center, comprised of both physical traits, such as one's sex, age, health, or race, as well as the more abstract parts of one's self, such as personality, beliefs, and values (which are often constructed by interactions with the larger environments). The first and most immediate system is the microsystem, which includes family, friends, religious or belief systems, school, and health professionals, all significant parts of development. Second is the mesosystem, which connects the various actors in the microsystem, such as relationships between educators and family or peers and family. Third, the exosystem links one's context with one's social setting; one example may be the impact of a parent's employment on one's home life. The macrosystem is fourth, and includes societal culture, socioeconomic status, ethnic identity, or communal values.

Fifth is the chronosystem, which encompasses life events and the general development over time both for oneself and society as a whole. Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that, over time, each person may come to develop within a unique system on each level due to personal experiences and development.

Alexander Astin's theory of student involvement (1984) as referenced by Patton, Renn, Guido-DeBrito, and Quaye (2016) notes that students develop both personally and academically when they are involved on campuses. This involvement varies in quantitative and qualitative measurement and is not equal for every student. However, the quality and quantity of involvement and effort, though varying in each student, determine how development occurs (Patton et al., 2016). Students in Greek life, particularly those in leadership roles, are often tasked with providing significant amounts of physical (which is spent organizing, setting up, and participating events, attending meetings, and carrying out other functions of the organization) and psychological (which is used thinking of ideas and solutions to organizational goals or issues, caring about the wellbeing of other organizational members, and bearing the responsibility of leadership) energy to meet goals and assist in the development of other members, which often leads to greater personal development. However, because the organizations are student led, a lack of preparation and training for those in leadership roles can contribute to the downfall of the organization.

Patton et al. (2016) also cited Baxter Magolda's (1992, 1998) theory of self-authorship. Baxter Magolda defined self-authorship as "the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 269)" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 365). Baxter Magolda (2001) stated the path to self-authorship begins with one following what they have learned from parents, educators, peers, and other social agents. Then, a crossroads is met, where

one becomes dissatisfied with the teachings of others and longs to establish an identity. Next,

the individual becomes the author of their own life by establishing their own beliefs, values, and

overall identity, realizing that these can change with time and new information. Lastly, the

individual reinforces their self-identity and are able to function with an awareness of external

influencers that no longer have such a large effect. Self-authorship, according to Baxter

Magolda (2008), has three elements. The first of these is trusting the internal voice, when

individuals realize that they cannot control external influencers or events, thereby becoming

more confident in their own beliefs. Second, individuals build an internal foundation which can

be reevaluated and changed once established. Third, securing internal commitments comes when

an individual integrates their self-identity with the external world or society. Crossroads may

occur at any point for an individual, according to Baxter Magolda (2012), and therefore may lead

to developments toward self-authorship in different areas of life at different times.

Establishing an understanding of the above theories provides a context for leaders in

fraternities and sororities. Leaders operate in an ecological model, beginning with the individual

self, and expands to include peers and advisors, individual chapters which are part of a larger

national organization as well as the Greek life community at an institution, local, state, and

federal laws and regulations, and the entire Greek life culture that is comprised of the common

themes, values, and actions found across individual and national Greek-letter organizations,

which can be promoted by the national organization or developed through tradition. Leaders are

involved on a higher degree than regular members, and entering the crossroads of leadership

combined with heightened involvement can lead to further personal development. The

development of one's perspective on alcohol use may change as a result of one's interactions

within the context of the socio-ecological model; student leaders in Greek life may change their

views on alcohol based on their experiences within their own chapter or organization,

experiences on their campus, or their experiences with legal or institutional laws or regulations.

Alcohol Use among College Students

The thought that collegiate alcohol use is a public health issue is not a new trend. Many

studies have been done on alcohol use among college students, and professionals in health and

higher education settings now have a strong understanding of "why, when, where, and how

students drink" (McMurtrie, 2014). Henry Wechsler was a leader in research in the field of

collegiate alcohol use in the 1993 (McMurtrie, 2014), and in 2000, Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, and Lee

(2000) found that the binge or heavy drinking rate, defined by the researchers as consumption of

five or four drinks in a row for men or women, respectively, had remained at 44% across the

1990s. The rate of frequent heavy drinking, defined by the researchers as heavy drinking three

or more times in a two-week period, increased over the decade, and increased use of alcohol also

increased alcohol-related risk among students (Wechsler et al., 2000). The National Institute on

Drug Abuse (2018) administers the "Monitoring the Future" survey annually and has done so

since 1975. Respondents in the study provide data regarding use of alcohol or other drugs based

on a number of factors. In the 2018 survey, the National Institute on Drug Abuse recorded that

33% of college students reported having five drinks in a row in one sitting at least once in the

last two weeks. While heavy and frequent drinking rates have fallen over time after peaking in

the 1990s and 2000s (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2018), alcohol use rates by traditionally

college-aged (ages 18-25) students in the last 30 days is still around 70%, depending on age.

Alcohol use among college students has reached a problematic level across the United

States. According to the American College Health Association (2018), 27.1% of surveyed

students consumed five or more alcohol drinks in a single sitting in the last two weeks, 49.3%

had used alcohol in the last nine days, the average blood alcohol concentration (BAC) among

students during an episode of drinking was 0.06, and the average amount of drinks per student

during an individual episode was 4.16. Similar results can be found in the Southern Illinois

University – Carbondale Core Institute's 2011-2013 National Results (2014):

> 68.7% of the students surveyed having consumed alcohol in the past 30 days, 61.8% of
>
> surveyed underage students (younger than 21) consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days
>
> and 43.9% of students reported binge drinking in the previous two weeks. A binge is
>
> defined as consuming 5 or more drinks in one sitting.

As a result of alcohol use, college students have experienced a wide variety of negative

consequences. Students have been involved in physical altercations, acts of violence, fights,

arguments, felt the threat of physical violence, injured others, or damaged property as a result of

alcohol consumption. They have experienced unwanted or unsafe sexual touching, sexual

assault, and have been taken advantage of sexually. Students have driven under the influence of

alcohol, gotten into trouble with the police or local authorities, received DWI or DUI citations,

and committed vandalism. They've failed to stop using alcohol even when trying to do so, had

suicidal ideations, thoughts, or attempts at suicide, felt physical illness and continual vomiting,

and been hungover. Students have experienced ethnic or racial harassment, felt a negative

impact on their academics, missed work or skipped out on other responsibilities, participated in

risky behaviors like drinking games, and some students have even died as a result of alcohol use

and misuse (American College Health Association, 2018; Kaplin & Lee, 2014; Lake, 2013;

Nguyen, Walters, Wyatt & DeJong 2013; Core Institute, Southern Illinois University

Carbondale, 2014; Fuertes & Hoffman, 2016; Zamboanga, Audley, Iwamoto, Martin, & Tomaso,

2017).

Intrinsic Factors Influencing Alcohol Use

While not all college students consume alcohol at such dangerous levels or frequencies, those who do so often experience intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to such behavior. Impulsivity has been recognized as a personality trait that may cause college students to drink heavily, in that impulsive students are likely to seek sensation and recognize the positive benefits of alcohol consumption. At the same time, impulsivity may limit recognition of the negative results of heavy alcohol consumption from the student perspective (LaBrie, Kenney, Napper, & Miller, 2014; Park, Kim, Gellis, Zaso, & Maisto, 2014).

Attempts to uphold masculine norms may explain why some students use alcohol. These norms, namely "winning, risk taking, violence, power over women, dominance, playboy, self-reliance, and heterosexual presentation" may cause male students to participate in heavy episodic drinking and to experience the results of such participation according to Wells, Tremblay, Dumas, Miller, and Graham (2014). Zamboanga et al. (2017) recognized the same link of between masculine norms and alcohol consumption, and found that male students are more likely to participate in drinking games or other risky behaviors related to alcohol. As a result, male students may be more likely to experience negative consequences because of heavy episodic drinking.

Gibson and Vassalotti (2017) studied student alcohol use among female college students who were in their first-year on campus and found that women drink more in college than in high school, but drink less than their male counterparts as a whole over time. Gibson and Vasalotti also found that women consume alcohol to build courage and explore their inner selves, to cope with strong feelings, to stop thinking about problems or conflicts, to sleep better, to feel more active and spontaneous, to relieve boredom, to build relationships and improve communications,

and to find a sense of belonging. When women experience negative consequences of alcohol consumption, they tend to reduce behaviors aside from alcohol consumption in order to lessen negative consequences. Adjustments made by female college students may include staying with a friend for the entirety of an outing that involves alcohol consumption and maintaining control of their drink at all times (Moorer, Madson, Mohn, & Nicholson, 2013).

Because the researcher interviewed recruited leaders for participation in this research who are from historically black Greek organizations, it is important to explore the drinking practices based on race. When the trait of racial background is introduced, black and white college students of all genders experience the same amount of negative consequences related to binge drinking when consuming the same amount of alcohol at the same frequency (Clarke, Kim, White, Jiao, & Mun, 2013). Brawner (2016), however, contends that African American college students do not have alcohol use and abuse levels of comparable quantity related to the use and abuse levels of their white peers. Brawner (2016) also suggested that the lack of problematic alcohol use among black students should be examined and applied to intervention practices for students of all ethnicities. O'Hara, Boynton, Scott, Armeli, Tennen, Williams, and Covault (2014) found that African American students often choose to drink to socialize and experience the pharmacological effects of alcohol, but noted that stress and attempts to cope may play a larger role in the choice of African American students to drink in singular episodes of heavy and frequent drinking. O'Hara, Armeli, Scott, Covault, and Tennen (2015) found that African-American students who perceive themselves as having experienced high levels of discrimination are likely to consume alcohol. McCabe, Lee, and Viray (2019) found that the link between perceived social drinking norms among college students and personal level of alcohol use was weaker among students of minority ethnicities than it was among white students, and implied

that because of the weakness of this link and lack of identification with the majority racial group, students of minority ethnicities may not consume alcohol at levels comparable to their white peers. Lui (2019) found that minority students who are not "against underage drinking and using alcohol as a reward" and who "believe being drunk is a right of passage in college" are more "likely to engage" in "hazardous drinking."

Other intrinsic motivations may also lead to alcohol use. Using alcohol as a means for coping with depressive symptoms is common among college students of all demographic backgrounds, as stress is normalized as a part of college culture (Pedrelli, Collado, Shapero, Brill, & MacPherson, 2016; Russell & Arthur, 2016). College students are motivated socially to use alcohol consumption as a means of developing relationships and finding friends, even if drinking alcohol does not always provide those expected results (Grant, Brown, & Moreno, 2013).

College students have a misconception about their personal levels of alcohol use and the alcohol use of their peers, often overestimating the amount of alcohol consumed by their peers (Napper, 2018) while underestimating their own consumption levels (Grant et al., 2012). The Southern Illinois University Carbondale Core Institute (2014) presented some statistics in this regard. Of surveyed students, 87.4% believe the average student had used alcohol at least once a week, and while no statistic was provided on actual weekly alcohol usage among students, 43.9% of surveyed students reported having five or more drinks in one sitting in the past two weeks, and 68.7% of surveyed students reported any alcohol consumption in the last 30 days. Only 14.2% of students felt alcohol use on their campus was greater than that of other campuses. Miley and Frank (2006) and Wrye and Pruitt (2017) found that students did not feel that their own drinking was as problematic as that of their peers, and students often felt like drinking was

an expected behavior. Clinkinbeard and Johnson (2013) did not recognize themselves as binge

or heavy drinkers even when students provided their own definition of binge drinking, which

may indicate that students defined binge drinking in a way that excluded their own behaviors.

Wrye and Pruitt (2017) also noted that heavy and frequent alcohol consumption can create a

moral disengagement that only furthers such behaviors. The Southern Illinois University

Carbondale Core Institute (2014) stated that only 20.3% of students saw a risk in having two to

three drinks of alcohol daily, and 48.4% saw a risk in having four to five drinks in one sitting.

The same survey results listed that 57.6% of students felt their friends would disapprove of their

having five or more drinks in one sitting. Furthermore, college students may not view binge

drinking and the effects of binge drinking as inherently negative. According to Nguyen, Walters,

Wyatt, and DeJong (2013) and Park et al. (2013), students do not always see experiences such as

injury to oneself, another person, or property, failure to perform responsibilities, sexual

misconduct or being a victim of sexual assault, health issues, or impaired driving as negative

effects when experienced as a result of binge drinking. These experiences are unlikely to change

student binge drinking behavior, which may suggest that extremely high frequency and intensity

of such experiences may not cause behavioral change (Nguyen et. al, 2013). Merrill,

Subbaraman, and Barnett (2016) alternatively found that higher frequency and level of alcohol

consumption may still lessen the impact of negative consequences, with negative consequences

generally being outweighed by positive results of alcohol consumption. Lee, Geisner, Patrick,

and Neighbors (2010) said the normalization of expecting negative consequences as a result of

drinking in combination with the misconception of alcohol use by their peers may lead to an

overall social norming of alcohol use.

The Southern Illinois University Carbondale Core Institute (2014) listed the following responses as perceived reasons for alcohol among college students: breaking the ice, enhancing social activity, making it easier to deal with stress, facilitating a peer connection, alcohol becoming something to talk about, functionality in male bonding, functionality in female bonding, allowing students to have fun, use as something to do, making food taste better, increasing female attraction, increasing male attraction, increasing personal attraction, and providing sexual opportunity. While these outcomes of alcohol use are perceived, they are not necessarily pharmacological effects of alcohol use; they focus on expectancies. The Southern Illinois University Carbondale Core Institute also presented data showing that 77.7% of students felt alcohol was the central part of fraternity social life, 71.5% students felt alcohol was the central part of sorority social life, 82.0% of students felt alcohol was the central part of male students' social life, and 73.1% of students felt alcohol was the central part of female students' social life. These and other perceived benefits of alcohol use may lead to consumption, according to Champion, Lewis, and Myers (2015).

In summary, college students of varying and all demographic backgrounds are consuming alcohol at high frequencies and levels per episode. The perceived benefits outweigh the negative consequences of alcohol consumption which are not always viewed as negative. In addition, students rarely feel that their alcohol use is as bad as that of their peers. Impulsivity and attempts to uphold norms further contribute to the alcohol use epidemic. These intrinsic factors are difficult enough to manage as a student, and do not consider extrinsic factors that also influence alcohol use.

Extrinsic Factors Influencing Alcohol Use

College students also face significant external influences that may lead to alcohol use. The Southern Illinois University Carbondale Core Institute (2014) reported 72.2% of respondents having heard bragging about alcohol use on their campus, 35.6% of respondents having experienced peer pressure to drink or do drugs, and 13.6% of respondents having held drink to deflect peer pressure, with each of these experiences happening in the last 30 days. These experiences are a small part of the larger societal phenomenon of college student alcohol use.

Dowdall (2013) theorizes that the mere existence of colleges and universities may facilitate alcohol use. White and Rabiner (2012) state that people in the same developmental period, in this case the college experience, with similar continuities, often share similar behaviors and norms. If college is a gathering of people who are generally adolescent in age, then White and Rabiner (2012) claim that alcohol may facilitate the increased amount of risk taking found in the adolescent age group, thus supporting Dowdall's (2013) claim. Because fraternities and sororities are organizations whose members are often adolescent-age, undergraduate college students, they are likely to be susceptible to risk taking with regards to alcohol. Varela and Pritchard (2011) found that the simple presence of one's peers can also lead to further risk taking. This collective gathering, and subsequent alcohol consumption, can lead to a communal sense of fun and relaxation due to the very nature of the collective behavior, says Ven (2011). Napper (2018) found that college drinkers may project their own behaviors as social norms on to their peer or friend group. If this is true, then the entirety of the college drinker population projecting these norms may lead to a widespread misconception of peer alcohol use. Russell and Arthur (2016) discovered a cyclical relationship between alcohol and the college experience in that stress was an expected part of college for students who then drank to cope with stress. Interestingly, the students, on some level, sought stress as a means for rationalizing and

normalizing their drinking behaviors. Academic stress was the stressor most closely linked with

alcohol use among students (Metzger et al., 2017), while Pedersen (2017) also recognized that

attempts to balance academics with external responsibilities and interpersonal stressors, such as

issues arising from familial, friend, or roommate relationships may contribute to heavier

drinking. Older members of one's friend or peer group may also add on to alcohol use, as they

carry significant influence with their actions and beliefs (Russell & Arthur, 2016) and can

provide easier access to alcohol in general (Wechsler & Weuthrich, 2004). Brown, Matousek,

and Radue (2009) noted that legal age drinkers are both expected to provide to underage students

and have personal reason to do so, as the providing of alcohol carries the ingrained drinking

culture of colleges across generations. This may suggest that older college students who are of

drinking age play a significant part in perpetuating alcohol use among social circles and student

organizations.

Events within the college and adolescent environment are often used as a reason for

drinking. These events can include things that are traditionally alcohol-centric, such as twenty-

first birthdays, spring break, beginnings of, ends of, and breaks from times where class is in

session, athletic events and tailgates, holidays like St. Patrick's Day or Cinco de Mayo, Super

Bowl parties, or even just weekends. However, some students are much less intentional with

their reason to drink. Some students drink just because they can, because drinking is something

to do, or because a friend suggests it as an activity. If a student does not have class on Friday, a

night of drinking on Thursday carries far less severity in regards to academic impact. A bar

offering reduced prices on alcohol or having themed nights for drinking may be another, less

notable reason for drinking. As a whole, drinking appears to be ingrained in the culture of

college in the United States, and it is often not even a question for many students whether or not

they will drink on a given night – it is just assumed that a group of friends will drink, with some

groups or organizations going so far as to designate some week nights as meant for studying and

the rest meant for drinking (Correia, Murphy, & Barnett, 2012; Ven, 2011; Wechsler &

Weuthrich, 2004; White & Rabiner, 2012).

　　Ven (2011) noted multiple other external factors that contribute to alcohol consumption.

