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September 2016

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### Recommended Citation

Dowiak, Shawn M. (2016) "An Analysis of the Leadership, Student, and Moral Development Gains of NICFraternity Men Controlling for Sexuality and Institution Size," *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 2 , Article 5.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25774/rtar-5408>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/oracle/vol11/iss2/5>

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# Dowiak: An Analysis of the Leadership, Student, and Moral Development Gains

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEADERSHIP, STUDENT, AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT GAINS OF NIC FRATERNITY MEN CONTROLLING FOR SEXUALITY AND INSTITUTION SIZE

SHAWN M. DOWIAK

*The study presented in this article examined the contributions of ritual to the fraternity experience, as well as challenges that exist for fraternity men in order to frame an examination of leadership, moral, and student development gains, measured on a leadership continuum, using data from the 2012 administration of the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership, while controlling for institution size and sexuality. The findings reveal a picture of near parity in the development of leadership constructs between fraternity men and non-affiliated men, with some exceptions.*

### Introduction

Fraternities have been part of the landscape of higher education since the early years of the American college experience (Anson & Marchesani, 1990; Rudolph, 1990), and while the role of fraternities on campus has evolved over time, similar core values have always been purported to be a compelling reason for fraternities under the umbrella of social development (Rudolph, 1990). However, serious doubts have been raised as to whether or not North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) fraternities are successful experiences, and whether they pose any value for today's college students (Flanagan, 2014a; Flanagan, 2014b; Friedman, 2008; McCurtie, 2015). Therefore, an analysis of the moral, student, and leadership development of NIC fraternity men using national data from the 2012 administration of the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) provides a snapshot into the leadership, student, and moral development gains made by NIC fraternity men. Further, when analyzing these gains while controlling for sexuality and campus size, a specific knowledge and acumen into the NIC fraternity experience is gained that can assist the fraternity/sorority professional in fostering best practices among diverse student populations.

At one time, NIC fraternities were made up of only the most homogenous memberships, usually comprised of students who were White,

presumed straight, and affluent (Dilley, 2005; Rudolph, 1990; Syrett, 2005; Syrett, 2009). However, NIC fraternities, in their most visible form, are college organizations, for it is through membership in a college chapter that most men are initiated (NIC, 2012). As such, as times changed, so did fraternities (Horowitz, 1987).

Today, NIC fraternities claim to be egalitarian, and to admit students regardless of race, creed, or national origin (NIC, 2015). However, when considering gay, bisexual, and questioning fraternity members, earlier researchers have observed an "invisible membership" (Case, 1996, p. 1; Case, Hesp, & Eberly, 2005, p. 1). While the NIC, the trade association that represents 74 (inter)national fraternities, recognizes the need for its member organizations to offer membership to all college men without regard to race, creed, or national origin, it does not offer a statement concerning the admittance of men regardless of their sexual orientation (NIC, 2015). Windmeyer and Miller (2012) state that approximately 10 % of NIC fraternities' headquarters have adopted non-discrimination clauses regarding sexual orientation; consequently, students' experiences are often left up to the climate of the campus and the community. Therefore, the leadership, student, and moral development of gay/bisexual/questioning (GBQ) fraternity men is important to examine using a national dataset as GBQ students represent a specific subset of the fraternity population, and a population that is

currently understudied (Case, 1996; Case, Hesp, & Eberly, 2005; Dilley, 2005). Additionally, by considering the leadership, moral, and student development gains of heterosexual students as well, the current study offers insight into the entire fraternity population.

### *The Importance of the Fraternity Ritual*

Fraternities have, within their organizational structure, a strong symbolic frame that can provide direction to students' as they seek to personally develop (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Callais, 2002; Callais, 2005; Eberly, 1967; King, 2010). Despite a press toward values-alignment and a strong symbolic frame, fraternities have experienced significant problems that have plagued both the organizational structure of undergraduate NIC fraternity chapters and which has affected the overall success of fraternity men (Allan & Madden, 2008; Dugan, 2008; Fernandez & Pérez-Peña, 2015; Flanagan, 2014a; Flanagan, 2014b; Friedman, 2008; McCreary, 2012a; Sasso, 2012a). McCreary (2012b) and Sasso (2012b) both claim that a lack of best practices and concerns within the fraternity/sorority profession may explain why fraternities fall short of their stated values.

