

THE INFLUENCE OF PEERS ON FRATERNITY BEHAVIORS:
THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NORMING & MASCULINITY

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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NORMING AND MASCULINITY

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Abstract

College drinking has been identified as one of the most serious problems on college campuses, and Greek organizations, specifically fraternities, are often identified as groups with particularly excessive alcohol use (O'Brien, McNamara, McCoy, Sutfin, Wolfson & Rhodes, 2013). The peer influence of brothers in fraternities has been identified as the greatest influence on drinking behaviors for members of those organizations (Borsari & Carey, 2003). Shaped by assumptions about what it means to be masculine boys and men will conform to the expectations of their peers by engaging in behaviors and expressing attitudes that are actually contradictory to what they truly believe in order to be accepted (Pollack, 2000). Thus, better understanding of how social norms play a role in a fraternity member's drinking behaviors is important for universities, prevention specialists, and student affairs practitioners in order to address excessive and binge drinking. The theoretical frameworks used throughout this study are theories of social norms and masculinities and allowed for the examination the role peers play in influencing drinking behaviors of fraternity men at a large, public institution in the Midwest (The University of Missouri or Mizzou). A qualitative case study methodology was employed to collect data from participants via a focus group and individual follow up interviews. From this, four overarching themes developed: (1) to be a brother, (2) competition, (3) liquid bonding, and (4) what it means to be a man. Within the context of the study, implications for practice and recommendations for additional research are included.

Chapter One: Introduction

College drinking has been identified as one of the most serious problems on college campuses (Brown-Rice, Furr, & Jorgensen, 2015; Capone, Wood, Borsari, & Laird, 2007). Every year, alcohol abuse among students is the most significant health concern on college campuses (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [NIAAA], 2004; Thombs & Briddick, 2000). National statistics show at least 1,800 college student deaths a year are related to alcohol (Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009). High-risk drinking also results in serious injuries, assaults, and other health and academic problems, and is a major factor in damage to institutional property (NIAAA, 2004). An important fact remains: the consequences of excessive college are a major social issue plaguing college campus (Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005; Turrisi, Mallett, Mastroleo & Larimer, 2006).

For the past 2 decades, research on alcohol use and misuse has provided valuable information for administrators in higher education (Barry, 2007). Much of this research has focused on heavy episodic drinking, generally defined as consuming five or more drinks on a single occasion (Capone et al., 2007). Also, undergraduate alcohol abuse is one of the most significant health hazards for college students based on the prevalence of alcohol related issues and binge drinking (Borsari & Carey, 1999; NIAA, 2009; Thombs & Briddick, 2000).

Statement of Problem

While alcohol issues exist throughout campuses, Greek organizations are often identified as groups with particularly excessive alcohol use (O'Brien, McNamara, McCoy, Sutfin, Wolfson & Rhodes, 2013). A variety of issues relating to alcohol and

Greek organizations include high use patterns of members and negative consequences that members have experienced due to alcohol (DeSimone, 2009). In addition, approximately 40%-45% of students report they participate in heavy episodic drinking known as binge drinking (Hingson et al., 2005); however, the number of Greek students who binge drink is even higher (Martens, Page, Mowry, Daman, Taylor & Cimi, 2006; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008; Wechsler & Kuo, 2000).

Fraternities and sororities have existed on U. S. campuses since 1800 and continue to grow with current membership over 750,000 students (North-American Interfraternity Conference, 2015). Becoming a member of these organizations provides students with a sense of trust and security that is a result of belonging to a group and identifying with others within a community (Hunt & Rentz, 1994). Unfortunately, many of the positive aspects of membership in the organization often are accompanied by the presence of alcohol (Borsari & Carey, 1999).

Greek organizations are an important sub-population to examine on college campuses when addressing issues of alcohol for a variety of reasons. One reason, as previously noted, is Greek students have higher drinking levels compared to nonmembers of Greek organizations (Capone et al., 2007; Presley, Harrold, Scouten, Lyerla, & Meilman, 1994; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008; Wechsler & Kuo, 2000). When compared with nonmembers, Greek students have more problems with drinking, have more tolerant views on getting drunk for fun, and hold more positive beliefs about drinking (Capone et al., 2007; Cashin, Presley, & Meilman, 1998; Faulkner, Alcorn, & Garvin, 1989). Further, “such use of alcohol often leads to the

Animal House notion that the Greek experience on many campuses involves the largely unfettered use of alcohol” (Borsari & Carey, 1999, p. 31) that can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Due to the unique environment of fraternities and sororities, there are multiple factors that can influence the drinking behavior of members, such as the influence of older members, leaders, and other Greek organizations (Cashin et al., 1998; Thombs & Briddick, 2000). Several theories support that there is a greater influence on individual behavior if the individual is a member of a group and if the group has a close bond (Borsari & Carey, 2003). The quality of peer relationships in terms of level of intimacy, stability, and perceived support appears to be important in determining the magnitude and direction of peer influences on drinking (Borsari & Carey, 2003). Studies have found that greater identification with a given group moderates associations between perceived drinking norms for that group and one's own drinking (Neighbors, Larimer, Geisner, & Knee, 2004; Read, Wood, Davidoff, McLacken, & Campbell, 2002). Analyzing the drinking behavior among college students, men outnumber women in virtually every category of comparison from consumption to frequency of drinking and incidence of problem drinking (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986; Harper & Harris, 2011; Wechsler, Dowdall, Maenner, Glendhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998). The numbers are even higher if the men are members of a fraternity (Harper & Harris, 2011).

Further, the peer influence in fraternities and sororities has been identified as a strong reference group (Borsari & Carey, 2003). In fact, these reference groups hold the greatest influence on drinking behaviors for members of those organizations (Borsari & Carey, 2003). In particular, fraternity men are at risk of replicating perceived drinking

behaviors of their male peers (Harper & Harris, 2011). Male peers also have profound influence on gender performance more than even parental influence (Pollack, 2000). Shaped by assumptions about that it means to be masculine, boys, and men, will conform to the expectations of their peers by engaging in behaviors and expressing attitudes that are actually contradictory to what they truly believe in order to be accepted (Pollack, 2000). Thus, better understanding how the notion of how masculinity and hypermasculinity play a role in a fraternity members drinking behaviors is important for universities, prevention specialist, and student affairs practitioners, in order to address excessive and binge drinking.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

Because of the drinking culture among Greek students, and fraternities in particular, and the influence peers have in shaping this culture, the purpose of this study is to understand the role peers play in influencing drinking behaviors of their brothers. Moreover, informed by social norming and influence of men and masculinities on individual behavior, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do members in one fraternity at the University of Missouri perceive the influence other members have on drinking behaviors within the fraternity?
 - 1a. How do these perceptions influence their own drinking behavior?
2. What role does masculinity play in their drinking behaviors?

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks “represent ways of thinking about a study, or ways of representing how complex things work they way they do” (Bordage, 2009, p. 313). One of the important features of conceptual or theoretical frameworks is they provide lenses

for viewing reality, therefore allowing the viewer to focus on or exclude certain entities, processes, and relationships (Bordage, 2009). The theoretical frameworks used throughout this study are theories of social norms (Berkowitz, 2004; Perkins, 2003) and masculinities (Connell, 2005; Harper & Harris, 2011; Kimmel & Messner, 2007; Laker & Davis, 2011).

Social Norms Theory

Social norms theory explains how individuals accurately believe the behaviors of peers to be different from their own (Berkowitz, 2004). This is also referred to as “pluralistic ignorance” (Miller & McFarland, 1991). These misperceptions manifest themselves through individuals choosing risky behaviors rather than healthy or protective behaviors (Berkowitz, 2004; Perkins, 2003). The theory purports that individuals overestimate the rates of occurrence of risky behaviors of others and underestimate protective behaviors (Berkowitz, 2004). Examples of risky behavior include using drugs, alcohol, unsafe sex, and smoking while the protective behaviors include using a designated driver, pacing one’s drinks, and avoiding drinking games (Hingson et al., 2005). Pluralistic ignorance will often lead individuals to alter their own behaviors to approximate the misperceived norm, which in turn, can lead them to rationalize such behaviors (Berkowitz, 2004).

Social norms theory is informed by social learning theory, which holds that subjective norms (i.e., perceived expectations) and attitudes of peer groups are determinants of behavior (Berkowitz, 2004). This theory hypothesizes that individuals are highly influenced by what they think their peers are doing and thinking and then conform to what they believe the norm, or what the social expectations are of them (Berkowitz,

2004). For example, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health found college students perceived 60% of their peers drink three or more times a week, while other researchers found that only 33% of them drank that often (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008). Most students overestimate the actual drinking behavior, which leads them to consider high-risk drinking to be the norm (Bruce & Keller, 2007). Thus, social norming theory would lead us to predict that college students would choose to drink more often because they perceive that behavior is “normal.” Misperceptions can lead to indirect peer pressure to drink heavily, which is particularly true for new members of the organization (e.g., fraternity new members, first-year students, who wish to be accepted by older members (Borsari & Cari, 1999). Given the socially understood relationship between men, competition, risk-taking (Laker & Davis, 2011), this begs the question what role does masculinity also play in alcohol use among fraternities?

Men and Masculinity

Scholars point to three factors that shape how masculinity is understood in the United States: social construction of gender, gender role conflict, and hegemonic masculinity. In society, boys learn “rules” about what it means to be a “man” from a very early age through their environments of playgrounds, living rooms, classrooms, and religion. They are taught what it means to be a man from peers, teachers, families, coaches from anywhere to anyone (Laker & Davis, 2011). These “rules” are not subtle messages but are very clear about what rules must be followed and, more importantly, most boys are deeply afraid of the consequence of the disapproval from other men they will face if they break these sacred societal rules (Laker & Davis, 2011). College men often find places where these rules are reinforced, such as fraternities, which makes it

difficult to challenge the status quo. Another factor that scholars point to in shaping masculinity is gender role conflict.

Gender role conflict is defined as “a psychological state occurring when rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles learned through socialization, result in personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self” (O’Neil, 1990, p. 25). When men want to exhibit gender in a way that is inconsistent with social norms, there is an internal struggle about what to do. Thompson, Pleck, and Ferrera (1992) found that gender role conflict provides an important link between societal norms that dictate traditional masculinities and someone’s individual adaptation of such roles. This is even more evident in the culture of a fraternity. Sandy (1990) found that the “covenant between pledges and the fraternity promises a sense of masculinity and superior power” (p. 135). Finally, hegemonic masculinity is the final factor shapes masculinity in men.

Hegemony is the process of influence where one learns to accept a system of practices and beliefs that can actually bring harm them at the same time they work to uphold the interests of those that exhibit power over them (Laker & Davis, 2011). Understanding the role that masculinity plays in the development of men who are members of a fraternity can aid in addressing the negative behaviors such as binge and excessive drinking that can be associated with such an affiliation. However, if hegemonic power is taken for granted, or ignored, challenging negative behaviors is incredibly difficult, further perpetuating these behaviors.

Building on Brannon’s theory of masculine ideology, researchers have defined hypermasculinity as the “inflation of stereotypic masculine attitudes and behaviors involving callous attitudes toward women, and the belief that violence is manly and

danger is exciting” (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984, p. 25). In addition, hypermasculinity includes the inflated evaluation of status, self-reliance, aggressive activities, dominance over others, and devaluation of emotion and cooperation (Burk, Burkhart & Sikorski, 2004). These behaviors may be telling of how an individual perceives themselves within a given context (e.g., hostile environment, all-male hegemonic context) or as a means of coping with health issues (e.g., depression, excessive alcohol behaviors, risky behaviors).

Methodology

Because my research questions seek to answer “how” and not “what,” it necessitates a qualitative approach to my study. Conducting qualitative research allows the researcher to collect data in a setting that is natural and familiar to the people in the study to attempt to make meaning of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). It is used when there is a problem that needs to be explored, a complex understanding of an issue is necessary, or when the researcher wants to share the lived experiences of a certain population. To effectively study the social or human problem being under investigation, a combination of assumptions, theoretical lenses, and research problems are used (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative studies are concluded by providing an in-depth description of the problem, telling the story of the participants, and contributing to the body of literature (Creswell, 2007).

I have chosen to conduct a qualitative case study (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). Case study research is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Specifically, this study will be an embedded, single case study design (Yin, 2009). The context will be the University of

Missouri and the case will consist of one fraternity while the experiences of members who live in the chapter house will be the units of analysis.

By using social norms theory and theories of masculinity, a qualitative study is important to allow for the detailed experiences of the participants to be best understood. Data will be collected using both focus groups and individual interviews, and the frameworks will influence the development of the focus group and the follow up interview questions. The data obtained from both the focus group and individual interviews will be coded and analyzed for the development of themes. Finally, the themes will inform the case that will serve as narrative for the study.

Significance of the Study

National media reports and research studies on excessive alcohol use among fraternity men and issues of hypermasculinity have informed the importance of my research study. Research has found that traditional prevention methods involving educational programming have only been moderately successful in increasing college student awareness regarding alcohol use, and alternative methods of intervention are recommended (Martens et al., 2006). Further, there is a gap in the literature regarding social norms and hypermasculinity in fraternities and its influences on excessive and binge drinking. Perhaps exploring other influential factors, such as social norms coupled with hypermasculinity, new interventions may emerge that will lead to greater success in educational programming.

Men misbehave to express themselves as men because that is what they are taught to do (Laker & Davis, 2011). Some of those misbehaviors involve the excessive use of alcohol and binge drinking. Administrators and prevention specialists in higher

education rely on data to inform practices to address related issues on their campuses. Specifically, research about collegiate alcohol abuse provides administrators a tool to identify potential targets for intervention and prevention (Luebbe, Varvel, & Dude, 2009). One-time programming will likely have a limited impact on men's excessive use of alcohol so efforts must be ongoing, systemic, and multi-pronged (Laker & Davis, 2011). Moreover, the programming must move away from traditional methods to be efficacious (Martens et al., 2006). Thus, research findings from this study will serve to inform educators working with Greek fraternities about the influence of social norms and hypermasculinity has on the alcohol use of fraternity men as a point of reference in developing better methods of increasing awareness and interrupting risky behaviors about alcohol use.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms will be used in the study:

1. *Binge drinking* is a pattern of consuming alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 gram percent or above. For the typical adult, this pattern corresponds to men consuming five or more drinks in about 2 hours (NIAAA, 2004).
2. *Social consequences of alcohol* are changes attributed to alcohol, occurring in individual social behavior, in social interaction, or in the social environment (Kilngemann & Gmel, 2001).
3. A *Greek student* is a college student who is a member of a Greek-letter social organization known as a fraternity or sorority (Whipple & Sullivan, 1998).

4. *Hegemonic masculinity* is the unattainable privileged model of living life as man (Laker & Davis, 2011)
5. *Protective behaviors* are actions that people engage in to protect, promote, or maintain health, whether the actions are medically approved or not (Harris & Guten, 1979).
6. *Social norms* for a community are the perceived standards of acceptable attitudes and behaviors prevalent among members of that community (Perkins, 2003).

Summary

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One presented an introduction to the study. Chapter Two includes a review of relevant literature, which consists of a content-driven and theoretical review. The theoretical review focuses on theories of masculinity and the social normative theory within the context of alcohol use in higher education followed by a content-driven review. Chapter Three provides a description of the research design and methods used in the study. Chapter Four reports the findings of the study. Chapter Five discusses the findings; answers the research questions; and identifies the implications for further research, policy, and practice.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In order to provide a critical foundation for the understanding of the current study, my literature analysis consists of both a theoretical and content-driven review. The theoretical review focuses on theories of masculinities and the social norms theory within the context of alcohol use in higher education. Anchoring my study in this theoretical framework will allow me to discuss how it guides my research in order to inform practice regarding alcohol education among fraternity members. The content-driven review explores scholarship focused on alcohol use in higher education, including alcohol use in Greek life and in fraternities specifically.

Masculinities

A growing area of research has shown that masculinity theories may be important in explaining a variety of behavioral issues as well as a broad range of health behaviors (Wells, Graham, Tremblay & Magyarody, 2011). Because this study is focused on fraternity men, understanding the roles of masculinities in their drinking behaviors is critical. Without doing so, prevention efforts may be ineffective. Moreover, the majority of institutions in higher education fail to target college men in meaningful prevention efforts (Harper & Harris, 2011). Therefore, there is a need for prevention programming that addresses masculinity concerns as they relate to substance abuse and violence (Wells et al., 2011).

Early Masculine Development Theories

In order to have a critical foundation for understanding the current study, a brief overview of the historical and contextual frameworks that have guided current research on men and masculinity will begin the literature review. A variety of disciplines and

fields have examined masculinity and its impact through various lenses throughout the past 100 years (Kilmartin, 2007). Earlier studies regarding masculinity explored gender development through the lenses of psychology, anthropology, and biology (Kimmel & Messner, 2007). The earliest of these developmental models benefited gender scholars in understanding men and masculinity, but each of these models had severe limitations as well.