First, positive peer confirmation reflects the natural human desire to be wanted, liked, and

recognized. Ven gave the example of a group of people calling out the name of a friend as the

friend entered a bar. Ven (2011) and White and Rabiner (2012) noted that one's social identity

may lead to drinking – if one is known as a party animal amongst peers, they may seek to uphold

this identity. Ven (2011) noted that alcohol can decrease inhibitions, often causing one to act in

a way they normally would not, which, even when resulting in negative consequences, can be

socially supported by friends telling one that they were being "funny" or those friends

normalizing such actions. Ven (2011) and White and Rabiner (2012) noted the biological and

societal factor of using alcohol to become more effective in social situations, especially when

alcohol consumption has become a social norm amongst a group.

　　In an increasingly digital and technological world, college students are subjected to a

continual barrage of alcohol-related content from both peers and alcohol producing companies.

According to Roberson, McKinney, Walker, and Coleman (2018), social media can normalize

participation in alcohol-related behaviors and can lead students to over-exaggerate frequency of

alcohol consumption among peers. Hoffman, Austin, Pinkleton, and Austin (2017) found that

college student social media use was a positive predictor for heavy drinking. Students in a study

done by Hoffman et al. (2017) used social media to receive updates on alcohol or engage in

discussion about alcohol. Marczinski et al. (2016) stated that alcohol-related social media use,

including posts or photos about alcohol, posts or photos while drunk, and usage of social media are actions taken by college students that are all positively related to alcohol use.

Marketing and alcohol-related content efforts from alcohol producers and sellers is more accessible by students because of social media as well. Correia et al. (2012) and Wechsler and Weuthrich (2004) noted the targeted nature of alcohol marketing, that seems to be increasingly directed at the social drinking culture ingrained into college campuses. Alcohol companies know the potential of this market and are united in their effort to consistently draw from it. Alcohol distributors are increasingly using social media for advertisements about their products, as 46.6% of respondents had seen an advertisement for alcohol on a social media platform (Hoffman et al., 2017). Won Yong Jang and Frederick (2012) found that the informational nature of alcohol advertising can lead to interpersonal communication among college students about alcohol, thus perpetuating alcohol usage.

In summary, alcohol consumption has become an ingrained part of college culture. Students today have intrinsic motivators for alcohol consumption, and the normalization of such behaviors among peer groups and across the college experience leads to both perpetuation of alcohol use and misconception of peer use. Furthermore, students today are subject to constant alcohol-related content, be it from friends on social media or alcohol companies through many mediums. This combination of internal and external factors helps understand the larger picture of the college alcohol epidemic.

College Student Leadership

Student development often occurs when students hold leadership positions, although the path of development may vary among individuals based on life experiences (Cox et al., 2016).

Wisner (2011) found that student leaders who understood their strengths through personal experience and strength assessment examinations and had a positive mindset were most effective at implementing change on campus or in their student organization. According to Wisner (2011), student leaders with high levels of hope, optimism, and self-efficacy were most efficient at implementing organizational change. Hope, optimism, and self-efficacy among leaders can bring about an alignment of values among members and an organization via collaborative work, can help organizations seek and meet goals even in the face of adversity, can change organizational and member attitudes, and can pass along the same skills to newer members. Using knowledge derived from studies done by Baxter Magolda (1992, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2001, 2002, 2008; Baxter Magolda, B. M. and King, P. M., 2012), Cohen et al. (2013) and Patton, Renn, Guido-DiBrito, and Quaye (2016), theorized that students develop on a journey toward self-authorship when given opportunities for growth. These opportunities can come in the form of discussion about personal and political issues with another student that they do or do not agree with on such topics, continual changing and reevaluating of the self, learning about the experiences of others, building relationships and a sense of community, letting others help lead, using conflict to implement change, and improving academic efforts. All of these opportunities help students and leaders achieve self-authorship, which in turn allows students to implement organizational change (Cohen et al., 2013).

Student leadership development often relies on student affairs professionals to aid students in their journey. Students may fail ethically or morally according to standards set by societal, familial, or other factors, but must be allowed to use those failures to learn and improve conditions for the future (Dalton, 2015). Students have pre-conceived notions about what an ideal leader should be, defined as someone who provides social support, identifies and reinforces

strengths, has a high sense of confidence, identity, and self-awareness, and learns from

successful and unsuccessful experiences to help provide direction (Soria et al., 2015). Students

also believe leaders must serve the whole community, be open minded, respect organizational

and member values, adapt to change, and develop relationships (Caza & Rosch, 2014). How can

students learn if student and professional leaders do not meet expectations of leadership?

Langford and DeJong (2010) state that effective cultural change only can occur when students

are among the stakeholders in the change. Langford and DeJong (2010) state that students must

be trained to effect change, must understand the underlying theory and reasoning for change, and

must be involved in the development, execution, and evaluation of change, particularly in a

campus setting. The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (2004)

recommends student leaders be involved in the evaluation of a campus's human aggregate,

campus organization, campus and community climate, and campus values in order to develop a

better campus and effect campus-wide change. The American Institute for Research's (n.d.)

FailSafe program teaches student leaders to be involved in assessment and planning of group

programming, provide individual and group feedback, adopt or improve risk management, and

measure success when implementing organizational change, especially when that change is

related to alcohol.

Researchers at the University of Maryland's Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership

(MSL) gather data every three years on college student leadership development in an effort to

link theory, practice, and research. Dugan and Correia (2014), the lead researchers for the MSL,

gathered data on socio-cultural conversations with peers, mentoring relationships, community

service, membership in off-campus organizations, leadership efficacy, leadership roles, social

perspective-talking, and resiliency among college student leaders. Using data from the MSL,

Johnson and Mincer (2017) found that leaders were most effective at creating social change

when leaders had a high consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, and collaboration,

encountered controversy with civility, were engaged citizens, and practiced responsible

leadership.

One example of college student leadership in the field of alcohol abuse prevention is the

student organization BACCHUS (Boosting Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of

University Students). This organization was founded in 1975 at the University of Florida as a

student-led effort "responding to the need for alcohol awareness and abuse prevention" (National

Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2019b). In the early 2000s, BACCHUS

expanded to become The BACCHUS Network with the addition of the GAMMA (Greeks

Advocating Mature Management of Alcohol) into the BACCHUS system. Most recently, in

2014, The BACCHUS Network merged with NASPA (National Association of Student Affairs

Professionals). Since its inception and even still today, BACCHUS was a student-led

organization focused on alcohol abuse prevention. It has expanded to focus on a wide variety of

health issues that college students encounter today, such as tobacco use, violence prevention and

safety, sexual health, and overall physical and mental health. The organization promotes peer

education, allowing students to educate one another and providing students with the confidence,

knowledge, tools, and programs they need to make an impact. (NASPA, 2019b).

If institutions of higher education are meant to be places where students not only learn

academic knowledge but also grow as persons and professionals into better versions of

themselves, then student leaders, including those in Greek life, should be propelled into the

personal growth experience, according to Patton et al. (2016). Student leaders in Greek life may

be able to assist in the personal growth of their peers through making organizational change,

especially with regards to heavy and frequent alcohol consumption. Understanding student leadership thus becomes important when trying to understand development of students in these roles and how they interact with others due to their status.

Fraternity and Sorority Participation and Effects on Student Experience

Involvement in a fraternity or sorority, an experience often referred to as Greek life, is a significant part of the college experience for several students of the past and present; historically, fraternities and sororities have been predominantly made up of white students. Unfortunately, the ideals of the Greek experience have been damaged by alcohol misuse. On average, Greeks consume alcohol at a higher frequency, at a higher amount per drinking session and binge drink more often compared to their unaffiliated counterparts. Russett (2017) proposed the idea that female students involved in Greek life are just as susceptible to social norms and expectations as male members of Greek life; they participate in alcohol consumption because "it is a regular and significant part of their undergraduate experience" and other students' behaviors with alcohol set a reference point for normal behavior. Russett (2017) stated that female alcohol consumption, especially among sorority women, occurs in environments where males are dominant; they function as social hosts in off-campus housing, set behavioral standards and expectations based on gender and alcohol consumption (i.e. women are provided "girly" drinks by men, women take care of those who are too intoxicated, men regulate alcohol distribution and protect women by walking them home, etc.), and women often functioned, as one informant in the study described, as "objects at parties for men to control through the alcohol" (Russett, 2017). According to Russett (2017), women are likely to conform and adapt to these behaviors and standards if they are seen as a norm.

Male Greek life students participate in heavy drinking more frequently and at a higher

level than their female Greek counterparts, especially when male Greeks live in a fraternity

house (Brown-Rice, Furr, & Jorgensen, 2015; Hutching, Lac, Hummer, & LaBrie, 2011;

McCabe, Veliz, & Schulenberg, 2018). Page and O'Hegarty (2006) found that fraternity men

living in a fraternity house and sorority women living in a sorority house were significantly more

likely to consume more alcoholic drinks in one session of drinking, and were likely to participate

in heavy drinking more frequently than their peers who lived in on-campus residence halls and

off-campus apartment complexes. Page and O'Hegarty (2006) also stated that heavy and

frequent drinking was a social norm among fraternity and sorority members who lived in their

organizational houses based on these students' expected number of members in their

organization who drink heavily and frequently being nearly equal to the self-reported number of

students in these organizations who drink heavily and frequently in any given week. Fraternity

men in particular are a representative microcosm of college men who participate in binge

drinking in that they use alcohol as a means to uphold masculine norms (McCready, 2018),

which validates the study done and results found by Wells et al. (2014). McCabe, Veliz, and

Schulenberg (2018) found that fraternity men who live in the chapter house have an increased

risk of long-term alcohol use disorders. Park, Sher, and Krull (2009) found that men who

participated in heavy and frequent alcohol consumption prior to college were likely to seek the

opportunity to join fraternities and live in fraternity houses that presented greater opportunity for

socialization and alcohol consumption, and their joining of these organizations often allowed

these men to perpetuate the reputation of these houses and participate in heavy and frequent

drinking. Of note is that most sororities are prohibited from having alcohol in their house, either

because of local laws or as a result of an umbrella ban on alcohol in sorority houses by the

National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) that oversees 26 national sorority organization, and thus little data is available on alcohol in sorority houses (Borsari, Hustad, and Capone, 2009; Jackson, 2018). Overall, drinking was an expected part of Greek life culture, to the point that it was a social norm. This norming, in combination with peer pressure, has created an environment in Greek organizations where alcohol consumption is ingrained into the culture (Brown-Rice, Furr, & Jorgensen, 2015; Hutching, Lac, Hummer, & LaBrie, 2011; Sheppard, Usdan, Higginbotham, & Creemens-Matthews, 2016; Soule, Barnett, & Moorhouse, 2015).

Brown-Rice et al. (2015) and Scott-Sheldon, Carey, Kaiser, Knight, and Carey (2016) found that students in Greek life were unaffected by any one of the multiple alcohol intervention methods used by the researchers, and students often viewed negative consequences of binge drinking as neutral or positive occurrences. Brown-Rice et al. (2015) noted the insignificant impact of intervention in the form of education sessions on the risk and effects of alcohol use where members of Greek life were asked open-ended question about their experiences and provided an opportunity to start a dialogue. Alva (1998) noted that Greeks may not accurately report on personal or organizational alcohol use, which may impact intervention effectiveness. Scott-Sheldon et al. (2016) examined a number of intervention methods used on the Greek community from 1987 to 2014; these intervention varied in form, including: variances in intervention type, including year the intervention was performed, funding of intervention, year of data collection, use or lack of use of control groups, and design of methodology and instrumentation; variances in participant characteristic such as age, race, gender, organizational membership, and year in school; variances in institution including region of the United States, enrollment size, and classification as a public or private institution; and variances in methodology, including frequency of intervention, time of intervention, delivery to individuals or

groups, use or lack of use of personalized feedback, facilitator of intervention, and topics covered in intervention. These findings were in line with the research done by Nguyen et al. (2013).

Most, if not all, Greek-letter organizations hold that academic excellence is a core value for the members enrolled in college. However, while fraternity men often enter college with above average standardized test scores and grade point averages, heavy and frequent drinking contributes to a day-to-day decline in academic performance (Nelson & McHugh Engstrom, 2013). Heavy drinking is not the only factor that negatively impacts academic performance, rather it works in combination with societal, demographic, and personality factors to negatively impact the entire system available to fraternity men. Greek life activities can be taken to extreme levels, evidenced by numerous cases of sexual assault, hazing, drug use, and alcohol related injuries and death (Kaplin & Lee, 2014).

Findings on alcohol use among leaders in Greek organizations is inconsistent. Fairlie et al. (2010) found that alcohol use varies from campus to campus and even among different organizations on the same campus due to variances in personal factors and environments. Capece and Lanza-Kaduce (2013) and Ward and Weiner (2012) found that leaders are often more likely to be heavy drinkers due to age, access to alcohol, stress, and other factors. Therefore, it is difficult to know how leaders in Greek life feel about the trend of alcohol abuse in their organization. Several influencers outside of Greek and leadership status may contribute to leadership alcohol consumption or lack thereof. Cashin, Presley, and Meilman (1998) found that leaders in Greek life are participating in heavy and frequent drinking at levels equal to, or in some cases greater than, that of their non-leader peers. This could imply that leaders in Greek life, who influence organizational culture, play a part in perpetuating alcohol norms.

Members in Greek life, particularly leaders can become better leaders, develop better interpersonal and public speaking skills, and become more aware of those with different backgrounds as a result of membership (Routon & Walker, 2016). These skill developments are desirable, and, when combined with the consolidation of beliefs and values of members and organizations over time, Greek life still remains an effective tool in the development of students. Fraternity men and sorority women also value citizenship, sharing a common purpose, and effecting change higher than their unaffiliated peers (Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella, 2012). Exposure to philanthropic causes and community service as well as a sharing of common values can allow for growth in these facets among Greek students, thus developing what Martin et al. (2012) referred to as socially responsible leadership.

However, sometimes the positive effects of involvement in Greek life can yield negative consequences, although the positive effects may remain. McCreary and Schutts (2015) examined four schemata of brotherhood in a fraternity, those being solidarity, shared social experiences, belonging, and accountability. Organizations or members with high senses of shared social experiences and solidarity can create "sacred objects", which can range from experiences or traditions that bring joy to the members to hazing of new members; these objects help keep groups together. High senses of shared social experiences can also lead fraternity men to increased alcohol use and moral disengagement; chapters may participate in something in order to maintain status. High senses of accountability among members can drive decision-making behavior toward common organizational values rather than values that may arise as a part of moral disengagement (McCreary and Schutts, 2015). Cohen, McCreary, and Schutts (2017) examined experiences and feelings toward sisterhood among sorority members. First, Cohen, McCreary, and Schutts (2017) found that sisterhood was less tied to collective, social

alcohol consumption among members relative to brotherhood's tie to alcohol consumption found by McCreary and Schutts (2015); instead, sisterhood is linked to exclusivity and bonding, with social experiences coming as a result of membership. Cohen, McCreary, and Schutts (2017) also found that mutual support among members of sororities was a key aspect of sisterhood, particularly in the form of emotional support and friendship, while fraternity men considered support as a sort of gang mentality among members (McCreary and Schutts, 2015). Senses of belonging and accountability were significant among sorority sisters, according to Cohen, McCreary, and Schutts (2017), similar to the importance placed on belonging and accountability by fraternity men, according to McCreary and Schutts (2015). Along with the four schemata of sisterhood already described, namely shared social experiences, encouragement and support, belonging, and accountability, sorority members also felt that hold a common, shared purpose was important (Cohen, McCreary, and Schutts, 2017). Generally, fraternity brotherhood and sorority sisterhood hold similar traits, but the way they are experienced by members holds the key difference between the genders.

Participation in Greek life, when the experience lives up to the ideals and values set forth by individual organizations, can be and still is a largely positive experience for many. Students in Greek life can make lifelong friends and connections, improve academic performance, develop personally and professionally, and make a positive impact on local and national philanthropic causes. Despite the many negatives that can occur as a part of the Greek experience, especially given Greek students' participation in heavy drinking, drugs, alcohol consumption, and other risky behaviors, (Martin et al., 2012) Greek students can move past these negatives and effect positive change on organizational culture and behavior when organizational values are prioritized in combination with exposure to experiences that support these values

(Barnhardt, 2014). Biddix (2014) suggests that leaders in Greek organizations recognize their own agency, work on peer development, and promote organizational values in order to effect such change.

Intervention Measures in College Student Alcohol Use

Intervention efforts as part of a comprehensive substance abuse program implemented by organizations and institutions to limit or measure college student alcohol use and abuse have become more prevalent over time. Correia, Murphy, and Barnett (2012) list general processes methods that can be incorporated into intervention, including clinical screening tools, alcohol use measures, alcohol use problem measures, diagnoses of alcohol use disorders, and assessment.

Intervention efforts can be implemented at different levels across the socio-ecological model. At the lowest level of this model, the microsystem, direct interaction with students can be used as an intervention method. Correia et al. (2012) explore the use of harm-reduction intervention methods, noting that, while broad in definition, harm-reduction can be effective when a clear message about alcohol use is communicated to students, who by their nature are emerging adults who rely on others for guidance and assistance, with an end goal of reducing risk, if not completely eliminating it. The message communicated by agents in a harm-reduction setting should include information on why alcohol consumption can be harmful. Correia et al. (2012) list multiple harm-reduction methods that can be employed by students, including stopping or limiting drinking, changing the manner of drinking to avoid risky behavior, avoiding serious negative consequences, selective avoidance of alcohol-related situations or behaviors, using risk-avoidant strategies while consuming alcohol, or finding alternatives to alcohol consumption. Institutions may also have opportunities to develop policy that leads to harm-reduction.

At a larger level of the socio-ecological model, the mesosystem, actors directly involved in the environment in which students consume alcohol can play a role in intervention. Correia et al. (2012) stated that, when using intervention methods, policy makers should work collaboratively, try to identify needs specific to their campus, advocate for stricter state or federal laws, provide significant and skilled training for campus agents, and be mindful of barriers that would prevent use of certain methods. Campus offices may offer stepped care, linking multiple strategies together, and using more intense or high-demand interventions only after beginning with simple measures. Campus administrators and leaders may also use Brief Motivational Interventions (BMIs), or short sessions which focus on current behaviors, perceived norms, and offer advice to reduce risk.

