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College Student Hazing Experiences, Attitudes, and Perceptions: Implications for Prevention

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This investigation reports findings from survey data collected from 5,880 students enrolled at seven U.S. research universities. Building on previous studies, this investigation found that hazing occurred across a range of student groups and included high-risk drinking, social isolation, personal servitude, and humiliation. Although students tended to have pro-social attitudes and did not believe hazing was beneficial to their organizations, some reported positive outcomes. Research-informed recommendations for campus hazing prevention are provided.

Intimidating, harassing, and violent behavior among college students can threaten the health and safety of campus community members and impede the missions of postsecondary institutions. Hazing, a form of interpersonal violence, is defined as “any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group (such as a student club, organization, or team) that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers regardless of a person’s willingness to participate” (Hoover & Pollard, 1999). Hazing is at odds with educational goals as it can harm students and contribute to abusive campus climates, negative publicity, and student attrition (Allan, 2016; Allan & Madden, 2012). From this perspective, hazing in any one organization or team, among any group of individuals, is an issue with campus-wide implications that go beyond the specific organizations and/or individuals involved.

For an issue with significance for educational institutions, scholarly focus on hazing has been relatively lean. Two national studies have laid a foundation for documenting the nature and extent of hazing in U.S. postsecondary institutions, including Hoover and Pollard (1999), who examined hazing among student-athletes at NCAA institutions, concluding that 79% participated in behaviors that met the definition of hazing. In that study, two-thirds of student-athletes experienced hazing that was abusive or humiliating, half experienced hazing with high-risk drinking, and one-fifth experienced hazing activities that were dangerous, unacceptable, and potentially illegal such as being kidnapped, harassing others, or being forced to destroy property (Hoover & Pollard, 1999). Allan and Madden (2008), who surveyed more than 11,000 students on 53 college campuses throughout the United States, reported that 55% of those involved in campus organizations had experienced behavior meeting

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the definition of hazing. That study also found that student hazing occurred across a broad range of campus groups with students involved in varsity athletics (74%), fraternities and sororities (73%), club sports (64%), performing arts organizations (56%), and service organizations (50%) most frequently experiencing hazing.

Building on this foundation, the investigation presented here explores the nature and extent of hazing, as well as student attitudes and beliefs about hazing, at universities participating in the first cohort of the Hazing Prevention Consortium (HPC). The HPC is a multiyear research-to-practice initiative designed to support comprehensive hazing prevention and contribute to an evidence base for prevention. Researchers collaborated with campus professionals to administer an online survey designed to provide insights about students and organizations most at risk for hazing, the frequency of hazing behaviors, and student perceptions of, and attitudes toward, hazing at each university.

While previous studies have examined the nature and extent of hazing among U.S. college students (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008), this study adds new insights by exploring hazing at a subset of universities that made a substantial commitment to hazing prevention. The addition of social norms data, aggregated across multiple institutions, extends a growing knowledge base. In sum, this study breaks new ground in that while previous national studies collected data on the nature and extent of hazing, this investigation did so with the express and multi-pronged purpose of laying evidentiary groundwork for improved campus understanding of the problem of hazing and by extension, the development of data-driven hazing prevention strategies. For instance, analyzing data by gender and race provide demographic clues for which students may be at more risk of particular types of hazing and gathering data on student perceptions of hazing can inform social norms prevention campaigns. Despite the nascent character of the field of hazing scholarship, this investigation and the larger initiative of which it is a part mark a turning point, as the field shifts toward increased focus on the use of research to inform prevention practice.

Relevant Literature

Researchers have established that hazing occurs across a range of student groups in secondary and postsecondary institutions (Allan & Madden, 2008; Hoover & Pollard, 1999, 2000) with students involved in fraternities and sororities, varsity athletics, club sports, intramural sports, performing arts organizations, and academic clubs, and others, experiencing hazing (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2012; Campo, Paulos, & Sipple, 2005; Owen, Burke, & Vichesky, 2008). Scholars have observed a wide range of hazing behaviors, including activities that cause physical and psychological harm, involve high-risk substance abuse, and sexual violence (Allan & Madden, 2008; Finkel, 2002; Hoover & Pollard, 1999; Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Nuwer, 2004, 2018). Regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender identity, such practices tend to reinforce heteronormativity (Anderson, McCormack, & Lee, 2012; Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Parks, Jones, Ray, Hughey, & Cox, 2015).