### *The Current Challenge of Fraternity*

Fraternity/sorority professionals at the (inter)national office and on the college campus are under a barrage of attacks from the media for the continually escalating negative press that NIC fraternity chapters bring to college campuses (Fernandez & Pérez-Peña, 2015; Flanagan, 2014a; Kelderman, 2015; McCurtie, 2015). These difficult challenges seem to have eclipsed the earlier concerns of hazing that have permeated the fraternity experience for decades and that are still a concern for today's fraternity chapters (Allan & Madden, 2008; McCreary, 2012a). Despite the concerns that consistently challenge the fraternity/sorority profession, the relationship that currently exists between fraternity headquarters professionals and campus-based pro-

essionals has been characterized as a "divorce" (McCurtie, 2015, p. 6). Further, fraternity/sorority professionals have not had access to best practices for over a decade (Gregory, 2003), and current researchers in the field make it clear that best practices are rarely supported or used by fraternity/sorority professionals (McCreary, 2012b; Sasso, 2012b).

Additionally, men in NIC fraternities have little national headquarters advisement with the exception of having young, traveling consultants visit them who are fraternity employees and who have varying levels of education and training (Sasso, 2012b). Regarding the (inter)national office, a continued movement toward the professionalization of the Executive Directorate at each office continues to take place (Dunn, 2005). However, in some organizations, the question of who the (inter)national office of fraternities actually serves (i.e. the best interests of the students or the preservation of national fraternity assets) has been called into question (Flanagan, 2014a).

On campus, advisement at larger institutions is often primarily done by graduate students with professional staff oversight. Also problematic is that fraternity/sorority professionals oftentimes remain in their job for less than four years (Sasso, 2012b). This high turnover rate is disconcerting because it demonstrates a clear lack of continuity in program structure at each institution with a fraternity/sorority community. What is worse, despite core competencies for fraternity/sorority professionals, there is no modern compendium of best practices that fraternity/sorority professionals can consult in order to assist them in being successful (Gregory, 2003, McCreary, 2012b; Sasso, 2012b).

This lack of stable advisement, best practices, and professional experience in the field frames the backdrop of developmental gains related to fraternity men and provides a foundation upon which to build the current study. Further, the lack of overall congruence between the supports provided to NIC fraternity men from the host

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institution and from the (inter)national office no doubt frames the potential outcomes for fraternity members (McCurtie, 2015).

One analysis of the problems facing undergraduate NIC fraternity chapters links fraternity men's reliance upon popular culture's notion of fraternities as vehicles of hedonistic excess to the idea of fraternities as values-based organizations. This dissonance may be the result of fraternity men seeing their fraternity's ritual merely as a tradition as opposed to a vehicle for change within their organization (Bolen, 2013; Callais, 2005; Eberly, 1967; King, 2010). Additionally, the lack of cohesive best practices by fraternity/sorority professionals on campus and within the (inter)national office adds to this inability of fraternity men to properly use their ritual as a way to shake off the hedonistic excesses of fraternity life (Callais, 2005; Eberly, 1967; McCreary, 2012b; Sasso, 2012b).

### *The Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of the current study is to analyze the fraternity experience through the lenses of campus size and sexuality to determine the moral, student development, and leadership gains made by fraternity men. Additionally, leadership gains are used for bivariate analysis of moral and student development gains; earlier studies into the fraternity experience have done similarly (Christman, 2013; Dowiak, 2016; Shalka, 2008; Shalka & Jones, 2010). The development of leadership in fraternity men is a purported primary purpose of the fraternity experience (Biddix, Matney, Norman, & Martin, 2014). Therefore, analyzing the moral development of fraternity men along Kohlberg's (1987) moral development scale and self-authorship along the continuum described by Baxter Magolda (2008; 2009) using leadership principles that align with these developmental outcomes is apropos to the fraternity experience as established in the literature (Christman, 2013; Dowiak, 2016; Shalka, 2008; Shalka & Jones, 2010). Finally, the current study seeks to distinguish itself by controlling for sex-

uality and institution size – two understudied areas of fraternity research as identified in the literature.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Fraternity Members and Socially Responsible Leadership*

Fraternity men have been analyzed for socially responsible leadership in previous literature. Wisner (2013) compared fraternity men in cultural fraternities (e.g. National Pan-Hellenic Council [NPHC] fraternities) to fraternity men from predominantly White social fraternities (e.g. NIC fraternities). Wisner found that cultural fraternity men had significantly higher mean scores than fraternity men in predominantly White social fraternities on every question on the citizenship measure of the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS). This is important to the current study as it demonstrates a direct analysis of social fraternity men's performance on the SRLS.

In another study using the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale Version 2 (SRLS-2) using data from the 2009 administration of the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), Johnson, Johnson, and Dugan (2015) found that Interfraternity Council (IFC) fraternity men showed significant differences from National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sorority women in their propensity to develop socially responsible leadership. Additionally, sorority women in general, regardless of council affiliation, showed significant differences from men on leadership development in aspects of the social change model. It is clear, from the studies of both Wisner (2013) and Johnson et al. that IFC or NIC fraternity men show a significantly lower propensity for leadership development. What remains to be seen is how particular sub-populations of IFC fraternity men seem to perform with regard to their leadership development.