Providers of alcohol are also members of the socio-ecological model of student alcohol consumption at the macrosystem level. Correia et al. (2012) also discuss campus and community measures that can be taken to intervene in college student alcohol use. First, Correia et al. (2012) state that the cheap price of alcohol and number of places where alcohol can be purchased contribute to student use. As a result, campuses and communities can enact certain policies or measures to reduce student alcohol use. Some measures listed by Correia et al. (2012) are as follows: compliance checks on students and sellers, training sellers on responsible beverage service, requiring keg registration for buyers and sellers, enacting a campus alcohol ban, developing class schedules that make it difficult to or deter alcohol consumption, offering alcohol-free alternative activities, using a social norm marketing campaign, or employing a strategy consisting of multiple measures.

Nation et al. (2003) analyzed the reviews of several intervention programs in an effort to identify commonly agreed upon characteristics of effective intervention programs. The nine

characteristics identified by Nation et al. (2003) are as follows: comprehensiveness, meaning use of multiple intervention methods occurring in multiple settings with different people involved; varied teaching methods for skill development; sufficient dosage, or quantity and quality of the interventions; theory driven interventions that are scientifically justified; positive relationships to support the person undergoing intervention; appropriately timing interventions that happen neither too early nor too late, especially when the one undergoing intervention is in a time of large development; sociocultural relevant programming that the one undergoing intervention will be receptive too and that address that person's specific needs; outcome evaluation that encourages continual improvement in the intervention programming and allows for concrete evidence of effectiveness; and well-trained staff that understand the role in which they function through experience, training, support, supervision, and scientific, theoretical research. While this list is not exhaustive, it can be used by those practicing interventions as a reference and reminder to always seek continual improvement for their programming.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism created a matrix, called CollegeAIM (Alcohol Intervention Matrix), that can be consulted for selecting intervention methods (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2015). The matrix presents methods organized by cost, barriers, research and effectiveness, and the NIAAA notes that the interventions can come on an individual or environmental level, but suggests a mix of methods. This is an important and valuable tool as intervention tactics are rarely a one size fits all situation, due to campus and individual level factors.

Brown, Furr, and Hardy (2017) examined the effectiveness of alcohol intervention methods on fraternity and sorority students through two different intervention tactics. The first of these was a discussion-based intervention, focused on providing safe ways to consume alcohol

and educating students on alcohol's impact on the brain. The second intervention format was a

prompt-based discussion centered on physical attraction and alcohol, norms and pressures to

consume alcohol, self-esteem and alcohol, negative consequences of alcohol consumption,

personal responsibilities when someone is being taken advantage of, and safe alcohol

consumption strategies. A survey was used to establish baseline levels of alcohol consumption

among participants and it was administered after the intervention to test outcomes and

effectiveness on student alcohol use. Brown et al. (2017) found that members of Greek life drink

at higher levels than the non-affiliated student, and continued to do so throughout the year.

Alcohol consumption continued at high levels even after the intervention tactics used by the

researchers, and in some cases the levels increased, particularly in sorority women. Furthermore,

a decrease in alcohol consumption levels was only seen in fraternity men who were already

heavy drinkers when entering the fraternity. Brown et al. (2017) conclude by noting that brief

and individualized interventions may be most effective, but alcohol interventions within the

Greek population are largely ineffective and need more study. Because this study was done at

one university and there was no control group, its generalizability is limited, however it may

indicate that discussion-based interventions with the Greek population are limited in

effectiveness. The intervention strategies used by Brown et al. (2017) would be considered

moderately effective according to the NIAAA matrix (2015). However, neither of the

intervention methods covered in this paragraph were promoted by CollegeAIM, and due to the

limited effectiveness of these methods on the general population, these methods would likely not

be successful on the Greek population. The intervention methods discussed did meet the

effective characteristics of being theory driven, including positive relationships, being

socioculturally relevant, using outcome evaluation, and having well-trained staff, according to

the effective characteristics of intervention described by Nation et al. (2003).

Intervention methods and measures of effectiveness, including methods and measures of

effectiveness targeted toward the Greek population, have been released prior to the existence of

CollegeAIM. Scott-Sheldon, Carey, Kaiser, Knight, and Carey (2016) performed a meta-

analysis evaluation of alcohol interventions targeted at Greek students from 1987-2014 to

determine characteristics that made interventions targeted at this population effective in reducing

alcohol use. Interventions in this time frame used a control group or condition, were theory

driven, occurred in a group setting, and lasted roughly 60 minutes. A majority of the

interventions concentrated on alcohol education, strategies to moderate alcohol consumption, and

addressed high-risk situations involving alcohol. Less than half of the studies focused on

correcting misconceived norms about Greek alcohol consumption, provided individual or group

feedback on alcohol behaviors, worked on goal setting and skill training, or evaluated outcomes.

A majority of interventions did establish a baseline level of alcohol behavior among participants

and randomly grouped participants in control and test groups. Alcohol measures in these

interventions included alcohol consumption frequency and quantity, alcohol consumption based

on occasion or day of the week, heavy or binge drinking frequency, and problems related to

alcohol consumption. The interventions also recorded data on participant gender, prior alcohol

use, whether or not the participant lived in a fraternity or sorority house, intervention delivery

methods, individual or chapter level of alcohol use, intervention dosage, intervention content,

personalized feedback, conceived norms, alcohol moderation, alcohol expectancies, goals for

consumption reduction, skills training, and pre-intervention and post-intervention measures.

Scott-Sheldon et al. (2016) found that the most effective interventions worked to change alcohol

expectancies that were based on special drinking occasions or days of the week and were brief with a time of one hour or less. The least effective interventions focused on risk reduction, consumption moderation strategies, goal setting, and skills, as external factors often dictate student alcohol consumption, meaning personal or internal factors are often secondary.

Of note is that the CollegeAIM (Alcohol Intervention Matrix) did attempt to evaluate effectiveness of certain intervention methods on subgroups of students, including members of Greek life. While CollegeAIM noted that there were too few studies done on Greek life and other subgroups about interventional effectiveness, some, though not all, intervention methods using the following strategies or programs were found to be effective when used on the Greek life population: generic personalized normative feedback, e-CHECKUP TO GO, parent-based alcohol communication training, brief motivational intervention (both in-person and individual based), and AlcoholEdu for College among freshmen students and personalized feedback intervention and brief motivational intervention (both in-person and individual based) for mandated students (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2015).

Intervention is taking place at the macrosystem level of the Greek community across North America. The United States Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration partnered with the North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) to create the Alcohol Summit (United States Department of Transportation & North-American Interfraternity Conference, 2004). During its inception the Alcohol Summit was widely promoted and highly revered, though it was a short-lived initiative. Eighteen pilot campuses were selected to host Alcohol Summits to develop initiatives and policies meant to address the growing and significant alcohol problem in Greek life. These initiatives were concentrated into four categories: environmental, knowledge attitudes, and behavioral intentions, health protection,

and intervention and treatment. The Alcohol Summit project lead to the development of policies that were varied and broad on each pilot campus, and provided insight for other schools to conduct a Summit in order to address the Greek life alcohol problem. The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (2019a) maintains a database of useful initiatives and students being conducted by professionals across the country involving Greek life and alcohol use, including a national hazing study, the Day of Dialogue, the Call for Values Congruence, the Fraternal Futures project, and information on alcohol-free housing.

The North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) is a collective representing 66 national fraternity organizations that has the power to place governing laws on member organizations. The NIC has a set of alcohol and drug guidelines that member organizations must follow, with the following set of rules: against underage alcohol consumption, possession, and the providing of alcohol to underage members according to local, state, and federal law; against the consumption, possession, and the providing of illegal drugs according to local, state, and federal law; against who can sell alcohol, in what quantities, what percentage ABV alcohol may be sold; against bulk serving of alcohol unless by a licensed vendor; against purchase of alcohol by chapter funds either officially budgeted, charges for cups or admission into events, payments into slush funds, or monies transferred by mobile apps; against sponsoring or participating in events held by organizations who break the rules of sale, possession, or consumption; limits to attendance of non-members at organizational events where alcohol is present; against alcohol use in the new member intake process; and encouragement for fraternity men to discourage heavy and frequent alcohol use (NIC, 2019a). The NIC also recently implemented a new alcohol-related pilot program for member organizations in order to reduce risk, those being: fraternity houses may no longer have hard alcohol inside, with any alcohol in a fraternity house being

capped at a 15% ABV; alcohol distributed at a registered social event must only be distributed in a common space, must be a maximum of 15% ABV, and will be distributed by a third-party vendor; fraternities and institutions will work together to reduce and cap the number of allowed, registered events with alcohol; fraternities will use a third-party guest registration and event management system; and guest-to-member ratio at registered events with alcohol will not exceed a ratio of three guests per member, or exceed fire code (NIC, 2019a). The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) is the sorority woman's equivalent to the North American Interfraternity Conference, overseeing 26-member organizations. The NPC has nearly identical guidelines to that of the NIC, with the added restriction of prohibiting alcohol within sorority chapter houses (NPC, 2019b). The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) oversees nine fraternities and sororities that have historically African American membership. The member organizations subscribe to a set of shared standards of operation, and among these standards is the point that campus governing bodies of NPHC organizations shall put in preventative measures against misuse of alcohol and use of illegal drugs (NPHC, 2017a). However, the setting of such standards is often delegated to campus-wide and campus council policy and local, state, and federal law. The NIC, NPC, and NPHC all have some form of liability insurance either available or required for at least chapter presidents or leaders, if not for whole chapters or entire organizations, as a protective measure in the incident of legal issues that typically stem from alcohol or drug use or hazing, among other risks, in Greek life (NIC, 2019; NPC, 2019b; NPHC, 2017b).

Alan Marlatt was an instrumental figure in the development of alcohol prevention and intervention among college students. Namely, Marlatt and his colleagues' research aided them in the creation of the Alcohol Skills Training Program (ASTP), an intervention measure in

college student alcohol use (Kilmer, Palmer, Cronce, and Logan, 2012). The ASTP method uses

a behavior skills development, social influences education, and stress management approach, can

include group discussion, lecture, and role play components, is typically taught over multiple

sessions with the goal of equipping students with the necessary skills to moderate or avoid their

alcohol consumption (Parks, n.d.; Kivlahan, Marlatt, Fromme, Koppel, and Williams, 1990).

The ASTP method is significant in that it "meets students where they are regarding their drinking

behavior" (Parks and Woodford, 2005), often creating a more personalized approach to

intervention. Kivlahan et al. (1990) piloted the first alcohol skills training research, and found

that the intervention method did lead to decreases in self-reported alcohol consumption, although

episodes of heavy drinking were still reported. Over time, the ASTP has been found to be

effective because of the intimate, personalized nature of the intervention (Kilmer, Palmer,

Cronce, and Logan, 2012). However, while more research needs to be done on the effectiveness

of the ASTP on students involved in Greek life, Hamm (2012) theorizes that this method may be

ineffective on this particular student population.

Recognizing that most if not all Greek-letter organizations hold the same values, value

alignment interventions have become another method of intervention used by those in the Greek

life community. In fact, values alignment has been listed as a core competency by the

Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors (Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors,

n.d.). Bureau (2014) states that, while this method can be effective, the message that advisors

communicate through such a tactic must be able to be understood by the students. These

students, Bureau (2014) notes, are still working on confirming these values as part of their

identity, and are still developing, which may affect the effectiveness of values alignment

interventions. The NIAAA (2015) CollegeAIM matrix considers values alignment or campus

norming campaigns to be low in effectiveness, which is in line with research done by Scott-Sheldon et al. (2016). This implies that previous efforts to use values alignment in the fraternity and sorority community as an alcohol prevention measure may be less effective than previously thought.

CHAPTER III

Methods

Overview

This study used a grounded theory qualitative approach to collect and analyze data. This approach allowed for informants to create their own individualistic narratives about the research problem rather than fit their experiences into pre-determined categories. Understanding perspectives on alcohol use in Greek life from a leader informant allowed for several differing perspectives, justifying the use of qualitative methodology.

Design of the Study

This study was a qualitative research study, completed using the grounded theory method (Creswell, 1998). The researcher worked in collaboration with the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Programs order to obtain contact information for members of the Greek life community at the research site who fell under the definition of a leader detailed in Chapter I. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews (Interviews, 2019) in order to gain insight into the multiple leaders' views on alcohol and its function as part of the Greek experience. The interviews were recorded with a primary recording device, and a secondary backup recording device was used to ensure that no data is lost. The informants were informed of the recording (Stage, 1992). The researcher logged descriptive and reflective field notes during the interviews in order to provide as much detail as possible, and the field notes were organized by informant, subject matter, and chronological occurrence (Bogdan and Knopp Biklen, 2007). Data was backed up to a password-protected file on the researcher's personal computer device where it will be stored for

three years, then destroyed (Creswell, 1998). Interviews lasted roughly 60 minutes in the interest

of informant time and availability (Stage, 1992).

Once data was collected from interviews, the researcher transcribed the recorded

interviews, with rigorous checks for validity via member checking and allowed other researchers

to evaluate the transcript and recordings (Merriam, 2009). The researcher used multiple checks

for validity, including: allowing the thesis committee chair to check transcripts and recordings

for error to establish confirmability; the researcher reviewed audio recordings, field notes, and

transcripts twice to check for errors; checked for credibility by referencing related literature and

informant answers; and made sure the methods employed in the study were clearly defined and

easily transferable (Trochim, 2006). Once interview data was coded, the researcher shared the

coding process with the informant to clarify that the data had been coded according to how the

informant intended the data to be interpreted.

Next, the researcher coded the raw collected data to identify themes (Saldaña, 2013).

The data was coded via the method of open coding, then axial coding, then selective coding, and

finally conditional coding. In the open coding stage, "the researcher formed initial categories of

information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information (Creswell, 1998, p.

57)." Within these categories, the researcher developed individual characteristics in order to find

extreme possibilities wherein the phenomenon may lie. In axial coding, the researcher continued

to evaluate and compile data in new ways. The researcher "identified a central phenomenon

(i.e., a central category about the phenomenon), explored causal conditions (i.e., categories of

conditions that influence the phenomenon), specified strategies (i.e., the actions or interactions

that result from the central phenomenon), identified context and intervening conditions (i.e., the

narrow and broad conditions that influence the strategies), and delineated the consequences (i.e.,

the outcome of the strategies) for this phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, p. 57)." In selective coding, the researcher developed "conditional propositions (or hypotheses) (Creswell, 1998, p. 57)" that integrate the developed categories in order to identify a common theme for the phenomenon. Finally, in conditional coding, the researcher integrated previous research in order to integrate historic, cultural, and societal factors that further substantiate the identified theme. After the coding process, themes and phenomena were identified and described, integrated with the data and research, and interpreted (Creswell, 1998).

Informants

Potential informants included all fraternity and sorority members at a four-year, midsized, Midwestern state university. The research site had a total enrollment of 7,806 students, with about 20% of those students involved in Greek life. A goal amount of participation was conducting interviews with at least 8 members of the Greek life community at the research site who fit into the described definition of a leader in Chapter I, or conducting interviews until the data is saturated. The informants came from a mix of social and multicultural fraternities and sororities.

Informants were collected through collaboration with the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Programs in order to obtain contact information for members of the Greek life community at the research site who fell under the definition of a leader detailed in Chapter I. E-mail solicitations were sent to potential informants, and upon successful garnering of informants, the researcher asked for references for other potential candidates.

An initial e-mail solicitation was sent to potential informants. Follow up e-mails were sent once weekly after the initial solicitation until the desired number of informants has been met

or exceeded, with a maximum of three email solicitations being sent to the informant. Sample e-mail solicitations and follow up messages can be found in Appendix E.

Research Site

The study was conducted at a four-year, North Central Association accredited, public institution located in a rural setting in the Midwest with a student population numbering 7,806 in total. The researcher met with fraternity and sorority members in public, on-campus meeting spaces or wherever the interviewee felt most comfortable.

The institution was located in a rural town with a population of around 21,000 (City of Charleston, Illinois, n.d.). The town had few options for social nightlife, and informants of legal drinking age had the option to consume alcohol at one of the few establishments that sold alcohol or at a private residence.

The institution hosted 23 different social and multicultural fraternities and sororities. The institution had a number of fraternity and sorority houses, collectively known as "Greek Court", where members are allowed and encouraged to live. The "Greek Court" houses were university owned housing, and almost all of the campus Greek organizations were housed in this location. Members also had the option to live in the residence halls or in private residences which were located off-campus. The institution's

> "fraternities and sororities are committed to creating well-balanced individuals through academic achievement, leadership development, community service and philanthropy, campus involvement, and brotherhood/sisterhood. The Interfraternity Council (IFC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), and Panhellenic Council comprise the Greek community at EIU. Our students are proud to be members of an outstanding Greek

community. Fraternity & Sorority Life teaches our students life lessons and skills that

they carry with them far beyond college years (About Us, n.d.)."

Enrollment for the Fall 2019 semester at the research institution totaled 7,806 students.

Of that, 4,917, or 62.9%, lived on-campus (Eastern Illinois University Institutional Research,

2019). While further data had not yet been released for the current semester, data was available

for previous years. Of the roughly 7,500 students enrolled at the institution as of the beginning

of the Fall 2018 semester, 5,385 lived in university-owned housing. Of the 5,385 students, 4,102

lived in residence halls, 658 students lived in university-owned apartments, and 625 students

lived in Greek Court. It should also be noted that there were some official Greek houses that

were not a part of the Greek Court collective, meaning that the number of students who lived in

Greek housing of any kind was higher than the 625-number provided. This left about 2,200

students who lived off-campus (Eastern Illinois University Institutional Research, 2018).

Instruments

Demographic information form. The researcher provided the informant with a sheet

allowing the informant to quickly fill out demographic information. The sheet was provided

after the consent form had been signed and before the interview begins.

Interview protocol. The researcher began the session by thanking the informants for

their time. The researcher provided a brief explanation of the study and why the informant had

been selected in regards to their status in their organization. The researcher allowed time for

questions and answered them to the informant's satisfaction. Interviews occurred face-to-face.

Informants were asked to sign a consent form, showing that they were willingly participating in

the interview and allowed data to be collected, recorded, and analyzed. The researcher read the

consent form out loud with the informant and allowed for the informant to ask questions. The sample consent form can be found in Appendix B. The researcher began recording when the interview began and after the consent form was signed and all informant questions had been answered in a satisfactory manner. The interview was conducted using the pre-determined questions, with the researcher adding unplanned, probing questions. After the interview had concluded, the researcher thanked the informant for their time and verbally provided a timeline of next steps in the project, making the informant aware of the researcher's desire for the informant to review the finalized transcription of the interview. The full interview protocol instructions can be found in Appendix A.