The psychological model sought to explain men and their deep sense of masculinity within the context of childhood psychological events that were meaningful. Sigmund Freud, Karen Horney, Heinz Kohut, and Carl Jung were some of the leading scholars who supported the psychological model of development (Kilmartin, 2007). One of the flaws in the psychological model is that it relied solely on early childhood events and development to explain male behavior and the masculinity issues that arise throughout a man's life (Kimmel & Messner, 2007). Those who studied the anthropological model sought to understand men through the lens of culture and the behaviors that were passed on from one generation to the next (Kimmel & Messner, 2007). The shortcoming with the anthropological model was it mistakenly accepted prescribed behaviors and differences between men and women. The model accepted these outdated or restricted behaviors as natural and the result of cultural evolution (Kilmartin, 2007).

Early scholars of the biological model held that differences in endocrine functioning were the cause of gender differences: that testosterone predisposed males toward aggression, competition, and violence whereas estrogen predisposed females toward passivity, tenderness, and exaggerated emotions (Kimmel & Messner, 2007).

These scholars argued that men's attitudes and behaviors are "hard-wired" in males through biology, that gender change is impossible, and that masculinity is static, trans-historical, cross-cultural, and cross-situational (Kilmartin, 2007).

During late 1970, the first works that were directly influenced by the feminist critiques on men and masculinity appeared (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan; 1982). "In all the social sciences, these feminist scholars have stripped these early studies of their academic facades to reveal the unexamined ideological assumptions contained within them" (Kimmell & Messner, 2007, p. xix). A new paradigm for studying and understanding masculinity emerged based on the theories from these feminist scholars. For the first time, a theoretical model was developed that viewed masculinity as more of a socially constructed phenomenon that occurred throughout a man's lifetime (Kilmartin, 2007). Current research on men and masculinity almost always considers it from a social constructionist perspective (Harper, Harris, & Mmeje, 2005; Wells et al., 2011).

The Social Construction of Masculinity

The social construction of masculinity was proposed by pro-feminist men's studies scholars such as Conell (2005), Kimmel and Messner (2007), and Levant (1996). These perspectives emphasized the influence social interactions, social structures, and social contexts have in producing and reinforcing the normative expectations of masculine behavior (Harris, 2010). The first assumption of a social constructionist perspective that is gender is viewed as a performed social identity and that there are consequences of performing masculinities according to the norms of society (Harris, 2010). A second assumption is that there is not one dominant form of masculinity existing across all social settings, but rather, multiple masculinities exist in sociocultural

contexts (Harris, 2010). In addition, the perspective recognizes men occupy a privileged space in society while also recognizing that some masculinities are prioritized and dominant above others such as White, heterosexual, able-bodied above minority, gay, feminine, disabled/person with disability (Harris, 2010). Finally, an assumption is how individuals express and conceptualize masculinities will continue to change as they grow and mature (Kimmel & Messner, 2007).

The Guy Code

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has influenced the way we think about men, gender, and social hierarchy (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity has also been utilized in the study of organizations, considering the gendered character of bureaucracies and workplaces (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Ethnographic and interview studies followed the development of hegemonic masculinities as it relates to organizations and the roles masculinity play in organizational decision-making (Messerschmidt, 1995). Basically, hegemony teaches men to be strong; that aggressive behavior is acceptable; to be in control; to be the breadwinner; and above all, to act heterosexual. The concept of hegemony refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life (Connell, 2005) and the dominant discourse of masculinity is one that is rooted in hegemony (Kilmartin, 2007; Kimmel & Messner, 2007). One of the critical tenants of the social construction of masculinity can be better understood in relation to hegemony – the power, privilege, and patriarchy that men have sustained over men who do not live up to or subscribe to the dominant discourse (Kimmel & Messner, 2007).

The dominant discourse about masculinities in the United States is characterized by personality traits such as toughness, independence, aggressiveness, achievement, strength, competitiveness, defiance and self-reliance (Kilmartin, 2007). According to Brannon (1985), the four major themes of the dominant discourse of masculinity in the United States include: (a) *No Sissy Stuff* – antifemininity (b) *The Big Wheel* – status and achievement; (c) *The Sturdy Oak* – expressiveness and independence; and (d) *Give Em’ Hell* – adventurousness and aggressiveness. Examples of Brannon’s four themes include experiences when men are discouraged from expressing their emotions and feelings, being vulnerable or getting close with other men in a way that could be considered homosexual or feminine (i.e., *No Sissy Stuff*). An example of dominant discourse glorifies men based on what they achieve and the status they hold while being successful at all they do: sports, work, and sexual conquests (i.e., *The Big Wheel*). As result of the adoption of these hegemonic masculine norms, men keep strict emotional composure and self-control above all else, never showing weakness (i.e., *The Sturdy Oak*). The masculine discourse in the United States encourages men to be adventurous, to take physical risks, and to violate any healthy tenants (i.e., *Give Em’ Hell*) (Brannon, 1985).

Hypermasculinity

In the past 25 years, there has been a growing body of literature addressing the exaggeration of traditional masculine ideology termed as hypermasculinity (Laker & Davis, 2011). Traditional masculine ideology was first viewed as men avoiding feminine pursuits; possessing wealth, fame, and status; having the ability to remain calm in any situation; and exhibiting a disposition toward risk-taking and aggression (Brannon, 1985). Building on Brannon’s theory of masculine ideology, researchers have defined

hypermasculinity as the “inflation of stereotypic masculine attitudes and behaviors involving callous attitudes toward women, and the belief that violence is manly and danger is exciting” (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984, p. 155).

In addition, hypermasculinity includes the inflated evaluation of status, self-reliance, aggressive activities, dominance over others, and devaluation of emotion and cooperation (Burk et al., 2004). Among emerging adult samples, including college-aged men, research finds hypermasculinity was linked to aggression toward women, aggression toward men who violate gender role norms (Parrott & Zeichner, 2008; Seaton, 2007); increased risk-taking behaviors (e.g., drugs, alcohol, large numbers of sexual partners; Burk et al., 2004; Mosher, 1991; Mosher & Sirkin, 1984); depression (Magovcevic & Addis, 2008); alexithymia (i.e., lack of affect); poor coping skills (Cassidy & Stevenson, 2005; Martino, 2000); and low academic achievement (Czopp, Lasane, Sweigard, Bradshaw, & Hammer, 1998; Spencer, Fegley, Harpalani, & Seaton, 2004). To be deemed hypermasculine, individuals must encompass all of the characteristics of hypermasculinity at high levels (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984). Likewise, one important review of research concerning masculinity and its correlation with alcohol research found social drinking is viewed as a “cultural symbol of manliness” (Lemle & Mishkind, 1989, p. 213).

Iwamoto, Cheng, Lee, Takamatsu, and Gordon (2011) found a distinct relationship between masculine norms, problematic drinking, and related consequences. Risk factors found for drinking to intoxication were consistent with masculine norms theory. Examples of distinct masculine norms such as being a “playboy,” risk-taking were a risk for alcohol-related problems. Consequently, the study found that men who

have the desire to have multiple sexual partners (i.e., playboy), like to take risks, and are driven to win have a higher likelihood of engaging in problematic drinking (Iwamoto et al., 2011). According to masculine norms theory (Levant, 1996), men may be striving to conform to traditionally perceived masculine norms in order to establish or demonstrate their manhood. In other words, in addition to taking risks, winning, and being a “playboy,” heavy drinking may also be perceived as a typically “masculine” behavior. Sasso & Schwitzer (2016) suggest that the issues related to masculine gender expression though alcohol are just not about binge drinking. He found fraternity men use alcohol as a means to express and reinforce their masculine identity. Therefore, men who adhere to masculine norms are more likely to drink to intoxication and to experience alcohol-related problems (Iwamoto et al., 2011).

In addition, a more complex analysis of hypermasculinity could aid in identifying men who may be prone to certain outcomes without being prone to others (e.g., physical violence, mental health issues, and alcohol abuse). For example, Wells and colleagues (2011) found hypermasculinity to be linked to the perpetration of barroom fights and heavy drinking of collegiate men. It has been debated that young men who prescribe to traditional masculine norms assert their masculinity by engaging in violent behavior (Iwamoto et al., 2011; Lea & Young, 1993). Conformity to masculine values may involve presenting a tough image and dominance which may lead to aggressive encounters such as bar fights (Wells, Flynn, Tremblay, Dumas, Miller, & Graham, 2014). Corprew and Mitchell (2014) reported that non-fraternity men who adopted increasing levels of hypermasculinity were more likely to endorse greater levels of hostile attitudes toward women.

For my study, identifying a variety of hypermasculine attitudes and behaviors has several important implications. Hypermasculinity is not an all-or-none aspect of an individual's gender identity and most men do not necessarily endorse or reject all aspects of hypermasculinity (Corprew, Mathews, & Mitchell, 2014). These behaviors may be telling of how an individual perceives themselves within a given context (e.g., hostile environment, all-male hegemonic context) or as a means of coping with mental health issues (e.g., depression). Corprew et al., (2014) state the importance to note the initial adoption of these attitudes and how and why they may change over time can lead to greater evaluation and understanding of the nuances in masculine identity and the promotion of a more adaptive and healthy masculinity.

Male Gender Role Conflict

Male Gender Role Conflict (MGRC) provides a framework to view the complicated roles of gender conflict (O'Neil, 1981). Previous research categorizes four of these gender role conflicts—status achievement, dominance, self-reliance, and avoidance of femininity—as either primarily achievement-or restriction-related (Good & Wood, 1995). Status achievement and dominance exemplify achievement-related conflicts, which promote competitive behaviors in “a drive for achievement that is accompanied to some extent by an evaluation of one’s comparative degree of achievement” (Good & Wood, 1995, p. 74). On one hand, the pressure to “get ahead” as defined by the goals and benchmarks set by gender role expectations narrows men’s perceptions of achievement and encourages behavior viewed as masculine. Self-reliance and avoidance of the feminine, on the other hand, discourage certain behaviors, including help-seeking and academic achievement. For both achievement- and restriction-related

conflicts, MGRC asserts that peer influence is capable of pressuring men, despite their personal goals and desires, into adopting the masculine behaviors of their peers (O'Neil, 1981).

College Men and Masculinities

There has been an increased trend in studying the behavioral trends of men on college campus as they relate to masculinities in higher education (Harris, 2010).

Researchers have studied college men in relation to campus judicial incidents, sexual assault, academic underachievement, lack of involvement in campus activities, homophobia, poor coping skills, and depression (Harris, 2010). Harper et al. (2005) conducted one of the first studies that analyzed the interactions between masculinities and college environments that found that men disproportionately violate policies and are sanctioned more often for violence and disruptive behaviors than women. Scholars also examined the experiences of college men as they came to understand themselves (Edwards & Jones, 2009). This study described masculine identity development as an interactive process involving men's awareness of society's expectations by redefining what it means to be a man and shaping what masculinity means to them by redefining it based on their own beliefs and values (Edwards & Jones, 2009).

Fraternities and masculinities. Previously it was suggested that the type of masculinity exhibited in fraternities is almost solely based on sexual aggression toward women and that heterosexual masculinity in fraternities is constructed over the use of women's bodies (Sanday, 1990). The fraternity culture can also be a place where heterosexual language, lifestyle, and viewpoints of fraternity members are learned (Anderson, 2008). A fraternity system can foster stereotypical views of male dominance

and female submissiveness (Wright, 1996). Furthermore, the potential presence of a hyper-sexed and antifeminine culture can lead to the promotion of the sexual assault of women in the fraternal culture (Boswell & Spade, 1996) although, others warn against such overgeneralizations (Anderson, 2008; Boeringer, 1996).

In order for the fraternity to achieve the hegemonic form of masculinity and to possess what is deemed as a “socially elite” status, certain variables are required (Boeringer, 1996). The variables, such as race, class, athleticism, and a certain body type, match dominant cultural normative views of position and power (Anderson, 2008). Accordingly, most fraternities are overrepresented by white, heterosexual men who are expected to act in accordance with the founding principles of an elite organization (Boeringer, 1996; Windmeyer, 2005). Martin and Hummer (1989) maintained that fraternities generally avoid recruiting “geeks, nerds, and men that might give the fraternity a wimpy or gay reputation” (p. 458). By coupling, theories of masculinities and social norms, I hope to have a richer understanding of the affect masculinity has on the drinking behaviors of fraternity men.

Social Norms

Those working in health promotion and prevention base their intervention strategies in social norms as a theoretical foundation to better understand human behavior. The theory predicts that overestimations of problem behavior will increase these problem behaviors, while underestimations of healthy behaviors will discourage individuals from engaging in them (Berkowitz, 2004). Thus, if norms are challenged by accurately communicating behaviors, it is possible to change those behaviors. When interventions focus on peer influence rather than familial, cultural, biological, personality,

and religious influences, individual behavior changes are more likely (Berkowitz, 2004; Borsari & Cary, 2001; Perkins, 2002). In their theory of normative social behavior, Rimal and Real (2003, 2005) propose that descriptive norms influence behavior and that the effect is magnified when there is social approval for the behavior (injunctive norms), a shared group identity, and a belief that there will be social benefits from the behavior (outcome expectancy) (Reid, Carey, Merrill, & Carey, 2015).

Human behavior is guided by perceptions about the status of the behavior (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). One of the factors that people use in making decisions relies on their observations as to whether others also engage in the behavior (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). The power of normative influences can be better understood in the context of a person's own judgments and behavior constraints (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). People take more into account than just the popularity of a behavior. If this were not the case, there would not have been behaviors that have shaped history and allowed for a minority behavior to provide acts of bravery and courage to fight the sometimes powerful forces perpetrated by the majority (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). For example people take unpopular stances on issues despite group pressures. However, it is quite common for people to align with group expectations, such as hegemonic masculinity.

According to Arrow and Burns (2004), there are social norms that exist at the collective level. For example, a group, community, or culture can influence behavior. At the collective level, norms can serve as prevailing codes of conduct that either prescribe or proscribe behaviors that members of a group can enact (Stok, Verkooijen, de Ridder, de Witt, & de Vet, 2014). These collective norms shape the code of conduct of a social system, like a Greek community. Collective norms emerge through shared interaction

among members of a social group or community (Borsari & Carey, 2003), and the manner in which norms emerge is dependent on, among other things, how they are transmitted and socially construed. Borsari and Carey (2003) found a distinction between collective and perceived norms which highlights the basic differences between these two norms. Collective norms operate at the level of the social system, which could be a social network or the entire society. Perceived norms exist at the individual, psychological level. They represent each individual's interpretation of the prevailing collective norm (Stok et al., 2014).

Social norms can be categorized as descriptive norms (i.e., perceptions of what others do) or injunctive norms (i.e., the perceived opinions of relevant others) (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990; Lapinski & Rimal, 2005). Descriptive and injunctive norms can be further classified as actual or perceived. When applied to drinking alcohol, descriptive norms refer to the prevalence of drinking behavior, as in the quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption while perceived descriptive norms refer to how much and how often people perceive that others drink, as in the quantity and perceived frequency of alcohol consumption (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007). Actual injunctive norms refer to how much college students approve or disapprove of drinking. Although both types of norms promote behaviors by providing information about what is appropriate in a given situation (Kallgren, Reno, & Cialdini, 2000), descriptive norms provide information about what is done and injunctive norms indicate what ought to be done (Kallgren, Reno, & Cialdini, 2000).

Research examining perceived norms found that college students have a generalized tendency to overestimate drinking norms, regardless of the normative

referent (e.g., close friends, best friends, same gender college student, and different gender college student; Baer & Larimer, 1991; Borsari & Carey, 2003; Lewis & Neighbors, 2004; Thombs, Ray-Tomasek, Osborn, & Olds, 2005). Furthermore, the overestimation of drinking norms is positively associated with drinking behavior among college students (Borsari & Carey, 2003), especially for more socially proximal referent groups, such as fraternities (Baer & Larimer, 1991). For example, Lewis and Neighbors found that perceived same-gender referent norms were more predictive of drinking behavior and problems compared with different gender and student referent norms. In relation to proximity of friendship, the perception of a close or best friend's drinking is more strongly associated with drinking than perceptions of students in general (Baer & Carney, 1993; Baer, Stacy, & Larimer, 1991; Thombs et al., 2005). In light of all these norming influences, college students may perceive that the majority of their peers consume alcohol (Wechsler & Wuethrich, 2002), and that they will lose friendships if they do not (Rimal & Real, 2003).

Social Norms and the Greek Community

Norms are social phenomena and they are propagated among group members, such as Greek communities, through communication (Kincaid, 2004). Communication plays a part not only in formulating perceptions about norms but as an influence of action. For example, people use the preponderance of a behavior depicted in the media to form their perceptions about the prevalence of the behavior, and also translate that perception in action (Stok et al., 2014).

