ABSTRACT
        Attitudes toward pledging among college students were
examined to determine if attitudes differed according to race or gender.
Participants were surveyed at two locations including attendees from a Greek
national convention and students enrolled at a large urban college campus.
Results showed a significant main effect for race and gender but failed to
find an interaction effect. Participants differed in their perceptions of the
process known as pledging. These findings suggest the importance of helping
educate college organizations about their roles and responsibilities for
pledging. The way in which that education about pledging occurs may take
different forms given cultural and gender differences in perceptions about
the pledging process. Also summarizes previous research concerning Greek
affiliation. Appendices include sample items from the Survey of Attitudes
About Pledging Survey and definitions of key terms. (Author/MKA)

Running head: RACE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PLEDGING

Race and Gender Differences in Pledging Attitudes

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Abstract

Attitudes toward pledging among college students were examined to determine if attitudes differed according to race or gender. Participants were surveyed at two locations including attendees from a Greek national convention and students enrolled at a large urban college campus. Results showed a significant main effect for race and gender but failed to find an interaction effect. Participants differed in their perceptions of the process known as pledging. These findings suggest the importance of helping educate college organizations about their roles and responsibilities for pledging. The way in which that education about pledging occurs may take different forms given cultural and gender differences in perception about the pledging process.

Race and Gender Differences in Pledging Attitudes

While college and universities have involved fraternities
and sororities for over 200 years (Hunt & Rent, 1994), little is
known about their time honored practice of entry known as
pledging. To date, research concerning students' attitudes about
experiences of pledging are not clear. Rarely understood as an
essential college student developmental task, the question may be
asked, of what importance is pledging to the college experience.
Pledging can be viewed as a rite of passage, a ritual that is
important for marking the successful passage from one position in
the social structure to another (van Gennep, cited in Butler &
Glennen, 1991). Why is it important for colleges and their
students to make sense of this unique rite of passage and place
of entry into college organizations including fraternities,
sororities, and other similar social groups?

Recent years have witnessed an unfortunate rash of pledging
accidents, assaults, and even deaths at the hands of fellow
students (Buchanan, 1982; Collision, 1988; Shea, 1994). College
administrators, student development educators, and student
leaders all decry these incidents but none can ignore them. For
this reason, understanding how the process of pledging occurs
helps students make better choices about their participation in a
social organization which requires pledging activities as an
entry requirement. Moreover, since thousands of students go
through some form of pledging on college campuses each year,

understanding how pledging influences a student's growth and development seems an important and necessary research endeavor.

Pledging may be described as the process of becoming a member of a fraternity or sorority. College organizations including social and academic sororities and fraternities, honorary societies, and even residence hall groups utilize formal or informal mechanisms to bring new members into the organization. Pledging activities may include a range of events from community service projects to learning fraternity and sorority history, as well as performing tasks or favors for Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Pledging activities can take only a few hours or extend several weeks in duration. In general, pledging seeks to acquaint or orient the prospective new member as to the rules, cultures, and beliefs of the group or organization. Through the process of pledging, the pledgee becomes acquainted with the organization and its various customs. In addition, pledging gives an organization or group an opportunity to screen or select its most attractive or desirable "recruits." Through pledging, an organization may determine which recruit is the most committed to membership. As such, an organization may create activities that serve to test or challenge a recruit's commitment to the prospective group. It is within this context that the potential for harm evolves. If an organization elects to test prospective members through the use of physical activity or the assessment of psychological acumen,

then the possibility of doing harm to the recruit intensifies.
Whenever such physical or psychological activity is recklessly
administered, such actions may constitute a form of abuse known
as hazing.

A third and final role for pledging is that of facilitating
entry and the assignment of organizational tasks upon entry.
Pledging helps a recruit and the organization to identify service
roles and tasks in which the student will become involved after
full acceptance into the group. Leadership skills, volunteer
service, and related skills are identified during the pledging
process.

In summary, pledging is a process or set of activities
designed to acquaint the recruit with the prospective
organization or group. The set of activities that comprise
pledging are not uniformly determined. There is considerable
variation from group to group and across recruits. While the
process is perceived to be developmental in nature, not all
pledging activities are beneficial. Highly publicized pledging
events which have led to serious injury or death are few, in
comparison to the thousands who pledge each year. Nonetheless,
these harmful activities are the focus of legal actions (Meyer,
1986; Richmond, 1989) and serve to cloud understanding about
pledging. For this reason, a study was undertaken to measure
attitudes toward pledging among college students and to determine
whether there are differences between black and white, male and

female, Greek respondents.   Three research questions were
important to this investigation.   (1) Are there differences
between Black and White college students in their attitudes
toward pledging? (2) Do men and women have different attitudes
toward pledging?   (3) How do race and gender interact to
influence attitudes toward pledging?