Interview questions. The researcher asked open-ended questions about informant demographic information and biographic information about the informant's Greek life experience. Then, the researcher asked questions about the informant's experiences with alcohol as a factor of the informant's Greek organizational experience. Questions were delivered face-to-face and were not be given to the informant prior to the interview. Pre-determined interview questions can be found in Appendix D. The researcher asked unplanned probing questions based on informant responses in order to develop a clearer understanding of what the informant intended or meant by their responses.

Field notes. The researcher recorded descriptive and reflective field notes during the interview to enhance understanding of the observed setting, people, conversations, actions of the informant, and the researcher's frame of mind, ideas, and concerns. Field notes were recorded with paper and pencil. After the initial recording, field notes were transcribed into a digital format using Microsoft Word on the researcher's personal laptop computer.

Recording equipment. The interview audio was recorded on the researcher's personal laptop computer to ensure no data was lost and quality of data is maintained. The computer was password protected and only the researcher knew the password. The recorded data will be destroyed three years after the initial recording date. The researcher purchased a new thumb drive to be used for storage of backups of recorded data for the duration of the study. Backups will also be destroyed three years after the initial recording date.

Researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher himself plays a significant role in data collection. In the interview process, verbal and nonverbal actions of the researcher may have influenced informant response. Being aware of my own role, I provided the following description of myself as I functioned in this project. I was a fraternity-affiliated man who held a leadership role for nearly two years, and at the time, I served as an alumni volunteer to two different chapters of my fraternity. As an active undergraduate member, I had significant insight into the function of alcohol within a fraternity, and particularly recognized its negative effects. I saw members of the Greek life community perform poorly in their academics, failing to meet some external and internal responsibilities, causing trouble with the institution, law enforcement, and other chapter members, and acting in ways detrimental to one's health and the health of others around them as a result of heavy and frequent alcohol use, among many other negatives. I also had an understanding for the positive role alcohol can play when consumed legally and in moderation. When consumed responsibly, alcohol can be used as a social lubricant, allowing conversation between members to flow more freely and at times for that conversation to become more intimate, strengthening the bonds of brotherhood or sisterhood.

I joined my organization during my third year of my undergraduate experience. The organization I joined was returning to campus and had been absent for over a decade. I was

appointed the first president of the new incarnation of the chapter and thus relied on anecdotal

evidence and national stories and trends to form my opinion on alcohol in the organization. It

took some time for me to fully understand the negative consequences that alcohol brings, and at

times I still understood what drove Greek students to participate in heavy drinking. However, I

recognized that when alcohol causes Greek students and organizations to depart from their

established values, a change must occur to learn responsible consumption and enjoyment. It was

difficult for me to create change in the alcohol culture in a new chapter as I was still developing

as a leader. As an alumni volunteer, I did my best to remind my undergraduate active brothers of

the negative consequences of heavy alcohol consumption, and that our chapter could very well

be the next one to suffer a serious negative event as a result of drinking, such as a death or injury,

if they were not careful.

While I believe my opinion was respected and heard, and while our national organization

was implementing new policies to deter heavy alcohol use, I was but one person fighting a long

ingrained cultural issue. Through this research, I sought to understand leaders in Greek

organizations view alcohol, if their view has changed as a result of their leadership role, and if

leaders in Greek organizations had the ability to impact positive change by way of reducing or

eliminating heavy and frequent alcohol consumption among members. This research can help

administrators and policy-makers work with leaders and non-leaders alike in fraternity and

sorority life make positive changes toward eliminating the drinking epidemic.

Transcription. A transcription of each interview was completed by the researcher,

formatted with numbered lines according to Merriam (2009). The transcription was checked for

validity through informant checking after the researcher has completed the initial transcription.

Data from the transcription and field notes was used to help interpret the raw interview data which will be coded.

Data Collection

Informants were collected through collaboration with the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Programs at the research site in order to obtain contact information for members of the Greek life community at the research site who fell under the definition of a leader detailed in Chapter I. E-mail solicitations were sent to potential informants, and upon successful garnering of informants, the researcher asked for references for other potential candidates. An initial e-mail solicitation was sent when approval to begin research had been granted. A second, follow-up e-mail solicitation was sent one week after the initial solicitation had been sent, and a final, third follow-up e-mail containing the same message was sent one week after the second email had been sent. If no response had been given after three messages, the researcher ceased sending email solicitations to that potential informant.

Semi-structured, open-ended interviews conducted with informants were conducted throughout the fall semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. Interviews were conducted once IRB approval had been received from the institution and once the advisory committee for this research had granted approval to the researcher. The researcher followed interview protocol, gaining informant consent and recording each interview, during which the researcher took field notes. Interviews were recorded and data will be transcribed.

Data Treatment and Analysis

Qualitative. Interview answers were examined and entered into Microsoft Word. Demographic data was entered into Microsoft Excel. Once data was collected from interviews,

the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews, with rigorous checks for validity via member

checking and allowing other researchers to evaluate the transcript and recordings (Merriam,

2009). Next, the researcher coded the raw collected data to identify themes (Saldaña, 2013).

The data was coded via the method of open coding, then axial coding, then selective coding, and

finally conditional coding. After the coding process, themes and phenomena were identified and

described, integrated with the data and research, and interpreted (Creswell, 1998).

Data and results from this research do not have any generalizability. Being that this

research was conducted at one institution and had a small sample size, it will be difficult for

other researchers to apply the same data to a different institution.

Summary

This research conducted this study by holding semi-structured, recorded interviews with

leaders in the campus fraternity and sorority community. The researcher recorded field notes

and transcribed the interviews. Once transcribed, the interviewer coded the interview data to

find common themes in order to discover the perspectives of fraternity and sorority leaders on

alcohol in their chapter. All data remains confidential.

Chapter IV

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

The researcher used email solicitations as described in Chapter III and Appendix E to ask

potential informants to participate in the study. The researcher also received references from the

Director of Fraternity and Sorority Programs at the research site for potential informants and

contacted them via email. Once a potential informant responded to the initial email solicitation,

the researcher sent a follow-up email further detailing the research and asking the potential

informant to provide days and times, and if desired, a location for the interview to take place.

The researcher confirmed dates, times, and locations for interviews, and sent a reminder message

to all informants who volunteered to participate shortly before the interview took place.

Once the researcher and informant met, the researcher followed the interview protocol

seen in Appendix A. When the researcher had confirmed with the informant that the informant

understood their rights and tasks as part of the research, the researcher conducted the interview

according to protocol.

After the researcher transcribed data collected in interviews with the informants, the

researcher emailed the transcribed data to the informant along with the audio file of the

transcription for member checking to increase reliability and validity of the study.

Informants

Eight informants participated in the study. None of the participants had a desired

location for conducting the interview, so each interview was conducted in the research site's

library. The researcher either found or worked with the participant to find a secluded location to maintain confidentiality and remove any distractions that could affect research.

Informant 1, Laura, was a 20-year-old white/Caucasian female member of AB Sorority. At the time of the interview, she had completed 74 credit hours of college coursework, making her a junior. Laura joined AB Sorority during the fall 2018 semester, had been a member for about 12 months, and resided in the official sorority house in Greek Court. Laura held the position of Vice President in her sorority, was elected to the position in the spring 2019 semester, and held the position for approximately six months.

Informant 2, Todd, was a 21-year-old white/Caucasian male member of XYZ Fraternity. At the time of the interview, he had completed 97 credit hours of college coursework, making him a senior. Todd joined XYZ Fraternity during the fall 2016 semester, had been a member for about three years, and did not reside in his organization's official fraternity house. Todd held the position of President in his fraternity, was elected to the position in the fall 2018 semester, and held the position for approximately one year at the time of the interview.

Informant 3, Lou, was a 22-year-old white/Caucasian male member of CD Fraternity. At the time of the interview, he had completed 86 credit hours of college coursework, making him a junior. Lou joined CD Fraternity in the fall 2016, had been a member for about three years semester, and resided in the official fraternity house in Greek Court. Lou held the position of Secretary in his fraternity and was the outgoing Vice President of Membership on the Interfraternity Council. He was elected to these positions in the spring 2018 and spring 2019 semesters, respectively. He held his positions for about 18 months and ten months, respectively. Furthermore, Lou was the incoming Executive Vice President of the Interfraternity Council, to

which he was elected during the fall 2019 semester, having held the position for a few months at the time of the interview.

Informant 4, Ernie, was a 22-year-old white/Caucasian male member of EF Fraternity. At the time of the interview, he had completed 95 credit hours of college coursework, making him a senior. Ernie joined EF Fraternity in the fall 2017 semester, had been a member for about two years, and resided in the official fraternity house. Ernie held the position of President in his fraternity, was elected to the position in the spring 2019 semester, and had held his position for about ten months at the time of the interview.

Informant 5, Cassidy, was a 21-year-old white/Caucasian female member of GH Sorority. At the time of the interview, she had completed 60 credit hours of college coursework, making her a junior. Cassidy joined GH Sorority in the spring 2018 semester, resided in the official sorority house in Greek Court, and had been a member for about 18 months. She held the Vice President position in GH Sorority and was the outgoing Vice President of Membership Development on the Panhellenic Council. She was elected to these positions in the spring 2019 semester and had held them for about six months at the time of the interview. Furthermore, Cassidy was the incoming President of the Panhellenic Council, to which she was elected during the fall 2019 semester, having held the position for a few months at the time of the interview.

Informant 6, Christopher, was a 21-year-old black/African-American male member of IJK Fraternity. At the time of the interview, Christopher indicated on the demographic form (Appendix C) that he had completed 17 credit hours of college coursework. While there is no official documentation to substantiate this claim, the researcher recalls that Christopher stated that he would be graduating "within the next few semesters," which may show that he did not understand the question on the demographic form. If Christopher had only completed 17 hours

of coursework, he would be considered a freshman. Christopher joined IJK Fraternity in the fall

2018 semester, had been a member for about one year, and did not reside in his organization's

official fraternity house. He held the position of President in his fraternity, being elected to the

position in the spring 2019 semester, and held his position for approximately six months at the

time of the interview.

Informant 7, Ashley was a 21-year-old black/African-American female member of LMN

Sorority. At the time of the interview, she had completed 110 credit hours of college

coursework, making her a senior. Ashley joined LMN Sorority during the fall 2018 semester,

had been a member for about 12 months, and resided in the official sorority house in Greek

Court. Ashley was currently the Vice President of her sorority, and was elected to the position

during the spring 2019 semester, and held it for about ten months at the time of the interview.

Informant 8, Chloe, was a 19-year-old white/Caucasian female member of OPQ Sorority.

At the time of the interview, she had completed 29 credit hours of college coursework, making

her a freshman. Chloe joined OPQ Sorority during the fall 2018 semester, had been a member

for about one year, and resided in the official sorority house in Greek Court. She held the Vice

President position in her sorority, was elected to the position during the fall 2019 semester, and

held her position for just a few months at the time of the interview.

Of note is that Informants Laura, Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, and Chloe are all members

of social fraternities and sororities, which are historically composed of predominantly

white/Caucasian members. Christopher and Ashley are members of multicultural Greek

organizations that have been historically predominantly composed of black/African American

members.

Todd, Ernie, and Ashley would be considered seniors based on the amount of college coursework they had completed at the time of the interview. Laura, Lou, and Cassidy would be considered juniors, Chloe would be considered a freshman, and Christopher would be considered a freshman, though as discussed above, Christopher may have been incorrect in providing the amount of coursework he had completed.

Laura, Christopher, Ashley, and Chloe had all been members of their organization for approximately 12 months, or one year, at the time of the interview. Cassidy had been a member of her organization for roughly 18 months, Ernie had been a member for about two years, and Todd and Lou had been members of their organizations for about three years.

Chloe had held her position for just a few months at the time of the interview, and Lou and Cassidy had held their current positions on their governing council for a few months at the time of the interview. Laura, Cassidy, and Christopher had held their positions in their chapter for about six months at the time of the interview. Ernie and Ashley had held their positions for about 10 months at the time of the interview, and Lou had held his previous position on his governing council for about 10 months before being elected to his current position. Todd had held his position for about one year at the time of the interview, and Lou had held his position in his chapter for about 18 months at the time of the interview.

Ernie was the only informant who currently resides in an official organizational residence that is not part of the Greek Court community at the research site.

Table 1 in Appendix G provides a summary of informant information provided at the time of the interview, including: informant name, gender identity, racial identity, age, class status, organization, date informants joined their organization, length of informant membership

in organization, residency in the official organizational house, position held, date of election to that position, and length in that position.

Data Analysis

The researcher gathered data through use of semi-structured interviews with the eight informants. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the data using Microsoft Word. The researcher sent the transcribed data to the informants to check for errors to increase validity and reliability.

After completion of the transcriptions, the researcher began the coding process (Creswell, 1998; Saldaña, 2013). In the open coding stage, the researcher examined each interview along with any field notes that were recorded to find general themes in the informant's interview answers to begin to form initial categories for data. In the second stage of coding, axial coding, the researcher compiled the open coded data into the different categories that were found during the open coding stage. These categories were based on the various, structured interview questions asked by the researcher. During the selective coding stage, the researcher categorized the structured interview questions based on themes found in informant answer's in relation to the overarching research questions posed in Chapter I. Finally, the researcher compiled collected data based on the research questions in preparation to see if a theory could be developed (Strauss and Corbin, 1994).

Results

All informants saw a change in the way they viewed alcohol after having leadership experiences. Some common themes appeared in discussions with informants regarding their leadership experiences and their view of alcohol's role on a personal, chapter, and Greek life

community-wide level. These themes each contribute to developing an overall sense of how leaders in Greek life have come to view alcohol after leadership experience, and each theme is discussed below.

View of Alcohol as a New Member

Informants who participated in this research had varying views on alcohol as newer members in their organizations. Notably, these views were primarily concerned with their own use or outlook, and none of the informants spoke about how they felt their view or use of alcohol as a new member impacted their chapter. This theme only appears when discussing one's view or use of alcohol after having some leadership experience.

Indifference and aversion.

Laura, Lou, Ashley, and Chloe all shared some level of indifference or feelings against alcohol use as a newer member. Lou shared that his personal familial experiences guided his outlook on alcohol, stating, "I've always kind of had the same outlook on it. Uhm, I've come from a family of multiple generations of alcoholics, so I've always had that stance of like, I need to limit myself, I need to be that person that breaks the chain of alcoholism in my family." While Todd said he did use alcohol occasionally for fun as a new member, he has always had an aversion to heavy alcohol use, particularly due to the pharmacological effects.

Use as a new member.

Other informants stated that as a new member, or as new college students, they used alcohol more freely. Christopher was quoted above as saying that he was excited to use alcohol because of the freedom of college. Cassidy shared that she did use alcohol frequently as a new member, stating, "I drank pretty frequently as a new member. Like, I didn't really have any

concerns for it." Ernie shared that he, like Todd, used alcohol occasionally to have fun as a new member. Ernie, however, did not have a similar aversion to heavy or frequent use. He said, "Uhm, I kind of viewed it as just a way to have fun…and forget, uhm… Yeah not as much in like, in a responsible manner, just in terms of like, I'm, uh, I don't have, I don't have class, like I want to have some fun, as a way to have fun basically." Cassidy and Chloe also shared that they had used alcohol prior to college, which no other informant had disclosed, though Laura mentioned she did not use alcohol in high school.

Paths to Leadership

Leadership roles can be achieved in many ways, and the leadership experience of a leader in Greek life may impact how they view alcohol.

Unique chapter circumstances.

Laura, Ernie, and Christopher had unique circumstances in their chapter that lead to them being elected to leadership roles. Laura did not elaborate on the circumstances that lead to her becoming a leader. For Ernie, a membership review from the national organization caused by financial issues led to a forced removal of some members, which in turn created a culture of low participation and mistrust, ending in a further, voluntary exile of members, including former leaders. Ernie had held at least one other position in the chapter, and was then one of the few leaders remaining who was able to assume greater responsibility. Christopher was elected as membership in his organization had dwindled and therefore in need of leadership. He says he was encouraged by his peers to pursue the position of President and was, to his surprise, elected.

Previous leadership experience.

Many informants had leadership experience prior to being elected to positions defined in

this study as leadership positions. Only Laura and Christopher had not had previous leadership

experience within their chapter before becoming leaders. Lou and Cassidy, who are leaders both

in their chapter and in their governing council, also had previous positions on their governing

council before being elected to the positions they currently hold. These informants who held

previous positions continued to ascend the ranks in their organizations to be elected to the

higher-level positions that they hold now or had held at the time of the interview. Chloe also

cited her leadership experience in high school that gave her a desire to continue seeking

leadership positions in college.

Intrinsic motivation to lead.

Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, and Chloe all had internal motivations for seeking out

leadership positions. Todd, Lou, and Cassidy all said that they wanted to make an impact on

their organization or governing council. Todd said:

> …just trying to implement things that we haven't done in the past or we used to do in the
>
> past and we don't do anymore. So, I don't know I just kind of wanted to, to leave my
>
> mark on, on the organization as a whole.

Regarding her previous experience holding a position on the Panhellenic Council,

Cassidy said, "I enjoyed that middle position and being able to assist all nine chapters on

campus, which led me to be elected as president." Lou felt similarly to Cassidy regarding his

work on the Interfraternity Council. Ernie, Cassidy, Christopher, and Chloe all stated that they

had a desire to seek out leadership position. Chloe sought out and earned leadership experience

early in her Greek life experience due to a need to fill out other administrative positions. She shared:

> So, I went through recruitment fall of '18 when I came in as a freshman, and there were still applications that needed to be put in, so I applied then, and I was VP of finance last term. And it was just kind of like, to show the upperclassmen that like, we can do this too even though we're freshmen. Because they definitely have their doubts, like "Oh you don't know what you're doing, you just got here." But it's like, let me show you I do know what I'm doing.

View of Alcohol After Having Leadership Experience

Changes in personal use and view of alcohol.