Students who are members of Greek organizations compared to non-Greek students more frequently endorse alcohol as a way to socialize, facilitate bonding, and make individual appear sexier (Hummer, LaBrie, Lac, Sessoms, & Cail, 2012). Greek

students tend to perceive that other Greeks' drinking levels are higher than typical student drinking, and are more accurate in estimating the typical drinking of fellow Greek students (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Hummer et al., 2012). Since members of Greek organizations view alcohol as being more normative than other students, they may have an even greater influence on their members' drinking patterns (Chauvin, 2012). There is an acceptable socialization in the Greek environment that results in new members observing older members drinking and therefore presents pressure for new members to conform to the group's previously established norms (Arnold & Kuh, 1992; Chauvin, 2012). Research finds that Greek members, compared to non-Greek students, are more likely to believe that alcohol enhances social activities, makes women sexier, and facilitated bonding (Alva, 1998; Chauvin, 2012). These are examples of the power of social norms that influence perceptions and behaviors. The next section explores alcohol consumption among college students, and specifically among Greek students and Greek men. This scholarship goes beyond the aforementioned frameworks to set the stage for the research design introduced in the next chapter.

College Alcohol Use and Abuse

In this section, I discuss the issues of alcohol use and abuse on college campuses. There are several topics that reinforce that alcohol abuse is one of the greatest overall issues affecting college campuses. These include: an overview, the current state of alcohol use on college campuses, and the "Greek" drinking culture.

Drinking with peers may have an important influence on descriptive norms because peers model drinking behaviors and increase the positive expectancies of alcohol use (i.e., beliefs about the positive consequences of using alcohol). During adolescence,

alcohol experimentation and use occurs in a social context. High school students most often report drinking with friends, either at a friend's home or at a party (Beck & Treiman, 1996; Stewart & Power 2002). Drinking in a social setting is consistent with adolescents' motivations for drinking (Kuntsche, Knibbe, Gmel, & Engels, 2005). For example, Stewart and Power performed a cluster analysis to identify eight patterns of alcohol motivation. Across all of the clusters, the most endorsed reason for drinking was "to party" (e.g., to have fun with friends; Stewart & Power, 2002). Drinking with peers provides social modeling of drinking behaviors (Hansen & Graham, 1991; Wood, Read, Palfai, & Stevenson, 2001). Numerous experimental studies, reviewed in a meta-analysis by Quigley and Collins (1999), have demonstrated that the peer modeling of drinking behavior increases personal alcohol consumption. Finally, consistent with social norming theory, drinking with peers likely increases the positive expectancies associated with alcohol use. For example, drinking with peers is associated with an increase in positive alcohol expectancies, particularly during early adolescence (Cumsille, Sayer, & Graham, 2000).

Over the past 10 to 15 years, alcohol consumption, especially binge drinking, among college students has attracted a great deal of interest on the part of the mass media, college administrators, students, and prevention-focused funding agencies and researchers. A special task force convened by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) responded by publishing *A Call to Action* with recommendations for *Changing the Culture of Drinking at US Colleges* to address the persistent and pervasive problem of excessive drinking by students on US college campuses (NIAAA, 2004).

Approximately 80% of all college students consume some alcohol, and of these, about half drink to becoming intoxicated (Iwamoto et al., 2011). Research suggests that a large percentage of college students who drink do so to excess (Correia, Murphy, & Barnett, 2012). National surveys indicate that from 1999-2007 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014), the percentage of 18-24 year-old college students who drank five or more drinks on occasion in the previous 30 days increased from 41.7% to 43.8%. The results are a significant 5% proportional increase. These reports noted that widespread heavy drinking and associated consequences on campuses place colleges and universities in the challenging position of developing programs and policies that can adequately protect students from harm.

College Alcohol Use

Heavy drinking among college students and alcohol-related consequences are major social problems in the United States (Perkins, 2003; Wechsler et al., 1998). Twenty years of research has revealed that the highest proportion of heavy drinkers and individuals with diagnosable alcohol-use disorders and multiple substance dependencies are in the age range between the ages of 18 and 21; accounting for over 90% of all enrolled college students (O'Malley & Johnston, 2002; Turrisi et al., 2006).

The College Alcohol Study (CAS), conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health, surveyed students attending 140 four-year colleges across the United States. The researchers found that, although college students reported drinking a mean number of 5 drinks per week (Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport, 1996), 44% of this sample were heavy episodic drinkers (also known as binge drinkers). "Heavy episodic drinking" is defined as five or more drinks consumed consecutively in a single sitting for men and four drinks

under the same conditions for women (Wechsler et al., 1996). Not surprising, the frequency of heavy episodic drinking predicts the number of self-reported problems related to alcohol among college students (Wechsler et al., 1998; Wechsler & Kuo, 2000).

In reaction to these findings, college administrators have adopted more intensive on-campus alcohol and drug abuse education and prevention programs (Dodge, 1991; Kunz, Irving, & Black, 1993; Magner, 1988; Morritz, Seehafer, & Maatz-Majestic, 1993; Turrisi et al., 2006). Despite these prevention efforts, the magnitude of college student drinking and alcohol-related problems has not decreased significantly (Hingson et al., 2005; Wechsler et al., 1996), leaving room for studies such as mine to introduce findings specific to fraternity men that may inform new interventions.

Perceptions of peer alcohol use, also known as descriptive norms, are consistently among the strongest predictors of a student's drinking behavior (Borsari & Carey 2001). Studies have shown that descriptive norms favorable to alcohol use precede alcohol use behaviors (Clapp & McDonnell, 2000; Cullum, Armeli, & Tennen, 2010; Larimer, Turner, Mallett, & Geisner, 2004; Sher, Bartholow, & Nanda, 2001; Wood et al., 2001). Drinking with friends represents a situation where all of social norming forces are at work. First, students perceive alcohol use to be acceptable and socially normative (Borsari & Carey, 2001). In fact, students frequently overestimate the amount of alcohol consumed by their peers when asked about their close friends or when asked about a typical student (Carter & Kahnweiler, 2000; Thombs & Briddick, 2000; Thombs et al., 2005). Second, students share a group identity with their friends (Sussman, Pokhrel,

Ashmore, & Brown, 2007). Finally, a recent systematic review found that the most frequent motivation for students' drinking is social (Kuntsche et al., 2005).

A cultural stereotype shaped through media persuasion, news reports, and personal experience informs a popular image of college students' drinking above average quantities of alcohol. However, this image is not far from the truth and data support it. Moreover, heavy alcohol consumption seems restricted to the college years for a majority of individuals (Weingardt, Baer, Kivlahan, Roberts, Miller, & Marlatt, 1998). Those who attend college are more likely to consume alcohol than peers of their same age who do not attend college (O'Malley & Johnston, 2002); and during the years following college, the quantity and frequency of individual drinking decreases (Marlatt, Larimer, Baer, & Quigley, 1993). These findings suggest that variables unique to the college experience, the college environment, or both contribute to heavy drinking for some students.

Drinking continues to be a male-dominated activity. Compared to college women, college men are more likely to drink alcohol, to drink more of it, and to drink more often (Courtney, 2004). Therefore, college men experience more negative health consequences such as physical injury, sexually transmitted infections (STI's), drowning, and motor vehicle death. College men are also more likely to use tobacco and have more dangerous smoking habits such as smoking more cigarettes per day (Courtney, 2004). College males have also been found to report a significantly greater motivation to drink for social reasons and are more likely to drink to "get drunk" compared to college females (Harrell & Karim, 2008). It is widely known that men use alcohol more often than women in social gatherings to help them be more congenial (Mullen, Watson, Swift,

& Black, 2007; Olenick & Chalmers, 1991). Drinking is an event to be shared with other men (Mullen et al., 2007).

The “Greek” Drinking Culture

While alcohol issues exist throughout campuses, Greek organizations are often identified as groups with particularly excessive alcohol use (Martens et al., 2006; O’Brien et al., 2013). In a study conducted of members of fraternities and sororities, researchers found that chapter-level approval for drinking is positively related to members’ drinking and the alcohol-related consequences they experience (Fairlie, DeJong, Stevenson, Lavigne, & Wood, 2010). Both selection and socialization effects drive members’ alcohol use (Capone et al., 2007). Many heavier drinkers choose to join fraternities and sororities, believing that these organizations promote a drinking culture and facilitate alcohol access (McCabe, Knight, Teter, & Wechsler, 2005; Read et al., 2002). Perceived norms about heavy drinking in fraternities and sororities, a form of indirect socialization, also drive members’ greater alcohol use (McCabe et al., 2005; Sher et al., 2001; Fairlie et al., 2010).

Researchers have convincingly documented higher levels of alcohol use and adverse consequences among students who are members of fraternities compared with other college students and with same-aged peers who are not attending college (Wechsler et al., 1996; Sher et al., 2001; Larimer et al., 2004). These findings date back to the 1950s (Larimer et al., 2004). Heavy drinking has become a normative part of fraternity culture, a phenomenon that may selectively attract heavier drinking college-bound students (Sher et al., 2001). In survey data, Wechsler et al. (1996) showed the majority (60%) of members living in fraternity houses binge drank in high school, compared with 44% of nonresident members, and 34% of non-members. Among college students who

did not binge drink in high school, 78% of members living in fraternity houses and 61% of nonresident members became binge drinkers in college, compared with 32% of nonfraternity men.

Within the general college student population, members of social fraternities and sororities are more likely than are other students to engage in high-risk drinking and substance use and to experience related problems (Alva, 1998; Borsari & Carey, 1999; Caron, Moskey, & Hovey, 2004; Cashin et al., 1998; McCabe et al., 2005; Meilman, Leichliter, & Presley, 1999; Presley, Meilman, & Leichliter, 2002; Weschler et al., 1996; Turrisi et al., 2006). This occurs for a variety of reasons such as lack of adult supervision, increased opportunities for members to drink, and having members who hold more tolerant attitudes toward drinking, and having members who are more likely to conform to group norms (Chauvin, 2012).

Specifically, McCabe and colleagues (2005) found that, compared with non-members, significantly more fraternity and sorority members (70% of men and 50% of women) engaged in binge drinking during the 2 weeks prior to the study. In another study, researchers found the average number of drinks consumed per week is significantly higher for Greek fraternity and sorority members than for non-Greek fraternity and sorority members (Cashin et al., 1998). Furthermore, although many of the negative consequences due to alcohol consumption are prevalent among all college students (e.g., hangovers, blackouts, unplanned sexual activity, and academic problems), fraternity and sorority members report experiencing these consequences at a much higher rate than do non-members (Turrisi et al., 2006).

A national study by Cashin et al. (1998) found that fraternity leaders drank more frequently than other members and reported more negative drinking consequences, including memory loss and fighting/arguing, while sorority leaders more often reported hangovers. Compared to students who attended Greek functions but were not active members, both fraternity and sorority leaders more often reported driving under the influence, feeling nauseous and vomiting, missing class, and doing things they regretted (Fairlie et al., 2010). In particular, men living in social fraternity houses drink more in terms of both quantity and frequency, and as a result, experience more adverse consequences than do non-Greek student members (Alva, 1998; Borsari & Carey, 1998; Meilman, et al., 1999).

Proximity tends to generate formal and informal standards or guidelines for individual and collective behavior (Borsari & Carey, 1999). The greater the time spent with peers, the greater the exposure to or opportunities for peer modeling and pressure. Researchers have shown that students' drinking styles correlate more closely with behaviors of their immediate social network than with drinking practices of students in general at their colleges (Carter & Kahnweiler, 2000; Reifman & Watson, 2003). Greek environments can also be influential in another important sense of propinquity (or proximity) by making alcohol easily available both physically and socially to members (Borsari & Carey, 1999; Larimer et al., 2004). This is concerning as alcohol availability plays a critical role in contributing to alcohol use and related problems (Ames & Grube, 1999; Caudill, Crosse, Campbell, Howard, Lucky, & Blane, 2006; Toomey & Wagenaar, 2002).

As Wechsler et al. (1998) point out, the influence of Greek organizations and culture on college drinking stretches beyond their membership and living quarters because they serve as a center for social activities on many campuses. If college leaders are to have an impact on addressing their alcohol problems, they must drastically change the drinking culture of their fraternities and sororities (Wechsler et al., 1998). The leaders of Greek organizations appear to be drinking at levels as high, and in some cases higher, than other actively involved members, thereby strongly contributing to this drinking culture (Caudill et al., 2006).

Greek Men

There are two risk factors that are well-established among researchers who identify drinking to intoxication and alcohol-related negative consequences among men. Those are if a man is a member of a fraternity and perceived peer norms (i.e., the individual's perception of how many drinks their peer group member consume on a daily basis) (Capone et al., 2007; Iwamoto et al., 2011). According to gender scholars, masculine norms play a significant role in contributing to problematic drinking in men (Courteny, 2004; Lemle & Mishkind, 1989; Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemar, Scott, Grottfied, & Freitas, 2003).

While the aforementioned statistics are important, caution is necessary when interpreting causal relationship because of students' self-selection into the Greek system. Undoubtedly, many students choose to join fraternities in part because of preexisting preferences toward behaviors that membership facilitates. It would be inaccurate to assume that these differences portray direct effects of fraternities (DeSimone, 2009). DeSimone (2009) found self-selection into fraternities accounts for a considerable portion

of the observed correlation between membership and drinking. Even the most conservative estimates, however, reveal statistically and quantitatively significant effects of fraternity involvement on drinking intensity, frequency, and amount that have associated outcomes like falling behind in school, and behaviors with negative external effects such as unsafe sex and vandalism (DeSimone, 2009). DeSimone asked the question “in a world without fraternities, would rates of drinking and related behaviors differ just as much between students who, with fraternities present, do and do not belong to them? (p. 338).”

A number of recent studies have identified links between excessive alcohol consumption and the male role (Mullen et al., 2007). The use of alcohol and the acceptance to drink to intoxication are deeply rooted in the expectations of masculine behavior (Mullen et al., 2007). Men who abstain from drinking are viewed as “weak” and “feminine” and that holding your alcohol without becoming over-intoxicated is seen as a positive expression of male identity (Lemle & Mishkind, 1989; Mullen et al., 2007).

Summary

This chapter provided a theoretical review focused on theories of masculinity and the social norms theory within the context of alcohol use in higher education. The content-driven review explored scholarship focusing on the alcohol use in higher education, especially among those in fraternities. My goal with Chapter Three will be to present research methodology and the process of gathering my data. I will also describe my analysis procedures and strategies I will use to ensure the rigor of my study.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

This provides a description of the methodology and procedures used to conduct this study in order to meet the objectives outlined in chapter one. As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to examine the drinking behaviors among fraternity men and the role masculinity plays in these behaviors. In this chapter, I restate the research questions. Second, I describe the case study method that was utilized to answer these questions. Third, I introduce the limitations of the study. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a summary.

Research Questions

The research questions that will direct this study are:

1. How do members in one fraternity at the University of Missouri perceive the influence other members have on drinking behaviors within the fraternity?
 - 1a. How do these perceptions influence their own drinking behavior?
2. What role does masculinity play in their drinking behaviors?

Case Study Method

Qualitative case study research is useful to understand the setting in which participants navigate issues and problems (Creswell, 2007). Case studies typically seek to answer “how” and “why” questions, but do not require control over behaviors and events (Yin, 2009). Case studies are studies of “bounded systems” (Creswell, 2007, p. 112), such as programs, activities, events, processes, or individuals. They provide researchers the ability to investigate a contemporary phenomenon and are conducted within a real life context with the purpose understanding the complexities of a case (Yin, 2009).

Creswell (2007) outlines the procedure for conducting case study research. The first step is for researchers to decide if case study is the appropriate method for their study. Once that is certain, researchers must identify a case or cases. Data collection for case study research is extensive because multiple sources of information are required in order to build the case (Yin, 2009). Following the collection of the data, the analysis of the case study should be done through a holistic or embedded analysis. Finally, researchers must report what was learned from the study of the case (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). It was important for this study to be conducted as a case study based on the complexity of the topic of masculinity coupled with drinking behaviors of fraternity men.

For this study, I utilized an embedded, single case study design to explore the perceptions and experiences of the participants in the study. The context of the study is the large, public, institution in the Midwest (University of Missouri) and the embedded case is one fraternity. The members of the fraternity will inform the case. The primary sources of data collected and analyzed were transcripts from focus groups and follow up individual interviews with participants. The emphasis of the study is descriptive in an effort to produce a rich understanding of the data collected (Jones & Torres, 2014). Below, I describe the context of the study and data collection and analysis for this embedded case study.

Context of Study

The University of Missouri (also known as Mizzou or MU) is the first public university west of the Mississippi River. The university is the flagship of the university system within the state of Missouri and is a land grant, research university with very high scholarly productivity. The university has 19 academic colleges and schools that provide

over 300 degree programs and is one of only five universities in the country that offers law, medicine, veterinary medicine, and has a nuclear research reactor (“Student Enrollment Data,” 2015).