Research on Greek affiliation

Several researchers have hypothesized that Greek membership
positively impacts values and psychosocial, identity and moral
reasoning development (Hughes & Winston, 1987; Hunt & Rent, 1994;
Winston & Saunders, 1987). However, other studies have suggested
that Greek affiliation can restrict the moral reasoning abilities
of Greek members (Kilgannon & Erwin, 1992; Sanders, 1990).
Kilgannon & Erwin (1992) conducted a 2 year longitudinal study
investigating the impact of Greek affiliation on the development
of student identity and moral reasoning. Greek men scored lower
on average in the confidence component of identity development
than did Greek women and non-Greek men and women. Non-Greek women
scored higher on average in moral reasoning than did Greek men
and women and non-Greek men.

Hunt & Rent (1990) found a positive relationship between a
Greek member's involvement and certain aspects of psychosocial
development. They found that involvement in a fraternity and
sorority and fraternal participation with other organized campus
activities was significantly related to establishing and

clarifying purpose, developing mature interpersonal

relationships, and establishing intimacy (Hunt & Rent, 1990).

Still other studies have examined the relationship between

Greek membership and interpersonal values (Astin, 1977;

Bohrnstedt, 1969). Hughes & Winston (1987) noted that fraternity

membership may impede or slow the developmental process of

independence and freedom in interpersonal relationships. Pledgees

become more homogenous or similar to each other and value

leadership more highly than do independents. Some studies examine

the relationship between Greek membership and changes in values

(Wilder, Hoyt, Doren, Hauck, & Zettle, 1978; Wilder, Hoyt,

Shuster, Wilder, and Carney, 1986). Hughes & Winston (1987) have

found that fraternity affiliation did not differentially affect

members' values or rate of change in values.

Pascarella, Edison, Whitt, Nora, Hagedorn, and Terenzini

(1996) conducted a longitudinal study on the cognitive effects of

Greek affiliation on first year college students. They found

that joining a fraternity during the first year of college has a

significant negative impact on four cognitive outcomes (reading

comprehension, mathematics, critical thinking, and composite

cognitive achievement) for men. For women, joining a sorority

during the first year of college also had a negative impact on

cognitive development, but only the effects for reading

comprehension and composite achievement were statistically

significant. However, additional results of their analysis

indicated that there were dramatic differences of fraternity membership on cognitive effects for White men and men of color. Pascerella et al (1995) found that fraternity membership had a modest positive influence for men of color on all four cognitive outcomes.

In summary, while some of the literature seems to suggest that Greek affiliation has negative effects on moral reasoning, developmental tasks of independence, and cognitive outcomes, Pascerella et al's study suggests that Greek affiliation may have positive differential effects on students based on race and gender.

There has been much publicity surrounding hazing incidents during pledging (Buchanan, 1982; Collison, 1988; Curry, 1989; Meyer, 1986; Reese, 1993; Richmond, 1987, 1989; Rodriguez, 1995). Deaths due to hazing incidents are a concern for colleges and their student organizations. Hazing incidents reported in many Greek organizations range from alcohol abuse (Tampke, 1990) to physical abuse (Shea, 1994). Despite these findings, little is known about the psychological characteristics (i.e. attitudes) of those individuals who commit hazing acts (Baier & Williams, 1983).

The present study is designed to measure attitudes toward pledging among college students. A second purpose is to determine whether there are any differences in attitudes between Black and White, male and female Greek college students. There were three

hypotheses tested in this study. First, there will be no
significant difference in attitudes toward pledging between Black
and White college students. Second, there will be no significant
difference in attitudes toward pledging between male and female
college students. Third, there will not be a significant
interaction effect of race and gender in attitudes toward
pledging.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were undergraduate students
chosen from two sources. College students at a large urban
university and conference attendees at Greek regional and
national conferences were recruited for this study. The sample
consisted of 280 students, 151 women and 127 men. Two respondents
did not indicate gender. There were 143 Black respondents and 121
White respondents. The numbers of other racial/ethnic groups
were too small to report. In addition, 229 were Greek while 49
were non-Greek. Two respondents did not indicate Greek/non-Greek
status. Non-Greeks were recruited as a potential moderator
variable in the analysis.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used to measure pledging and hazing
attitudes was the Survey of Attitudes About Pledging (SAAP), an
instrument especially designed for this study (Cokley, 1992). It
is a 32 item, 5-point Likert scale. A rating of 1 indicates