In yet another study that used MSL data from the 2009 administration, Supple (2015) found

that fraternity and sorority membership had a negative impact on social perspective taking. Social perspective taking contributes to moral reasoning, which is one of the outcomes being measured in this study. In fact, using data from the MSL, Supple (2015) found that fraternities and sororities actually attracted men and women with lower social perspective taking. Similarly, Shalka and Jones (2010) found that fraternity men did not demonstrate significantly greater growth in the variable on the SRLS called Consciousness of Self; Shalka (2008) determined that Consciousness of Self was a congruent variable with self-authorship as elucidated by Baxter-Magolda.

In a counterinterviewing study, Martin, Hevel, and Pascarella (2012) found that among freshman students, fraternity and sorority membership had a positive effect on some of the subscales of the SRLS. However, in a follow-up study two years later, Hevel, Martin, and Pascarella (2014) found that fraternity and sorority membership had no significant effect on leadership development based on the scales of the SRLS by senior year. Therefore, while fraternity and sorority membership might have had some impact during the freshman year of college development, that impact was short-lived and did not continue until the end of the senior year (Martin et al., 2012; Hevel et al., 2014). Further, Hevel et al. (2014) found that the gains found in the earlier study by Martin et al (2012) were not replicable in the later study.

Despite the strong advocacy for fraternity membership as a leadership development experience, the literature focused on NIC fraternity membership has trouble baring out those claims.

### ***Sexuality and NIC Fraternity Membership***

In 1996, the first national study of lesbian (lesbian, gay, and bisexual) fraternity and sorority members was conducted (Case, 1996) and was presented again in a peer reviewed form nine years later (Case, Hesp, & Eberly, 2005). Case found over 500 respondents to his 32-ques-

tion survey. Over 90% of the study respondents were men; women were less likely to be involved in the study because the addition of women to the survey took place after the survey had already been in distribution (Case, 1996). The study focused on simply creating a typology of the “lesbigay” fraternity/sorority experience. This seems like a logical first step in the research on gay, bisexual, and lesbian fraternity and sorority members, who have traditionally been so deep in the closet that they were described by Case (1996) as the invisible membership.

Through the survey results, Case (1996) determined that on average gay or bisexual members made up approximately 5% of each chapter. Additionally, gay and bisexual fraternity men and lesbian sorority women were chapter leaders at a rate of over 80% of that survey sample (Case, 1996; Case, Hesp, & Eberly, 2005). Further, many of the men and women in the study (almost 70%) faced some sort of homophobia as a result of membership (Case, 1996). The Case study was extremely important because it gave a snapshot for the first time into the membership of an organization that some have claimed is hyper-masculine and gave visibility to what was once invisible (Case, 1996; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Additionally, in relation to leadership development, earlier studies have already demonstrated that fraternity and sorority leaders have high rates of leadership development; therefore, if GBQ members of fraternities are in the leadership of their chapter at a rate of 80%, then that could bode well for GBQ students leadership development in the context of their fraternity membership (Case, 1996; Case et al, 2005; Cory, 2011).

As a follow-up to the Case (1996) study, Hesp (2006) found that gay fraternity men experienced tremendous obstacles when they sought to affiliate with a fraternity. In his ethnography, Hesp (2006) found that gay students often try to mask their true identity by giving rise to heteronormative behavior (e.g. such as bringing a female date to fraternity functions). What is

interesting in the Hesp (2006) study is the way that the gay men in this study characterized the values and support that their fraternity provided them through its training and rituals.

In contrast to Hesp (2006), Dilley (2005) frames several categories for collegiate men who are not straight, and three of these categories relate to the fraternity experience: closeted, normal, and parallel. Closeted students are characterized by Dilley (2005) as living on the fringes. They neither identify with heterosexual students nor with gay or queer students. The men in this category may have been closeted for fear of social revision, arrest or incarceration, or forced therapy (Dilley, 2005). Closeted students did not allow themselves to interact in situations that could reveal their sexuality, but they were aware of their sexuality and the implications of it (Dilley, 2005). Dilley (2005) finds that Closeted students had a sexual and personal identity associated with their sexuality, but hid it. The implications for these findings in the current study are of paramount importance considering other fraternity researchers have found that most gay/bisexual members enter their fraternity as closeted individuals (Dilley, 2005; Hesp, 2006). By contrast, those students that Dilley classified as "normal students" did not have an identity that was non-heterosexual. The men in this category would engage in homosexual behavior, but not consider themselves any different from other "normal" students (Dilley, 2005). They would engage only in tearoom (e.g. public and random) sexual experiences. What is interesting about normal students is their ability to see their sex lives as separate from their identity. Therefore, "normal" students do not seem to see themselves as existing within a closet. "Parallel students," on the other hand, are identified in Dilley's (2005) study as realizing that their sexuality was a clandestine life that they led alongside their normal, on-campus life.

