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Associations Between Greek Life Membership and Undergraduate Student Well-being

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ABSTRACT

There is a lack of research and literature on whether being a member of Greek life as an undergraduate student in a college or university setting is associated with differential well-being. During emerging adulthood, a time of considerable change and challenge, like attending a higher education institution, an individual can benefit from joining an organization or group in benefit of their social well-being. Greek-lettered organizations play a significant role in an individual's life on and off campus through relationships, engagement, and campus life, however, there are mixed research results regarding the positive or negative outcomes associated with Greek membership. The current study uses data from the Penn State COLlege Relationships and Experiences (CORE II) project to understand whether Greek life membership is associated with undergraduate student social well-being at the University Park campus. Correlations and descriptive statistics were run to better understand associations between Greek life membership and social well-being factors like sense of belonging and social connectedness. A linear regression was run to determine the association between Greek life membership and social well-being factors accounting for gender. Within the Greek life sample, a t-test was run to determine if social well-being differed between men and women and by a function of living situation. Also, within Greek life sample, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to determine if social well-being differed by year in school. Present study findings indicate that being a member of Greek life is associated with higher sense of belonging and social connectedness at the University Park campus, controlling for gender ($p = <.001$; see Table 2). In general, women reported a higher sense of social connectedness compared to men ($r = .10, p = <.01$; see Table 1). Women in Greek life reported having higher social connection than men in Greek life ($\beta = -.095; p = <.001$; see Table 2). Current findings support a possibility to examine larger Greek life

samples within the University Park campus and other higher education institutions to determine study finding generalizability and more accurate analyses of living situation. There is an opportunity to analyze if current study findings are applicable as individuals transition from emerging adulthood into adulthood. Finally, associations can be tested among more diverse samples to gain a greater understanding of the needs or gaps within Greek life membership for minority students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Emerging Adulthood

The Theory of Emerging Adulthood aims to conceptualize the lives of individuals from their teens to their mid to late twenties (Arnett, 2007). Emerging adulthood reflects the idea that people in their late teens to mid to late twenties are no longer adolescents but not fully in adulthood yet (Arnett, 2007).

As emerging adults, individuals often leave home and move out, go to college or university, get married, or have children. Specifically, attending college or university introduces new challenges and transitions for individuals to experience such as, moving away from home, living with a roommate or multiple roommates, and joining sports teams, clubs, and other organizations and activities. The emerging adulthood stage of development provides individuals with opportunities to do things they would not normally do; it is an opportunity for experiences of both growth and failure (Nelson, 2021). Particularly, the undergraduate years in college or university immerse individuals in a massive period of transition, growth, and stress.

The transition from a high school setting to college or university can be challenging and isolating for individuals to adapt to; college and university students, during their emerging adulthood area of development, have a great opportunity to flourish or flounder. With the transitions and changes they are experiencing in a short amount of time; individuals may be

vulnerable to negative or risk factors preventing them from thriving in this new environment. As a first-year student, starting at a college or university can place an individual in a vulnerable state filled with stressors, anxiety, and doubt; finding a group of peers or friends can be challenging.

Engaging as a member of an extracurricular group or activity can contribute to an individual's sense of belonging and well-being (Winstone et al., 2022). The extracurricular and peer environment within a single Greek-lettered organization or entire Greek life community can serve as a protective factor to help shape and embrace these opportunities for growth and failure. These activities and membership play a pivotal role in an individual's college, university, and emerging adulthood experience. Fraternities and sororities are beneficial resources for student success, such as involvement, achievement, retention, and graduation (Yates, 2020). Pike (2000) explains how fraternity and sorority membership is a predictor for an individual to have higher levels of involvement on campus than non-Greek life students. Greek life allows members to be involved in activities on and off campus in relation to community service and philanthropy, leadership, and membership development giving them a sense of belonging and purpose throughout their membership experiences.

Seligman (2011) describes well-being using a combination of five measurable elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment ("PERMA"). The engagement, relationships, and meaning PERMA components of well-being are prevalent to Greek life membership because participation in a student organization or club contributes to engagement and meaning (Kovich et al., 2022). Being able to connect with members of a fraternity or sorority through social communications and interactions allows individuals to engage and develop positive relationships with other members of their own fraternity or sorority

and the wider Greek life community. Grace et al., (2022) explains how fraternities and sororities provide members developmental opportunities like meaningful connections and social support.