According to the *Fall 2015 Enrollment Summary*, there are 35,448 students enrolled at the university, of whom 27,812 are undergraduates (“Student Enrollment Data,” 2015). Of the undergraduate enrollment, 7,651 (27%) students are members of a Greek organization at Mizzou, and 2,940 are men (“Student Enrollment Data,” 2015). Thirty years after the university opened, the Missouri Alpha Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi was founded, marking the beginning of a Greek community rich with tradition. In the latter part of 1870, two other fraternities joined the university, Zeta Phi, which had its origin in the university, and Phi Delta Theta. Five years later, the Theta Chapter of Kappa Kappa Gamma became the first female Greek letter fraternity on campus (“Org Sync: Greek Life,” 2015). Despite the growth of Greek organizations on campus, the university barred all secret societies from 1880-1887. In 1888, fraternities and sororities returned to campus (“Org Sync: Greek Life,” 2015). Since that time, the Greek community at Mizzou has continued to grow and flourish (“Greek Life: Membership Statistics,” 2015).

The role of Greek Life at Mizzou is to provide a foundation for the development of leadership skills and to provide opportunities for campus involvement (“Greek Life: Membership Statistics,” 2015). Membership in a fraternity or sorority provides students with experiences that immerse them in the campus community, while providing leadership opportunities within their chapter and throughout the campus. Greek students are visible leaders in organization such as Missouri Student Association (MSA, i.e.,

student government), Summer Welcome orientation leaders, Tour Team, Mizzou Thon, Rockin' Against Multiple Sclerosis (RAMS), Relay for Life, Mizzou Alternative Breaks (MAB), Alumni Association Student Board (AASB), and Homecoming Steering Committee ("Greek Life: Membership Statistics," 2015). Members of the Greek community play a role in shaping student experiences at Mizzou through their involvement and influence ("Greek Life: Membership Statistics," 2015).

There are four umbrella councils and each fraternity and sorority of the 53 chapters is affiliated with one. The councils are Interfraternity Council (IFC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), Multicultural Council (MGC), and Panhellenic Council (PHA). Each has its own elected student governing boards, policies, university advisor, and national governance ("Greek Life: Membership Statistics," 2015). There are 33 fraternities that are affiliated with the Interfraternity Council, the governing council for fraternities. The student leadership of each chapter varies in size, role, and scope within the organization based on their national make up and structure ("North American Interfraternity Conference; About NIC," 2015). The elected officers of an undergraduate chapter are entrusted with the leadership and management of the chapter and the preservation of the chapter's charter during their term in office ("North American Interfraternity Conference; About NIC," 2015).

Undergraduate student enrollment has been on a steady increase for several years prior to the study. Similarly, the university has seen a consistent increase in the number of students who are members of fraternities and sororities on the campus. In 2004, 4,604 undergraduate students were members of a fraternity or sorority on campus. Membership

increased to 7,569 by 2015, a 39% increase. The average fraternity chapter size in the Fall of 2015 was of 100 men (“Greek Life: Membership Statistics,” 2015).

When considering drinking behaviors, campus students report a positive correlation between membership in a fraternity and sorority to problematic drinking behaviors, particularly when compared to non-Greek students. In addition, where students live in college is correlated to their drinking behaviors. According to the 2013 Missouri College Health Behavioral Survey data, 27% of all students reported high-risk drinking. Students living in fraternity housing reported the highest levels of risky drinking (56%), followed by students living without parents off campus (29%) (Missouri Partners in Prevention, 2014).

I have selected [Alpha Beta Chi (a pseudonym)] as the case for the study. ABC was founded as one of the first chapters west of the Mississippi River in the late 1800s (Anonymous, 2015). The charter states that it strives for excellence through enhancing the collegiate experience through social, moral, and intellectual growth by promoting high standards of moral conduct and responsible citizenship (Anonymous, 2015). ABC fraternity has over 90 active members and over 35 new members. The house, which is one of the newest fraternity houses recently built on campus, houses over 90 members who are of freshmen, sophomore, and junior standing (Anonymous, 2016). The fraternity has a requirement for all new members to live in the fraternity house during their new member process during their freshman year. Sophomore and junior members live in the chapter house along with the freshmen new members; senior members live adjacent to the chapter house in apartments.

The Fraternity's Grand Chapter Bylaws call for the election of a chapter president; five vice presidents in the areas of programming, finance, recruitment, member development and communications; as well as the five members of the Standards Board: the chaplain, senior marshal, junior marshal, guide, and guard (Anonymous, 2015). This particular chapter is able to appoint several other positions such as a national program chairman and/or a learning community chairman (Anonymous, 2015). The national organization has established expectations for undergraduate officers (Anonymous, 2015):

1. Lead a safe, healthy and relevant experience that adds value for all members.
2. Understand the skills needed to work on a team.
3. Lead by example and serve as a role model to all chapter brothers.
4. Develop and articulate a shared vision for the chapter.
5. Set and meet SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely).
6. Address conflict and risk appropriately and proactively.
7. Communicate with a variety of audiences including alumni, parents, and university officials. (Anonymous, 2015)

Sampling

I utilized purposeful sampling to identify participants for my study. "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009, p. 61). The fraternity chosen was intentional based on being an overall representative chapter at the University of Missouri. Purposeful sampling is also known as criterion-based sampling. Patton (2001) describes criterion sampling as selecting

participants who meet some predetermined criterion of importance. This sampling technique is favorable for this study because all participants have experienced the same phenomena. For this study, the criteria were: general membership in Alpha Beta Chi, resident in the chapter house, and were undergraduate men.

Recruitment

After securing approval from the University of Missouri's Institutional Review Board to conduct the study, I recruited participants with the help of gatekeepers such as the fraternity advisor, house director, the national headquarters, and notable alumni, all of whom have existing relationships with potential participants. I first met with the alumni, fraternity advisor, and house director separately since they reside in various locations, to explain my study, share the consent form (Appendix A) and garner their support by describing the potential benefits (e.g., from the research information about alcohol use, and the influence of hegemonic masculinity and social norming on drinking behaviors).

I assume my close, working relationship I maintained with the chapter advisor aided in the chapter agreeing to participate in the study. One stipulation the alumni requested was enacting a 2 year embargo on my dissertation. The alumni thought the embargo would limit the chances of their identities being revealed. They felt the majority of members in the chapter at the time of the study would graduate in 2 years and the embargo would lessen any chance a connection would be made from the findings to their specific chapter.

Once the alumni, advisor, and house director agreed to assist me, I contacted the national headquarters requesting approval for the study. Finally, I attended a chapter meeting in order to explain the study and address any concerns that chapter members had

about the research (Appendix B). The members appeared indifferent and non-responsive during my explanation of the study. I provided an initial sign up sheet that I circulated to the chapter members during the explanation of my study. To my discouragement, no one signed up to participate in my study.

After meeting with the chapter members, I requested an email list of the membership from the chapter president in order to follow up. The chapter president requested I leave the sign up sheets with him and he offered to talk to the members after their chapter meeting that evening. I did so and then e-mailed eligible members, inviting them to participate in the study (Appendix C). The e-mail also explained the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and that participation is voluntary. I also included information about consent (Appendix A). Mainly due to the efforts of the chapter president, there were 15 men from three different pledge classes who signed up to participate in my study. His involvement was crucial, as I question if I would have received the same amount of participation if not for the assistance and interest of the chapter president.

I was very intentional to discuss how the information would be utilized solely for the purpose of research and any information gathered would not be forwarded or shared with the Office of Student Conduct or their chapter leadership. I ensured my messages emphasizing the fact this study is voluntary and they can discontinue their participation at any time in order to combat any language or actions that could be deemed as coercive.

Data Collection Methods

For this study, I relied on two data sources: focus groups and interviews. Using more than one source of data will strengthen their quality by providing additional

evidence to support the findings as compared to the reliance on only one data source (Yin, 2009).

Focus Groups

One of the benefits of using focus groups as a data collection method is that it has the potential to elicit a range of perspectives from participants across several identities (Krueger & Casey, 2014). Individuals reveal information about themselves based on their perceptions of others in the group (Jourard, 1964). In Jourard's studies of self-disclosure, he found that "subjects tended to disclose more about themselves to people who resembled them in various ways than to people who differ from them" (Jourard, 1964, p. 15). By collecting data from one chapter, it was likely there were many characteristics participants shared. Further, the success of a focus group is evident when participants feel comfortable, respected, and free to give their opinions without being judged. By facilitating a focus group of fraternity men who have pre-established relationships, I hoped they will be more comfortable sharing their experiences with me and each other.

There are five characteristics that generally are found within a focus group (Krueger & Casey, 2014). The characteristics include: (1) a small group of people, who (2) possess certain characteristics, and (3) provide qualitative data (4) in a focused discussion (5) to help understand the topic of interest. I plan to conduct three or four focus groups of fraternity men who live in the ABC fraternity house.

Each focus group consisted of no more than 8 participants, to allow for maximum opportunities to engage (Krueger & Casey, 2014). The focus groups lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and was be located in a meeting room of the student center.

Each focus group was audio recorded and transcribed with permission of all participants. Because I also collected data through individual interviews, if any participants were uncomfortable with the audio recording, I invited them to only participate in an individual interview and offered to take written notes throughout. I had a note taker in attendance to identify various body language or visual cues that would not be captured on an audio recording. I utilized a semi-structured protocol informed by the theoretical framework and relevant literature guiding the study to facilitate the conversation (Appendix D). I asked participants permission to audio record during data collection in advance. Data collection consisted of focus groups and individual interviews. After each focus group, I invited participants to schedule an individual interview to follow up on our conversation. I was encouraged how open, honest, and free the participants were during the data collection. They did not hesitate to answer any of the questions I asked and they elaborated their answers in detail. The men seemed very genuine and engaged in the study.

Interviews

All those who agreed to participate in the study were invited to complete an individual interview. Interviews are guided conversations, instead of structured queries, that require the interviewer to ask the necessary questions in order to meet the needs of the study (Yin, 2009). I utilized semi-structured protocol (Appendix E) informed by the focus groups and the related literature for this study. Because the protocol is semi-structured, it allowed for flexibility to follow up on questions answered and stories told. The intention of the interview was for the participant to feel comfortable to expand on questions being asked.

I conducted interviews in a neutral location, a small conference room located on the University of Missouri campus. Interviews were intentionally not held in my office or in the chapter house in order to separate the position I hold as an administrator and researcher in this study and to protect the privacy of the participants. The only pre-existing relationship I had was with the president. He knew who I was based on my title and role, but that was the extent of our relationship. I did not have any other relationships with the remaining participants. Although not a participant, the strongest relationship I held was with the chapter advisor. I asked each participant's permission to audio record the interview and explained at a later time it would be transcribed. I offered the option of taking notes in lieu of the audio recording if the participants were uncomfortable being recorded but all agreed to the audio recording. The interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Due to the time commitment I requested of the participants, I incentivized the participation in the study by providing chance to receive a gift certificate to the Mizzou Store at the completion of the interview process.

Methods of Analysis

Prior to analyzing the data, information gathered through the focus groups and interviews was compiled in a case study database which allowed the data to be managed during the analysis, as well as maintain a chain of evidence to increase the study's dependability (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). Analyzing data for case study research is a process that is being developed, refined, and mastered (Yin, 2009). Because there is no well-established analytic technique, I have chosen to conduct my data analysis using techniques identified by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). They are detailed below.

Specifically, Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) identified the following analytic stages: (1) read through the original text and sort it by pulling text that is relevant to the study in an effort to minimize the amount of text being reviewed; and (2) look for repeated text or ideas among the data sources to identify codes. The repeated text or ideas will eventually lead to the development of themes. I will review each focus groups transcript and interview separately to gather as much detail as possible.

Codes

All data was first analyzed inductively, rather than deductively, in an effort to approach the data with an open attitude and without any preconceived hypothesis (Seidman, 1998). Warren (2002) described the purpose of qualitative coding: use all the material gathered in the case in an effort to find patterns among the data sources. The coding process involves sorting text and similar ideas identified in the collected data (Creswell, 2007). Next, coding groups were created by organizing related ideas together to eventually develop related themes (Warren, 2002). The intention of coding was to reflect the interests of the researcher and the intended audience thus, the research questions and the theoretical frameworks were essential to keep in mind through the data analysis process (Warren, 2002).

Themes

The purpose of developing themes is to search for connecting patterns and threads throughout the coded data (Seidman, 1998). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) define themes as “an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas” (p. 38). For case study research, the development of themes allows for the conceptualization and organization of the data concerning the case (Creswell, 2007). However, just as with

coding, the themes should develop naturally and should not be thought out prior to coding the data (Seidman, 1998).

To create themes, I followed Simons's (2009) three-stage process. First, I identified and confirmed categories. I developed categories based upon the frequency, extensiveness, and intensity of the codes (Krueger & Casey, 2014). Next, I analyzed the relationship deductively between the categories based on social norming theories and hegemonic masculinities described in Chapter 2. In the final step, I developed overarching themes that helped inform the case. Once this was completed, the embedded case emerged (Merriam, 2009).

Positionality

What I bring as a researcher in relationship to the participants is important to this study, for my identities can influence the community I am researching (Kersetter, 2012). Researchers may be "outsiders" or "insiders" to a setting and they try to seek a collaborative relationship with the participants. At the same time, they must sort out the consequences of their relationship to the study (Thomson & Gunter, 2011). On one hand, researchers who are outsiders to community can add value to the study because they potentially bring more neutrality to the study. On the other hand, researchers who possess insider perspectives have an understanding and an awareness of the unique qualities of a community because they have experienced the culture (Kersetter, 2012). In this study, I am both an outsider and an insider, and it is important for me to reflect on my positionality. By doing so, I am beginning the process of reflexivity, which will enhance the credibility of my study.

I am the fourth and final child in my family and arrived at a time when my parents thought they were done having children. My youngest sibling is 16 years older than me. By the time it came for me to attend college, my parents were supportive but not extremely knowledgeable about college applications, student success strategies, and career preparation. For my parents, my participation in higher education was a reflection of their success, and not necessarily for my personal educational outcome.

I am the first woman in my family to have graduated from college and I am the first person in my family to have obtained an advanced degree. I grew up knowing I wanted to go to a large university and join a sorority. I was driven to be part of an organization that few people from my hometown were familiar with, and I wanted to be involved in something that would continue past my years in college. I also wanted to be involved as a student and part of something that was larger than me.

My experience in college was beyond what I could have hoped for. I took advantage of involvement experiences. I worked on campus in the student recreation center and I became the president of the Panhellenic Council, the governing council of the sororities on campus. I was exposed to the world of fraternity and sorority life and have always been a part of it since I set foot on campus as first year student.

After obtaining my undergraduate degree and master's degree from the same institution, I worked for 5 years at a regional state institution that had a small Greek community. While it was a different Greek culture than I was familiar with, it still offered the opportunity to give back to something that had given me so much as an undergraduate student. I became a chapter advisor for a sorority on campus. This

experience as a sorority chapter advisor allowed me the opportunity to work as a fraternity and sorority professional full time.

After spending 5 years as a chapter advisor and then as a coordinator of Greek life, I moved to a new role as a mid-level manager at Mizzou, a large, Midwestern, research university. I oversaw the offices of leadership, experiential education, service and fraternities and sororities. I went from overseeing roughly 700 students to over 5,000 students who were members of a fraternity or sorority. I came into a community that was understaffed, unchecked, and unfamiliar with policies focusing on risk management.

With my new position, I became aware of the issues of hazing, binge drinking, over-engaged alumni advisors, non-existent alumni advisors, hegemonic masculinity among fraternity men, and competition. I spent almost all my time reacting to issues often fueled by alcohol. I did not see the positive effects of the “award winning” alcohol education programming the fraternity and sorority members were receiving. In my role overseeing the Greek community, I assisted the Office of Student Conduct with the Organizational Conduct process for violations of student organizations of the Student Code of Conduct. Year after year, I witnessed 90% of the conduct cases in the Greek community were with fraternities. Of those cases, 90% involved alcohol. I also found that there was a lack of knowledge about binge drinking among fraternity members. These experiences led me to focus on issues within our fraternity community and how members were influenced by the leaders of their chapters to assimilate into a culture of hypermasculinity that valorized binge drinking. To my knowledge, current alcohol educational programs that were in place did not address the issues I was seeing. These experiences led to the current research project.

At the time of this study, I was in a new position within the same division at Mizzou. The position was deemed more managerial in nature. I supervised student life staff, including those working in Greek Life. I also had less direct student interaction, especially with general members of fraternities and sororities. When I did have contact with them, it was typically interacting with members of the council executive boards. The majority of the men in ABC fraternity knew my role as a university administrator, but very few knew my name or had extended interactions with me.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness can be achieved in qualitative research through credibility, transferability, and dependability (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For this case study, I utilized a variety of techniques in order to increase the likelihood of trustworthiness in the study. For example, I conducted member checking; demonstrated reflexivity, started with reflecting on my positionality above; established a chain of evidence; and triangulated data from multiple sources. Below, I explain the myriad techniques I utilized in more detail.