Dilley's (2005) research bears heavily on the current study. Fraternity men who engaged in either closeted, normal, or parallel experiences,

as defined by Dilley (2005), would each have different experiences within their fraternity, and would all have a contrasting experience with heterosexual fraternity men. This is because the student may not see a way to integrate their life in the fraternity house with their sex life. No doubt, these characterizations are applicable to students today, and therefore it is likely that sexuality may have a bearing on the leadership and student development of fraternity men (Dilley, 2005; Hesp, 2006).

What is emerging as a divergent view from previous studies is that fraternities are becoming more accepting of gay and bisexual men. In their cohort analysis, Rankin, Hesp, and Weber (2013) found a significant difference in students and alumni who joined their fraternities prior to the year 2000 and after the year 2000. Men who joined fraternities after the year 2000 found more acceptance of their sexuality (Rankin, Hesp, & Weber, 2013). The researchers concluded that the fraternity communities studied at the colleges were indeed becoming more diverse and less of a place where LGBT students had to worry about the perception their sexuality had on their fraternity membership for fear of being shunned by their fraternity brothers (Rankin, Hesp, & Weber, 2013).

What follows next is an analysis of the relationship between campus size and the fraternity experience. While there is little literature on this topic, there is good reason to consider that, like sexuality, campus size may play a role in fraternity members' development.

### *Campus Size as a Factor in Leadership, Student, and Moral Development*

The current study analyzes the effect of institution size upon the effectiveness of NIC fraternity members' gains in leadership, student, and moral development, while at the same time creating a second control for campus populations.

There has been a demonstrated connection between both campus size and chapter size and the relative success of fraternity/sorority chap-

ters. Lounsbury and DeNeui (1996) found in their study that there was a negative correlation between psychological sense of community on campus and the increase in institution size. Additionally, Lounsbury and DeNeui (1996) found that psychological sense of community was more positive among fraternity and sorority members. Psychological sense of community encompasses feelings of belongingness, togetherness, attachment, commitment to the setting, positive affect, concern for the welfare of the community, and an overall sense of community (Lounsbury & DeNeui, 1996).

In initial, unpublished research, one researcher looked at the progression of sisters of sororities toward what was termed “selfless sisterhood,” which developed among sorority women who had a common goal or purpose in their chapter (McCreary, 2015). What is interesting to note in the initial display of findings that McCreary (2015) provided, is that a chapter size where the women in the chapter have over 150 members results in the decreased ability to find common purpose, and thus a regression toward selfish sisterhood (what can I get from fellow members) as opposed to selfless sisterhood (what can I give to fellow members).

Conversely, one study found that fraternity gains in leadership and diversity were congruent in a regression model only when fraternity chapter sizes were bigger (Turk, 2012). Turk (2012) provides a relatively small explanation of the effect of openness to diversity and leadership based on chapter size, and does not find a topping out point as does McCreary (2015).

Research into institution size calls to mind the research of others who found that 150 people in a social organization is the maximum that a social organization could hold and still function to provide membership development (Dunbar, 1992; Gladwell, 2002). Fraternity chapter size should have a link with undergraduate college/university population size, but the literature is unclear on this.

Additionally, in a study by Gleason (2012), in-

stitution type was used to compare scores on the SRLS omnibus measure of the MSL. The SRLS Omnibus measure shows the overall gains that a student makes in all aspects of the SCM (Gleason, 2012). Gleason (2012) separated institutions by Carnegie Classification, and found no significant difference in the omnibus scores based on institution type. Carnegie Classification measures schools by type (e.g. Research Institution-High, Master’s level institution, bachelor’s level institution, etc.) (Gleason, 2012). Therefore, Gleason’s (2012) findings are relevant to the current study because bachelor level institutions tend to be smaller and research institutions tend to be larger. So, when Gleason is controlling for Carnegie classification he is really controlling for institution size. However, despite the significant similarities that Gleason found based on institution type, it is clear that Gleason did not differentiate by student characteristics or involvement (Gleason, 2012).

Analyzing the leadership, student, and moral development of fraternity men while controlling for institution size and sexuality will lead to a clearer understanding of the fraternity experience. What follows next is the theoretical and conceptual frame for the current study.