strong disagreement with the statement while a rating of 5.
indicates strong agreement with the statement. The instrument
produces a score where the larger numbers (4 and 5) represent
support for pledging and the smaller numbers (1 and 2) represent
lack of support for pledging. Items for this instrument were
obtained from (1) a review of the literature concerning pledging
and hazing, and (2) interviews with both Greek and non-Greek
students. Items within the survey addressed such issues as
level of difficulty of pledging, physical and mental
requirements, and dressing alike. (see Appendix A for sample
survey items). Five key terms were defined on the survey to
ensure that all respondents had the same working knowledge of the
terms. These terms included fraternity/sorority, Greek, pledgee,
pledge, and Big Brother/Big Sister. (see Appendix B for
definitions). The initial content validity was determined by an
administrator, a student affairs professional, and a faculty
person, as well as an additional faculty expert in instrument
development. The administrator is the Assistant Dean of Students
and Research, while the student affairs professional is the
director of Greek Affairs. One faculty member has expertise in
the area of student development in higher education, while the
other faculty expert in instrument development is the co-author
of the Coping Resources Inventory for Stress (CRIS)(Matheny,
Curlette, Aycock, Pugh & Taylor, 1987) and the Basic Adlerian
Scales for Interpersonal Success (BASIS-A)(Kern, Wheeler &

Curlette, 1993). Comments from these experts were used to screen items for ambiguity.

There were two issues that had to be addressed before constructing the survey instrument. First, hazing needed to be operationally defined. For this study, hazing is defined as any act which requires the physical, mental, or public degradation of an individual who desires membership into an organization. Second, because of the emotionally charged and pejorative nature of the word, hazing was intentionally not defined on the survey. It was used only once on the survey. This action was done to manage any socially desirable response bias by respondents. Items on the survey that characterized the acts of hazing were consistent with the operational definition of hazing without actually using the word itself.

Procedure

The surveys were distributed and collected by two Greek Affairs professionals in attendance at the Greek conferences. Participants were given a brief description of the study, informed that participation was voluntary, and given instructions on completing the survey. Consent forms were then distributed. Data were collected from participants at the beginning of presentations given by the Greek Affairs professionals. In addition, one of the authors distributed and collected the surveys at various Greek and non-Greek student meetings at the public southeastern university. The author also gave a brief

description of the study, informed that participation was
voluntary, and gave instructions on completing the survey.
Consent forms were then distributed, and upon collection the
surveys were distributed.

Data Analysis & Results

An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.
Because of unequal group sizes, the homogeneity of variance
assumption was tested using Cochran's C test. The degree of
heterogeneity was not significant (F=.272, df=4,62, p >.05), thus
indicating equal variances. A two-way factorial ANOVA was
employed to determine any significant main effects and
interaction effects of race and gender. In addition, due to the
small Non-Greek sample (49), a two-way factorial ANCOVA was
employed controlling for Non-Greek Status to ensure that any
significant results were not due to non-Greek influence. Data
analysis was completed on only 251 respondents due to missing
data. Descriptive statistics consisting of percentage analyses,
means and standard deviations were performed.

Insert Tables 1,2 & 3

The first question investigated was whether there was a
significant main effect difference in pledging attitudes due to
race. The two-way ANOVA for main effect of race was significant

$F(1,247) = 6.61$, $\underline{p} < .01$.   The two-way ANCOVA for main effect of race with Greek status covaried out was also significant $(1,247) = 10.66$, $\underline{p} < .001$.

Attitudes about physical requirements of pledging indicated that 75% of Black students disagreed with this while 94% of White students disagreed. Among Black students, 37% agreed that Pledgees should be required to dress alike, while only six percent of White students agreed. Among White students, four percent agreed that Pledgees should eat the same foods while 16% of Black students agreed. Forty-four percent of Black students agreed that Pledgees should undergo mentally or psychologically challenging activities. In contrast, 16% of White students agreed with that statement. Almost three-fourths (73%) of White students supported the belief that the quality of new members would be worse if pledging was banned, while almost half (47%) of Black students agreed. Forty-eight percent of Black students thought that it was okay to require Pledgees to perform tasks for their Big Brothers/Big Sisters, while 36% of White students agreed. Only about three percent of White students thought that it was necessary for Pledgees to be subservient to Big Brothers/Big Sisters while 21.2% of Black students agreed. Over three-fourths (76%) of Black students thought that Greek organizations are elite organizations, while over half (57%) of White students agreed. Forty-six percent of Black students agreed that an application and interview are sufficient criteria

to be admitted into a Greek organization while 77% of White students agreed.