One important aspect of flourishing during this time is developing a sense of belonging and finding meaningful social connections within a community. *Sense of belonging* refers to the degree to which an individual feels like they belong at campus. *Social connectedness* indicates if an individual agrees or disagrees that their social relationships are rewarding (Diener et al., 2009). Low social connectedness and sense of belonging is associated with a lack of group participation, fewer friendships, a dissatisfaction with social relationships, and loneliness (Lee & Robbins, 2000). According to Kovich et al., (2023) during the transition from adolescence into adulthood, young adults' success in college may be impeded by barriers to well-being and mental health.

Finally, during emerging adulthood, high sense of belonging and social connectedness contribute to an individual's positive community engagement, peer relationships, and friendships to have a positive impact on their mental health and well-being. In college or university, an individual's well-being is critical for success not only academically during their undergraduate years, but in later life too. Lee and Robbins (1998) explain how social connectedness plays an important role in personal adjustment and well-being. During a time of major transitions throughout the emerging adulthood period, greater social connectedness may help with a more positive adjustment process to these changes (Lee & Robbins, 2000).

Greek Conferences, Greek Councils, Professional Fraternities and Undergraduate Student Well-being

The National Panhellenic Conference is the umbrella organization for the 26 national and international women's fraternities and sororities. In 1902, the National Panhellenic Conference was established with the mission to be the "premier advocacy and support organization for the advancement of the sorority experience" (Mission, Vision and Purpose, 2022). The North American Interfraternity Conference is a trade association representing 56 inter/national men's fraternities (Shelton, 2019). The Council's purpose is to advance fraternity on campus and provide interfraternal leadership by offering support, resources, and services (Shelton, 2019).

In 1930, five chartering organizations founded the National Pan-Hellenic Council in Washington, D.C. with the purpose to foster cooperative actions of its members in dealing with matters of mutual concern (About the NPHC – National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2023). The nine African American Greek-lettered organizations emerged during a time of racial and social isolation on college and university campuses (About the NPHC – National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2023). The National Multicultural Greek Council is an umbrella council for a coalition of Multicultural Greek-letter organizations (National Multicultural Greek Council, n.d.) which "promotes multiculturalism by advocating for justice and equity, cultivating interfraternal relationships, and empowering its member organizations" (National Multicultural Greek Council, n.d.).

In addition to these four conferences and councils, there are professional Greek-lettered fraternities on college and university campuses which promote specific areas of academia like business, law, and agriculture, for example. While differentiated through missions, purposes,

values, and founding history, these four Greek conferences and councils emphasize community for their chapters and members. Cultivating a sense of community for undergraduate students promotes individual and group flourishing like social connectedness, in addition to a sense of belonging within a group on campus. This positive feelings and attributes to membership may reduce isolation, loneliness, and seclusion better contributing to positive well-being factors like social belonging and sense of connectedness for undergraduate students.

Mixed Positive and Negative Outcomes Related to Greek Membership

Despite international and national missions from the Greek conferences and councils promoting community, belonging, and flourishing, there is extensive literature on the negative outcomes associated with fraternity and sorority life Greek affiliation, membership, and participation. A considerable amount of Greek life research focuses on negative outcomes like hazing, alcohol consumption, and sexual assault and violence. Past research links negative outcomes with failure over flourishing. Hazing can take place in many forms from physical to mental to emotional abuse; Helene Bruckner from Touro Law Review considers hazing an epidemic (Bruckner, 2018). Capone et al., (2007), research findings indicate gender and Greek involvement significantly predicted increases in alcohol use and problems, particularly for men who affiliate with Greek life organizations are in a high-risk group for alcohol use. Similarly, findings from Asel et al., (2015) show fraternity and sorority members spend more time participating in co-curricular and extracurricular activities but are also more likely to binge drink at higher levels compared to non-members.