Laura, Todd, Lou, Cassidy, and Ashley all stated that they have decreased their personal levels of alcohol use after having leadership experience in their chapter and/or governing council. Laura, Lou, and Ashley said they did not drink much anyways, but they did decrease their use. Christopher noted that his level of alcohol use has increased because he now is legally able to purchase and consume it. However, when consuming, he prefers to do so in a relaxed and controlled setting, whereas when he was a new member, Christopher attended parties and drank with less caution. Chloe indicated that her use of alcohol may have decreased slightly, but she was more so concerned with responsible use.

Ernie shared that his alcohol use has increased because his bodily tolerance for alcohol has increased, but his leadership roles did not impact his use. He said, "…my consumption has gone up but that's just because my tolerance has gone up. But in terms of like, having more so because of leadership roles that's not the case." However, Ernie did say that he tried to be more

responsible in his use, and that he did try to look out for his brothers when they were

participating in alcohol use. He stated:

> Uhm, it's similar, just knowing, knowing and doing it in a responsible manner, and, uhm,
>
> knowing like, I can't drink for a week straight…uhm, and just knowing what it does to
>
> my body and everything, just making sure, if I, uh, do use alcohol I don't go overboard
>
> and, uh, just do it in a respectful manner – responsible manner.

Christopher and Ashley, the only two informants belonging to historically African

American organizations, maintained a view throughout their interviews that alcohol use was not

involved in their chapter.

All informants acknowledged a need for more responsible consumption on a personal,

chapter, and/or community-wide level, even if they had not changed their level of personal use.

Reasons for decreased use or changes in perspective included responsibility for members and the

negative consequences that result from alcohol use, role modeling, and risk of personal or

organizational loss. There was some variance among informants on their overall views of

alcohol after having leadership experience.

Risk of loss.

Laura, Cassidy, Ashley, and Chloe, all of the sorority women informants, recognized the

potential for personal or organizational loss as a result of alcohol use. Losses described by

informants included loss of position or power in their chapter or governing council, damages to

personal or organizational reputations, and disciplinary actions taken against organizations.

Ashley summarized the potential of reputational damage well, simply saying that in a social

setting where alcohol may be involved, "I'm being Ashley, the member of LMN Sorority, not

just Ashley." The sorority women informants all noted that the small size of the Greek

community at the research site made the potential for impacts on the reputation of a person or an

organization much greater. Chloe recognized that safer use of alcohol is a necessity to avoid

negative consequences for leaders and organizations. She stated:

> Uhm, but, I've realized now I do need to be careful, like I realize the consequences of it,
>
> because I've watched people lose positions over this, not just from our chapter but from
>
> other chapters, like they do some dumb shit, and then they lose their positions, they go on
>
> probation the – and then, the fraternity and sorority office is watching over them, their
>
> every move because they f****d up. And I don't want that for our chapter, like I want to
>
> be able to enjoy ourselves, but you need to be smart about how you do it, even if you're
>
> in high quantities.

Cassidy is both a leader in her chapter and on the Panhellenic Council. She felt that the

association with her governing body and added responsibilities make her much more

apprehensive regarding alcohol use. She stated:

> But, especially with my association now with Panhellenic, I'm much more apprehensive…
>
> now, I'm 21 now so it's perfectly acceptable for me to drink. I'm a little bit more…aware
>
> of how much I'm drinking when I'm out in a setting where other women of the Panhellenic
>
> community can see me, and men of the IFC community can see me. I definitely think that,
>
> that change over time – I wasn't very aware, I didn't really care if I was drinking a lot, and,
>
> uhm, what actions I was partaking in. And now since my leadership roles, I care a lot
>
> actually… drinking now almost makes me nervous because it can just make you not really
>
> realize what you're saying and doing, and that can get brought back to me Monday, and
>
> me not even remembering that I did something, uhm, that could've hurt another chapter

member, or another member of another chapter, that – as Panhellenic vice president of

membership, and now as president, they're my responsibility. I'm supposed to care for

them as much as I care for, uhm, my own sisters.

Ernie, Cassidy, and Chloe all stated that previous issues with or the possibility of issues

with the research site's judicial system or their national organization were deterrents for misuse

of alcohol in their own organizations. Ernie and Cassidy had experienced conduct investigations

from their national organizations previously. Echoing her care not only for her own

organization, but for the larger Greek community, Cassidy said:

I don't want my organization or any organization to be closed down just because we didn't

fill out the correct paperwork or something silly like that. Uhm, and I've also just, you

know, fraternities have been removed from campus here because of drinking and not being

able to get their academics in line, and their finances in line, and I don't want that to happen

to my organization or any other, so…

Increased responsibility.

Some informants stated that increased personal responsibility contributed to their shifts in

use or view of alcohol. Ashley said that her organizational responsibilities caused a decrease in

her already limited use. She said, "I mean, you know, 'cause I really don't really drink as much…

So, it's like, uh, it's just – with me being in the organization, it's like more, uh, me, getting things

done…this aspect, and then, uhm, staying focused with being on the right path."

As a leader, informants are now responsible for the actions of the members of their

organization. Having to both "clean up the mess" that comes as a result of the negative

consequences of alcohol use while having to be liable for the mess itself as a result of one's

leadership position were common themes among informants. Christopher discussed liability

forms he must complete for the institution when hosting events, especially if alcohol will be

present. Todd noted that the responsibility of managing organizational liability risks was an

added stressor of leadership. He said, "So, I'm, I'm definitely more on the end of like, I kind of

stay sober, I kind of stay, you know, reserved, and just kind of take a step back and watch.

'Cause if something does happen… I'm the one that's getting the phone call, I'm the one that's

got to, you know talk to whoever." Laura said she is now more likely accept the responsibility of

caring for her peers who exceed their personal limits of alcohol use, stating, "I have never

personally gotten to the point where I don't know what I'm doing, like I'm always aware, and I

never get to the point where somebody has to take care of me. Like, I'm always the one taking

care of other people."

Laura, Todd, Lou, Cassidy, and Christopher also stated that with time, personal

responsibilities outside of their Greek life experience become increasingly important priorities,

especially relative to alcohol consumption. Some of these responsibilities included academic

performance, personal growth, and gaining life experience.

Value alignment and role modeling.

Laura, Cassidy, Ashley, and Chloe stated that being a role model was reason for having

decreased their personal level of alcohol use. Because of their leadership, they wanted to hold

themselves to the standards of their organizational values and show their peers that this was a

desired behavior. Lou and Ashley did not seem to have changed their views on alcohol after

having leadership experience. Lou specified that he, along with other leadership in his chapter,

worked to make sure that alcohol culture was not the primary focus of his organization, as other

organizations might be susceptible to. He said, "make sure that's not the focus of, of the

organization so that we are actually… upholding our values and up, upholding the reasons that

we are in, in this place to begin with." This could mean that Lou perceived alcohol to be a focus

earlier in his Greek life experience.

Negative consequences of alcohol use.

Laura, Todd, Cassidy, and Christopher all shared that seeing others misuse alcohol and

suffer negative consequences impacted their view. Discussing negative consequences of alcohol

use she had seen, Laura said:

> Uhm, some of them are like people waking up with like scratches, or like bruises on them,
>
> they're like "I don't know what happened", or like losing their phone, or like a lot of people
>
> have like Juuls so like losing a Juul. Uhm, people have lost like their IDs, or wallets… Just
>
> like waking up the next day and like "I don't remember what happened" like… People,
>
> you know, just not… really thinking about what they're doing and they are getting
>
> belligerent, falling over, you know throwing up everywhere, or just not really taking care
>
> of themselves like they should.

Christopher has seen even more drastic consequences of alcohol use and involvement in

alcohol culture. He said:

> I've just seen craziness happen, like… I've been at parties that have been shot up
>
> before… I have been in parties where fights have happened. I think, uh, I went to the
>
> senior bar crawl, like last semester and, a huge like, bar fight just happened. And then
>
> some dude just like, left and like came back with like a shotgun. So, it's just kind of
>
> like…it's a little traumatizing.

Ernie said that he had personally experienced negative consequences of alcohol use. He shared that during his freshman year, he consumed much more than he was able to handle. As a result, he wound up asleep on the residence hall hallway floor in his underwear, being tended to by emergency medical professionals. As a result, Ernie said that he wanted to make sure his brothers did not have a similar experience, prompting his desire for more responsible use.

Comparative views of chapter use.

Informants also provided varying answers when asked how they viewed their own organization's use of alcohol in comparison to that of other campus Greek organizations. Todd, Ernie, Cassidy, and Chloe felt that their organizations did not use alcohol at a level that was higher or lower than any other Greek organization. Lou, Christopher, and Ashley stated that their organization uses alcohol less than other Greek organizations. Christopher and Ashley continually maintained that alcohol use was not a prevalent activity in their organization. Lou said, "Uhm, because I know that there's chapters that will go out from Wednesday through Sunday, and, and we, really only go out, maybe Friday, Saturday, or it's usually one or the other."

Laura thought that alcohol use varies not only by among different organizations, but also among individual members within each organization. She said, "Uhm, I definitely feel like… like if I laid everybody out, I could like say, like, ok this girl doesn't really go out much, 'cause a lot of people work at the bars and stuff, so like they can't really go out 'cause they're at work." Laura also believed that fraternities use alcohol more than sororities, and it is a standard practice for them to host social functions or provide alcohol. Similar feelings were shared in response to a question about this topic by Ashley, and elsewhere in the discussion Cassidy and Chloe also believed that fraternities played a part in alcohol culture. On this topic, Laura said:

Uhm, like for sororities we can't, like, have parties, we can't you know, uhm… really

have alcohol. We're not really supposed to have alcohol at anything. But like with

fraternities, they, you know, they have parties every weekend, they charge people, they

supply alcohol for people, uhm, sometimes for philanthropies they do like pre-games

before or whatever.

Christopher and Ashley both shared that alcohol use is not a part of their organization's

regular activities. Notably, these two are the only informants who are members of historically

African American Greek organizations. They both said that some members have and do use

alcohol socially, and they both are aware of this experience or have participated in it at one time.

Both informants, along with Todd, shared that alcohol use during chapter business was strictly

not allowed. No informant provided a definition of what constituted chapter business, so this

term could refer to anything from official meetings to informal gatherings. Christopher did

discuss his participation in a "senior bar crawl." This may indicate that chapter business would

be formal meetings. Other informants discussed alcohol use at recruitment and philanthropic

events, so the line between chapter business and non-business events is unclear. Christopher and

Ashley also specified that alcohol use was no to be associated with their organization, which is a

longstanding part of their organizational culture.

Reasons Greeks drink according to leaders

Informants who participated in the study discussed their perceived reasons for why

members of Greek life choose to consume alcohol. These reasons included expectancies,

defined by Goldman, Del Boca, and Darkes (1999) as beliefs about how alcohol will affect one's

behavior or experience related to alcohol use, desired outcomes of alcohol use, experienced

pharmacological effects of alcohol use, and perceived social norms. These reasons for use often

had positive intentions, but may not always bring about the expected outcomes.

Interpersonal Communication.

A common theme among informants was that alcohol consumption can aid in social

interactions. According to Laura, Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, Christopher, and Chloe, there was

a notion among informants that Greeks had an expectancy that if they consume alcohol, they

would be better able to communicate with members of their own organization, members of other

Greek organizations, members of the opposite sex group, and others outside the Greek system.

Cassidy stated, "I think that we're so used to texting each other and like, Snapchatting each

other, that being drunk makes the awkwardness of having a real conversation a little less

awkward…" Later, she continued, "I hear my, I hear girls, not my girls, but girls out all the

time, and they're like, 'Well if I just get drunk, like, it'll be fine. I'll be able to talk to that boy'

or 'I'll be able to have that conversation'. I think we use it literally just to learn how to talk

whenever we're out in group settings."

Informants also discussed the outcomes of alcohol use that they viewed as positive.

Similar to the expectancy of eased facilitation of social interactions, some informants felt that

alcohol could contribute to the sense of community, acting as a tool for helping facilitate

interactions, or when consumption of alcohol as a group became a common purpose. With the

expectancy of easier social interactions occurring with alcohol use, and the experienced outcome

of community building, one larger theme discussed by informants was that relationships can be

developed through alcohol use. Chloe discussed how she personally had experienced the

outcome of developing relationships through alcohol use, stating, "Like some of the best friends

I've made in my chapter, it's because we went to a function, we got super drunk and had to take

care of each other, and that's how we became friends." No informant provided expectancies that would result from further development of relationships with others in their organization, in the Greek community, or otherwise, be it friendship, a romantic relationship, or otherwise.

Laura, Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, and Chloe all shared that members of their organization participated in social functions or weekend parties involving alcohol as part of their Greek life experience. Cassidy stated, "I would say alcohol in our community is used purely socially." Todd provided a fraternity member perspective on the social use of alcohol within his organization, stating, "…we have, uhm parties on weekends, uhm usually one night a weekend, uhm, and we just… I mean we all chip in for money, we get booze, and then it kind of just goes on from there." Laura shared similar thoughts about her sorority, stating:

> Uhm, well I mean people go out on weekends, and go party and whatever. Uhm, when we have social functions alcohol is there. Uhm, usually we have to like do it at a bar, and if you're like 21, you can buy drinks there kind of thing. Uhm, but for the most part that's pretty much it.

Advancing organizational purpose.

Informants also shared that alcohol could be used to advance the organizational purpose, or to carry out organizational functions, such as increasing attendance at organizational events, raising funds for organizational use, and recruitment. Laura and Chloe suggested that events that are meant to benefit certain philanthropic causes in the Greek community may involve alcohol as a motivator for increasing attendance at philanthropic events or other organizational events. Chloe stated, "I know with a lot of the fraternal philanthropies, they involve alcohol, and that's

sort of like a motivation to go, because like, we don't have to pay, so, like it is kind of like a

motivator."

Christopher felt that Greek organizations may be able to make a profit by hosting parties

with alcohol, but did not expand upon how money would be made at these events. He stated:

> I could just say that like, other like Greeks that I've been at parties with, like, if they have
>
> alcohol at their parties, like they said, they're more focused on like making money, or
>
> you know, just having a good time, dancing with people…whatever the case may be.

Todd also stated that alcohol was used to advance organizational purpose and carry out

actions of the organization, such as recruitment. This suggests that would-be members of the

Greek life community are attracted to wherever alcohol may be available, especially in a party

setting, and that using alcohol for this purpose may increase the appeal of one organization over

another, at least among fraternities. Later, Todd continued, "You get dropped off by your

parents, you say goodbye, and then there's guys coming to your door knocking, 'Hey, what are

you doing tonight? Are you coming out? Coming to our party?'"

While individual Greeks have certain expectancies for their experience using alcohol,

organizational culture may also create expectancies that impact how Greeks operate. As

discussed above, some Greeks feel that providing or consuming alcohol will be a way to increase

attendance at an organizational event, or a means by which outsiders are attracted to the

organization.

Relaxation and enjoyment.

Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, Christopher, and Ashley all indicated that Greeks use alcohol to

relax. None of the informants further elaborated on the term relax, so it is unclear whether relax

was meant as the intended experience of enjoying oneself, or if relax meant the pharmacological

effect of relaxation on the body's nervous system experienced when consuming alcohol.

Therefore, the notion of relaxation is discussed in both the expectancies section and the

pharmacological effects section of this document. Regarding the experience of enjoyment

resulting from alcohol use, Christopher said, ""You know, I guess it's supposed to get like,

people more t'd (a slang term for becoming more lively), or supposed to you know, liven the

party up, I don't know."

Laura, Todd, Ernie, and Chloe felt that some Greeks may enjoy the pharmacological of

being intoxicated. In this sense, intoxication is also an expectancy. Greeks may think that if

they consume alcohol, they will get drunk and enjoy the experience of doing so.

In some scenarios, it was difficult to discern whether informants intended expectancies or

pharmacological effects to be reasons for members of Greek life to consume alcohol. This was

the case when discussing both forgetting stress and relaxation. In a pharmacological sense,

relaxation would be the sensation of calmness or a lowering of inhibitions experienced by the

consumer. Ashley said that alcohol use may allow users to relax, or be more open to discussing

previous traumas. She stated, "being open to people, not just holding their past in, to different

things or situations… they can just go to a person who did deal with that." Both the

pharmacological effects of alcohol and the expectancies when consuming alcohol could be at

play.

Coping with and forgetting stress and trauma.

Todd, Lou, and Ernie also discussed using alcohol as a coping mechanism to forget both

previous trauma and current stressors as a reason Greeks use alcohol. Again, it is unclear

whether these informants meant that Greeks drink in hopes of being able to better cope with stress, or if the pharmacological effect of memory loss helps Greeks forget whatever stress they are undergoing. Ernie discussed how Greeks use alcohol for relaxation and coping with stress, stating:

> Many people, they'll do it to relax, or forget about, like, school or other things going on for them. Uhm, others just do it as a way to have fun. Uhm, but for, for the most part it's people's way of forgetting previous things and just enjoying the moment.

Lou stated that members of his own organization use alcohol for this reason, saying "Uhm, some of them I know for a fact have used it for coping mechanisms with different things in life," and Todd said, "Uhm, some people, some people come from different backgrounds, different, different traumatizing things in their past…"

Another pharmacological effect of alcohol use is memory loss. While Greeks may expect to be better able to cope with stress by consuming alcohol, it is unclear if this was the intended definition of forgetting stress discussed by some informants. Informants also could have meant the literal loss of memory of a certain stress that could come with heavy alcohol use. However, the pharmacological effects of alcohol, especially memory loss, may not always bring the desired results for drinkers. As mentioned above, Ashley felt that the relaxation could contribute to coping with stress.

Perceived experience fulfilled.

A number of external societal factors were discussed by informants with regard to alcohol culture participation among members of Greek life. Laura, Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, Christopher, and Chloe all felt that alcohol use in Greek life was perceived to be an expected

activity among Greeks and non-Greeks alike. Todd stated "they think college is like what you see in the movies and the TV shows," referring to one reason why members of his organization use alcohol. When asked why members of Greek life use alcohol, Laura said, "I think it's the social life. Everybody, you know, when you come to college, you think Greek life is… that's really what it is. Like, that's what people associate with Greek life, is partying and knowing everybody, and knowing where the parties are, and you know, dressing up or whatever. I definitely feel like it's the stigma of it." Todd felt that new or potential members of Greek life may consume alcohol because they expected alcohol use to be part of the college experience. He said, "…they're new to college, new to this experience, they want to get the full, full effect of it."