The second question investigated was whether there was a significant main effect difference in pledging attitudes due to gender. The two-way ANOVA for main effect of gender was significant $F(1, 247) = 24.63$, $p < .001$. The two-way ANCOVA for main effect of gender with Greek status covaried out also was significant $F(1, 247) = 21.08$, $p < .001$.

Sixty-five percent of males did not think that individuals should be let into Greek organizations if they desired no pledging, while 42% of females held the same view. While 47% of males thought that joining a Greek organization should be difficult only 25% of females agreed. Twenty-three percent of females thought that Pledgees should undergo mentally or psychologically challenging activities compared to 42% of males agreed. While almost half (49%) of males thought that it was necessary to have an intense process only 35% of women agreed. Fifty-three percent of females agreed that an application and interview are sufficient criteria to be admitted into a Greek organization while 68% of males agreed. While 31% of males reported that they would report pledging activities that were clearly prohibited by law only 11% of females agreed.

The third question investigated was whether there was a significant interaction effect difference in pledging attitudes due to race and gender. The two-way ANOVA for interaction effect

of race and gender was not significant F(1, 247) = .295, p <

.587. The two-way ANCOVA for interaction effect of race and

gender with Greek status covaried out was also not significant

F(1, 247) = .011, p < .918.

Insert Tables 4 & 5

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis, that there are no significant

differences in attitudes about pledging and hazing based on race,

was rejected by this study. The data show that while both Black

and White students were not in favor of physical requirements in

pledging, Black students were more likely to be in favor of

mentally and psychologically challenging activities for Pledgees,

44% to 16%, respectively. Although more Black students (21%)

than White students (3%) supported the idea of Pledgees being

subservient, neither group endorsed it strongly. Not

surprisingly, Black students were more likely to endorse Pledgees

dressing alike (36.6%), and to a lesser extent, eating alike

(15.7%), than White students (5.9% & 4.2%). The finding that over

75% of Black students feel that Greek organizations are elite

organizations seems to be consistent with Kimbrough's (1995)

study that showed that 81.5% of Black Greek members see

themselves as scholarly, 92.6% see themselves as leaders, and

100% see Black Greek organizations as assets to the campus. The

differences in attitudes between Blacks and Whites may be explained in part to cultural differences in experiences of both groups. There seems to be more emphasis on proving worthiness through tests of mental toughness and acuity in Black Greek organizations than White Greek organizations. The emphasis on mental toughness and acuity might be explained by Blacks valuing human activity focused on inner development more so than Whites (Carter 1990). Also, an adulthood rite for many Black males is the ability to control emotions and the strength to accept taunts and teasing (Harris, 1995; Kunjufu, 1986) while being able to think quickly on one's feet. This cultural frame of reference is often used to justify what might be labeled as hazing activities.

The second hypothesis, that there would be no difference in attitudes between males and females, was not supported by this study. While both males and females generally favor individuals going through a process of proving themselves worthy of the organization, males were more often than females to not favor considering individuals who did not want to pledge but who still wanted to be a part of the organization, 65% to 42%, respectively. As expected, males were more likely than females to believe that joining a Greek organization should be difficult (47%) and that Pledgees should undergo mentally or psychologically challenging activities (42%) than females (25% and 23%, respectively.) Surprisingly, females were less likely than males to support the idea of an application and interview

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being sufficient criteria to be admitted into a Greek

organization (52.9% and 67.7%, respectively). Equally surprising

was the finding that more males (31.2%) than females (11.2%)

would report pledging activities clearly prohibited by law. These

results might be due to female perceptions of the pledge process

as being more relational than male perceptions of the pledge

process.   Activities that constitute pledging may be defined

differently for females than for males.   It is possible that

pledging activities for women are more nurturing than male

pledging activities.   If this is the case, then it would not be

surprising that females would be more opposed to minimum criteria

of an application and interview for fear that this would devalue

the interpersonal relationships developed as a result of pledging

activities. This valuing of interpersonal relationships and

rejection of objective criteria would be consistent with the

findings of Gilligan (1977, 1982). Overall these results are

consistent with the different social-psychological experiences of

men and women. Male development tends to place more emphasis on

autonomy, separation, and physical competence whereas female

development tends to place more emphasis on connectedness,

interpersonal relationships, and caring (Gilligan, 1977, 1982).