Fraternity and sorority membership help to develop strong social involvement but may lack diverse social relationships in terms of experiences and interactions with [diverse] individuals (Asel et al, 2015). Higher quality relationships, more community service and engagement with the community can contribute to an individual sense of social connectedness and belonging. In Asel et al., (2015), a higher quality of relationships was reported amongst senior members. In a study at a smaller public institution with a smaller sample, results indicate that students in Greek-lettered organizations members may experience a greater amount of social support compared to the average college student and student athletes as a result of being an affiliated member of their organization (Chartoff, 2017). This current study will examine this similarly in a larger sample and institution. Furthermore, for academic success, Debard and Sacks (2010), indicate a positive alignment between fraternity and sorority membership for both men and women with academic success when compared to those students who decide to remain unaffiliated.

It is possible that Greek life membership is associated with higher aspects of social well-being like sense of belonging and social connectedness as aspects at college and university campuses. However, its linkages to social connectedness and sense of belonging not yet been specifically studied in a large college sample before.

Differences by Gender, Year in School, and Living Situation

An important consideration in studies examining the impacts of Greek life involvement is whether the effects are consistent across different groups. In this project, I considered a number

of factors that may add to our understanding of the relation between Greek life involvement and college student well-being.

Lee and Robins (2000), explain that despite both men and women valuing social connectedness, there are differences in the social relationships that men and women pursue to achieve a true sense of connectedness. Fraternity men and sorority women participate in engaging activities like brotherhood/sisterhood events, philanthropy and community service, and social events like parties. However, these events may look different when comparing fraternities and sororities and the strength of connectedness they are promoting through the events. Undergraduate men and women report different types of relationships that satisfy their need for social connectedness; women report needing relationships that emphasize physical proximity and men need relationships that emphasize relationships that emphasized social comparison (Lee & Robbins, 2000). Since Greek life membership often involves physical proximity to chapter members whether by living together or at events, for example, women may feel more satisfied or connected with their relationships compared to men. Therefore, Greek life membership may be associated with higher social connectedness and sense of belonging for women compared to men.

In Asel et al., (2015), Greek life membership was associated with higher quality peer relationships for seniors, but it was not for freshman. One possible explanation for this is since fraternity and sorority life active membership runs throughout the four years of undergraduate school, therefore seniors had more time with their brothers or sisters during membership. At the Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus, a majority of students join a Greek-lettered organization during their first (freshman) or second (sophomore) year in school and maintain their active membership status for the duration of their time in undergraduate school.

Joining as a vulnerable first- or second-year student would allow an individual to find a sense of community and belonging within a Greek lettered organization. The individual gains more time to grow and foster positive relationships and experiences as their undergraduate years progress. Consequently, it is likely that among Greek life members, those who have been in school longer may exhibit higher social connectedness and sense of belonging.

Despite not being examined in past research, place of residence likely impacts the extent to which Greek life membership promotes belongingness for individuals. Many Greek-lettered organizations throughout the United States have dedicated on or off-campus residences for fraternity and sorority members to live-in, host meetings, and informally gather. Members of Greek-lettered organizations that live in non-fraternity/sorority affiliated housing whether on-campus or off-campus, may not experience the same benefits as those living in the fraternity/sorority houses like increased social connection from living with your brothers or sisters.

Current Study

The goal of this research is to examine how Greek life membership is related to an individual's sense of social connectedness and sense of belonging. The current study explores five specific aims. By examining how being involved in Greek Life is related to social connectedness and sense of belonging, a necessary gap in research is being filled. Since 14% to 16% of individuals at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus are members of a Greek-lettered organization, findings aim to see how individuals' membership affects their sense of social connectedness and sense of belonging at a large institution.

The first aim of this research is to examine if being involved in Greek Life is related to an individual's social well-being. It is hypothesized that being involved in Greek Life will be related to a higher sense of sense of belonging (H1a). Also, it is hypothesized that being involved in Greek life will be related to higher social connectedness (H1b). The second aim – if Greek life membership is associated with social well-being outcomes – is to evaluate whether there are differences in social well-being among Greek life members as a function of gender, year in school, and living situation. Specifically, I hypothesize that women would have higher social belonging and social connectedness compared to men (H2a). Additionally, I hypothesize that those who have been in school longer will have a higher sense of belonging and social connectedness (H2b). Finally, I hypothesize that individuals who live in the fraternity/sorority affiliated housing will experience a higher sense of belonging and social connectedness compared to those who live in non-affiliated housing (H2c).