### The Theoretical & Conceptual Frame

The Social Change Model (SCM) is the primary theoretical frame for the current study and is the conceptual framework for the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) – the source of data used in this study (Astin & Astin, 1996; MSL, 2015a). The SCM posits that the Individual, the Group, and the Society move in concert with one another to foster leadership development on seven contingencies (e.g. the seven “C’s”) in order to foster the eighth C, change (Astin & Astin, 1996). These seven constructs work in concert with the particular components of the model, namely, the Individual, the Group, and the Society (Astin & Astin, 1996). In the current study, NIC fraternity members are compared

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with non-fraternity members on three of the constructs from the SCM that are measured on the MSL: Consciousness of Self (CS), Commitment, and Congruence.

CS is defined as the awareness of one's beliefs, values, and emotions which motivate an individual to take action (Astin & Astin, 1996). Commitment is defined as the purposeful investment of time and physical and psychological energy in the leadership development process (Astin & Astin, 1996). Congruence is defined as feeling, thinking, and acting with consistency, genuineness, and authenticity in connection with one's values (Astin & Astin, 1996). All three of these constructs are measures taken from the Individual frame of the model (Astin & Astin, 1996). CS development and gains have been associated in three earlier studies measuring self-authorship (Christman, 2013; Dowiak, 2016; Shalka, 2008; Shalka & Jones, 2010). And so, in the current study, when measuring for CS, we are performing a bivariate outcome analysis for CS and development along the continuum of self-authorship as distinguished by Baxter Magolda (2008; 2009).

Additionally, the current study uses the construct of internalized moral perspective (IMP), which is one leadership quality described within the model of authentic leadership (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). IMP is defined as the ability of leaders to violate the allegiances that they have to a group when the group acts against their individual value systems and threatens to hurt individuals (MSL, 2015a; Walumbwa et al, 2008). The component items that help to identify if a student is progressing toward the development of an IMP are Congruence and Commitment from the SCM, as well as Resiliency and Cognitive Skills. The measurement of Resiliency on the MSL analyzes how students deal with change, whether or not they follow through with goals regardless of obstacles, how they handle fear, anger, sadness, and stress, and how they react to problems (MSL, 2011). Cognitive Skills analyze the amount of cognitive

growth that students have made in college in relation to the ability to see relationships between ideas, critically analyze ideas and information, learn on one's own, and learn about new things (MSL, 2011).

Finally, by measuring for component items of IMP we are also measuring for component items of Kohlberg's sixth stage of moral reasoning (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn 2010; Kohlberg, 1987; Kohlberg, 2000). The sixth stage of moral development for Kohlberg involves the individual acting in a way that is universally ethical, meaning a way that will preserve human dignity regardless of personal consequences, when basic human dignity is being violated (Evans et al., 2010; Kohlberg, 1987; Kohlberg, 2000). Similarly, the development of an IMP is the ability to act against the interests of a group that one leads or belongs to when individuals may be harmed by the group (Walumbwa et al., 2008). The key, overarching construct existing within both measures of moral development is the ability to act when human dignity is violated (Dowiak, 2016; Evans et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Fraternity members who have developed to this stage of moral development in either model would be able to stand up to their fellow members when faced with a compromise to basic human dignity or human harm.

## Methodology

### Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

- Do NIC fraternity men differ from non-affiliated men in their development of Self-Authorship and Consciousness of Self, controlling for institution size and students' sexuality?
- Do fraternity men differ from non-affiliated men in the components of the MSL theoretically related to Internalized Moral Perspective and Kohlberg's sixth stage of moral reasoning, controlling for institution size and sexuality?

### Sample

The sample for the current study was taken from the 2012 administration of the MSL. Based on the 2012 administration of the MSL, data from approximately 77,150 students from 82 campuses in the United States, Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean constitute the entire collection of MSL Data (MSL, 2015b; MSL, 2015c). Of these, 22,680 seniors (MSL, 2015c) constituted the potential sample for this study, of which 8,025 constituted the actual study sample. This study will focus on the survey answers of senior students because the measurements that this study seeks to find related to gains in self-authorship and advanced moral development would only be characteristic of older students based on the underlying theories of student development and leadership that are central to the study.

The research variables for this study are divided into three groups: independent variables, dependent variables, and control variables.

### Independent Variables

The independent variable for this study is NIC fraternity membership. The MSL asks (Item 16) if students were part of student groups. Students who answered yes to 16q “social fraternities or sororities (ex. Panhellenic or Interfraternity Council groups such as Sigma Phi Epsilon or Kappa Gamma)” and who identified as male will be included in the NIC fraternity group (MSL, 2011). All other males, excluding members of multi-cultural fraternities (who were removed from the dataset because they answered yes to 16p: Multi-cultural Fraternities and Sororities), are in the non-affiliated group. The removal of multi-cultural fraternity men was done to ensure that there was no overlap between groups, and to focus membership on NIC fraternity men (Johnson, Johnson, & Dugan, 2015).