The third hypothesis, that there would not be a significant

interactive effect between race and gender, was supported by the

data. While both race and gender exhibited significant main

effects, it would appear that race and gender means were not

conditionally ordered. In other words, the rank order of the means indicated that men scored higher women in all circumstances regardless of race.

There are several implications from the data for student affairs professionals. Attitudes about pledging Greek organizations differ based on race and gender. The experiences of gaining membership into Greek organizations differs widely among college students.

In trying to eliminate hazing, administrators and student affairs professionals must be careful not to impose institutional values at the expense of student's cultural values. It is a judicious exercise to ferret out those activities which cause senseless harm to students from those activities which, when properly implemented, facilitate cooperation, personal and civic responsibility, resiliency, and a sense of purpose.

The key to managing pledging while dealing with hazing incidents must include an attitude change at the organizational level (Reese, 1993). Change in behavior must be preceded by a change in attitude. Patterns of misbehavior in the Greek system are symptoms of organizational weakness (Reese, 1993). Student affairs professionals and administrators must work in conjunction with the national Greek organization's leadership to articulate, implement, and regulate organizational mechanisms which promote the psychosocial development of Greek members.

Caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings to all college students. Because the sample was not random and consisted primarily of members of Greek organizations, these findings might not reflect the attitudes of nonmembers of Greek organizations. As with all survey research, the problem of social desirability bias is a significant one (Sudman & Bradburn, 1982). Respondents may answer items in ways that make them appear to be good people. However, question wording and the lack of a response set with a judgmental tone (e.g. "good" or "bad") should have reduced potentially biased responses.

Continued research using this survey needs to be done to determine if the differences in attitudes detected in this study are valid and reliable. Future studies might consider looking at stages of moral development and attitudes about pledging. An examination of these two areas might reveal a relationship.

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Table 1.   Average SAAP Scores and Standard Deviation by Gender

Male	Female
x=3.24	x=2.98
sd=.42	sd=.39

Table 2.   Average SAAP Scores and Standard Deviation by Race

Black	White
$x=3.14$	$x=3.05$
$sd=.42$	$sd=.43$

Table 3. Average SAAP Scores by Race and Gender

	Black	White
Male	x=3.33	x=3.17
Female	x=3.03	x=2.92

Table 4

<u>2-Way ANOVA GENDER BY RACE</u>

		Mean	
Source	DF	Square	F
Main Effects	2	2.66	15.623**
GENDER	1	4.163	25.832**
RACE	1	1.163	7.220*
2-Way Interactions	1	.083	.514
GENDER RACE	1	.083	.514
Explained	3	1.803	11.189**
Residual	247	.161	
Total	250	.181	

*p < .01.   **p < .001

Table 5

2-Way ANCOVA GENDER BY RACE

Source	DF	Mean Square	F
Covariates	1	.746	4.698*
STATUS	1	.746	4.698*
Main Effects	2	2.686	16.905**
GENDER	1	3.542	22.294**
RACE	1	1.829	11.515**
2-Way Interactions	1	.014	.09
GENDER RACE	1	.014	.09
Explained	4	1.533	9.650**
Residual	246	.159	
Total	250	.181	

*p < .03   **p < .001

Appendix A

Sample items from SAAP Survey

1.   It should be difficult to join a Greek organization.

2.   Individuals should be required to participate in any
     physically strenuous activity as a prerequisite to belonging
     to a Greek organization.

3.   Pledgees should be required to dress alike while pledging.

4.   It is necessary to have an intense pledge process.

5.   It is okay to require Pledgees to perform tasks for their Big
     Brothers/Big Sisters.

6.   Greek organizations are elite organizations.
7.   Greek organizations should accept any individual who meets
     minimum requirements (i.e. grade point average).

8.   If I were a member of a Greek organization I would voice
     concern about any pledging activities that I was not
     comfortable with.

9.   Pledging and hazing are the same behaviors.
10. Pledging is unnecessary and should be banned.

Appendix B

Definition of key words

Fraternity/Sorority: An organization that uses Greek letters for its name and offers lifelong membership

Greek: A member of a fraternity or sorority

Pledgee: A person who is working to become an active member of a fraternity/sorority

Pledge: The process of becoming a member of a fraternity/sorority

Big Brother/Big Sister: A term used by Pledgees when referring to active members of fraternities/sororities

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