According to informants, the stereotype that alcohol is widely used in Greek life, if not among college students as a whole, does hold true. Many informants felt that alcohol use in college is simply a part of the college experience. Lou stated, "It is college. It is like the… We're away from our parents, we're getting out, branching out to our, our – own our own." Todd and Christopher also felt that the college experience involved use of alcohol. Todd, Lou, Ernie, and Christopher all believed that the freedom of college, which allows students to be removed from authority figures, may perpetuate the use of alcohol. Christopher shared, "I can tell you that uhm, when like I first came to college I was so excited to drink, 'cause I was just like, ok, I'm young, I'm really not supposed to be doing this." In contrasting Greek alcohol use and alcohol use among all college students, Christopher added "You know, I feel like asking uh, why do Greeks drink, would almost be the same thing as asking like, why do college students drink."

Other components of the Greek experience.

During their interviews, some informants shared that, although the perceived Greek life experience involved alcohol use, there was much more to Greek life than alcohol culture. Specifically, this view was shared by Laura, Lou, Cassidy, and Christopher. Lou said, "Brotherhood can't be explained, it has to be experienced." What, then, does the Greek life experience entail, according to leaders – the informants – beyond participation in alcohol culture?

Each informant other than Ashley stated that the sense of community and developing relationships was an important part of Greek life. Todd said:

Uhm, I guess it's just – for me, when I came here, it was just about finding, uh, friends. I didn't come here, like, with anyone I knew from home, so it was kind of finding… finding friends, a place where I fit in, uhm, and then it kind of developed into something more than that. When I got here, you know, Greek life as a whole, kind of gotta stick together.

Chloe shared similar thoughts, saying:

Uhm, kind of like finding your second family I guess, uhm, just 'cause like I don't have a super strong family connection at home. It's kind of like, these are the main people you go to if you're having a s****y day, or whatever… Uhm, it's nice that you get to like, hang out with these people all the time. So, like that's a plus, like you have all these friends, like, and they kind of understand what you're going through, because we all kind of go through similar things.

Lou, Cassidy, Christopher, and Ashley felt that the Greek life experience was a pathway for personal growth. Christopher said, "Uhm, and I think there's a lot of benefits to like…person that actually does decide to go into Greek life, because it's a lot of responsibilities, uhm, it

teaches you, like time management…definitely. It definitely makes you like grow up really fast, so I mean I think there's a lot of benefits to it.

Laura and Cassidy felt that Greek life was generally a great way to get involved on campus. They, along with Lou, said that Greek life also opened up opportunities to gain leadership experience. Of his experience, Lou said:

> Uhm, it's definitely impacted my life a lot. In coming from high school, I was very shy, very, uhm, not outspoken, uhm, kind of, stuck to myself a lot, had very few close friends, and coming to college I wanted to have a different experience. I wanted to get… put myself out there and kind of jump into those leadership roles that I could get into…Uhm, so… it means a lot to me, and it has really grown me as a person.

Christopher and Ashley both stated that Greek life can be an opportunity to affect positive change on campus and in the community. Ashley said that she has been able to help those inside and outside of her organization in some way. She said:

> Uhm, the Greek life experience means to me is the, uhm, the aspect of giving back to the community, uhm as well as, putting your work in in the, uhm, organization, uhm, and being a mentor, a help to the organization, outside of the organization, being a help here in the community.

Christopher stated that his chapter has a longstanding separation between alcohol use and brotherhood. Because of this, he felt that the bonds between the chapter members may be stronger. He said:

> Uhm, I think it forces us to sometimes – especially when like life is just getting hard, and like when school is just getting rough and stuff – to actually like sit down, and like, deal

with it…rather than you know, finding uhm – I wouldn't really call alcohol like a solution – but finding like, ok, like a quick fix.

Peer influence.

Lou, Cassidy, and Chloe believed that peers may play a part in influencing members of Greek life to take part in alcohol culture. Chloe stated that some members, especially newer or younger members, may try take part in alcohol culture because there is an unspoken pressure to socialize with other members of the organization in order to make friends. Cassidy felt that older members continue to perpetuate alcohol use in Greek life, which makes it difficult to stop the phenomenon, as she stated, "It's just what they were taught by older members, and it's just what keeps happening." Lou noted that while some younger or newer members may be seeking authentic brotherhood through the fraternity experience, they may quickly learn to participate in alcohol culture or take on other "bad habits," stating:

> Uhm, I think it's like a belief in the stereotype of, this is what you do, this is what it means to be Greek. And, so, like people think that that's like a standard to live up to. Uhm, and… it's not always that way. Uhm, and I also think that lots of people that join Greek life come from… broken homes, uhm, could potentially come from broken homes, and they want… the brotherhood experience, they want the family experience that they didn't get… back home. Uhm, but then, the other brothers that they have, have other views, and the active members maybe have a different influence, and then they will influence them to, uhm… take on those bad habits, and take on the, uhm, drinking and the, and the, everything else, so.

Chloe also felt that peer pressure plays a part in alcohol use among Greeks, and that there may be a misperceived social norm that participating in alcohol use can lead to further developed relationships among Greeks. She said:

Some girls will drink just to kind of fit in with their friends, like they're sort of more of a follower, but they people they cling to in their friend groups are all drinking, and they're like, "Well they're drinking, so I should drink," or if everyone around them is drinking, they're like, "Oh yeah, maybe I should drink," or… I feel like this is especially with the newer members, because like we tell them all the time there's no obligation to do anything, because we don't want it to fall back on us that, like we're hazing – we're not hazing, because if you're not cool we don't want you to be uncomfortable. But we're like, oh we're having a pregame at so-and-so's apartment, like, don't feel obligated to come, it's totally optional, but then they're like well everyone's gonna be there, like maybe this is my chance to kind of get in with them. And like, 'cause it's sort of hard to integrate yourself into the sorority your first semester, two semesters there because you need to find your friends. And especially because you sort of cling to the older members who adopted you under their wing, they graduate, so you're sort of SOL, you need to find your own friends. So, you kind of figure out who you mesh well with. But, a lot of times we're all together, if it's not for a required event, we're probably drunk, so that's sort of the scene.

Perceived lack of other social opportunities.

Laura, Todd, and Christopher felt that participation in alcohol culture may in part be continued by members of Greek life because of a lack of other social opportunities. Laura stated, "Others I feel like…don't… like don't see anything else to do. Like that's all there is, is going and partying, that's all anybody ever talks about is weekend parties." Christopher stated, "People just

want to have a good time, and even in a small place like Charleston, there really isn't much to do but like what, go get some pizza?"

Intervention and prevention.

Each informant was also asked questions regarding how alcohol is addressed within their organizations and/or governing councils. A number of varying educational, interventional, and preventative practices, policies, and activities were discussed. Among the most commonly used practices for alcohol education were electronic, educational modules.

Electronic modules.

The research site distributes an electronic educational module known as AlcoholEdu to all incoming students. Some national organizations have similar programs. Ernie, Cassidy, and Christopher specifically mentioned AlcoholEdu. Cassidy mentioned a program called Greek Life Edu, which is required for all new members of Greek life by the Panhellenic Council. It is unclear based on research data if this program is required by other governing bodies in the Greek system at the research site. On electronic modules used by his chapter, Ernie said:

> Uhm, yeah, actually, so coming in to this school year, uhm, EF Fraternity nationally went
> and set these guidelines where everyone had to go and, uhm, do these, uh alcohol and re –
> prevention modules and everything, uhm, kind of like AlcoholEdu that Eastern does as a
> freshman. Uhm, and they do that as a way to make sure everyone is properly informed and
> everything of, all of the, uh, facts about alcohol.

Chapter or council programming.

Several informants discussed different alcohol-related programming that was put on by their organization or governing council. Lou and Ashley discussed having group presentations and discussions with members of the organization and community members who are knowledgeable about alcohol and other issues facing the Greek life community. Lou said:

> We try to have, every semester, uhm, somebody from one of the organizations on campus that, uhm, like I think it's the HERC… uhm, that come in and talk about alcohol, and how, and how it can relate to mental issues, and mental health and stuff like that, uhm, and just kind of give us tips on how to see it, and how to help with it.

Christopher discussed outreach programs done at a national level by his organization. He stated:

> Uhm, so I know some of our national programs like, uhm – we do this thing called Go to High School, Go to College. So basically, we do go to high schools, uhm, and sometimes even middle schools, and we literally just talk about like, the transition from like, high school in to college. And of course, like, the number one thing that they ask about, the number one thing that, you know, we have to talk about is alcohol. So, we just try to like tell people, like, uhm, we would encourage you to stay away from it, but I mean we're just gonna be realistic, like, you may try it, you may not try it, who knows. But as long as you do it safe, as long as you do it responsibly, like, you know don't pick up cups if don't know what's in it, you know, don't – know your limits, 'cause that's definitely like a big thing.

There are also alcohol-related programs being put on at the council-wide level. Lou discussed upcoming plans to host a movie night where members of Greek life would watch a film regarding alcohol, hazing, or another Greek life-related issue and have a discussion. Chloe

discussed a program done through the Panhellenic Council called "These Hands Don't Haze" related to alcohol and hazing prevention. Cassidy discussed two further Panhellenic Council programs. The first of which was an educational series on spring break safety tips and consuming alcohol responsibly in a warmer climate. Second was a "Not Anymore" program that educated Greek members on sexual assault and alcohol.

National organization practices.

Many informants mentioned programming relating to alcohol and risk management that occurs at a national level in their organization. Todd mentioned that he had discussions with national representatives on how to better manage his chapter. He said, "I know, like, we've had people come down from, from national, and they, they're like 'You guys need to, should do this type of continuing education kind of stuff', like these little seminars or whatever you want to call them, about like, the dangers of certain things, and all this kind of stuff." Lou mentioned that his national organization stressed the importance of not letting alcohol culture dominate the chapter. Ernie had personally experienced his national organization provide training through electronic modules and conducting a membership review due to conduct issues; Cassidy's chapter had experienced a conduct investigation prior to her joining and during her time as an active member. Christopher also mentioned having attended a national conference that, while not solely alcohol-focused, helped him grow as a leader. Chloe stated that her national organization has the ability to intervene if they are aware of conduct issues. It seems that national-level activities are primarily experienced by informants as reactionary conduct corrections when the individual chapter breaks a rule.

Practices and policies at a chapter level.

Some informants mentioned that their organization had policies that were meant to maintain safe practice. Christopher mentioned that the separation of alcohol and chapter activities had been so effectively ingrained in his chapter's culture that there was little need for extensive alcohol programming. He did mention that members could not drink while wearing organizational apparel, and, like Todd and Ashley, that alcohol was not permitted during official chapter business.

Cassidy has tried to develop safer practices in her sorority and governing council. Specifically, she has made those conversations happen in a more public setting, and tried to change the way relationships in her organization work. She said:

And so, it's kind of led me to really encourage my women that are 21 and older to BYOB to events that I can control. So, we had a private mixer with (a fraternity on campus). I had a cooler on the porch, all of them had to put their alcohol in there. It was BYOB, (the fraternity) didn't supply anything. And then they had to come to me to get their alcohol out. We've also encouraged sober monitors even at private mixers with frats, or at, you know, when we go out on the regular weekend, just making sure are sober, uhm, so they can pick up those who are not. And I've just kind of, had the conversation about, like, you know, making sure they're eating before they're going out, 'cause a lot of our new members I've noticed, like, and I've noticed this kind of with all the new members in chapters, they're like not eating…because they know it'll get them more drunk. And I'm like, that's ridiculous. You need to eat something because, here's why – we don't want to take care of you, first of all, when you're belligerent… because you can't even stand up. We don't want fraternity men to have to take care of you because you should hold yourself to a higher standard than that, and alone you should just hold yourself to a higher standard than that.

Uhm, so I've really opened up that conversation with them. And then as vice president of membership development, I've also opened up that conversation bigs and littles… that the big's responsibility is not to make sure your little knows how to drink on the weekends… Your big's responsibility is to help them get their academics, help them go into the leadership roles on their executive board… not, meet the best fraternity men that you think personally are great, and party with them.

Todd mentioned that there was no real formal policy in his organization that related to alcohol training. He stated that he did not follow his national organization's guidance in this matter because, as he said regarding implementing any alcohol training in his chapter, "And then, to be honest with you I don't even know where I would start." His other reasons for not doing so will be discussed shortly.

Individual efforts.

According to some informants, they have made personal attempts to change the way members of their organization view alcohol. However, these attempts have been primarily informal. Laura, Lou, Cassidy, Christopher, and Ashley have shared that they have had informal conversations with members of their organization regarding alcohol use. Laura used the term "carefrontation", an amalgam of the words cares and confrontation, regarding the conversations she has had with her peers. She said:

Just having those conversations. Uhm, I think we just need to let people know that like, it's ok to go out, like I'm not telling you not to, but you know, to know your limits, and you know… to just kind of watch yourself or go with – go out with people that you trust… Uhm, so I think we also need to have those conversations with like, remember who you're

surrounding yourself with and who you're going out with. And, if it's, if you're going with people that are making you walk home alone at night, like, you don't need to go out with them again.

Laura, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, Christopher, and Ashley all stated that they have had similar conversations in a social setting when they see their peers consuming too much alcohol. Ernie said that this level of accountability in his organization has been helpful. When his fraternity brothers have tried to help him consume more responsibly, he said, "And, uh, I may not like that at the moment, but if I like, say the next day – I'll look back on it, be like, that was the right decision, like, and thank them for that."

Reasons for making or not attempting change.

Some informants have not made attempts to change the way members of their organization view alcohol, but for different reasons. Christopher again cited the longstanding culture of separation of alcohol and fraternity business as being so instilled that he did not feel a need to make a change. Todd said that he has not made any attempts for a number of reasons as discussed above. Chloe felt that it was not her place to make such attempts. She felt that such attempts would be ineffective, saying:

> Not really, because I don't feel it's really my place. Uhm, we can – like you can say how you feel, but people always have like, some sort of defense mechanism. It's like, well does it really affect you? No. And it's right, like no it doesn't affect me if you want to miss class for the third week in a row, or the third day in a row. If you want to fail, that's on you, it doesn't affect my diploma.

Overall, it seemed that Chloe felt that it was not her place to make any attempts to change the way members of her organization used or viewed alcohol. Todd also noted that individual members carry the greatest responsibility for their own alcohol use. However, Todd and Lou did feel that it was also the responsibility of the members of their organization to intervene when another member's alcohol use was problematic or causing negative consequences.

Of those that had made such attempts, informants provided a number of reasons for doing so. Laura discussed the potential for a negative impact on her sorority's reputation, as discussed above. Lou believed that in-person attempts to change behavior or view on alcohol were much more effective. All informants, shared some sentiment of genuine care for the members of their organization at some point in their interview. Ernie cited this specifically as a reason for having informal conversation, saying:

> Uhm, yeah, I think it's just me and my past experiences of, like, I had to – I was on a year of probation with the school. Uhm, I had to take, uh, and alcohol class, pay a fine, and everything when I got my drinking ticket for, uhm, falling asleep on the floor. Uhm, just, yeah me looking back on it, not wanting to have those same mistakes that I had.

Cassidy's thoughts were directed toward general care for the wider Greek community. She said:

> I would say because three, I would say three out of the nine sororities on this campus risked social probation, mine being one of them… And then we just had a fraternity – two years ago, (a former fraternity on campus) got kicked off. Uhm, and, we don't want to see anybody go under. Even with our shrinking community, we'd like to keep us all here, 'cause we care about each other. Uhm, and the social probation thing is always due

to alcohol not being handled correctly a majority of the time… or us going under – like,

chapters going under investigation for hazing, because again, alcohol wasn't held

responsibly, it was abused. And, uhm, I just don't want to see that, I don't want to see

that happen to my chapter, but I really – I don't want to see that happen to the entire

community as well. And with the – I brag about it sometimes, but Greek life takes a very

small portion of Eastern's life… So, if it becomes more of a hassle than a positive aspect

of the community, why would they hold on to it when it doesn't really bring much to the

campus?

Effectiveness of intervention and prevention measures.

Some informants were asked about the impact and effectiveness of the various alcohol-

related programs that their organization participated in. Ernie and Cassidy both felt that any kind

of electronic program was wasted. Both informants believed that in-person training would be

more effective at creating change and awareness regarding alcohol use. Regarding the impact of

electronic training and alternatives, Ernie said:

Uhm, I don't think it was that much. Uhm, it was just kind of a sit and listen, answer some

questions and then you're done kind of thing… Uhm, yeah, I think it was very minimal

impact…Uhm, I just think, like, there's better ways to do that, uh to like, uh – it'd be better

to like, be in like, a focus group, and people talking, compared to just being on your laptop.

There's just better ways of doing that education in my opinion.

Other informants discussed why any type of alcohol training may be ineffective on

members of the Greek community. While Todd has not tried any training or education in his

organization, he stated that low turnout, low engagement, and the unwillingness of his

organization's members to recognize problematic alcohol use were barriers. Lou also felt that members of Greek life would not want to stop living the so-called party lifestyle. Todd believed that one significant problem in the way of alcohol training is that some members of Greek life do not recognize that their alcohol use is problematic. Regarding his concerns with alcohol training, he said:

> It's impossible to get people to do something they don't want to do, and to sit there and listen, listen to someone tell them that they have an alcohol problem, and this is what happens when you drink as much as you do… no one really wants to listen to that. So, I think it's kind of – we haven't had anything, and also that even if we did, no one, no one would even bother with it… Uhm, I don't know if it's just a thing where people are just in denial of it… People don't realize – people think that alcoholism is, you know, literally just getting obliterated every day, uhm, and, you know… getting angry and pissed off and breaking stuff and that kind of stuff. But alcoholism has many forms, and a lot of people don't really realize that even, even binge drinking from Thursday – Thursday night, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, that, you know, a form of alcoholism. People think "Oh I'm just partying, I'm just blowing off steam, I got nothing going on." But it's a form of alcoholism. People don't want to be told… People don't even want to think that they have a problem because they don't – they themselves don't think it's a problem.