Credibility

I employed a variety of techniques to strive to establish credibility of this research and, therefore, it provided confidence in my findings. First, it was important to develop a rapport and trust among my participants by being transparent and creating an environment where open and honest dialogue could occur. I created such an environment by reviewing the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their participation, my role as a researcher, and addressing any other concerns. Second, I triangulated data sources. Triangulation involves using multiple sources of evidence to provide deeper context into

the behavioral and historical issues of the study, as well to increase the credibility of the study (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). By using multiple sources of evidence, I could compare and cross check the collection of data (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). As previously mentioned, I was able to triangulate findings from the focus groups and interview data.

Accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of the data from the focus group and interview is important when conducting qualitative research (Merriam, 2009).

Throughout the data collection process, I conducted member checks with the participants to ensure that their story was being captured accurately. These member checks allowed the participants to determine whether my interpretation of the interview was accurate (Merriam, 2009). I asked participants to review the transcripts from the focus group in which they participated and the transcript of their individual interviews. The experience of the participants should be recognizable within the transcripts and, if it is not, member checking allows them the opportunity to provide feedback, which incorporated as I further analyzed the data (Merriam, 2009).

Transferability

It is important to present findings so that readers can determine whether they can be applied to other situations and populations (Merriam, 2009). In order to enhance the likelihood of transferability of my study, I provided a thick description of the context of my study, along with the findings (Shenton, 2004). The purpose of providing a thick description is to allow for readers to make meaning of the phenomenon and to determine whether it may be similar in their own settings (Shenton, 2004).

Dependability

Dependability allows that the findings of the study are consistent and, if another was repeated with the same methods, similar results would emerge (Shenton, 2004). To address dependability, I conducted an external audit by having my advisor examine the processes and findings in order to ensure an unbiased audit of my study. Also, I described my methods in detail to enable someone else to replicate the study to the extent possible in qualitative research.

Limitations

As with all research, this study has several limitations. First, participants may not recall certain details that occurred in the past so data may be incomplete. Also, I asked participants to self-report drinking behaviors. If they were under the age of 21, such activities are illegal and may influence how honest they were in responding.

An additional limitation could be my role as a professional at the institution. I served as an administrator who oversaw the fraternity community and students might have been hesitant about being honest and forthcoming. I did not have an official role in determining conduct for their chapter infractions, but it was generally perceived by the chapter members that the administration was the “Greek police.” It was important that I discussed my role multiple times so they understood I was a researcher during this process, not an administrator. It was also imperative that I built trust and developed rapport with the students so they were open and honest in their discussions.

A final limitation could be the method of data collection in the form of the focus group. There was a chance the men may posture for one another and may respond to questions about their own experiences around drinking and their fraternity based on the

responses of others in the group. In order to mitigate this limitation, I invited each participant to an individual interview to allow for greater follow up and to gain and individual responses to my inquiry.

Summary

In this study, I utilized a qualitative case study method to examine the drinking behaviors among fraternity men and the role hegemonic masculinity influences these behaviors. This chapter provided an overview of the methods I utilized in this study. I reviewed the research questions, presented the context of the study, as well as the case study method, and participant selection. Additionally, this chapter addressed the data collection methods, methods of analysis, positionality of the researcher, trustworthiness, and limitations of the study. Chapter Four will present the findings of the study.

Chapter Four: Findings

I designed this study to explore the role peers play in influencing drinking behaviors of their brothers. Social norming theory and theories of men and masculinities informed the study of one fraternity at an institution in the Midwest. This chapter will provide a brief overview of the fraternity chapter profile, followed by the themes that emerged through analysis of interviews and focus group data.

Fraternity Profile Characteristics

Men who are members of one Greek fraternity [Alpha Beta Chi, ABC, (a pseudonym)] at a large, land grant institution located in the Midwest, participated in this study. ABC was founded as one of the first chapters west of the Mississippi River in the late 1800s (Anonymous, 2015). The charter states that it strives for excellence through enhancing the collegiate experience through social, moral, and intellectual growth by promoting high standards of moral conduct and responsible citizenship (Anonymous, 2015). ABC fraternity has over 90 active members and over 35 new members. The house, which is one of the newest fraternity houses recently built on campus, houses over 90 members who are of freshmen, sophomore, and junior standing (Anonymous, 2016). All new members of the fraternity have to live in the chapter house if they are going to be members of the organization. In addition, sophomore and junior members live in the facility and seniors live adjacent to the fraternity house.

The operations of the fraternity are overseen by the fraternity executive board. The board has 18 positions that oversee chapter operations such as finances, recruitment, social activities, and alumni engagement, to name a few. The executive board serves for one year in their position and participation in the election process is only for

undergraduate members of the fraternity. The members of the chapter are very involved on campus. They have fraternity men leading clubs, philanthropies, and student councils throughout the campus. In addition, the chapter historically is a fierce competitor in the intermural sports program and routinely wins various tournaments and leagues year after year (Anonymous, 2016)

During the 1990s, ABC's national organization created a comprehensive strategic plan that was designed to align members' actions with the mission and vision of the national fraternity. These included five initial goals:

1. Define in contemporary language the base case for membership in a Greek society
2. Make academic performance an explicit commitment and find ways to demonstrate that membership in a Greek society enhances academic achievement
3. Establish and self-enforce a code of conduct that Greek societies utilize for responsible social behaviors
4. Build a program that encourages broad-based opportunity for leadership training within the fraternity and service to the community at large
5. Connect these attributes of Greek members to the outcomes of professional careers and active participation in a global society as an engaged citizen

(Anonymous, 2015).

The national organization found ownership and involvement from the undergraduate membership would be essential components for any cultural change recommended by the strategic plan to occur (Anonymous, 2015). One of the goals of the strategic plan directly

targets social behaviors through a self-enforced code of conduct. The national organization believed that it was important to outline expected social behaviors for fraternity members. In light of its history and the focus of the current strategic plan, the fraternity was an ideal organization with which to engage for this study.

Fourteen members of the fraternity participated in this study. Each participant chose a pseudonym to protect his identity. Each of the participants was a traditional, college-aged student, ranging in age from 19-23 years old. All participants were members of the fraternity and lived in the fraternity house. Five of the participants were freshmen and joined the chapter in fall 2015. Three of the participants were sophomores and six were juniors. The focus groups were conducted according to pledge class so the participants of each focus group were of the same pledge class and joined the fraternity at the same time. Following the focus groups, 12 participants participated in an individual interview that allowed for greater individual reflection and private conversations. Two members chose not to participate in the individual interviews and did not communicate with me the reasons for this decision.

In an effort to protect the identity of the chapter and the participants, the following table (Table 1) provides general information about the participants.

Table 1: Participant Profile

Pseudonym	Pledge Class	Informal/Formal Recruitment	Class Standing	Individual Interview
Randy	Fall 2013	Informal	Junior	Completed
Charlie	Fall 2013	Informal	Junior	Completed
Ethan	Fall 2013	Informal	Junior	No Show

Johnson	Fall 2013	Informal	Junior	No Show
Teddy	Fall 2013	Informal	Junior	Completed
Gabe	Fall 2013	Informal	Junior	Completed
Boone	Fall 2014	Informal	Sophomore	Completed
Sam	Fall 2014	Informal	Sophomore	Completed
LaDonnia	Fall 2014	Informal	Sophomore	Completed
Nick	Fall 2015	Informal	Freshmen	Completed
Gunnar	Fall 2015	Informal	Freshmen	Completed
Mark	Fall 2015	Informal	Freshmen	Completed
Garth	Fall 2015	Informal	Freshmen	Completed
Flounder	Fall 2015	Informal	Freshmen	Completed

Cross Cutting Themes

Although each participant had his own experience in the fraternity, there were four broad themes that emerged from the case analysis: (1) to be a brother; (2) competition; (3) liquid bonding; and (4) what it means to be a man. In addition, alcohol use was a common thread throughout all themes. Below, I present each theme, including subthemes that provide nuanced in support of the theme

To Be a Brother

The role of the current members is to ensure new members learn the organizational traditions and values through role modeling, chapter ritual, and the formal new member program. The ultimate goal for a new member is to become a brother of the fraternity. New members will also assimilate into the fraternity through receiving new facts or of

responding to new situations in conformity with what is already available to consciousness (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Below, I present three subthemes that describe to be a brother: the role of the upperclassmen in the assimilation into the fraternity, social pressures, and work hard/play hard.

Role of the upperclassmen. Upperclassmen played a paramount role in the assimilation of new members. In particular, upperclassmen were key in facilitating new members' socialization with alcohol. Upperclassmen in the house provided alcohol to the younger students throughout their socialization process. In doing so, new members received messages that alcohol was accessible and should be part of fraternity life. During the focus group, one participant compared pledgship in the fraternity to boot camp in the military. "Boot camp" helped assimilate the new members into the culture of the fraternity by teaching them about rituals, expectations, processes, and the role alcohol plays.

Gunnar, a freshman, talked about one of the first events the fraternity does each year. He recalled:

One of the first events we do every year during the first week in on a Friday where we just go to one of the senior's houses off campus and we just have freshmen and seniors. We hang out and drink and usually a game of shot gun is started by one of the older guys. And of course, it's a get together for them, it's one of their last hurrahs where they're all together. At that point, clearly all freshmen want to know is what it means to be in the fraternity.

Similarly, Garth, another freshman, discussed his experience of drinking around the upperclassmen during his first year as a new member. He described the need to try to

“out drink” another member of his fraternity by drinking more alcohol in a sitting than anyone else in his new member class as a way to stand out and bring attention to himself. Early in the semester there were not a lot of opportunities for him to stand apart from his pledge brothers so he said that out-drinking someone was one way he thought he could make an impact on the older brothers in the fraternity. Many of the participants, like Gunnar and Garth, were introduced to the upperclassmen when they were new members through various events involving alcohol; these events served as the initial introduction into the fraternity.

According to participants, alcohol is essential in the new member process and is used to connect the new members together to one another and reinforce the social norms of the chapter culture. This process, also known as “pledging”, is a process in which the new members must earn their status as a full and initiated member into the fraternity.

Teddy, a junior, described his first weeks in the fraternity. He shared:

When we first got here freshman year, it just seemed like such a big school and so many people to meet on weekend nights and even some weekday nights. It was a time when everyone was going out to drink. That’s how people were meeting each other, especially new friends, so it was just kind of like that, go make some friends and learn about the fraternity.

An example of assimilation into the fraternity included such things as cookouts with only the new members and the senior members during the first week of classes. The purpose of the cookout was to allow the senior members of the chapter who lived out of the chapter house to have an opportunity to meet the new members over a burger and beer. This activity was the first time that the new members were introduced to the oldest

members in the fraternity and it was one of the only times the new members interacted with the seniors throughout their entire new member period even though they lived in close proximity of each other.

The new members spent the majority of their time with members of the fraternity, specifically the men who resided in the fraternity house. They spent the majority of their first semester eating, sleeping, studying, and socializing only with the men who lived in the fraternity house. They were not introduced to other cultures on campus such as living in a residence hall, interactions with other new members from a different fraternity, or campus alcohol-free events. When asked during a focus group if their experience was different from friends that went to other institutions, participants agreed whole heartily. They told accounts about friends from high school who attend different universities being jealous how much partying and fun their friends were having in the fraternity at the University of Missouri.

This experience is consistent with the literature where alcohol has been cited as being used often by upper-class students as a key element in assimilating and influencing the new members (Arnold & Kuh, 1992). The new members tend to be willing to conform based on the need to be accepted into the group (Creeden, 1990). It was apparent by experiences upperclassmen had with alcohol that they were not influenced by the drinking behaviors of the new members. This was attributed to the fact that over time the upperclassmen had become the cultural norm for the fraternity and had already lived up to the behavioral expectations that were imposed on them as new members. In fact, the older participants spoke about the behaviors of the freshmen were consistent with their own behaviors especially when they were freshmen. Even when one of the

questions asked if they were ever worried about a new members' drinking behavior. The participants in the focus group recounted stories about isolated occasions when a brother might have needed to be put in bed or cleaned up vomit. Overall, they did not display overall concern with a new member's drinking behavior.

Getting to know the other members of their pledge class was critical to create a sense of belonging in the fraternity, which also helped the new members integrate into the fraternity culture. Freshmen new members described the beginning of the semester as a time when they only knew one or two members in the organization. They discussed the perception that some members from larger cities knew each other, yet even those from the cities felt that they were in the minority of the group and did not know others. They emphasized that it was important to get to know their pledge class and any other members whenever possible and it was an easier task when alcohol was involved.

One fraternity member discussed how the responsibilities of pledgship facilitated a forced interaction among the upperclassmen and pledges. Mark, a freshman, discussed how these interactions changed after the pledges were finished with pledgship. He recalled:

Some of the upperclassmen would invite us all to come over to their room and a couple of us (new members) would go and hang out. But after pledgship, not so much, just because we want to do our own thing, you know, just take the chains off.

Mark provided insight on the importance placed on meeting older members in the fraternity during the new member process. There is a priority placed on spending time

with fraternity members and learning the culture of the fraternity during the new member process more than any other time during their collegiate experience.

LaDonnia, a sophomore, discussed his view of the upperclassmen and how alcohol played a role in getting to know the older members. He observed how well the older members knew each other and how well they all got along during an event hosted by the upperclassmen. He went on to say he did not think it would be possible to convince the seniors to come and meet the new members if alcohol was not involved. For him, alcohol made events with the members more appealing and more fun.

Charlie, a junior, described the older member's role in assimilating the freshmen into the fraternal culture. He stated that the freshmen, new members, look up to the upperclassmen for good or for ill. If the new members see the upperclassmen acting in a certain way, they are more willing to act the same way. If they see the upper class members role modeling a behavior they perceive to be a cultural norm of the fraternity, they will model that behavior as well. For example, it was a tradition for the new members to meet the older, senior members of the fraternity at one of the older member's apartment during the first week of school for activities that generally led to competitive drinking games to ensue. The younger participants talked about how it would be their turn to continue the tradition when they were seniors.

Social pressures. Many participants reflected on the social pressures of the fraternity they experienced, while they were also adjusting to college life in general. The social pressure to assimilate with other members and adopt perceived norms, rituals, culture and behavior of the fraternity is a reality for the new members. Participants described the desire to belong and the pressures that they felt in order to fit in with others

in the fraternity. Participants described changes in their drinking behaviors after joining the fraternity, such as drinking on a week day night, participating in a drinking games, and consuming more alcohol than they were accustomed to. They credited these changes to perceived social expectations and pressures.

Some men discussed their experience with alcohol prior to attending college and whether their behaviors changed now that they were on campus. For many, the social pressures they felt to belong and fit in were the same pressures as those to use alcohol.

Ethan, a junior, shared his experience while he was a new member:

I definitely felt a pressure during my freshman year to drink. I didn't drink that much in high school. I went to a small, private school and I just never went into that or was never really welcomed into those drinking cliques. When I got here, I did try (to drink). Did I unconsciously or consciously try to fit into what that actives expected? Yea, I did. I wanted to show them I could hang out with the guys. But definitely more during the transition of freshmen year and to the fraternity. After my freshman year, it died down a bit.

Another participant discussed the culture shock he experienced during his first semester in the fraternity. Growing up in a small community, alcohol was not a significant factor in social settings or getting to know people. During his first semester on campus, he found the social pressures he encountered around alcohol to be somewhat of a culture shock. He felt that if he did not participate in drinking with the upperclassmen or the new members in his class, he would be seen as an outsider and someone who was not serious about belonging to the fraternity.

Thompson described the rhythm of alcohol that became part of the fraternity routine. New members were expected to learn the rhythm in order to be seen as a legitimate part of the fraternity. He recalled times where he saw new member brothers pounding beers, one after the other, in a type of rhythmic drinking pattern. Although he said he did not feel the need to prove himself to his brothers, he did feel a need to join some sort of rhythm. He shared that being part of the rhythm was a big factor for him to meet people at a large institution.

Some participants during the focus group verbally and nonverbally expressed agreement with Ethan when he described a time he pretended to drink at an event. He did not discuss why he did not want to drink, but did recount the time he held a red solo cup filled with soda in his hand during a social event where his brothers were drinking alcohol. He said he felt the need to “appear to be drinking [alcohol],” so nobody would question or ridicule him for not doing so.

During a focus group, Ryan also described the social pressures he felt during pledgship:

There are times when I have definitely not wanted to drink but because everyone’s drinking...I’m not going to not go out to the bar, I’m not going to not hang out with these guys...I might as well just have a few beers, you know. To fit in.

Overall the participants freely discussed the internal pressures they felt to drink, but they were very quick to point out at no time did any of the brothers force any type of alcohol consumption. Instead, they focused on their own experiences and pressures to

adapt to the drinking culture of the fraternity, not recognizing (or perhaps unwilling to recognize) that the culture itself might be perceived as a social force.