### Control Variables

The control variables for this study are institution size and sexuality.

*Institution Size.* Institutions for this study are

divided into three categories: small, medium, and large (Beazley, 2013). This is based on the IPEDS data related to undergraduate institutions as captured by the MSL: small institutions are those which are smaller than 5,000 undergraduate students; medium institutions are those with between 5,000 and 15,000 undergraduate students; and large institutions are above 15,000 undergraduate students.

*Sexuality.* The MSL survey asks students to identify their sexuality (Item 32). Answers are coded 1 through 5:

1. Heterosexual
2. Bisexual
3. Gay/Lesbian
4. Questioning
5. Rather Not Say

Students who identified as bisexual (2), Gay/Lesbian (3), Questioning (4), or Rather Not Say (5) were part of the GBQ group.

### Dependent Variables

*Consciousness of self.* CS is measured on the MSL through the main portion of the MSL, the SRLS-Rev 3 (Beazley, 2013) because it is one of the variables of the social change model. There are nine questions on the SRLS which make up the CS scale. Students respond to these items on a 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The students mean score of all of those self-reported outcomes will constitute their score on Consciousness of Self. For the CS Scale, a valid measure of internal reliability was obtained,  $\alpha = .79$ , as any Cronbach's alpha score above a .7 on newer scales is considered reliable (Field, 2009).

*Internalized Moral Perspective.* IMP is a composite variable and was determined by looking at four measures of the MSL based on the theoretical underpinnings of the principle (Walumbwa et al, 2008; MSL, 2015a). Congruence is measured on the SRLS-Rev 3 (MSL, 2011). The Cronbach's Alpha for Congruence was measured at  $\alpha = .846$ . There are seven items that measure for values congruence and students answer based

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on a 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Commitment, the third individual “C,” makes up the second component of IMP, and this too is measured on the SRLS-3. The Cronbach’s Alpha for Commitment was measured at  $\alpha=.817$ . Four items make up the scale for commitment. Next, Resiliency is a five point Likert scale rated from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and it measures the ability to thrive in the face of adversity while also learning to accept change. It is not measured as part of the SRLS and is a sub-scale on the MSL (MSL, 2011). The Cronbach’s Alpha for Resiliency was measured at  $\alpha=.898$ . Finally, cognitive skills are measured on a 4 point Likert scale from “not grown at all” to “grown very much,” and this is the final component of the IMP variable (MSL, 2011). The Cronbach’s Alpha for cognitive skills was measured at  $\alpha=.868$ . Four items constitute this final scale and it is measured separate from the SRLS-3.

To test the construct of IMP, all the items for each of the scales that were sub-constructs were also tested using a Cronbach’s Alpha, yielding internal reliability,  $\alpha=.92$ . All the reliability findings fell within the acceptable scale for analysis of the topics being covered (Field, 2009).

### *Limitations*

Because this study used a national dataset based on self-reported data, it is suggested that caution be used when making institutional policy based on these results. Likert scale data is susceptible to bias because of the halo effect, and national data samples do not give snapshots into the particular program on any one college campus (Ahren, Bureau, Ryan, & Torres, 2014; Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009; Hevel et al, 2014; Martin et al, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The fraternity experience is as much related to institutional support and best practices as any other campus program (McCreary, 2012b; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pike, 2003; Sasso, 2012b).

Another limitation is the limited way in which sexuality can be described in a quantitative study.

Dilley (2005) makes it clear that there are differences within the experiences of GBQ fraternity men that may impact their development because of the way they view their sexuality. The current study can only give a snapshot of gains related to the fraternity experience for GBQ students who participate in NIC fraternities and cannot do justice to the diversity of human sexuality that is existent.

### *Analysis*

Despite the fact that the dependent variables were ordinal, they were measured for normality, and when the dependent variables demonstrated that they were outside the bounds of normality, it was determined that the Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA was the best methodology for the study based on the research design. Analysis was performed by comparing like groups to one and other. For example, GBQ fraternity men were compared to GBQ non-affiliated men.

## **Results**

### *Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA Results*

Regarding students who identified as GBQ, regardless of campus size, there were no significant differences between fraternity members and non-fraternity members. On the other hand, heterosexual students who were fraternity members were significantly different than non-fraternity members in the measurement of CS at medium and large institutions. Table 1 shows the reporting statistics for fraternity men and non-fraternity men across groupings. It is clear that those students who demonstrated the lowest medians in comparison to their counterparts were students who are GBQ fraternity members attending small institutions.