Chapter 2

Methods

Participants

This study utilizes data from the Penn State COLlege Relationships and Experiences (CORE II) project. The Penn State CORE II project collected data from Penn State undergraduate students across the Commonwealth campuses with the purpose to better understand students' experiences. All data for the current study came from responses from University Park students.

This study included a sample of 2263 undergraduate students at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus. Of that sample, 14% of these undergraduate students were members of Greek life for social reasons (N = 326). Within the Greek life sample, 78% are women (N = 253) and 22% are men (N = 72). Also, of this sample 17.48% are freshman (N = 57), 29.14% are sophomores (N = 95), 34.04% are juniors (N = 111), and 18.09% are seniors (N = 59). Finally, 6% of Greek life members reported living in fraternity/sorority affiliated housing (N = 18) while 94% of Greek life members live in non-affiliated housing (N = 307).

Procedures

Penn State CORE II data was collected via online survey in the Spring of 2023. The participants who consented to participating in the study and were deemed eligible, completed the

online survey which had an average completion time of ten minutes. CORE II project procedures were reviewed and approved by the university's Institutional Review Board.

Measures

This study utilizes measures on social well-being, Greek-life membership, and demographic characteristics of the sample.

Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging was accessed through participants' responses using a 7-point Likert scale to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "I feel like I belong at Penn State." Responses ranged from a 1 (Strongly disagree) to a 7 (Strongly agree). Participants could also respond with "Prefer not to answer" (999).

Social Connectedness

Social connectedness was accessed through the first item of the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009). Participants responded using a 7-point Likert scale to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "My social relationships are supportive and rewarding." Responses ranged from a 1 (Strongly disagree) to a 7 (Strongly agree). Participants could also respond with "Prefer not to answer" (999).

Greek Life Membership

Greek life membership was assessed through the item of "Greek life for social purposes." Participants responded to these items with the choices of 1 = "Yes", 0 = "No", 2 = "Maybe in Future." Participants could also respond with "Prefer not to answer" (999).

Gender

Gender was accessed through participants' responses to the following question: "How do you describe yourself?" Participants responses included Woman (1), Man (2), Genderqueer (3), Gender nonconforming (4), Non-binary (5), Not listed (6). Participants could also respond with "Prefer not to answer" (999).

Year in School

Year in school was accessed through participants' responses to the following question: "What is your current college standing?" Participants responses included First year (1), Second year (2), Third year (3), Fourth year (4), and Other (5). Participants could also respond with "Prefer not to answer" (999).

Living Situation

Living Situation was accessed through participants' responses to the following question: "Where do you live during the academic year?" Participants responses included College dorm/residence hall (1), House/apartment/room (not college-affiliated) (2), Parent's or relative's home (3), Fraternity/sorority house (4), Other (5). Participants could also respond with "Prefer not to answer" (999).

Chapter 3

Statistical Procedure

Missing values were assigned to responses where participants selected “Prefer not to answer.” Descriptive statistics were conducted to better understand the demographic characteristics of the sample. For gender, the variable was computed to have responses Woman (1) and Man (2) stay the same and responses Genderqueer (3) through Not listed (6) reassigned to “Missing.” Only one participant responded with a gender outside of the categories of “man” or “woman” so the analysis for the sample of students who responded with anything other than man or woman would be too small to statistically be compared to these two larger samples. For year in school, the variable was computed to reassign Other (5) responses to “Missing” so as to analyze only those who were freshman through seniors.

For Aim 1, linear regressions were run to examine the relationship between the two well-being outcomes and Greek life membership, controlling for gender. For Aim 2, all analyses were run within the sample of Greek life members. A t-test was run to determine if the relationship between well-being and Greek life membership differed by gender. An ANOVA could not be run to determine if the relationship between well-being and Greek life membership differed by gender because only one participant responded with a gender outside of the categories of “man” or “woman”. Additionally, an ANOVA was run to determine if the relationship between well-being and Greek life membership differed by year in school. Finally, an t-test was run to determine if the relationship between well-being and Greek life membership differed by living situation. For living situation, the variable was computed to have responses of living in a

fraternity/sorority house (4) stay the same and all other responses combined into one group (non-fraternity/sorority house residents).