Work hard/play hard. Participants expressed that the concept, *work hard/play hard*, was part of the overall philosophy of the fraternity, and an excuse to drink. The notion of working hard was related to the academic status of the fraternity on campus. The fraternity historically placed in the top five for grades every year and there is a high academic expectation of the members, especially the new members. Randy, a junior, in his interview, described how the notion of work hard/play hard starts during the recruitment process:

I think every fraternity drinks. I would say especially for our fraternity; the best part is its work hard/play hard philosophy. That is what they tell us during rush.

That is what we are taught as pledges. You know, we always have one of the best grades among the fraternities. It is a work hard/play hard mentality.

Charlie agreed, sharing:

One thing I think about, the fraternity is really good getting people to get their work done first and then open up to free time. It's motivation to open up free time so that you can go do fun stuff and you don't have to stress about it. We plan out times to have that free time together and that's when we go out and drink.

When participants referred to work hard/play hard, they focused on academics and not working in a part time job or on internships, or engaging in the fraternity, particularly during the first year. After their first year, they were more likely to get involved in other activities, including working during the week at jobs or internships. The fraternity impressed upon them their two priorities for their freshman year would be

the fraternity and their academic accomplishments, in that order, suggesting that the work hard/play hard really meant play hard/work hard.

Competition

Competition emerged as an integral part of participants' experiences in ABC. As previously mentioned, the chapter and its members were proud to place in the top five for their grades among all fraternities. However, the majority of the conversation about competition centered on competition within the organization, rather than with other fraternities, especially when discussing alcohol. During the focus groups, many of the recollections of times involving competitive drinking with other members were told in a male consumption narrative commonly called a "drinking story" (Giles, 1999). For example, Nick, a freshman, discussed how competition is perceived as a byproduct of any fraternal get together. He reflected:

I think when we all get together to do something it's competitive. I think it's so deeply engrained, the desire to win almost and even though it is not a sport, you still treat it as a competition. It's not "oh, that guy's drinking more than me", it's more "I don't want to be like soft or something like that". If you're sitting around playing a drinking game or even something as simple as a video game, you want to compete and win.

Participants consistently described how members would compete against each other and how their fraternity was, overall, very competitive. However, participants did not explicitly equate competition with masculinity.

Shot gun. The prevalence of drinking games not only reinforced a culture of competition, but also as a way to demonstrate you are part of something. Several men

discussed playing drinking games. In particular, all focus groups mentioned the game, “shot gun.” Shot gunning is a means of consuming beer very quickly by punching a hole in the side of a beer can with a sharp object and placing their mouth over the hole, while at the same time, pulling the tab to open the can. The object of this game is to see who can chug a can of beer the fastest. Mark expressed the need to chug a beer in order to stand out among the other members of his fraternity:

Guys will say “oh, let’s chug this beer, oh, I finished before you, I can do it quicker than you, I’m better than you.” If you beat them at shot gun and you drop it (the empty can) on the ground, not only is it a sign to say “I beat you” but obviously you’ve got the glory of the win. Everyone will look at you too; it goes back to the attention. And the person who lost thinks “maybe I should shot gun a little more, maybe I should figure out a way to do this quicker.”

Sam, a sophomore, shared his strong desire not be left out or to be the only person who was not participating in a drinking game. He recalled the following:

If I want to do something, I do it. I mean, if everybody is shot gunning a beer, I might be more likely to do it too. I mean, I don’t want to be the only person at the table that everybody’s saying “no thank you, I am not going to do that” and just be sitting there.

Like Sam, each brother recalled playing drinking games during various time of their fraternal experience. For some, it was their personal reflection on the activity; for others, it was celebrating how certain brothers excelled in the various forms of drinking games. In either case, competition was important and potentially a way to prove one’s self.

Impress the best. Like with the subtheme shot gun competitive drinking was a way to impress their brothers. As previously mentioned, winning a drinking game was a way participants could stand out from one another. One of the sophomore fraternity members said that impressing other members was a regular occurrence among the brothers. He noted:

It's a way to impress people, too. Obviously the one who can drink the most and still be standing when everyone's drinking is just showing off. A lot of people want to show off how much they can drink and how much they can do. When they get really drunk, it's not "oh, you got really drunk you dummy", it's "oh, I drank that much last night". It's almost like a badge of pride sometimes.

Boone, a sophomore, viewed drinking in a competitive manner as a way to one-up a brother in order to stand out. The more one drank during drinking competitions, the more he would stand out. He recalled:

There's competitive aspects in drinking and there's one-upmanship where everyone wants to drink a little more. Like I said yesterday, there's social pressures that masculinity definitely goes into. And masculinity, I would say, almost exclusively increases the volume that you drink. I don't think it ever really decreases it.

Overall, the men recalled many accounts of the central role competition played in the fraternity. Competition and alcohol were intertwined and appeared to be rites of passage, and a way to stand out as new member and a man. The next theme, liquid bonding, explores how standing out is not the only purpose for alcohol use. Alcohol is also a way to fit in and come together as a fraternity.

Liquid Bonding

Alcohol was a way for brothers to bond and a mechanism for social connectedness. The participants in both the focus groups and the individual interviews discussed the bonds and connection that alcohol helped facilitate. Alcohol became the glue that bonded brothers together in the fraternity and to the fraternity.

“It’s a social lubricant.” Each of the participants talked in one way or another about how alcohol made getting to know the brothers easier. For example, one of the focus group participants said:

It’s a social lubricant so when you’re hanging out with people it makes it easier to talk to them. It makes it easier just to be social and hang out. It’s so much more fun being social when you’re drinking.

Likewise, alcohol allowed Randy to be more social; he also described the ability to unwind and relax as dependent on alcohol. He stated:

So this sounds like an alcoholic, but I definitely drink sometimes whenever I don’t have stuff to do and I want to relax and unwind. On the other hand, for me, alcohol is definitely needed during social times like we were talking. I can talk to people but sometimes I’m not the best conversationalist so it’s definitely a social lubricant.

Sam, a sophomore, also described the reliance on alcohol as a social lubricant. He spoke about how alcohol allowed the brothers to open up and be closer. He stated that alcohol is needed in order to bring the brothers together and even to get the brothers to attend an event. He recalled:

I mean, kind of like the lubricant, like socially. It definitely makes it easier to talk to people. I think people sometimes open up more whenever they've been drinking, which kind of just makes you get closer... And it's kind of like the thing to do. So it is something to bring people together.

All of the participants reflected on the importance of alcohol as a social lubricant. They unanimously agreed that alcohol provided opportunities for deeper and more meaningful engagements among their brothers. The next subtheme, *fraternal bonding*, expands on the nature of these engagements and their significance in the fraternity experience.

Fraternal bonding. One of the benefits fraternities and sororities boast about is the intense relationships that occur among the members of the organization. Participants expressed this benefit as well, despite any negative consequences of drinking. They were very forthcoming regarding how much alcohol played a role in bonding members of the fraternity together. For example, Flounder said:

I know alcohol can cause huge problems in people's lives, but is it bad to say we all are, in a way, closer friends because like we have had so much fun together and we've had so many great nights and so many stories and so many good things? I'm not saying we wouldn't be friends without alcohol, but it's part of it.

I mean, there's a reason people drink alcohol. It's fun.

Charlie, a junior, shared that some of his friendships were contingent on drinking alcohol. During his interview, he reflected on the focus group in which he participated. He recalled how all of the brothers agreed that alcohol was important to provide the sense of bonding:

It's a bonding thing, kind of what we talked about in the group discussion was like this is ... In certain situations, maybe we wouldn't be or I wouldn't be as good of friends with some of my buddies now if it weren't for alcohol.

Similarly, Teddy, a junior, credited the closeness of his new member class on experiences involving alcohol. He stated:

Yeah, my pledge class is extremely close. I know for a fact that I'm infinitely more close with my pledge brothers because of the times we have sat around and drank and got to know each other. You'll never be in the Army and things like that but our bond is just as strong and that's what it's like in that bond.

Gabe, a junior, discussed his perspective on brotherhood and the strong bonds he witnessed during his experiences in the fraternity. He was one of the few participants who connected masculinity and alcohol and the role they played on the bonds within the fraternity. He acknowledged:

But I think fraternities are one of the stronger bonds that you can see in people's lives and that's because of masculinity and because of drinking. It really brings you together when you're drinking. It increases camaraderie. It increases how social you are. I mean, it brings people together and alcohol can help.

All of the participants discussed the role alcohol played in the introduction to the fraternity and the bonding that took place among its members. Many of the examples pointed to alcohol to facilitate strong relationships. The next subtheme reveals how participants identified alcohol as an important factor in further enhancing relationships by fostering deeper and more meaningful conversations.

Deeper conversations. Participants reflected specifically on how they engaged in deeper conversations with their brothers when alcohol was involved. Many said they would not have learned as much about their brothers if it was not for the ability to open up with alcohol. For example, Randy, a junior, stated:

It's easier to make friends when there's alcohol in the house because it's not like it has to be there but you can get to deeper conversations quickly.

Reflecting on a personal conversation he had with his brothers, Garth, a freshman, said:

In terms of opening up and talking I probably wouldn't have opened up if I had not been like drinking that night. It did make us like a lot better friends. It's kind of just uncomfortable subjects if you're sober.

In the same way, LaDonnia described how brothers are able to open up more about difficult topics when they consume alcohol. He shared a time that one of his pledge brothers was able to open up about his feeling regarding his mother's health:

I think guys are pretty guarded with their emotions but there have been times when we're all really drunk some real stuff comes out and is talked about. One of my pledge brothers told us his mom's really sick and might die but he was only able to open up about it after we had been drinking. It got really emotional and he could tell we really care for him and stuff like that.

The examples above highlighted how participants perceived that deeper and more serious conversations occurred among the brothers in the fraternity when alcohol was a factor. Each was able to draw from a personal experience when he, or a brother, was under the influence of alcohol and engaged in conversations that were more emotional and raw.

What It Means to a Man

The last thematic category that emerged from the data was *what it means to be a man*. Although their experiences with alcohol were easy for the participants to discuss, talking about their masculinity appeared to be challenging. There were a handful of participants who had reflected on how masculinity has influenced their lives. However, for many, it was the first time someone asked them to talk about it. In the end, participants described experiences within the fraternity that exemplified what it meant for them to be a man in general, and a man in ABC fraternity in particular. Three subthemes comprised the overarching theme: (1) drink Like a Man; (2) don't Be a Sissy; and (3) aggression.

Drink like a man. Sam, a sophomore, discussed how masculinity played a role in dictating behavior and how society says one thing about drinking, but masculinity counters that thought. He reflected:

I think one of the things about masculinity and people our age is the amount you drink in a week. For some guys, 3 times might be a lot but for us, 5 times a week is normal. It's little things which goes back to when you're 6 years old and someone beats you in hop scotch. It's that little thought: "I'm better than you, I won," which goes back to masculinity and winning. Masculinity absolutely drives so much behavior I think.

Boone, who talked more than other men about masculinity during his interview, correlated the amount a brother drank to his notion of masculinity. He noted:

I think masculinity definitely affects how much you drink. I think masculinity affects most aspects of men's lives from an early age. And saying you don't have

the strength, you are saying you don't have the masculinity to do this (drinking) essentially.

Similarly, LaDonnia had this to say about the role of masculinity played in his own alcohol consumption.

When you're with your friends and you're around drinking, you want to drink a lot. Everyone knows that guy because after drinking six beers and he's trashed, people say, "ha, ha, he's such a lightweight" and that definitely plays on the idea of masculinity.

Randy described how brothers are perceived as "manly" for winning a game of shot gun. Winning any competitive drinking game was not only a way for a member to stand out, but also a way to express masculinity to the brothers. Randy stated:

You know the guy who chugs the quickest is the one considered to be the man. Those guys would be considered to be the bad asses or something like that. I'd say probably in that sense the guy that drinks the most is the one to be considered to be the manliest. If you're with ten guys and you are the only one to decide that you are not going play a drinking game and you sit down, you feel inferior to everyone else. You do it to feel more manly or else you feel inferior.

Like Randy, Gabe connected playing drinking games and masculinity. He also reinforced comments made by other participants that drinking games were more prevalent during freshmen year. Gabe, a junior, acknowledged:

I would definitely say that it's a man thing. I don't know. I think that men also feel like they have to drink more. And then I also feel like they can drink more. So I think it's definitely could be considered like a challenge and I know it was

when we were younger like as freshmen. At first coming in, many people were like “oh, like I can drink more than you.” But now it doesn’t really matter. People still give other people trouble for being a lightweight but it doesn’t really play a role that much anymore as we’ve gotten older.

Randy and Gabe described competitive situations involving alcohol that connected alcohol use and masculinity. For them, two factors were important in determining how masculine a member was, particularly for new members: (1) the amount of alcohol consumed, and (2) competitive drinking. If participants use alcohol to measure what it means to be a man, then it logically follows that engaging in feminine behaviors can call into question one’s masculinity.

Don’t be a sissy. Some participants discussed the how some drinking is viewed as feminine. Two participants from one of the focus groups discussed having wine nights and listening to jazz music in the fraternity house. Reaction of the other members in the focus group resulted in snide, joking remarks. Garth said:

We had wine nights. We don’t talk about those too much. It was planned by just two of us. There’d be other people that joined in every time; different people that joined in every time but we would each get a bottle of wine and then blast the jazz. Just hang out and relax.

Not only did what you drank and how you drank send a message about masculinity, but whether you drank did as well. Boone discussed how men were called out and viewed by their brothers if they did not partake in various drinking behaviors. He recalled being told the following:

“Oh, don’t be a pussy, don’t be a bitch, some take a shot, take a shot of this with me.” We joke about it but not drinking is a factor for a lot of guys in not being, well, masculine. It’s exactly what drives someone to drink so they aren’t called out as being a pussy or a bitch. Obviously, even the words themselves are going back to acting like a woman.

As with a previous theme, *deeper conversations*, participants did not make explicit connections between emotions and masculinity. However, there were some indirect references made that equated expressing emotions and less masculine. Boone was an exception; he described a recent conversation with a friend:

Men don’t like to be emotional. It’s unmasculine because that’s showing your hand, it’s showing weakness and if you show weakness its obviously not masculine at all. I think that can really negatively affect people because when you can’t do things that are normal, like showing emotions...like empathy and just a lot of really key emotions you have now gotten extremely dull. All because it’s not socially acceptable to show your emotions.

Boone’s quote above was also one of the few times that a participant openly expressed the harm men may experience if they follow socially constructed ideas of masculinity.

Aggression. Although participants also did not make explicit connections between aggression and masculinity (Edward & Jones, 2009), they did recall several incidents of brothers’ aggressive behaviors that were often explained away or justified. Charlie, a junior, perceived that members of the chapter utilized alcohol to not only influence their aggressive behaviors but would also blame alcohol when their behaviors became overly aggressive. For instance, participants shared stories about members living

in the fraternity house punching holes in doors and defacing bathrooms. When those brothers were confronted the next morning about their behaviors, they would use being drunk as an excuse rather than taking responsibility for their actions. In this way, fraternity members accepted aggressive behaviors of brothers when they were under the influence of alcohol.

Like Charlie, Gabe discussed how his brothers exhibited aggressive behavior and how that behavior reflected a type of toughness. He said:

Drinking lowers people's inhibitions. So, if you're drunk, you're thinking you can take on anyone in a fight. I'm so tough. I'll punch a wall. I'm going to show everyone how tough I am.

Teddy, viewed aggressive behavior being fueled by alcohol. He illustrated:

No one goes out and says "oh, who can drink the most tonight" but when people are drunk you can see behind the curtain. When guys are overdrinking and for no reason they become physically and verbally more aggressive I feel like the aggression is a subconscious type of thing.

Participants reflected on the role alcohol had on aggressive behaviors they witnessed when their brothers were intoxicated. Some of the men were able to draw from personal experiences observing a brother who was under the influence of alcohol had destroyed property or grew "beer muscles" and wanted to engage in some type of fighting. Both emotions and overly aggressive behaviors were somehow more appropriate, or at least justifiable, when alcohol was involved. Thus, demonstrating any behaviors that failed to align with typical constructions of masculinity were only acceptable when men were impaired or had lower inhibitions.

Summary of Findings

From analysis of focus group and individual follow up interviews, four overarching themes emerged in this study: (1) to be a brother; (2) competition; (3) liquid bonding; and (4) what it means to be a man. I presented subthemes to provide further nuance to each theme. In addition, alcohol use was a common thread throughout the findings. In Chapter Five, I will discuss the findings as they relate to the research question and guiding theories, recommend additional areas of research, provide implications for practice, and conclude the study.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Implications & Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I presented the findings of the study. In this chapter, I answer the research questions based on the themes presented in Chapter Four. In doing so, I consider them in relation to theories of social norms (Berkowitz, 2004; Perkins, 2003) and masculinities (Connell, 2005; Harper & Harris, 2011; Kimel & Messner, 2007; Laker & Davis, 2011). Implications for practice and recommendations for additional research focus on the experiences of the men in the fraternity in relation to their drinking behaviors. Finally, I present the study's conclusion.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the role peers play in influencing drinking behaviors of men in a fraternity at the University of Missouri, a large, public institution in the Midwest. In this section, I revisit the questions that guided this study, the findings, and interpret the findings and their relationship to the literature in an effort to answer the research questions.