Despite risks outlined previously, students continue to engage in hazing. Some scholars contend the persistence of hazing is largely attributable to perceived positive outcomes such as maintaining group hierarchy, cultivating commitment, and creating group cohesion (Campo et al., 2005; Cimino, 2011; Keating et al., 2005; Kirby & Wintrup, 2002). However, not all investigations have produced results in alignment with such conclusions, finding that hazing lowers group cohesion and undermines relationships between teammates and peers (e.g., Johnson, 2011; Van Raalte, Cornelius, Linder, & Brewer, 2007). Allan and Madden (2012) and Hoover and Pollard (2000) documented that nearly half (47–48%) of students arrive to campus having experienced hazing in high school, and these prior experiences may contribute to the normalization of hazing in college settings (Allan & Madden, 2012; Allan, Payne, & Kerschner, 2015). Further, there is a

documented gap between students' experiences of hazing and their willingness and ability to indicate they were hazed when asked directly (Allan & Madden, 2008). Allan (2016) considered hazing along a spectrum where subtle forms of hazing are normalized and less recognizable and extremely violent forms of hazing are readily recognizable but occur with less frequency.

Campo et al. (2005) indicated that a possible explanation for the reported gap between experience of hazing and self-reports of hazing is that students ascribe to a narrow definition of hazing that emphasizes extreme forms, including being tied up, beaten, or raped. Crow and Macintosh (2009) found a number of disagreements among student-athletes about what is considered hazing and what is acceptable for a team initiation. It is commonly believed students discount the potential for harm related to a wider range of hazing activities and this likely contributes to its prevalence. However, Campo and colleagues (2005) reported that, overall, students perceived hazing as harmful though they were neutral about their susceptibility to harm. In another study, respondents tended to agree that hazing was a serious problem and did not agree it was socially acceptable or was justified (Owen et al., 2008). Relatedly, in a study of perceptions of fraternity and sorority members, both groups attributed similar levels of responsibility to fraternity members for perpetrating a hazing incident, indicating that even in-group members recognize the role their peers play in perpetuating hazing (Drout & Corsoro, 2003).

While limited in scope, some research has documented gender differences in hazing (Finley & Finley, 2007). In a national study of college students and hazing, the most frequently reported behaviors overall—participating in drinking games and singing or chanting by oneself or in a select group—occurred for both men and women (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012). However, some of the other behaviors such as being asked to “associate with specific people and not others” ranked third for women and fifth for men, and physically taxing experiences were reported more frequently by men than by women, including having to “drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out,” and “enduring harsh weather conditions without appropriate clothing” (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012).

The vast majority of research on hazing, and media attention to particular incidents, has focused on male groups. In the few studies with a focus on women, hazing has been found to be prevalent however. For example, in a survey distributed nationally to professionals who advise fraternities and sororities on college campuses, 44% said hazing incidents among sororities were reported to them. “Of the incidents reported, 20% considered them psychological, 2% considered them physical and 28% considered them both” (Shaw & Morgan in Holmes, 1999, p. 4).

While few studies have examined racial differences in hazing, a number of studies have explored hazing in Black Greek Organizations (BGLOs) (Jones, 2000, 2004; Lee-Olukoya, 2010; Parks et al., 2015). Jones (2000) found that BGLO fraternity men were strongly committed to pledging models that included “physical hardships” (p. 121). Parks et al. (2015) argued that hazing in male BGLOs is more violent in nature than their historically White peer organizations. While Giddings, in her book on the history of Delta Sigma Theta, wrote that, “Hazing had always been a part of the initiation period . . . but may have a particular meaning and character among Blacks” (in Nuwer, 1999, p. 180).

Conceptual Framing

This investigation explores student hazing through the lens of campus ecology, culture, and climate by building on the early work of George Kuh (1998, 2009) and others who contributed to understanding relationships between campus environments and student learning. Rankin et al. (2011) defined campus climate as “the learning, living, and working environments of colleges and universities” (p. 8), while Renn and Patton (2011) described it as the “overall ethos or atmosphere

of a college campus mediated by the extent to which individuals feel a sense of safety, belonging, engagement within the environment, and value as members of the community” (p. 248). The development of college students is influenced by their experiences of campus climate: Students who perceive their campus as welcoming are more likely to demonstrate positive learning outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo, 2006).

Campus culture, typically conceptualized from anthropological and sociological perspectives, refers to values deeply embedded in the organizational structure and are therefore considered enduring in nature. In contrast, the concept of campus climate emerges from conceptual frameworks of cognitive and social linguistics, psychology, and organizational behavior and provides more of an emphasis on current patterns of behavior and perceptions of an organization which tend to be more malleable or susceptible to change (Cress, 2002; Hart & Fellabaum, 2008).