Chapter 4

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Of this sample, those who were in Greek life reported higher social belonging ($r = .15, p = <.01$) and social connectedness ($r = .08, p = <.01$). Women in Greek life reported a higher sense of social connectedness compared to men ($r = .10, p = <.01$). Gender ($r = -.15, p = <.01$) and living situation ($r = .20, p = <.01$) also have significant correlations with Greek life membership. Living situation is significantly correlated with sense of belonging ($r = .04, p = <.05$) and gender ($r = .04, p = <.05$). Year in school was not significantly correlated with sense of belonging, social connectedness, or Greek life membership.

Aim One

For Aim 1, there was a significant association between Greek life membership and sense of belonging ($p = <.001$; see Table 2). These findings support the hypothesis that being involved with Greek life will be related to a higher sense of sense of belonging (H1a). There was a significant association between Greek life membership and social connectedness ($p = <.001$; see Table 2). These findings support the hypothesis that being involved in Greek life will be related to higher social connectedness (H1b).

Additionally, there was not a significant association between Greek life membership and social belonging when controlling for gender ($p = .946$; see Table 2). There was a significant

association between Greek life membership and social connectedness when controlling for gender ($p = <.001$; see Table 2). Women in Greek life reported having higher social connection than men in Greek life ($\beta = -.095$; $p = <.001$; see Table 2). These findings partially support the hypothesis that women would have higher social belonging and social connectedness compared to men (H2a).

Aim Two

For Aim 2, there was no significant difference on the relationship between Greek life membership and sense of belonging between women and men ($M_{\text{women}} = 6.25$, $M_{\text{men}} = 6.28$, $p = .80$; see Table 3). There was a significant difference between Greek life membership and social connectedness between women and men in Greek life ($M_{\text{women}} = 6.09$, $M_{\text{men}} = 5.57$, $p = .004$; see Table 3), with women members of Greek life exhibiting a higher sense of social connectedness compared to men ($p = .004$). These findings partially support the hypothesis that women would have higher social belonging and social connectedness compared to men (H2a).

There was no significant difference on the relationship between Greek life membership and sense of belonging between the years in school ($p = .51$; see Table 4). There was no significant difference on the relationship between Greek life membership and social connectedness between the years in school ($p = .77$; see Table 4). These findings do not support the hypothesis that those who have been in school longer will have a higher sense of belonging and social connectedness (H2b).

There was no significant difference on the relationship between Greek life membership sense of belonging between those who live in a fraternity/sorority house and those who do not (p

= .06; see Table 5). There was no significant difference on the relationship between Greek life membership and social connectedness between those who live in a fraternity/sorority house and those who do not ($p = .39$; see Table 5). These findings do not support the hypothesis that individuals who live in the fraternity/sorority affiliated housing will experience a higher sense of belonging and social connectedness compared to those who live in non-affiliated housing (H2c).

Chapter 5

Discussion

Brief Overview of Significant Observations

The first aim of this research was to examine if being involved in Greek Life is related to an individual's social well-being. It was hypothesized that being involved in Greek Life will be related to a higher sense of sense of belonging (H1a). Results suggest a significant association between Greek life membership and sense of belonging indicating that being a member of Greek life has a positive impact on an individual's sense of belonging at their campus. These findings are congruent with Winstone et al., (2022), emphasizing that engaging as a member of an extracurricular group or activity can contribute to an individual's sense of belonging and well-being. It was hypothesized that being involved in Greek life will be related to higher social connectedness (H1b). Results suggest a significant correlation between Greek life membership and social connectedness indicating that being a member of Greek life has a positive impact on an individual's social connectedness at their campus. Thus, Greek life membership may be beneficial for undergraduate student social well-being. Additionally, from the regression model, women reported having higher social connectedness compared to men. Lee and Robbins (2000), explain how undergraduate men and women satisfy their needs for social connection in different ways which helps to explain current study findings why men do not feel as socially connected compared to women.