Peer Influences on Drinking

The first research question and sub question asked “How do members in one fraternity at the University of Missouri perceive the influence other members have on drinking behaviors within the fraternity?” and in turn, “How do these perceptions influence their own drinking behavior?” For the participants, three factors were most salient: (1) normative social influence, (2) integration into the fraternity, and (3) social desirability of the new members, in shaping the drinking behaviors of their fraternity experience at Mizzou.

Participants reflected on their fraternity experience and the role alcohol played in their experience particularly within the new member period. Throughout the study, participants described how alcohol was a normative part of their fraternity experience. In fact, the ease with which they discussed their drinking and the drinking of their brothers suggested that drinking was a taken-for-granted part of fraternity life.

Normative social influence. A factor in developing the social normative behavior of the new members in the fraternity was their living arrangement. The men in this study all lived in the fraternity house the first semester of their freshman year while they were involved in the new member process of the fraternity. The fraternity had a practice of not having any new members begin the new member process if they were living “out of house” or in any other location than the fraternity house. In addition, sophomore and junior members also lived in the chapter house and the senior members of the fraternity lived in a facility adjacent to the chapter house. Throughout their entire collegiate years, the members of the fraternity lived with each other, or in close proximity to each other. Thus, it is not surprising that peers had a powerful influence in establishing normative expectations for behaviors including drinking (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Trockel, Wall, Yanovitzky et al., 2006).

Moreover, according to social cognitive theory, the acquisition of behavior can occur through observation of others or by communication with others (Bandura, 1977). Because of the immediacy of exposure to older members at house parties, new members were quickly influenced by the behavior and actions of older members who they aspired to emulate and impress. The tendency of new members to conform to the recognized social norms and socially desirable behaviors of the fraternity was important to them in

order to belong and to avoid situations that they perceived could result in negative evaluations by other members.

The participants discussed the importance of socially adapting to their environment. They would appear to be drinking alcohol in order to fit in. At times, a member might hold an empty beer can or red solo cup in their hand while socializing with older members in order to appear to be drinking alcohol - and, more importantly, to belong. The men did not want their drinking behaviors to appear different from those of the others in the fraternity, and they did not want other members to question them or look down on them for not drinking. If they were perceived to be engaging in the same behaviors, then they would be included as one of the brothers.

Participants perceived the drinking behaviors of the older members as “normal” drinking behavior for the fraternity. They rarely interacted with older members who did not live in the house unless alcohol was involved, sending a message that alcohol was an important aspect of fraternity life and of maturation with the fraternity. Although my data did not specifically capture levels of self-reported drinking, this message from their brothers may lead to higher self-reported alcohol use among the new members, affirming the theory of social norming (Yanovitzkey et al., 2006).

Participants discussed varying expectations they had about alcohol use prior to joining a fraternity, as well as the reality they encountered as a new member. The older members’ drinking behaviors were perceived as “normal” drinking behaviors among the new members. Not only was this reinforced by the seniors who lived near the house, but more consistently, new members spent their out-of-class time with the sophomores and juniors living in the house. The interactions among members was daily and, in turn, they

believed that their alcohol use matched those of their peers with whom they had high instances of contact (Rimal & Real, 2005).

The older members in the fraternity were found to view new members' alcohol use similar to their own and normative within their fraternity. Older members did not exhibit any concern or alarm with the drinking behaviors of the new members. New members brought into the work hard/play hard mentality that was echoed by the sophomores and juniors who participated in the study. They drank after they studied, indulged in house parties, and participated in drinking games that were generally organized by sophomore members of the fraternity. Additionally, participants described the ease new members had in finding someone in the house to drink with on any given night if so desired. This is not surprising given research that found alcohol use, sometimes in excess, was an accepted behavior that can be attributed to shared beliefs that make up group norms in situations when peer-to-peer interaction is tightly connected, such as ABC fraternity (Baer, Stacy, & Larimer, 1991). Moreover, individual members expressed that, in some cases, they altered their personal standards regarding their own behavior, in part, based on their perception of the behavior peers expected of them (Trochel et al., 2008). Peer pressure, combined with a new members' desire for acceptance into the fraternity, may have contributed to shifting personal standards about drinking toward perceived peer expectations. Many of the men reported that they had tried alcohol but rarely drank on a routine basis prior to coming to college, which was different than what they observed and participated in during their first semester as a new member in the fraternity.

Assimilation into the fraternity. In order to be a respected new member in the fraternity, participants believed they had to mirror the behaviors (perceived as normative)

of their older peers. Because acceptable drinking levels are learned based upon observations of the larger group (Borsari & Carey, 2001), it is not surprising that peer pressure also contributed to participants' decisions to use alcohol. Consistent with Borsari and Carey's findings, participants experienced three forms of influences: 1) direct peer influence through direct offers of alcohol, 2) indirect influence or modeling, and 3) the creation of social norms around alcohol use. Whether intentional or not, participants were subject to peer pressure when they attended parties hosted by upperclassmen with alcohol. Although the upperclassmen could have considered offering a beer to a new member as being hospitable and welcoming, such offers constituted a form of peer pressure (Borsari & Carey, 2003).

Upperclassmen modeled drinking behaviors in initial activities during the early days of the new member period. Not only by providing alcohol to new members but by drinking themselves, the upperclassmen engaged in a form of peer pressure (Borsari & Carey, 2001). Prior to the formal fraternity educational new member program, initial fraternal activities, even if deemed informal, involved alcohol. During these activities, the upperclassmen helped the new members adapt into the alcohol culture by modeling their own behaviors of alcohol consumption.

The role of assimilating the new members through unintentional peer pressure relies on the behavior of the group, not just the behavior of one member (Baer et al., 1991). The role a social network has on orientating and assimilating a person to positive and negative behaviors is well-documented (Dorsey, Scherer, & Real, 1999; Larimer, Turner, Mallett, & Geisner, 2004; Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007). The majority of participants already had a relationship with the fraternity before

becoming members, which meant that there was some degree of socialization prior to coming to campus. For example, some of the participants described how their dad or brother was a member of the fraternity. Others talked about close friends from their hometown or family acquaintances who were associated with the fraternity. Thus, many participants come to the fraternity with an idea of fraternity norms. Once joining, the norms were quietly reinforced, so that the participants' own behaviors were consistent with perceived and experienced behaviors of the larger group and its legacy.

New members looked up to upperclassmen and desired to be accepted by them, thus participants strived to copy the older men's behaviors, including alcohol use. The more newer members were invested in a particular relationship with the upperclassmen, the more likely they were to conform to perceptions of what upperclassmen would approve. Participants shared concerns about not fitting in and the importance to stand out and prove oneself. These concerns are examples of injunctive norming - they perceive that others of influence expect them to behave in a certain way, and that if they do not behave in such a way, they will be socially sanctioned (Rimal & Real, 2005). Injunctive norms influence behavior through fulfilling individuals' needs to build and maintain relationships with others. Because participants equated alcohol use with developing relationships (e.g., alcohol as a social lubricant or as a mechanism for liquid bonding), the importance of alcohol was highlighted and reinforced its normative influence.

Another example of participants experiencing injunctive norms was through the perception of approval from the older members of the new member's alcohol use. For example, if the new members perceived the older members had an issue with the amount or frequency the new members were drinking, they believed their relationships with

upperclassmen would be at risk. Thus, the new members' need to conform to the social normative behaviors of the fraternity and to assimilate into the fraternal culture is likely linked to their need for social desirability. Conforming to an injunctive norm, such as drinking with the upperclassmen on a weeknight after study hours, comes from a desire to gain or maintain social approval (Jacobson, Mortensen, & Cialdini, 2011). The new members' injunctive norms seemingly influenced their behaviors, and these behaviors were shaped by what is a socially approved behavior by the fraternity. In this case, the socially approved behavior was drinking alcohol regardless of whether new members are underage or drink excessively.

Social desirability of the new members. Most participants declared that they wanted to join the fraternity to fulfill their need to belong to a group. The men spoke about the desire to lessen feelings of being overwhelmed by the sheer size of a campus like Mizzou. Joining a fraternity provided the opportunity to be socially desirable and to belong to a large campus by belonging to a fraternity.

According to Trockel et al. (2008), fraternity expectations of alcohol use are closely predictive of actual consumption behavior of the new members, suggesting a strong social desirability orientation of new members. Participants in this study appeared to follow the social norms and expectations much like in Trockel et al.'s study. As discussed in ABC, alcohol was used in the recruitment, socialization, and assimilation of new members into the chapter culture, which reinforced the group expectation of alcohol norms on the new members. However, it is worth noting that contrary to other studies (e.g., Borsari & Carey, 1999), participants in this study did not share any experiences with forced drinking or physical hazing from any brothers within the fraternity. Of

course, it is possible that they did not feel comfortable sharing such experiences with me due to my outsider status and role within the university.

Masculinity

The second research question asked “What role does masculinity play in their drinking behaviors?” For the participants, masculinity was largely an identity about which they had thought little. Their reactions when asked to think specifically about masculinity are not unexpected for men who are coming of age with no road maps, no blue prints, and no primers to explain what a man is or how to become one (Kimmel, 2007).

The majority of the participants were not able to properly define or even describe what masculinity was. They generally learned about masculinity from their fathers, coaches, or other male figures in their lives. Thus, it is not surprising that the men’s families and their relationships with family members were influential factors that shaped their identities (Kilmartin, 2007). When prompted, the majority of participants described masculinity as being physically and mentally strong, or a form of power. Yet, it was evident in our discussions that the men had not encountered the topic of masculinity in their new member program or in any of their classes. Despite the limited exposure to and inability to describe masculinity, when reviewing the finding through the lens of masculinity, descriptions of bonding with each other and engaging in behaviors that reflect compensatory masculinity suggest that masculinity does play a role.

Bonding. It is through relationships that we know students learn lessons about how to manage their feelings, how to rethink first impressions, how to share on a deeper level, how to resolve differences, and how to make important decisions (Chickering & Reisser,

1993). However, relationships with others, especially men, can be difficult for men to navigate because of the messages they receive that to be a man, one must be hyperindependent and non-emotional (Kilmartin, 2007). Findings from this study are consistent with these messages. Participants discussed the difficulty of opening up to their brothers and developing deep emotional bonds—unless alcohol was involved.

Some of the brothers reflected on instances when either they were struggling with an issue or a brother was going through a difficult situation. The brothers were guarded with their emotions (Kilmartin, 2007). Yet, in each instance, participants credited alcohol as a tool to facilitate difficult and emotional discussions. Alcohol was generally included during times when a deeper connection with a brother transpired. Further, men referred often to alcohol being a “social lubricant” for them. They viewed alcohol as a way to loosen up, feel relaxed, and be able to have conversations they would not generally have without the use of a social lubricant. Thus, it raises questions about how genuine such connections truly are if they rely on alcohol.

For the majority of the men in the study, their fraternity experience provided them with an opportunity to develop relationships and connections that were deeper and closer than their previous relationships. But how did these men develop these deeper conversations, and therefore, deeper connections? As mentioned before, they did so through liquid bonding (Kuh, 1993). A part of any new member process involves not only learning about organizational norms and values but developing bonds among the chapter and older brothers (Borsari, Murphy, & Barnett, 2007). Participants recalled numerous instances of relationship-building, and spoke of these times fondly, and as a given aspect of fraternity life. However, they did not connect that developing deep

emotional connections was inconsistent with overarching notions of what it means to be a man. Nor did they consciously realize that alcohol gave them an excuse to operate outside traditional masculine norms.

Hegemonic masculinity. Hegemony teaches men to be strong; that aggressive behavior is acceptable; to be in control; to be competitive; and above all, to act heterosexual (Messerschmidt, 1995). The concept of hegemony refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life (Connell, 2005). The notion of hegemonic, compensatory, or performance masculinity is a form of gender expression in which men overcompensate to the hegemonic culture (Edwards & Jones, 2009). Another way to describe hegemonic masculinity is how men act when they feel they need to reaffirm their masculinity, especially in instances where they perceive themselves to have less power (Giles, 1999). Although they did not label it as such, participants described examples of hegemonic masculinity during their new member period, a time when they lacked power and status within the fraternity. Examples of forms of hegemonic masculinity include crafting masculine narratives, behaving aggressively, and ridiculing feminine behavior (Messerschmidt, 1995).

Throughout the findings, participants shared stories that are consistent with socially constructed notions of masculinity. For example, they watched sports, played games, and competed among each other, while drinking and sharing stories about their lives. These “drinking stories,” also known as male consumption narratives, are likely a component of male identity formation and engagement in compensatory masculinity (Giles, 1999; Gough & Edwards, 1998).

Although participants did not make explicit connections between aggression and masculinity, they did recall several incidents of brothers' aggressive behaviors, behaviors that were often explained away and justified. Fraternity members accepted such aggressive behaviors when brothers were under the influence of alcohol. Participants spoke about members living in the fraternity house who punched holes in doors and defaced bathrooms. When confronted the next morning about their behaviors, the members would always blame being drunk rather than taking responsibility for their actions. Other members seemed to implicitly accept this rationale and let any concerns about aggressive behaviors go.

Participants reported being called "sissy" or "pussy," or told "don't be a bitch," by other brothers for acts that the brothers' perceived as feminine. This type of name-calling falls directly into one of four rules a man must follow (i.e., no sissy stuff, anti-femininity) to establish his masculinity according to Brannon (1985). This rule requires men to distance themselves from anything that can be perceived as feminine. Name-calling, then, becomes a way that members remind each other that they are breaking the rules of what it means to be a man.

Iwamoto et al. (2001) found a relationship between "playboy" norms and problematic drinking; however, I did not find examples of "playboy" norms (i.e., having numerous sexual partners and encounters). The participants did not discuss examples of masculinity in relation to women or sexual experiences. Possible lack of such findings could be because the study was not designed to focus on sex and masculinity or because the men were not comfortable discussing those viewpoints with a woman or person with authority as the researcher. Regardless, the findings from this study differ from the

findings of other studies regarding sexuality, masculinity, and alcohol (Burk et al., 2004; Iwamoto et al., 2001). From my findings, it is evident that peers played a powerful role in influencing the drinking behaviors of the men participants in ABC. Next, I discuss the implications of these findings on practice, present recommendations for research, and conclude my study.

Implications for Practice

The current study offers several implications for practice. First, the results from this study can be utilized to inform the development of targeted interventions for fraternities specifically focusing on drinking behaviors. Findings from this study can be utilized to create educational interventions for fraternity men, develop awareness among the diverse group of stakeholders working among the fraternal community, and leverage resources for addressing the needs of the fraternal population. Such focused efforts, coupled with a culture-changing approach, could facilitate sustainable change regarding the central focus of alcohol in fraternity life.

My research shows the need for additional interventions for fraternities relating to masculinity and drinking behaviors. Therefore, chapter members need to be given the tools to create new member programs and fraternal experiences that allow for the exploration of what masculinity means to them. My findings reflect an overall lack of awareness about compensatory and hegemonic masculinity. Thus, even introduction to the concept and an opportunity to self-reflect upon one's masculine identity would be a positive step toward improving interpersonal relationships without relying on alcohol as a social lubricant or an excuse for bad behavior. The intervention would

introduce fraternity men to aspects of masculinity and how they can make sense of it in their own lives.

Fraternities are highly structured, political organizations that engage multiple stakeholders including local advisors, alumni, national headquarters, and campus administrators. In order to create effective educational opportunities and cultural change, educational efforts must extend beyond the undergraduate fraternity members to include all stakeholders. In addition, resources need to be coordinated so there is a unified vision and strategic plan to achieve cultural change. Creating change in this culture must include training for staff, advisors, and faculty on issues surrounding men, masculinities, and peer influence on behaviors. Professionals who better understand the influence of peers and masculinity on alcohol behaviors in the fraternal system can then provide new insight into interrupting the drinking dynamics that occur.

One approach would be for an office of Greek Life to partner with a national headquarters that has a shared vision for providing members, alumni, and volunteers invention efforts centered on the relationship between masculinity and social norms. By aligning with a national organization, an institution can provide greater opportunities for awareness, education, and inventions to men in fraternities on more than one campus.

In order to create any type of change within the fraternal culture, a coordinated approach involving a variety of diverse stakeholders will be necessary. The first step would be to assemble a task force that would include student affairs practioners; prevention specialists; academic areas involved in higher education, gender studies, psychology, social work, or counseling. The goal of the task force would be to develop educational interventions based in theoretical grounding of masculinity and social norms.

A process of assessment to measure the effectiveness of the interventions will be required for determining success of such interventions.