### *Post Hoc Analysis*

As per Field (2009), for the two significant results found in the study, post hoc Analysis was performed via the Mann-Whitney U Test. Table 2 below gives the results of the Mann-Whitney U

Test which substantiated the results of the Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA. The Pearson's  $r$  gives effect size and is calculated by dividing the  $z$ -score by the square root of  $n$  (Field, 2009). In both cases, the mean ranks of fraternity men were

higher than their non-affiliated counter-parts. Therefore, greater gains were made in the area of CS by heterosexual fraternity men over their heterosexual counterparts who are not fraternity men, however based on the low Pearson's  $r$

**Table 1**

*Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA scores controlling for Sexuality and Institution Size*

Category	Measure	Total Participants (n)	DF	Median for Fraternity	Median for Non-Fraternity	H value	Sig. (p) value
GBQ Small	Consciousness	72	1	4.0	4.0	.000	.993
Hetero Small	Consciousness	624	1	4.1677	4.1677	.683	.409
GBQ Small	Congruence	72	1	4	4.2	.606	.436
Hetero Small	Congruence	624	1	4.6	4.4	1.696	.193
GBQ Small	Commitment	72	1	4.333	4.333	.188	.665
Hetero Small	Commitment	624	1	4.333	4.5	.006	.938
GBQ Small	Resiliency	72	1	3.85	4.0	.419	.654
Hetero Small	Resiliency	624	1	4.3	4.0	2.952	.086
GBQ Small	Cognitive Skills	72	1	3.3750	3.5	.404	.525
Hetero Small	Cognitive Skills	624	1	3.25	3.25	.240	.624
GBQ Med	Consciousness	358	1	4.1667	4.1667	.333	.564
Hetero Med	Consciousness	3,490	1	4.1667	4.1667	7.460	.006*
GBQ Med	Congruence	358	1	4.2	4.2665	.009	.924
Hetero Med	Congruence	3,490	1	4.2	4.2	.188	.665
GBQ Med	Commitment	358	1	4.4123	4.5	.100	.752
Hetero Med	Commitment	3,490	1	4.5	4.5	.341	.559
GBQ Med	Resiliency	358	1	3.9	4.0	.358	.549
Hetero Med	Resiliency	3,490	1	4.1	4.0905	1.441	.230
GBQ Med	Cognitive Skills	358	1	3.25	3.5	.472	.492
Hetero Med	Cognitive Skills	3,490	1	3.25	3.25	.292	.589
GBQ Large	Consciousness	300	1	4.333	4.000	2.292	.130
Hetero Large	Consciousness	3,181	1	4.1667	4.1667	9.597	.002*
GBQ Large	Congruence	300	1	4.4	4.2	.075	.784
Hetero Large	Congruence	3,181	1	4.2	4.2	.912	.340
GBQ Large	Commitment	300	1	4.5	4.333	3.016	.082
Hetero Large	Commitment	3,181	1	4.5	4.5	1.156	.282
GBQ Large	Resiliency	300	1	4.15	4.0	1.082	.298
Hetero Large	Resiliency	3,181	1	4.1	4.1	.711	.399
GBQ Large	Cognitive Skills	300	1	3.5	3.25	1.333	.248
Hetero Large	Cognitive Skills	3,181	1	3.25	3.25	2.358	.125

Note: Significance Values are marked with an asterisk (\*)

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scores, the effect size was minimal.

## Discussion and Implications

The findings in this study help to support the development of best practices and calls into

question the structure of leadership advisement provided by fraternity/sorority professionals. The SCM has been described as the ubiquitous model for student leadership development on college and university campuses in the United States (Dugan, 2008; Whitney, 2015). Since the

**Table 2**

*Mann-Whitney U Test Post Hoc Analysis on Heterosexual Fraternity Members and Non-affiliated Students at Medium and Large Institutions*

Category	N	Median Fraternity	Median Non-Fraternity	U Score	z-Score	Sig. (p) value	r score
Hetero Medium CS	3,490	4.1667	4.1667	684,846.00	-2.731	.006	-0.046
Hetero Large CS	3,181	4.1667	4.1667	582,600.00	-3.098	.002	-0.052

SCM is considered by researchers to be the ubiquitous model of leadership development for college students, it is clear that the fraternity experience is not aligning to the leadership model that U.S. colleges and universities are using to teach leadership development; this and other studies demonstrate a lack of gains for fraternity men along the SCM leadership continuum (Dowiak, 2016; Dugan, 2008; Martin et al, 2014; Shalka, 2008; Shalka & Jones, 2010; Supple, 2015; Wisner, 2013). This finding supports the possibility that the fraternity/sorority profession is failing at advancing leadership education for members, especially if fraternities are being billed as the premiere leadership experience on college campuses (Biddix et al, 2014; Dugan, 2008; Friedman, 2008; McCreary, 2012b; Sasso, 2012b; Whitney, 2015). Establishing best practices around leadership education would entail fraternity/sorority professionals educating students for the SCM. This would help students not only in their leadership development, but in their student and moral development as well (Christman, 2013; Dowiak, 2016; Shalka, 2008; Shalka & Jones, 2010).