For this investigation, an understanding of social systems and campus culture shaped our thinking about institutional factors that might contribute to the presence of hazing (e.g., prestige of particular campus organizations or deeply held campus traditions) as well as factors that might mitigate the likelihood of hazing. The concept of campus climate framed the design of data gathering related to current attitudes and perceptions about the institutional and organizational environment of a particular campus.

Campus Ecology and Prevention Science

Prevention strategies adapted from areas of interpersonal violence research that are more fully developed (e.g., bullying, sexual violence) may be utilized in emerging areas of prevention (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; Mercy, Rosenberg, Powell, Broome, & Roper, 1993; Nation et al., 2003; Wilkins, Tsao, Hertz, Davis, & Klevens, 2014). Building on Bronfenbrenner (1979), Dahlburg and Krug (2002) posited that effective interpersonal violence prevention involves targeting individual, group, and community factors. A review of effective prevention programs with an ecological approach related to areas such as bullying, HIV, and substance abuse found the following six common elements: (a) comprehensiveness, (b) community engagement, (c) contextualized programming, (d) a focus on structural contributors to the problem, (e) theory-driven content, and (f) an emphasis on positive development (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009). Langford’s (2008) working paper adapted the multilevel ecological approach and laid a foundation for applying principles of prevention science to the issue of hazing in higher education. In thinking about societal and structural issues, the ecological framework also provided a lens to consider larger social systems such as racism, homophobia, and gender-based privilege that may influence the manner in which hazing occurs and how it is perceived by college students.

The background literature, concepts of campus culture and climate, as well as an ecological framework provide the backdrop for this investigation, which was designed with consideration to institutional context including institutional type, student demographics, and geographic location. The concept of campus ecology, adapted through a public health framework, informed our approach to data analysis and interpretation by exploring factors that may contribute to and protect from hazing at multiple levels of the campus ecology, including the intrapersonal, interpersonal, group/organization, university, community, and society (Dahlburg & Krug, 2002; Langford, 2008).

Methods

The primary question guiding this investigation was what is the nature and extent of hazing at a group of universities committed to comprehensive hazing prevention? Secondary questions embedded in the design included: Are there statistically significant gender differences in perceptions and experiences of hazing? Are there statistically significant differences in patterns of hazing based on

race? And, can student perceptions data support a social norms campaign to address misperceived norms related to student hazing? Data collection and analysis for this study were conducted as part of a larger three-year initiative from 2013–2016. In the initial year of the project, researchers assessed campus hazing using a mixed methods approach using an online survey as well as individual interviews and focus groups with students and staff. This article presents findings from the survey data.

Sample

The seven institutions from which data were collected include public and private research universities located in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, South, and Western regions of the United States and ranging in enrollment from 7,000 to 64,000. Each participating university provided researchers with a random sample of student e-mail addresses, representing at least 25% of the full-time undergraduate student population between the ages of 18–25. In total, 56,614 students were invited to participate across the seven HPC campuses that completed the survey with 5,880 students completing the survey (10.4% response rate overall, with individual institutions ranging from 3.9% to 27.2% response rates). Students included in the sample received an e-mail invitation to participate in a survey, along with a unique web address to prevent multiple entries. Replicating methods used in previous national studies of hazing, researchers did not use the term “hazing” in the survey invitation, instead describing the study as an investigation of student experiences joining clubs, teams, and organizations.

In aggregate, 59.6% of respondents identified as female and 40.3% identified as male. Seventy-three percent identified as White, 9.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 8.2% Hispanic, 4.7% multi-racial, 3.4% Black or African American, and fewer than 1% as American Indian, Native Alaskan, or other. With the exception of the underrepresentation of Black students, these demographics are similar to the racial/ethnic composition of U.S. public and private research universities near the time of this investigation, where 71.4% of students identify as White, 9.9% Black, 9.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 8.3% Hispanic, 0.8% American Indian/Alaskan Native (NCES, 2008). Twenty-four percent of respondents were enrolled in their first year of college, 24.5% in their second year, 25.2% in their third year, 22.5% in their fourth year, and 3.9% in their fifth and sixth years.