Establishing a partnership with conduct educators is another critical collaboration. Laker (2005) indicated that there is a tendency among university administrators to “bad dog” men. He described “bad dogging” as shaming men who are performing in ways they have been taught and for which they have been previously rewarded. This could be interpreted as punishing the men, like those in this study, for social normative behaviors such as new members drinking alcohol in the fraternity house. This tactic does not provide a true challenge for men to examine their behavior and, in many cases, causes men to dismiss the issue at hand. Practitioners must recognize that men are performing in ways that have been deeply ingrained in them and that they generally do not even recognize. When a fraternity is in violation of a policy, alternatives for sanctions need to be created and implemented that would focus on the impact of masculinity on the issue and teach valuable interventions to address the organization’s behavior. This is not to say that men should not be held accountable for the behaviors, but that perhaps a different approach is necessary in order to facilitate a lasting cultural shift. Working in partnership with programs that oversee the conduct process would allow for educational interventions grounded in masculinity to be administered for violations that included alcohol.

The study demonstrates that the participants generally misunderstood concepts of masculinity and its impact on their drinking behaviors. Their narratives reveal that incidences of alcohol misuse increased when they acted based upon what they perceived others expected of them in regard to their alcohol behaviors. The men were not taught about masculinity and the role it can play in the fraternity culture. This is evident in the

general lack of awareness the participants had in responding to questions during the focus groups and interview process. The small number of participants who expressed greater awareness about the role of masculinity appeared to make better decisions regarding their behaviors, including alcohol use. They were also more willing to challenge some of the negative stereotypes entrenched in masculine culture, such as being aggressive and stoic, with or without alcohol. To foster cultural change regarding alcohol use in fraternities like ABC, issues of men and masculinity and challenges to peer influences and social norms must be prioritized.

Lastly, the findings can be used to leverage additional resources for fraternal organizations. Generally, fraternities are perceived as elitist organizations that have access to unlimited amount of resources. Resources can be defined as time, monetary support, awareness, and strategic support. Taking the time to educate faculty, staff, and students on the findings of this research can increase awareness. Research relating to both masculinity and fraternities is very limited, therefore there are few programs and interventions that connect this knowledge. For instance, the findings of this study can be shared with various prevention offices throughout campus in order to create specific programming related to social norming and masculinity within the scope of alcohol education among fraternities. Greater awareness, education, and support is needed to assist not only fraternity men, but all men, in understanding the role masculinity plays in their college development and lives.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to fill gaps in the research about the role peers and masculinity play in influencing drinking behaviors of a group of fraternity men at the

University of Missouri. Although this study has done that, there is room for additional research. For example, I recommend additional investigation into the influence of intervention efforts on fraternity drinking and dismantling compensatory masculinity. In addition, my design could be replicated to study similar questions in multiple fraternities, including historically Black or Latino fraternities, where the intersections of race and masculinities may reveal other valuable insights.

Another important consideration for future research is to conduct multi-fraternity studies, and studies of the same chapter on multiple campuses. The current study focused on one fraternity. The fraternity was a good choice in many ways due to a rich fraternity history and the willingness of the men to participate, as well as the researcher's knowledge of the institution. However, the addition of several fraternities would provide a diverse knowledge of new member experiences and increase the depth and breadth of data based on numerous organizations within the same university context. Additionally, if the same chapter was studied on multiple campuses, researchers might be able to tease out behaviors and traditions that are unique to ABC: that is, how pervasive is chapter culture related to drinking and masculinity?

While the study purposefully excluded members of historically Black or Latino fraternities, repeating the study at the same research institution or at other institutions with the inclusion of these groups would potentially yield valuable data regarding the influence of masculinity on the perceptions of alcohol use in fraternities intersected by racial identity. This could also lead to the ability to contrast historically Black or Latino fraternities and predominately White fraternities regarding the role of masculinity on the perceptions of alcohol use.

This study represents the experiences of men in a fraternity at the University of Missouri who agreed to participate. Many of their experiences were consistent with the existing literature, suggesting that my findings are credible and dependable, however, this study should be replicated with other fraternities and at other institutions as a way to both continue to explore and expand the study of men in fraternities.

Conclusion

Researchers have found that the drinking culture among Greek students in general, and fraternities in particular, and the influence of peers in shaping this culture is pervasive (Borsari & Carey, 1999). As such, I wanted to have a deeper understanding about the role peers and masculinity played in influencing drinking behaviors of their brothers. The fraternity men who participated in this study are not atypical. They are men who want to do well academically, who want to be engaged outside of the classroom, and who want to be leaders within their fraternity and on campus. They enjoy hanging out with their brothers, socializing, and drinking throughout the week. They acknowledge peer pressure and its influence on their drinking behaviors and the behaviors of others. They are also not immune to social norms related to alcohol use. Although most did not articulate the influence of masculinity on their drinking behaviors, I found that hegemonic masculinity did play a role in the alcohol culture.

This study supports previous research that has examined how chapter culture can contribute to high-risk drinking among fraternity members (Borsari et al., 2007; Carter & Kahnweiler, 2000; Higher Ed Center, 2008; Park, Sher, Wood, & Krull, 2009). The research has shown the issues related to men and alcohol use and the role social norming has on the fraternal culture; however, many institutions have done very little in the way

of creating programmatic interventions aimed specifically at connecting alcohol use and masculinity. Mizzou is no exception. “The lack of active programming for men is one of the most neglected areas in higher education...And the real challenge for the profession is to fully accept vulnerable college men are a special group that need our help and support” (Lemke, Casper, & More, 2011, p. 46). The good news is there is an opportunity to develop initiatives to address how fraternity men understand their masculinity and how fraternities can be successful vehicles in better educating and empowering their members to become healthier and more critically self-aware individuals.

In my professional work, I found that there is hesitancy and complacency to focus energy and resources on populations such as fraternities, because of the many privileges already afforded to these men. Yet, they are also communities at risk. A culture needs to be created where all stakeholders strive to create a model fraternity system that is built on positive historical rituals and traditions that also include modern viewpoints on masculinity and normative social desirability.

I hope that higher education professionals and fraternity leaders use this study to further assess the need to address an age-old issue of dangerous alcohol behaviors among fraternity men through new and innovative lenses. The days of “one size fits all” in terms of addressing alcohol issues within the fraternal community are gone. A great deal of attention has been paid to this complex issue for the fraternity population, but less attention has been afforded to how this issue intersects with masculinity. This must change if we want to better address alcohol use and abuse in fraternities.

This study only begins to examine how masculinity can influence the behaviors of

fraternity men and the role of alcohol within the fraternity. Fraternal men are the “lost boys” of our campuses. They have been seen as privileged troublemakers and the cause of what is wrong with the fraternity and sorority system. Maybe we are also to blame as educators, researchers, and administrators. Maybe we have not done a thorough job taking a close look at fraternities, their needs, and the evolving influences of compensatory masculinity. As Kimmel and Davis (2011) state, “The need for a band of brothers is stronger than ever. Boys and men need a place where they can be vulnerable, honest, and open with each other and learn how to become men” (p. 13). My findings suggest ABC is not yet this place. I hope that this study encourages educators and institutions of higher education to embrace the band of brothers and provide them the necessary resources to learn about masculinity, and therefore the influence it has on drinking behaviors, social norms, and the fraternity culture.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

THE INFLUENCE OF PEERS ON FRATERNITY DRINKING BEHAVIORS: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NORMING AND MASCULINITY

INTRODUCTION

We are asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researchers if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. The process is called “informed consent”. A copy of this form will be given to you.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the role peers and masculinity plays in influencing drinking behaviors of their fraternity brothers of one fraternity at a large, public institution in the Midwest.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS’ INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a focus group with other members from your chapter to discuss your perceptions of the drinking behaviors of other members in your chapter.
- Participation in this research will take approximately a total of 1.5 hours.
- I will ask you to share your thoughts about your perceptions and behavior and ask questions such as “Why did you join your fraternity? Think back over your experience, when do your brothers drink alcohol? Why do brothers drink in your fraternity? What things do you see when your brothers drink?”
- Participate in one in depth interview to discuss your experiences about how others drinking behaviors affect your drinking behaviors.

All focus groups will be audio recorded and a note taker will capture the conversations, with consent of participants. Recordings and notes will be uploaded to the principal investigator’s computer. Recordings will also be transcribed.

In publications and presentations resulting from the study, your name and the name of your chapter will not be used. Instead, a pseudonym will be used.

RISKS

I do not anticipate any risks from participating in this study.

BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefits to participants from this study. However, the expected benefit of the study is to understand the drinking behaviors of fraternity members at a large, public institution in the Midwest to provide a greater understanding on how aspects of masculinity affect these behaviors.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified to you or your chapter will remain confidential.

Only the researchers will have access to the data associated with this study. Data will be stored securely on a password-protected computer in a locked office and will be made available only to the researchers. Each participant will be identified along with the chapter. Data will be stored for 7 years following completion of the study.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. You can also skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable in answering. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from this study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to you which are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collections is completed, your data will be returned to you and destroyed.

COMPENSATION

Upon completion of the focus group and follow up interview, participants will have the option to enter a raffle to win one of 4 \$50 Mizzou Store gift cards.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about they study or the procedures, you may contact the investigator, Janna Basler at 2500 MU Student Center. (573) 882-8291, or baslerj@missouri.edu or my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Jeni Hart at 202 Hill Hall, (573) 882-8221, or hartJL@missouri.edu. You may contact the Campus Institutional Review Board if you have questions about your rights, concerns, complaints or comments as a research participant. You can contact the Campus Institutional Review Board directly by telephone or email to voice or solicit any concerns, questions, input or complaints about the research study.

483 McReynolds Hall E-Mail: umcresearchirb@missouri.edu
Columbia, MO 65211 Website: <http://www.research.missouri.edu/cirb/index.htm>
(573) 882-9585

Appendix B

Recruitment Script (Fraternity Meeting)

My name is Janna Basler, and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri.

I am currently collecting data for my dissertation study. I am extremely interested in wanting to understand the role peers and masculinity play in influencing drinking behaviors of their brothers. How is the behavior informed by social norming (what you think others are doing) and the masculinities of men? I hope to identify and better understand individual behavior.

I am here tonight to ask you to take part in a research study. I have been in discussion with your advisor and have received support from your alumni board and national headquarters.

Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. I am going to pass around the consent form and review it in order to provide you the information about the study so you can decide if you would choose to participate.

Please take the time to read the following information carefully while I go over it with you.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to examine the role peers and masculinity plays in influencing drinking behaviors of their fraternity brothers of one fraternity at a large, public institution in the Midwest.

What information do you need to know?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a focus group with other members from your chapter to discuss your perceptions of the drinking behaviors of other members in your chapter.
- Participation in this research will take approximately a total of 1.5 hours.
- I will ask you to share your thoughts about your perceptions and behavior and ask questions such as “Why did you join your fraternity? Think back over your experience, when do your brothers drink alcohol? Why do brothers drink in your fraternity? What things do you see when your brothers drink?”
- Participate in one in depth interview to discuss your experiences about how others drinking behaviors affect your drinking behaviors.

All focus groups will be audio recorded and a note taker will capture the conversations, with consent of participants. Recordings and notes will be uploaded to my computer and the recordings will be transcribed so I can code the data.

In publications and presentations resulting from the study, your name and the name of your chapter will not be used. Instead, a pseudonym will be used.

Are there any risks associated with your participation?
I do not anticipate any risks from participating in this study.

What are the benefits of participating?
There will be no direct benefits to participants from this study. However, the expected benefit of the study is to understand the drinking behaviors of fraternity members at a large, public institution in the Midwest to provide a greater understanding on how aspects of masculinity affect these behaviors.

Let me talk about confidentiality.
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified to you or your chapter will remain confidential.

Only the researchers will have access to the data associated with this study. Data will be stored securely on a password-protected computer in a locked office and will be made available only to the researchers. Each participant will be identified along with the chapter. Data will be stored for 7 years following completion of the study.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

Do you have to participate in this study?
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. You can also skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable in answering. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from this study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to you, which are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collections is completed, your data will be returned to you and destroyed.

Is there any compensation?
Upon completion of the focus group and follow up interview, participants will have the option to enter a raffle to win one of 4 \$50 Mizzou Store gift cards.

There are no significant risks associated with this research. Participation is completely voluntary, participants must be 18 years of age, and answers will be confidential. Upon completion of the focus group and follow up interview, participants will have the option to enter a raffle to win one of 4 \$50 Mizzou Store gift cards or 1 iPad Air. Participation in this research will take approximately 1.5 hours.

Who do you contact for questions?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact me as the lead investigator, Janna Basler or Dr. Jeni Hart. Both of our information is listed on the paper you have in your hands.

If you would like to participate in the study, you will receive an e-mail following tonight's meeting to sign up. This study is something that is very important to anyone that works with fraternities on any level. There is little to none existing studies in this area.

Now, I would like to open it up to any questions you might have. Are there any questions?

Appendix C

Invitation E-mail

My name is Janna Basler, and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri. I'm writing because I am currently collecting data for my dissertation study to understand the role peers and masculinity play in influencing drinking behaviors of their brothers. Moreover, informed by social norming and influence of men and masculinities, I hope to identify and better understand individual behavior.

There are no significant risks associated with this research. Participation is completely voluntary, participants must be 18 years of age, and answers will be confidential. Upon completion of the focus group and follow up interview, participants will have the option to enter a raffle to win one of 4 \$50 Mizzou Store gift cards or 1 iPad Air. Participation in this research will take approximately 1.5 hours.

The research study is being overseen by Dr. Jeni Hart. If you have questions regarding the project, you may email Dr. Hart at Hartjl@missouri.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board by telephone (573-882-9585) or email (umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu).

If you would like to participate in the study, please reply to this e-mail to sign up for one of the pre-determined times.

Thank you very much for your time and assistance!

Sincerely,

Janna D. Basler

Appendix D

Focus Group Protocol

THE INFLUENCE OF PEERS ON FRATERNITY BEHAVIORS: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NORMING AND MASCULINITY

JANNA BASLER | FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE | DISSERTATION DATA

1. Welcome

- a. Introduce moderator (Janna Basler) and research assistant
- b. The purpose of this study is to examine the role peers and masculinity plays in influencing drinking behaviors of their fraternity brothers of one fraternity at a large, public institution in the Midwest
- c. The results will be used to inform my dissertation and will be not be identifiable to you or your chapter
- d. You were selected because you are members of a fraternity, you live in your chapter house, and your chapter is a good representation of a fraternity among the Greek community

2. Guidelines

- a. There are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view
- b. We're tape recording for accuracy so please only have one person speak at a time
- c. We will be on a first name basis
- d. You don't need to agree with others, but we ask that you listen respectfully as others share their views
- e. We ask that you turn off your phones.
- f. My role as the moderator will be to guide the discussion
- g. The research assistant's role will be to take notes for me to utilize only for my analysis.

	QUESTION	MINUTES
1.	Tell us the name you have chosen for today and why.	5
2.	Why did you join your fraternity?	5
3.	What role does alcohol play in college?	5
4.	What role does alcohol play in your fraternity?	10
5.	Think back over your experience, when do your brothers drink alcohol?	5
6.	Why do brothers drink in your fraternity?	10
7.	What types of behaviors do you see from your brothers when they drink?	15
8.	Of all the things you heard today, what is the most interesting to you?	10
9.	(Review purpose of study) Have we missed anything?	5
		70

3. Wrap Up

- a. Remind them of the rights and responsibility
- b. Ask them not to talk to their brothers about the questions so every focus group is able to answer them without prior prompting or knowledge as you did today
- c. Have each person sign up for a follow up interview
- d. Remind them of the incentives for participating
- e. Thank them for their time and assistance

Appendix E

Semi Structured Interview Protocol

1. Welcome
 - a. Reintroduce myself (Janna Basler)
 - b. The purpose of this study is to examine the role peers play in influencing drinking behaviors of their fraternity brothers of one fraternity at a large, public institution in the Midwest.
 - c. The results will be used to inform my dissertation and will be not be identifiable to you or your chapter.
 - d. You were selected because you are members of a fraternity, you live in your chapter house, and your chapter is a good representation of a fraternity among the Greek community.

2. Guidelines
 - a. I will be audio recording for accuracy, with your consent

3. Questions
 - a. What role does “guycode” play in the drinking behaviors of your fraternity?
 - b. What influences your personal drinking behaviors?
 - c. Final Question
Review the purpose of the study, and ask “Have we missed anything?”

4. Wrap Up
 - a. Remind them of the rights and responsibility
 - b. Ask them not to talk to their brothers about the questions so everyone is able to answer them without prior prompting or knowledge as you did today
 - c. Remind them of the incentives for participating
 - d. Thank them for their time and assistance

VITA

Janna D. Basler was born in Oregon, IL. She attended Illinois State University where she completed a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science and a Masters of Science in Sport Management. Currently, she serves as the Senior Associate Director of Student Life at the University of Missouri where she oversees the offices of New Student Programs, Off-Campus Students, Leadership Programs, Greek Life, Student Organizations, Service Programs, Craft Studio, Environmental Leadership, and Mizzou Alternative Breaks.