Summary

In summary, informants had a contrast in their view of alcohol prior to gaining leadership experience. After having leadership experience, all informants at least felt that alcohol should be consumed more responsibly. A majority of informants had decreased their personal level of

alcohol use. The path to leadership for informants included at least one of the following factors: unique chapter circumstances, previous leadership experience, and an intrinsic motivation.

Leaders felt that Greeks drink for a number of reasons. These include interpersonal communication, advancing organizational purpose, relaxation and enjoyment, coping with and forgetting stress and trauma, in fulfillment of the perceived experience of college students and members of Greek life, peer influence, and a perceived lack of other social opportunities.

Intervention and prevention efforts with regard to alcohol consumption are occurring at a national, chapter, and individual level. Electronic modules and chapter or council programming were the most frequently discussed methods for reaching multiple people, while many informants cited having informal conversations with their peers regarding alcohol use. Some chapters have differing policies on alcohol use, and some national organizations have become involved in intervention and prevention efforts. A minority of informants had not tried to change the way their peers use or view alcohol, but for differing reasons.

Chapter V

Discussion

Summary of Findings

This study explored how leaders in Greek life at a four-year, midsized, Midwestern state university views on alcohol have changed as a result of their leadership experiences, and how these leaders may play roles in reducing heavy and frequent alcohol consumption in the fraternity and sorority community. The review of literature explored was multifaceted. Qualitative research framework was discussed. The researcher examined theoretical models for components of the Greek experience, including student development theory on involvement and self-authorship, as well as ecological systems in which Greek leaders operate. Factors influencing college student and Greek alcohol use, prevention and intervention practices, and college student leadership were also discussed by the researcher.

The researcher conducted eight semi-structured interviews in order to gain insight into the multiple leaders' views on alcohol and its function as part of the Greek experience. In these interviews, informants discussed their experiences and views regarding alcohol, the Greek life experience, their leadership experience, and their experiences with formal and informal preventative and intervening measures regarding alcohol.

Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

View of alcohol as new members.

As new members in Greek life, five informants – Laura, Todd, Lou, Ashley, and Chloe, were either indifferent to or had an aversion to alcohol use. Lou specifically cited family history

as a reason for his view as a new member. A majority of informants held views that had

negative connotations regarding alcohol use, especially heavy and frequent alcohol use, as new

members. Although the researcher found no literature to support this claim, this could suggest

that members in Greek life who enter as new members with an aversion to heavy and frequent

alcohol use may be more likely to seek out leadership positions, or that they may be better

equipped to do so.

Cassidy and Christopher both discussed using alcohol as new members in Greek life or as

new students in college. Later, they both suggested that they have decreased personal use and/or

saw a need for more responsible use. Dalton (2015) suggested that some students may need to

fail in light of certain moral or ethical standards to improve future conditions. While alcohol use

as a new member in Greek life or new student may not be a failure necessarily, exposure to

alcohol use and the negative consequences resulting from it could be a trigger toward changed

behavior. Ernie also discussed his use of alcohol as a new member being more frequent and

heavy, similar to Cassidy and Christopher. He, however, did not seem to change his personal

level of alcohol use, and his view on alcohol changed the least after having leadership

experience.

Cassidy and Chloe stated that they had used alcohol at some point in before coming to

college, while Laura stated that it was not part of her high school experience. The researcher did

not find any previous research on the comparative drinking practices or leadership experiences

between females who did and did not consume alcohol in high school. Due to the varying

experiences and viewpoints on alcohol between these three informants, no conclusion can be

drawn based on the recorded data.

Paths to leadership.

The progressions from being a new member to holding a leadership position had similar themes among informants. Laura, Ernie, and Christopher cited unique circumstances that led to their being elected. Laura did not elaborate on her chapter's situation, Ernie discussed a review of membership by his national organization, and Christopher cited low membership leading to his election.

Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, Ashley, and Chloe all had held previous leadership roles in their lives before being elected to their leadership positions. Todd, Loud, Ernie, Cassidy, and Ashley held previous leadership positions in their chapter. Lou and Cassidy had also held leadership positions on their governing councils before being elected to the ones they held at the time of the interview. Chloe cited high school leadership experience.

Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy and Chloe all had intrinsic motivation for seeking leadership roles. Todd, Lou, and Cassidy all saw an opportunity to impact their chapter or governing council, and Ernie, Cassidy, and Chloe had a desire to lead.

Again, the researcher did not find any previous research relating paths to leadership among leaders in Greek life and their views on alcohol. Varying views after having leadership experience among those who came to hold leadership positions by unique circumstances suggest no conclusions about views on alcohol can be drawn from this pathway. However, a majority of informants who held previous leadership positions and who had an intrinsic motivation to lead had either decreased their personal level of alcohol use and/or saw a need for more responsible use. This could suggest that those who seek leadership positions in Greek life are more likely to change their views on or use of alcohol after having leadership experience.

View of alcohol after having leadership experience.

Shifts among participants toward a more apprehensive view of alcohol use or decreased personal use are supported by Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship (1992; 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 1999c; 2001; 2002; 2008; Baxter Magolda & King, 2012). As leaders encounter a crossroads regarding their view on alcohol, they are then forced to evaluate and enforce or change their own personal beliefs. Langford and DeJong (2010) stated that students are critical in impacting cultural change. If leaders are changing their views on alcohol after having leadership experience, then it follows that they as students must be involved in attempts to make cultural change.

Decreased personal levels of alcohol use for Laura, Todd, Lou, Cassidy, and Ashley was a finding contrary to studies done by Capece and Lanza-Kaduce (2013), Ward and Weiner (2012), and Cashin et al. (1998), whose suggest that leaders may drink at higher levels than their non-leader peers. Wisner (2011) stated that students undergo further development after having held leadership positions. Perhaps leadership in Greek life caused student development for these six informants in a way that caused them to decrease their personal levels of alcohol use. Laura, Lou, and Ashley said they did not drink much anyway, so their development could have reinforced their personal beliefs. Christopher, who only claimed to drink alcohol more because he was now of legal consuming age, also leaned more toward the view of alcohol and support for responsible use found in discussions with Laura, Todd, Lou, Cassidy, and Ashley. These views contradicted Ernie's lack of change in personal use and slight shift toward support for more responsible drinking that was also found in Chloe. Overall, all informants displayed some level of support for more responsible alcohol consumption for themselves and their peers.

Reasons for changes in personal level of alcohol use or desires for more responsible use were many. Laura, Cassidy, Chloe and Ashley were concerned about risk of personal or

organizational loss.   Potential or experienced conduct or judicial investigations impacted Ernie,

Chloe, and Cassidy. A sense of increased personal or organizational responsibility as leaders for

Ashley, Christopher, Todd, Laura, Cassidy, and Lou was contrary to the study done by Pedersen

(2017) which stated leaders may drink more due to increased external responsibilities and

interpersonal stressors. Laura, Cassidy, Ashley, Chloe, and Lou all discussed value alignment

and role modeling, and among those five only Chloe did not make attempts to change the way

her peers viewed alcohol. Pedersen (2017) stated that leaders in Greek life recognized their own

agency and promoted organizational values to make change, which is in line with the

experiences of Laura, Cassidy, Ashley, and Lou. Lou suggested that alcohol may have been an

organizational focus early on in his membership, which further supports the findings of Pedersen

(2017) as Lou attempted change. Laura, Todd, Cassidy, Christopher, and Ernie experienced or

observed negative consequences stemming from alcohol use, and the negative consequences

observed or experienced aligned with those discussed in other studies (American College Health

Association, 2019; Kaplin & Lee, 2014; Lake, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2013; Core Institute,

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2014; Park et al., 2014; Zamboanga, et al., 2017).

Regarding each informant's comparative view of their own organization's alcohol use

relative to other chapters, Todd, Ernie, Cassidy, and Chloe did not feel their chapter used alcohol

any more or less than others. Lou, Christopher, and Ashley felt their chapters consumed alcohol

less frequently, which is in line with studies by Napper (2018) and the Core Institute at Southern

Illinois University-Carbondale (2014) that state college students often overestimate how much

their peers drink. Laura and Ashley also felt that alcohol use varied among individual members

as well as entire organizations, which is in line with research done by Fairlie et al. (2010), who

discussed the fact that alcohol use varies between campuses, organizations, and persons. Laura,

Chloe, Cassidy, and Ashley all felt that fraternities drink more than sororities, and that

fraternities play a significant part in the perpetuation of alcohol culture among Greeks, which

reflects research done by McCabe et al. (2018), Hutching, et al. (2011), Russett (2017), Brown-

Rice et al. (2015), McCready (2018), and Wells et al. (2014).

Reasons Greeks drink.

Informants provided several reasons that Greeks drink. The reasons of interpersonal

communication, advancing organizational purpose, relaxation and enjoyment, coping or

forgetting, fulfillment of a perceived experience, because of peer pressure, and due to a lack of

other social opportunities are in line with studies done by Champion et al. (2013), the Core

Institute at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (2014), LaBrie et al. (2014), Park et al.

(2014), Gibson and Vassalotti (2017), Grant et al. (2013), McCreary and Schutts (2015), and

Cohen et al. (2017).

A sense of community building, cited by Laura, Todd, Ernie, Cassidy, Christopher, and

Chloe, reflects research done by Ven (2011), who discussed the fact that there may be a cyclical

nature to the experience of fun and enjoyment of drinkers and the experience of consuming

alcohol in a communal setting.

Drinking to increase philanthropic attendance, discussed by Laura and Chloe reflects

research done by Martin, Hevel, and Pascarella (2012), who state that fraternity men and sorority

women value citizenship, sharing a common purpose, and effecting change higher than their

unaffiliated peers, even moving past the negatives of alcohol use to achieve these values.

Using alcohol to recruit reflects, discussed by Todd, aligns with findings by Park et al.

(2009), who found that prospective members are attracted to alcohol and the Greek setting. As a

result, even when unintended, Greeks may be recruiting by hosting or participating in social settings where alcohol is present.

Todd, Lou, and Ernie, who said Greeks drink to cope or forget was a practice also identified by Metzger et al. (2017), Pedrelli et al. (2016), and Russell and Arthur (2016). Academic challenges, the stress of the college experience, or life traumas are some, but not all of, the things participants discussed when referring to using alcohol to cope or forget.

Fulfillment of perceived norms or stereotypes about the college or Greek experience, cited by Laura, Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, Christopher, and Chloe was supported by Brown-Rice et al. (2015), Hutching et al. (2011), Sheppard et al. (2016), Soule et al. (2015), Lee et al. (2010), Ven (2011), and White and Rabiner (2012). Todd discussed social perceptions that come from media stereotypes, aligning with Roberson et al. (2018). The freedom of the college experience providing opportunities to drink, as discussed by Lou, Todd, Ernie, and Christopher, reflects the findings of Dowdall (2013) and White and Rabiner (2012).

Lou, Cassidy, and Chloe all discussed the impact of peers or peer pressure on Greek students and their alcohol-related behaviors, often resulting in some Greeks drinking more. This aligns with research done by Varela and Pritchard (2011), Ven (2011), the Core Institute at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (2014), and Napper (2018), all of which contends that the presence of one's peers, a misunderstanding of peer alcohol use, and incitement to drink by peers can lead to increased alcohol consumption. When Chloe discussed peer pressure to drink, she said, "I feel like this is especially with the newer members, because like we tell them all the time there's no obligation to do anything, because we don't want it to fall back on us that, like we're hazing – we're not hazing, because if you're not cool we don't want you to be

uncomfortable." This statement could suggest that Chloe or members of her organizations feel

that you must drink – or possibly participate in hazing – to be viewed as "cool."

Other components of the Greek experience.

Informants discussed multiple other parts to the Greek experience outside of alcohol

culture, with half of informants stating there was "more" to being Greek than drinking. These

reasons included developing community and relationships, personal growth, campus

involvement and leadership experience, and having the ability to impact change. Personal

growth as part of the Greek experience aligns with discussion on involvement by Patton et al.

(2016).

Christopher discussed how his brotherhood felt more authentic and sensed more depth in

his relationships, and specifically said the lack of alcohol use in his chapter contributed to this

authentic brotherhood. Lou discussed the idea that some members in Greek life may,

intentionally or unintentionally, pervert the brotherhood experience by passing along bad

practices regarding heavy and frequent alcohol consumption to younger or newer members.

More research is needed, but this could suggest that authentic brotherhood is further cultivated

the further removed alcohol is from chapter activities. McCreary and Schutts (2015) wrote that

fraternity brotherhood typically displays four major themes, those being solidarity, shared social

experiences, belonging, and accountability. McCreary and Schutts (2015) also discussed that a

high sense of shared social experiences among men can increase certain behaviors, such as

alcohol consumption. If alcohol consumption was not a highly shared experience, this could

influence the way fraternity men view their brotherhood.

Intervention and prevention.

Informants had both participated in, developed, and employed varying intervention and prevention tactics with regard to personal alcohol use and that of their peers. Ernie, Cassidy, and Christopher had participated in electronic modules mandated by their institution, governing council, or national organization. Lou, Ashley, Christopher, Chloe, and Cassidy took part in programming at a chapter or national level. Types of programming included workshops and discussions, all presented to a larger audience rather than by way of individualized support. Todd, Lou, Ernie, Cassidy, Christopher, and Chloe all had experienced intervention efforts from their national organization in the form of electronic modules, conduct investigations, outreach programs, or conference attendance.

AlcoholEdu was one electronic module mentioned by informants, and this intervention method received a high effectiveness rating from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) on the CollegeAIM Matrix (2015), but informants did not feel electronic methods were effective. Alcohol-free programming as an intervention or preventative method did not have enough research to conclude the effectiveness, according to the NIAAA (2015). The NIAAA (2015) did state that group motivational interviewing has a medium level of effectiveness, but it was unclear if any of the group programming experienced by informants came in the form of motivational interviewing or skill training. The NIAAA (2015) CollegeAIM Matrix also states that simply being provided information or education alone was ineffective. According to Correia et al. (2012) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (2015), based on informant reporting, no informant had participated in truly effective alcohol training. It is possible that electronic modules are ineffective because they are required. Young adults may not respond well to mandated education programming that takes significant amounts of time to complete.

Some informants recognized the ineffectiveness of the alcohol programming they had taken part in. Ernie and Cassidy felt that electronic forms of programming were ineffective, and Todd and Lou felt that Greeks may not be willing to admit that they may have a problematic level of alcohol use, and therefore would not be receptive to any kind of intervention. Clinkinbeard and Johnson (2013) and Wrye and Pruitt (2017), state that students may not recognize that they drink alcohol at problematic levels. As a result, they may be less receptive for intervention or prevention strategies that target those who do drink alcohol at problematic levels, because these students do not admit their issue. Furthermore, a lack of awareness may skew data and practices surrounding intervention and prevention if students do not accurately report their drinking habits.

Regarding chapter policy concerning alcohol, Ashley, Christopher, and Todd maintained that alcohol was to be kept separate from chapter business. Cassidy attempted to implement new policies and practices in her chapter to encourage her sorority sister to drink more responsibly. Todd said he did not have any formal policy regarding chapter member alcohol use, stating that he would not know where to begin to develop one.

Some informants made individual efforts to change the way members of their organization used or viewed alcohol. Laura, Lou, Cassidy, Ashley, and Christopher had used informal "care-frontations." Their attempts to make change reflect findings from Biddix (2014) that state Greek leaders may recognize their own agency and attempt to implement change.

When asked why informants had or had not attempted to make such changes, informants provided several reasons. Among reasons for making change, Lou and Todd said that their organizations would wholly support a peer who needed help with a drinking problem. Lou felt that in-person attempts to make change were more effective, which reflects the findings of

Kilmer et al. (2012) and the ASTP intervention and prevention methodology, though Hamm (2012) found contrary data, who stated that even in-person intervention methods and trainings like the ASTP may be ineffective on Greeks. All informants who attempted change cited a general care for their peers, both in their organization and in others. This aligns with findings by Barnhardt (2014) and Biddix (2014) that state Greek leaders can move past negative consequences, recognize their own agency, and make change. Laura also cited her organizational reputation as a reason for making change, and Ernie reflected on his personal negative experiences as a reason for making change.

Of those who did not attempt such changes, Christopher maintained that his organization's longstanding culture of separating alcohol and fraternity business meant there was no need to make change. Todd was unsure of where to begin when attempting to change the views or practices surrounding alcohol in his chapter. Chloe and Todd both felt that individuals carried significant burdens in changing their views or behavior.

Notably, Chloe seemed to be the most committed to the mentality that individuals were responsible for their own alcohol use. As a new member, Chloe spoke about her own personal alcohol use and view of alcohol which related to her as an individual and not the impact of her behavior on her organization. While other informants also had an individualistic view as new members, all other informants came to have some level of concern or care for their peers and their organizations as a whole. Because Chloe is still a freshman and new to Greek leadership, this could indicate that with maturation, Greek leaders become more concerned with the consequences of member actions on the organization, and develop greater care for those around them.

African-American Greek organizations.

One theme that emerged from this study was the views of leaders in African-American Greek organizations surrounding alcohol. Christopher and Ashley were both leaders in such an organization. Both informants maintained that alcohol was to be kept separate from chapter business, and this practice had been in place for some time. Therefore, Christopher and Ashley felt their chapter's use of alcohol was less than that of other Greek organizations. They also both shared that they personally did not use alcohol all that much. Christopher specifically mentioned that separation of alcohol and Greek life led to a more authentic brotherhood. Both informants also felt that they could impact positive change on the campus through Greek life. These themes could suggest that African-American Greek members have a different view and experience of participation and Greek life and the outcomes that it brings. The lack of alcohol use reported by Christopher and Ashley aligns with Brawner (2016), who concluded that African American students do not have comparable alcohol abuse issues on levels of their white peers, and McCabe et al. (2019), who suggested students of minority ethnicities may not participate in alcohol consumption at levels like their white peers because of a weak link between perceived social norms and racial identification with the majority racial group.

Sorority women.