The second aim of this research was to assess whether there are differences in social well-being among Greek life members as a function of gender, year in school, and living situation. It was hypothesized that women would have higher social belonging and social connectedness compared to men (H2a). There is no significant association between gender and sense of belonging among those in Greek Life. However, results suggest women in Greek Life report a higher sense of social connectedness compared to men in Greek Life. According to Lee and Robins (2000), men report needing relationships that emphasize relationships promoting social comparison, whereas women emphasize physical proximity. The high proportion of time spent with sorority sisters for women in Greek Life may align well with the type of physical proximity that helps women feel more connected to their peers, which can help to explain this finding.

It was hypothesized that those who have been in school longer will have a higher sense of belonging and social connectedness (H2b). Senior students report the highest averages for sense of belonging and social connectedness than any other grade level but is still not statistically significant ($N = 59$; $M_{\text{Belongingness}} = 6.42$; $M_{\text{Social Connectedness}} = 6.10$). Asel et al., (2015) describes a higher quality of relationships reported amongst senior members which is consistent with current study findings. It was also hypothesized that individuals who live in the fraternity/sorority affiliated housing will experience a higher sense of belonging and social connectedness compared to those who live in non-affiliated housing (H2c). Results do not suggest significant relationships between living situation and social belonging and social connectedness, which suggests these factors may not have a significant impact on Greek Life members' social well-being.

Limitations and Future Directions

Compared to the overall sample size for University Park undergraduate students, there is a smaller number of Greek life students within the sample, decreasing the sample size for some analyses in the current study ($N = 326$). A larger Greek life sample would allow for generalization of significant findings to the broader population of Greek life members, as there are thousands of students at the University Park campus involved in a fraternity or sorority and millions nationwide. The current study sample size makes it challenging for findings to be applied to other large institutions who have similar sized or larger Greek life communities. Future directions of research also open the opportunity to compare results within chapters or overall communities from each governing conference or council, the National Panhellenic Conference, North American Interfraternity Conference, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and National Multicultural Greek Council. By better understanding the needs and opportunities for growth from the chapters within each governing conference or council, student leaders and student affairs professionals will be able to meet the needs of undergraduate students more effectively through education, leadership, member hood development, and other programming activities.

A larger sample size when determining if living situation had an impact on a Greek life member's social well-being would be helpful to understand the benefits or challenges with living in a formal Greek life affiliated residence like a fraternity/sorority house. It is important to note that the sample size for those who lived in fraternity/sorority affiliated housing ($N = 18$) may not accurately represent the reality of individuals who live in Greek affiliated housing. At the Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus, a majority of chapters within the Interfraternity Council have formal on-campus and off-campus residences. At the time of this

study, one Panhellenic Council chapter has a formal off-campus residence. Panhellenic sorority chapters can have a dedicated shared floor and suite space within the dormitory halls on campus, however, a majority of Panhellenic chapters do not have a floor to be utilized as a formal chapter residence. National Multicultural Greek Council and National Pan-Hellenic Council chapters do not have formal on or off campus housing opportunities for their members. Therefore, the current sample may not reflect potential differences by place of residence for Greek Life members.

Also, the current study does not detail if Greek life members live with their fellow fraternity or sorority members in non-Greek life affiliated housing whether on or off campus. It is highly likely that Greek life members live together in apartments or dorms, for example, and benefit from the commonality of Greek membership and are still being fulfilled in terms of their social wellbeing, specifically social connectedness, without living in a formal or designated chapter residence. Therefore, the sample of students labeled as non-residents may contain many students who do live in community with other Greek Life members. Women in Greek life may benefit more from living in a formal chapter residence or living with other members of Greek life in a non-affiliated housing option because women report needing relationships that emphasize physical proximity to satisfy their need for social connectedness (Lee & Robbins, 2000). There is a disproportionate number of formal Greek-affiliated housing options like fraternity/sorority houses for men to reside in during the school year compared to women. A future direction of research would be considering a larger sample to examine if the men are benefiting from living in formal Greek-affiliated residences.