Instrument

A modified version of the National Survey of Student Hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008), amended to include questions regarding students’ attitudes and beliefs about hazing, was used to gather data for this investigation. Respondents were asked to select the type of student organization they had been most involved with at their university (i.e., varsity athletic team, fraternity or sorority, performing arts organization, academic club) and were then provided with a list of behaviors, most of which met the definition of hazing, and asked if the behavior happened to them as part of joining their team, group, or organization. In total, the modified survey incorporated more than 100 data points related to student experiences with behaviors meeting the definition of hazing, student experiences with hazing prevention strategies, perceptions of hazing on campus, experiences with hazing prior to college, and attitudes and beliefs about hazing.

Analysis

Analysis of data from 5,880 students across seven HPC campuses who completed the survey were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to aggregate databases generated by each institutional survey and to conduct basic descriptive statistical analyses. Chi-square tests for independence were utilized to examine the relationship between categorical independent variables such as gender, race, and primary group membership and categorical dependent variables such as whether or

not a student had experienced hazing and attitudes and perceptions of hazing. Results from the national report *Hazing in View: College Students At Risk*, which used a similar survey instrument (Allan & Madden, 2008), are also presented as a point of comparison.

Findings

Of the 5,009 students who indicated they had been involved in at least one campus organization or team, 4,953 (98.9%) identified an organization in which they had been most involved as a “primary organization.” Fraternities and sororities (19.9%), academic clubs (8.3%), faith-based organizations (8.2%), service clubs/organizations (8.1%), and club sports (7.9%) were reported most frequently as the “primary organization” for students. See Table 1 for the most frequently reported primary organizations.

Hazing Behaviors and Group Membership

Of the 4,953 students who indicated a team or an organization in which they had been most involved, 84.1% responded to the questions about specific behaviors they may have encountered to join or maintain membership in that primary team or organization. Of these respondents, 26.0% indicated they experienced at least one behavior meeting the definition of hazing in order to join or maintain membership in their group, team, or organization. See Table 2 for the percentage of students experiencing hazing by primary group type.

As noted in Table 3, students most frequently report participating in a drinking game, associating with specific people and not others, and being yelled, screamed, or cursed at by other members in order to join or maintain membership in their primary organization.

Chi-square analysis reveals there is a significant relationship between primary organization and students experiencing behaviors meeting the definition of hazing, $X^2(15, n = 4,196) = 192.93, p < 0.001$. Students indicating that varsity athletic teams, fraternities and sororities, and club sport teams were their primary organization experienced higher rates of hazing than their peers.

Hazing and Gender

Chi-square tests for independence also reveal there is a significant association between gender and whether or not students experienced hazing behaviors $X^2(1, n = 4,175) = 55.81, p < 0.001$. Overall, 32.4% of male students and 22.0% of female students experienced behaviors meeting the definition of hazing. There was also a statistically significant relationship between gender and alumni involvement in hazing, with male students being more likely than female students to indicate alumni were present during activities meeting the definition of hazing ($X^2[1, n = 725] = 5.55, p = 0.019$). As noted in Table 4, male students were more likely than female students to respond that they were hazed when joining both their primary organization ($X^2[2, n = 4,699] = 26.23, p < 0.001$), joining other organizations on campus ($X^2[2, n = 4,671] = 40.23, p < 0.001$), and in high school ($X^2[2, n = 4,622] = 65.62, p < 0.001$). Furthermore, male students indicated being more likely than female students to have participated in hazing others on campus ($X^2[2, n = 4,639] = 34.79, p < 0.001$) and in high school ($X^2[2, n = 4,620] = 71.42, p < 0.001$).

Male and female students experienced many of the same hazing behaviors most frequently, as noted in Tables 5 and 6. However, male students were more likely than female students to report participating in all but three of the 36 behaviors meeting the definition of hazing included on the survey.

Full responses of student beliefs about hazing can be found in Table 7. Chi-square analyses (Table 8) indicate a statistically significant relationship between gender and attitudes towards

Table 1

Most Frequently Reported Primary Organizations

Primary organization	N	Percentage
Fraternity or sorority	985	19.9%
Academic club	409	8.3%
Faith-based organization	405	8.2%
Service organization or club	403	8.1%
Club sport	389	7.9%
Band or other performing arts organization	348	7.0%
Varsity athletic team	324	6.5%
Social club	246	5.0%
Intramural team	227	4.6%
Student government or other student leadership organization	191	3.9%
Honor society	164	3.3%
Service or professional fraternity or sorority	156	3.1%
Culturally-based organization	133	2.7%
ROTC or other military organization	48	1.0%
Political organization	8	0.2%
Other type of organization	517	10.4%