Another commonality that emerged in research was the shared viewpoints of all four female sorority member informants (Laura, Cassidy, Ashley, and Chloe). All four cited a risk of personal or organizational loss as reasons for shifting their views of or behaviors with alcohol for themselves and their organizational peers. They also felt that value alignment and role modeling were reasons for these shifts. Finally, all four sorority women felt that fraternities consumed more alcohol than sororities, and played a part in perpetuating alcohol culture. Risk of loss and role modeling could suggest different priorities for sorority women relative to those of fraternity

men in their Greek experience. If fraternities do indeed play a larger part in perpetuating alcohol culture, and if sorority leaders recognize a need for value alignment and the potential for risk of loss, future research could explore why sorority women still participate in alcohol culture that is perpetuated by fraternity men.

Fraternity men.

There were also some commonalities that emerged in discussions with fraternity men. All male informants cited that alcohol was used to cope with or forget stress, and the freedom of the college experience caused them to explore alcohol use. This could indicate that fraternity men consume alcohol, at least in part, for reasons that sorority women do not.

One other dynamic that emerged was the idea of authentic leadership contrasted by Lou and Christopher's experiences. Future research could explore what role alcohol plays in fraternity brotherhood and how much this correlates to feelings of authentic brotherhood.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for administrators and leaders in Greek life alike. However, because of the limitations and qualitative nature of this study, no conclusions can be drawn for practice at other institutions. For the research site, this study sheds light on the experiences and views of Greek leaders. The data can guide practice to more effective intervention and prevention measures. In the Greek system, leaders are able to grow through involvement (Astin, 1984). As they encounter crossroads (Baxter Magolda, 1992, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2001, 2002, 2008; Baxter Magolda, B. M. & King, P. M., 2012), student leaders can choose to prioritize and value safer drinking practices. If leaders are willing to attempt to make changes in the way their peers use or drink alcohol, and have made changes in their personal use or view of

alcohol, then practitioners can partner with leaders and support them as they implement change. Despite increased alcohol use among students (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2018), students must be stakeholders in implementing effective change around student alcohol use, especially in the Greek system. Through such changes, there may be a ripple effect on the ecological system in which Greek leaders operate (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Limitations of the Study

This research was limited in a number of ways. First, the researcher conducted the study at one four-year, midsized, Midwestern state university. As a result, the findings of the study cannot be generalized. Furthermore, having one research site limited the population of potential informants for the study. With an already limited population to recruit informants from, potential informant self-selection also limited the study. If more informants would have volunteered to participate, findings could have been more abundant and richer in detail. Furthermore, self-selection bias may have occurred on the part of the informants. If a majority of informants had an indifferent or aversive view of alcohol, had changed their personal level of use, or saw a need for more responsible use, it is possible that Greek leaders with these experiences would be more likely to volunteer to participate. For a leader without these experiences, they may be less likely to volunteer for such a study.

Second, because Greeks, whose organizations are secretive, and because of the general misrepresentation or misunderstanding of personal alcohol use among college students, the anecdotal data reported by informants may be incomplete or inaccurate. Therefore, conclusions drawn by the researcher may be incomplete or inaccurate.

Third, Cox et al. (2016) discussed the variance among student experiences based on other life experiences. Because the informants are all students of different backgrounds and identifying factors, it was difficult to draw conclusions based on any similarities shared by the informants, as any number of life factors or influences may have shaped their outlook on and experiences with alcohol.

Fourth, the researcher always impacts the outcome of qualitative studies, whether they intend to or not, simply because of the nature of qualitative studies that often require the researcher to be a research tool in and of themselves. The researcher is a former leader in fraternity life at another institution who has changed his perspective on alcohol as a result of his leadership experience. Although measures were taken to eliminate bias both in data collection and data interpretation, bias can never be fully eliminated.

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice for Alcohol Intervention Professionals

This study developed some commonalities that could lead to further research topics. First, future researchers could continue to examine the African-American Greek life experience especially with consideration of how alcohol use, or lack thereof, contributes to more authentic comradery. Future research could explore the relation between alcohol and substance abuse and African American ethnic status. Additional research could explore the relation between alcohol and pursuing and experiencing membership in African American Greek organizations.

Future research could also explore the ideas of value alignment, role modeling, and risks for personal or organizational loss as factors that could contribute to more effective intervention and preventative practices. Some informants cited these reasons as factors influencing their

change in view on or personal use of alcohol. If other Greeks, especially sorority women among whom these factors were most discussed, have similar concerns, prevention and intervention practice based on these ideas could be beneficial.

A majority of informants in this study stated that they had an indifference or aversion to heavy and frequent alcohol use as new members, prior to holding leadership experience. Future research could explore the likelihood of low-risk drinkers to pursue leadership positions in Greek life, and the change that these leaders would implement surrounding peer or organizational alcohol use. Additional research could explore the relation between leaders in Greek life and their implementation of harm-reduction strategies with their peers. Furthermore, future research could examine how Greek leaders experience the negative results associated with alcohol use, and explore if leaders are more significantly impacted by these consequences.

Continued research could examine the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of intervention and prevention programming on the Greek population. A number of informants discussed that certain methods may be more or less effective, and that their peers would not be receptive to attempts to change their view of or use of alcohol. Particularly, future research could explore why mandated programming, by the nature of it being required, may be ineffective.

If fraternity leaders in this study felt that Greeks drink to cope and forget, and because of the freedom that college provides, future research could be done to examine reasons for Greek alcohol consumption, specifically among fraternity men. If male leaders drink to cope or forget, this could signify underlying issues that, if resolved, could decrease levels of alcohol consumption. Overall, more general research could be done on coping mechanisms, with potential focus areas in Greek students or males.

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice for Greek Life Professionals

There was a distinct difference in the reported drinking practices of African-American Greeks compared to their white peers. Future research could continue to explore the comparative alcohol use between historically white and historically black Greek organizations.

Research could explore the development of Greek leaders and their increasing awareness of how individuals impact their organization over time. If Chloe lacked such a perspective while other informants indicated greater levels of care for their peers, perhaps maturation and leadership experience lead to Greek leaders caring for their peers and the impact their peers have on their organizations more than they did as new members.

Greek organizations may have different roles that are considered leadership positions outside of President, Vice President, and Risk Manager. As a result, views on alcohol of others in these roles in Greek life may differ from the defined leadership positions may differ from the views of Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Risk Managers. Future research could explore the topic of this study on a more expansive scale.

Future researchers could also continue to develop the notion of authentic brotherhood, and how alcohol may or may not contribute to this sense. If a lack of alcohol use does truly lead to more authentic brotherhood, then demonstrating such an effect could change the way fraternity men or all Greek members view their experience. A shift in culture among fraternities, who, as shared by the female informants of this study, are often relied on to provide the social settings with alcohol, could be developed with greater pursuit of authentic brotherhood that does not involve alcohol. Prospective members seeking a real brotherhood experience rather than a party scene may be more attracted to Greek life if fraternities are based in this non-alcoholic,

authentic brotherhood, which could perpetuate a cyclical development of this new culture. Fraternity men may not experience a sense of moral disengagement like they do with increased alcohol use, as suggested by McCreary and Schutts (2015). Furthermore, the four schemata of brotherhood suggested by McCreary and Schutts (2015), solidarity, shared social experiences, belonging, and accountability, could become more prevalent without alcohol. Future research could explore all of these notions of fraternity life without alcohol.

At the research site, with use of this study, practitioners and students may have a better understanding of why Greeks drink, and the views of leaders on alcohol. Practitioners and students, especially student leaders, can partner to implement preventative and intervention strategies at the research site centered around these reasons for drinking and views of leaders. If this study is replicated at other institutions, similar implementations based on findings could be executed as well.

In practice, Greek life professionals and intervention and prevention professionals could collaborate to create programming based on the results of this study. Informants felt in-person methods were more effective in making changes in peer use or view of alcohol, and many had employed the "carefrontation," informal conversation strategy. Perhaps professionals could design a workshop based around arming leaders and non-leaders alike with the skills, language, and confidence to use such a strategy.

Finally, because this study cannot be generalized, future researchers could replicate it at other institutions. Based on future findings, helping Greek leaders and practitioners develop agency and find common values could guide future intervention and prevention practices.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. The researcher will welcome the informant, thank them for their participation, and provide a brief overview of the research project. The researcher will then allow for questions from the informant and answer them in a satisfactory manner before proceeding.

2. The researcher will provide the informant with the consent sheet (Appendix B), reading along with the informant, and making sure the informant knows they will remain anonymous while the interview is recorded and the research is conducted. The informant will sign the consent sheet. The consent sheet will be adapted from the IRB forms provided by Eastern Illinois University (EIU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, n.d.).

3. The researcher will provide the informant with a demographic information form. This will allow demographic information to be quickly collected prior to the interview in an effort not to consume the time of the informants (Appendix C).

4. The interview will occur face-to-face, with the researcher following the pre-determined questions (Appendix D) and asking unplanned probing questions to the informant to gather data.

5. The interview will conclude after approximately one hour. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher will thank the informant for their time and inform them of the next steps in the research. The researcher will verbally inform the informant about participant checking and ask that they increase the validity and reliability of the study by checking a finalized transcript of the interview for error. A typed transcript of the

interview will be delivered to the informant via email in a maximum of 30 days after the

interview, at which point the informant will be asked via email to perform their check for

reliability and validity.

6. After data is coded according to the processes outlined in the project, coding strategy will

be shared with the informant to confirm that the data was coded according to the intended

interpretation of the informant.

Appendix B

Sample Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

How Do Leaders in Greek Life View Alcohol?

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by graduate student Blake Miller and Dr. Eric Davidson, thesis committee chair, from the Department of Counseling and Higher Education at Eastern Illinois University.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a leader within the fraternity and sorority community at EIU.

- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Student leaders in fraternities and sororities have a tremendous responsibility. They are tasked with guiding their organization both operationally and culturally while they themselves are personally developing. The purpose of this study is to understand how leaders' in fraternities and sororities at a four-year, midsized, Midwestern state university views on alcohol have changed as a result of their leadership experiences, and how these leaders may play roles in reducing heavy and frequent alcohol consumption in the fraternity and sorority community.

- **PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Provide personal demographic information, including your age, year in school, gender identity, racial identity, Greek organization affiliation, and leadership position
- Participate in an interview lasting roughly one hour with the researcher and answer questions regarding your experience in the Greek life community, your views on alcohol, and alcohol use within your organization
- Have audio of your interview recorded on the researcher's personal, password-protected laptop computer, having the audio of this interview destroyed after three years of storage
- (Optional) help the researcher confirm the reliability of your interview by examining an electronic transcription of the interview audio to make sure the researcher did not misunderstand or misinterpret your answers

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Participants may feel uneasy about sharing experiences with alcohol with the researcher as alcohol consumption may be illegal in cases of underage drinking. Participants may also feel uncomfortable sharing experiences of organizational peers with alcohol. The researcher guarantees anonymity for all participants and will destroy any demographic data collected from the participants in three years.

Participants may also feel uncomfortable with any of the identities of the researcher, those being: a heterosexual, Caucasian male who is a fraternity member. If the participant is uncomfortable interacting with the researcher because of any or all of these identities, the participant is free to exit the study at any time with the understanding that their data will be destroyed and go unused in the study.

Outside of unforeseen academic, health, or familial issues, there are no anticipated circumstances under which the research expects to terminate the study.

Should any physical or psychological harm occur to the participant as a result of participation in this study, the researcher will work with the Eastern Illinois University Health and Counseling Services Clinic and the Central East Alcoholism and Drug Council to refer the participant to proper medical care.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Heavy and frequent alcohol consumption is reaching problematic levels in fraternities and sororities on college campuses across the country. Participation in this study will allow leaders in these organizations an open dialogue in a safe setting to discuss this issue and their experiences with it, and the conclusion of the research may help inspire or guide the thinking leaders in these organizations to effect positive change in their organization away from such practices.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storing all demographic information, interview audio, and field notes electronically on the researcher's personal, password-protected laptop computer. Only the researcher will have access to raw data, and all data will be destroyed after three years of storage.

Research data may be shared with Dr. Eric Davidson, faculty advisor for this project, Nathan Wehr, research committee member, and Dr. Elizabeth Gill, research committee member in order to aid the researcher in completion of the research.

Audio recording of the interview session, a typed transcription of the audio recording, the demographic information form, typed transcriptions of any written notes, and any typed notes will be recorded on the researcher's personal laptop computer. The computer is password protected and only the researcher has the password. Recorded data will be deleted after three years. Any paper copies of forms or notes will be destroyed immediately after being recorded on the researcher's computer.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

NOTE: Student researchers, whether PI's or Co-PI's, are not required to be identified in this section.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Faculty advisor: Dr. Eric Davidson, esdavidson@eiu.edu; (217)581-3413

Principal investigator: Blake Miller, bcmiller2@eiu.edu; (309)846-7011

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:
Institutional Review Board
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Ave.
Charleston, IL   61920
Telephone: (217) 581-8576
E-mail: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu
You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Printed Name of Participant

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

I, the undersigned, have defined and fully explained the investigation to the above subject.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix C

Demographic Information Form

1. Please list your age. _____

2. Please list fill in the circle next to your gender identity:

   o   Female

   o   Male

   o   Genderqueer/gender non-conforming

   o   Intersex

   o   Transgender Male/Transgender Man

   o   Transgender Female/Transgender Woman

   o   Other: _____

   o   Prefer not to state

3. Please list fill in the circle next to your racial identity:

   o   White/Caucasian

   o   Black/African-American

   o   Asian/Asian-American

   o   Hispanic/Latinx

   o   Native American/American Indian

   o   Other: _____

   o   Prefer not to state

4. Please list how many credit hours of college coursework you have completed.

   _____

5. Please share what Greek organization you are affiliated with. _____

6. Please share during which semester you became a member of this organization.

   _____

7. Do you live in your official fraternity/sorority house which is located either in Greek

    Court or off-campus? Yes No

8. Please share what leadership position you currently hold in your organization.

    _____

9. Please share during which semester you were elected to your leadership position.

    _____

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. What does the Greek life experience mean to you?

    a. Benefits/negative consequences

2. Describe your journey to becoming a leader in your organization/council (e.g. previous positions held in your organization and when, significant events that inspired you to become a leader, etc.).

3. What do you think is the role of alcohol in Greek life?

4. Describe the use of alcohol within your organization.

5. Why do you think members of your organization use alcohol?

6. How did you view alcohol as a member before becoming a leader?

7. What is your view of alcohol now that you have leadership experience in your organization?

8. Was there a turning point or points during your experience in your fraternity/sorority that led to a change in your outlook regarding alcohol?

9. Has your level of alcohol consumption changed since becoming a leader?

10. Describe how alcohol is addressed by your organization.

    a. What impact do you believe such efforts have had?

11. What attempts have you made to change the way members of your organizations view or use alcohol?

    a. Why have you/have you not made such attempts?

12. How do you see your organization's drinking compare to that of other campus Greek organizations?

13. Why do Greeks on this campus drink alcohol?

Appendix E

E-mail Solicitations

A. Initial solicitation

Greetings,

My name is Blake Miller and I am a graduate student at EIU. I am currently pursuing a master's

degree in the College Student Affairs program. I am conducting research on perceptions of

alcohol in Greek life, specifically among members who have held elected leadership positions

within their organization. In working with the Office of Greek Life, I was given your contact

information and am reaching out as I believe you may be able to offer valuable insight to aid in

my research. As an elected leader in your organization and/or your governing council, in the

Greek life community, and on campus, you have demonstrated your ability to impact social

change, and your leadership experience makes you an ideal candidate for participating in my

research. If you are interested in participating, please reply to this email and I will send you a

follow-up message with a brief overview of the project. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Blake

B. Follow-up solicitation

Greetings,

My name is Blake Miller and I am a graduate student at EIU. I am currently pursuing a master's

degree in the College Student Affairs program. I am conducting research on perceptions of

alcohol in Greek life, specifically among members who have held elected leadership positions

within their organization and/or governing council. I recently emailed you to see if you would be interested in participating in my research as I think you may be able to provide valuable insight to aid in my research. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my project and would love to hear back from you. If you are interested in participating, please reply to this email and I will send you a follow-up message with a brief overview of the project. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Blake

Appendix F

IRB Approval Email

October 29, 2019

Blake Miller
Eric Davidson
College of Student Affairs

Dear Blake,

Thank you for submitting the research protocol titled, "How Leaders in Greek Life View Alcohol" for review by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has reviewed this research protocol and effective 10/29/2019, has certified this protocol meets the federal regulations exemption criteria for human subjects research. The protocol has been given the IRB number 19-099. You are approved to proceed with your study.

The classification of this protocol as exempt is valid only for the research activities and subjects described in the above named protocol. IRB policy requires that any proposed changes to this protocol must be reported to, and approved by, the IRB before being implemented. You are also required to inform the IRB immediately of any problems encountered that could adversely affect the health or welfare of the subjects in this study. Please contact me, or the Compliance Coordinator at 581-8576, in the event of an emergency. All correspondence should be sent to:

Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
Telephone: 217-581-8576
Fax: 217-581-7181
Email: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

Thank you for your cooperation, and the best of success with your research.

John Bickford, Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
Telephone: 217-581-7881
Email: jbickford@eiu.edu

Appendix G

Informant Information Table

Table 1. Summary of informant information.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Informant Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Name	Laura	Todd	Lou	Ernie	Cassidy	Christophe	Ashley	Chloe
Gender Identity	F	M	M	M	F	M	F	F
Racial Identity	w/C	w/C	w/C	w/C	w/C	b/A-A	b/A-A	w/C
Age	20	21	22	22	21	21	21	19
Class	Junior	Senior	Junior	Senior	Junior	Freshman	Senior	Freshman
Organization	AB Sorority	XYZ Fraternity	CD Fraternity	EF Fraternity	GH Sorority	IJK Fraternity	LMN Sorority	OPQ Sorority
Length of Membership	About 12 months	About 3 years	About 3 years	About 2 years	About 18 months	About 1 year	About 1 year	About 1 year
Joined	F2018	F2016	F2016	F2017	S2018	F2018	F2018	F2018
Lived in Official House (Y/N)	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Position(s) Held	VP	P	C VP	P	VP, C VP	P	VP	VP
Date of Election to Position	S2019	F2018	S2019	S2019	S2019, S2019	S2019	S2019	F2019
Length of Time in Position	About 6 months	About 1 year	About 10 months	About ten months	About 6 months, About 6 months	About 6 months	About 10 months	A few months