Based on significant findings from the current study, Greek life membership has a meaningful impact on an individual's sense of belonging and social connectedness during their undergraduate years. Future research can examine if this positive relationship extends past the

undergraduate years into adulthood or if Greek life membership eases the transition from emerging adulthood to adulthood. As emerging adults transition into adulthood, there are ways to stay connected and engaged with Greek life and members to maintain a sense of belonging and purpose within a community. For example, individuals can stay actively involved in Greek life through graduate chapters, alumnae chapters, networking, volunteering with the [inter]national organization, and advising or mentoring roles. Sharing a commonality of Greek life membership automatically connects individuals through shared values and interests and they can use it as a basis for developing relationships in the future.

Finally, future research can test these associations among more diverse samples to determine if current study results are consistent or differ among samples of minority students for example, in terms of gender, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity. Bureau et al, (2021) explains how even within the same institution, governing council, and chapter, member demographics can vary, so further research is needed to better understand the generalizability of current study findings to the entire Greek life population at the University Park campus and other institutions. If future findings are inconsistent with current study findings, more research may be needed to effectively understand and support the needs of minority students in Greek life.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to highlight the positive relationship between Greek life membership and social well-being aspects, such as, social belonging and sense of connectedness. Future research can compare Greek life students to non-Greek life students to determine if Greek

life membership continues to be significantly correlated with social well-being and if there are moderating factors such as, gender, year in school, and living situation between both groups.

Within the Pennsylvania State University, the four governing Greek Councils for the fraternity and sorority communities can leverage the current study findings when marketing their councils and chapters for recruitment or intake purposes. For example, in overall marketing like social media or print, prospective member information sessions, and their own recruitment or intake practices. By better understanding the gaps or non-significant findings in the current study, future research and practices can emphasize on sustainable community building and well-being. At programming events, more emphasis can be placed on brotherhood, sisterhood, and membership as fostering a sense of belonging and social connections internally within individual chapters and externally within larger councils and communities at University Park.

Tables

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Sense of Belonging	--	.32**	.15**	-.024	.01	.04*
2. Social Connectedness	.32**	--	.08**	.10**	.01	-.00
3. Greek Life Membership	.15**	.08**	--	-.15**	-.02	.20**
4. Gender (Men)	-.02	-.10**	-.15**	--	.02	.04*
5. Year in School	.01	.01	-.02	.02	--	-.00
6. Living Situation	.04*	-.00	.20**	.04*	-.00	--
Mean	5.82	5.76	.14	1.42	5.00	.01
SD	1.21	1.20	.35	.54	50.31	.10
N	-	-	326	-	-	-

Note: Greek life membership is scored as 0 (not involved in Greek life) and 1 (involved in Greek life)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2.

Associations between Greek Life Membership and Well-Being

	Sense of Belonging		Social Connectedness	
	Est.	<i>P</i>	Est.	<i>P</i>
Intercept	5.75	<.001	6.03	<.001
Greek Life Membership (1 = yes)	.15	<.001	.060	.004
Gender (1 = women, 2 = men)	.00	.946	-.095	<.001
R ²	.021	-	.014	-

Table 3.

Gender Differences in Social Well-being among Greek Life Members

	Mean (Women)	Mean (Men)	t-value (df)	p-value
Sense of Belonging	6.25	6.28	-.23 (322)	.80
Social Connectedness	6.09	5.57	2.96 (319)	.004
N	253	72	-	-

Table 4.

Differences in Greek Life Members Social Well-being by Year in School

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	F-statistic (df)	p-value
Sense of Belonging	6.30	6.21	6.23	6.42	.77 (3)	.51
Social Connectedness	5.89	5.99	5.95	6.10	.38 (3)	.77
N	56	95	111	59	-	-

Table 5.

Differences in Greek Life Members Social Well-being as a Function of Living Situation

	Mean (residential)	Mean (non-residential)	t-value (df)	p-value
Sense of Belonging	6.56	6.25	-2.00 (322)	.06
Social Connectedness	5.78	5.99	.88 (319)	.39
N	18	307	-	-

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