For GBQ fraternity men, we can see that gains in self-authorship and Kohlberg's sixth stage of moral development are advancing at the same rate as non-affiliated GBQ men. As Pike

(2003) suggests, parity of measures does not justify the fraternity experience, nor does it avail the fraternity experience for these students. The fraternity experience on any campus requires the substantial input of talent, time, and money by participants, and therefore showing parity with others students is not demonstrating that the investment is worth the cost. This lack of clear gains over non-fraternity GBQ men demonstrates that the fraternity experience may not be the premiere leadership opportunity it portends to be on most college campuses for GBQ students (Friedman, 2008).

Regarding the findings related to heterosexual students, the current study provides insight into the fraternity experience when controlling for campus size. With the exception of two significant findings related to CS at medium and large institutions, which did not demonstrate a strong effect, fraternity men showed parity in every other area measured with non-affiliated men. Additionally, none of the variables associated with IMP was found to be significant. This brings into question how bystander intervention programs could be successful when students in fraternities show no development toward IMP. Bystander intervention programs ask the bystander to intervene when the organization

is wrong (McCreary, 2012a). Having an IMP is necessary for students to be able to stand up for human dignity and against their fraternity when their fraternity is wrong. IMP is clearly not a developed perspective among fraternity men, regardless of campus size. Until students can stand up to their peers regarding negative situations that plague some fraternities, substantial change in regard to the fraternity experience will not take place and the evidence of that is visible today (Allan & Madden, 2008; Fernandez & Pérez-Peña, 2015; Flanagan, 2014a; Flanagan, 2014b; McCreary, 2012a; Sasso, 2012a).

While the current study examined a large cluster of constructs, all of these constructs are indicative of what fraternities should be able to provide to students based on the billing of the fraternity experience as a leadership development program and on the ubiquitous presence of the SCM in leadership education in U.S. institutions of higher education (Biddix et al., 2014; Dugan, 2008; Friedman, 2008; Whitney, 2015). The fraternity experience is also intended to be a moral compass through values-development; it is supposed to provide training that creates better, ethical leaders; and it is supposed to provide the ability to develop an internal foundation that should assist the student in their self-authorship because of its strong symbolic frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Callais, 2002; Callais, 2005; Dowiak, 2016; Eberly, 1967; King, 2010; Shalka, 2008; Shalka & Jones, 2010; Schutts & Shelley, 2014). Therefore, this parity in scores represents the need for fraternity/sorority professionals to begin to focus on best practices that provides for moral education, as was called for by earlier researchers (McCreary, 2012b), and for better leadership education models that are aligned with the social change model and the model of authentic leadership (Astin & Astin, 1996; Dugan, 2008; Walumbwa et al, 2008; Whitney, 2015).

The findings in this study represent a positive contribution to what is known about both the GBQ and straight fraternity experience on

today's college campuses. Sometimes the adoption of the null hypothesis, as has happened most often in this study, identifies where we need improvement in current practice.

### *Implications for Further Research*

Further research needs to be conducted that examines the student development, moral, and leadership gains that GBQ students make in the context of their fraternity membership. GBQ fraternity members' experiences have oftentimes been typographies. It is time to go beyond describing the experience and for future research to analyze how GBQ fraternity students experience student development, moral, and leadership gains related to their fraternity membership.

Additionally, as called for by McCreary (2012a), more research is necessary into already existent programs that have eliminated the traditional new member process to see if that experience, which centers more on developmental education in fraternities, has produced any results that show differences between these students and students who emerge from a more traditional chapter. This may have a large impact on moral, leadership, and student development.

Finally, further research is necessary on the moral and values development education of fraternity men, as educating for moral and values development is one way to help students go through the process of values discovery leading to self-authorship and encourages bystander intervention in fraternal organizations. It is important for us to show what works and does not work when educating for morality.

### **Conclusion**

The current study examined the relationship between NIC fraternity membership, sexuality, institution size, and leadership, moral, and student development. The study found that with the exception of straight fraternity men at large and medium institutions, there was no difference in the gains made by fraternity and non-affiliated

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men in the leadership, moral, and student development variables that were studied. The current study gave examples for developing best practices and provided a useful critique of the fraternity/sorority profession and how its members engage in leadership development of fraternity students.

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