Table 2

Hazing in Organizations

Group/Team	Number experiencing hazing	Percentage (consortium)
Varsity athletic team	123/288	42.7%
Fraternity or sorority	320/836	38.3%
Club sport	101/342	29.5%
Student government or other student leadership organization	45/164	27.4%
Band or other performing arts organization	85/312	27.2%
Intramural or recreation team	50/188	26.6%
Service or professional fraternity or sorority	37/141	26.2%
ROTC or other military organization	14/56	25.0%
Culturally-based organization	29/119	24.4%
Faith-based organization	61/337	18.1%

Table 3

Most Frequently Experienced Hazing Behaviors

Behavior	Number experiencing behavior	Percentage (consortium)	Percentage (national study)
Participate in a drinking game	405/4,117	9.8%	26%
Associate with specific people and not others	362/4,160	8.7%	12%
Be yelled, screamed, or cursed at by other members	314/4,151	7.6%	10%
Act as a personal servant to other members	289/4,160	6.9%	5%
Attend a skit night or roast where other members are humiliated	269/4,158	6.5%	6%
Sing or chant, by yourself or with other new members, in a public situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	254/4,157	6.1%	17%
Be deprived of sleep	241/4,151	5.8%	11%
Drink large amounts of an alcoholic beverage	239/4,119	5.8%	12%
Be awakened at night by other members	223/4,166	5.4%	9%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	132/4,166	3.2%	6%

Table 4

Hazing Variables Experienced More Frequently by Male Respondents

Variable	Degrees of freedom	n	Chi-square value	p-value
Have you ever been hazed to join or maintain membership in your primary organization?	2	4,699	26.23	< 0.001
Have you ever been hazed when joining any other team or organization at your institution?	2	4,671	40.23	< 0.001
Have you ever participated in hazing someone else while at your institution?	2	4,639	34.79	< 0.001
Were you ever hazed in high school?	2	4,622	65.62	< 0.001
Did you ever participate in hazing someone else in high school?	2	4,620	71.42	< 0.001

Table 5

Most Frequently Experienced Hazing Behaviors: Male Membership

Behavior	Number experiencing behavior	Percentage (consortium)	Percentage (national study)
Participate in a drinking game	229/1,585	14.4%	31%
Be yelled, screamed, or cursed at by other members	178/1,609	11.1%	16%
Act as a personal servant to other members	149/1,622	9.2%	NA*
Associate with specific people and not others	146/1,611	9.1%	14%
Drink large amounts of an alcoholic beverage	141/1,584	8.9%	17%

*Note: Not in top 10 hazing behaviors for males in national study.

Table 6

Most Frequently Experienced Hazing Behaviors: Female Membership

Behavior	Number experiencing behavior	Percentage (consortium)	Percentage (national study)
Associate with specific people and not others	213/2,528	8.4%	10%
Participate in a drinking game	175/2,514	7.0%	23%
Act as a personal servant to other members	139/2,534	5.5%	NA*
Be yelled, screamed, or cursed at by other members	134/2,522	5.3%	6%
Attend a skit night or roast where other members are humiliated	132/2,524	5.2%	NA*

*Note: Not in top 10 hazing behaviors for females in national study.

Table 7

Beliefs about Hazing

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree > Disagree	Disagree > Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It can be hazing even if someone agrees to participate	39.5% (1,709)	34.9% (1,510)	12.0% (519)	6.1% (262)	4.1% (176)	3.4% (148)
Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding	45.5% (1,968)	23.1% (997)	13.9% (602)	9.9% (426)	4.4% (191)	3.2% (139)
There is no good reason to haze new members of a group	49.6% (2,142)	23.7% (1,023)	12.3% (531)	8.5% (366)	3.5% (153)	2.3% (100)
Hazing is a problem on this campus	10.8% (463)	14.3% (612)	24.6% (1,053)	25.3% (1,083)	16.6% (710)	8.3% (357)
Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members	46.7% (2,009)	25.5% (1,097)	13.8% (592)	8.5% (366)	3.4% (146)	2.1% (91)
Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm	55.6% (2,396)	29.0% (1,249)	9.5% (410)	3.3% (144)	1.5% (65)	1.1% (46)
Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm	59.5% (2,564)	25.9% (1,117)	8.8% (381)	3.2% (138)	1.3% (57)	1.2% (51)
I do not need to be hazed to feel like I belong to a group	68.0% (2,931)	22.3% (960)	6.3% (271)	1.6% (70)	0.8% (35)	1.0% (43)
I would be more likely to report hazing if I could do it anonymously	36.4% (1,569)	26.0% (1,121)	19.1% (823)	7.1% (305)	5.8% (251)	5.7% (244)
I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference	43.4% (1,870)	26.9% (1,159)	15.4% (665)	5.8% (251)	4.2% (182)	4.2% (180)
The college's hazing policy is clear to me	34.4% (1,356)	25.2% (995)	17.1% (674)	11.9% (470)	6.6% (261)	4.7% (185)

hazing and perceptions of hazing, with female respondents more likely to agree with the following statements:

1. It can be hazing even if someone agrees to participate.

Table 8

Chi-Square Analyses of Beliefs about Hazing

Statement	Degrees of freedom	<i>n</i>	Chi-square value	<i>p</i> -value
It can be hazing even if someone agrees to participate	2	4,299	71.05	< 0.001
Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding	2	4,298	189.43	< 0.001
There is no good reason to haze new members of a group	2	4,290	207.47	< 0.001
Hazing is a problem on this campus	2	4,253	24.14	< 0.001
Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members	2	4,276	202.68	< 0.001
Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm	2	4,285	206.34	< 0.001
Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm	2	4,283	195.69	< 0.001
I do not need to be hazed to feel like I belong to a group	2	4,285	75.80	< 0.001
I would be more likely to report hazing if I could do it anonymously	2	4,278	160.05	< 0.001
I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference	2	4,282	129.80	< 0.001
The college's hazing policy is clear to me	2	3,915	1.34	0.512

Table 9

Chi-Square Analyses of Hazing Variables by Race

Variable	Degrees of freedom	<i>n</i>	Chi-square value	<i>p</i> -value
Were alumni present during activities meeting the definition of hazing?	4	726	20.86	< 0.001
Have you heard of organizations on your campus engaging in hazing to initiate new members?	4	4,715	14.66	0.005
Have you witnessed organizations on your campus engaging in hazing to initiate new members?	4	4,720	16.00	0.003
Have you ever been hazed to join or maintain membership in your primary organization?	4	4,711	216.86	< 0.001

2. Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding.
3. There is no good reason to haze new members of a group.
4. Hazing is a problem on this campus.
5. Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members.
6. Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm.
7. Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm.
8. I do not need to be hazed to feel like I belong to a group.
9. I would be more likely to report hazing if I could do it anonymously.

Table 10

Chi-Square Analyses of Beliefs about Hazing

Statement	Degrees of freedom	<i>n</i>	Chi-square value	<i>p</i> -value
It can be hazing even if someone agrees to participate	8	4,311	12.80	0.119
Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding	8	4,311	17.60	0.024
There is no good reason to haze new members of a group	8	4,302	22.06	0.005
Hazing is a problem on this campus	8	4,266	23.02	0.003
Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members	8	4,288	24.84	0.002
Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm	8	4,297	6.20	0.625
Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm	8	4,295	5.28	0.728
I do not need to be hazed to feel like I belong to a group	8	4,298	11.31	0.185
I would be more likely to report hazing if I could do it anonymously	8	4,291	27.76	0.001
I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference	8	4,295	35.35	< 0.001
The college's hazing policy is clear to me	8	3,928	10.37	0.240

Table 11

Individuals with whom Students Discussed Their Hazing Experience

Individuals	<i>n</i> (consortium)	Percentage (consortium)	Percentage (national study)
Another member	531	75.4%	41%
Friend not on team or in group	476	67.6%	48%
Family member	344	48.9%	26%
Boyfriend/girlfriend	340	48.3%	NA*
Team captain or student leader	281	39.9%	13%
Coach or advisor	127	18.0%	7%
University staff or faculty member	60	8.5%	5%
On a website or chat site	39	5.5%	5%
Counselor	38	5.4%	NA*
Resident advisor	32	4.5%	NA*

n = 704.

Note: *Not included in national study.

10. I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference.

Hazing and Race

While this analysis did not find a relationship between race and students' experience of behaviors meeting the definition of hazing ($X^2 [4, n = 4,185] = 3.21, p = 0.524$), chi-square analyses (see Table 9) indicate a relationship between race and recognition of campus hazing. Because the number of respondents in each racial group was low relative to White respondents, these analyses were based on an aggregated sample of students who identified as Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaskan Native. This group of minoritized students was more likely than their White counterparts to report alumni involvement with behaviors meeting the definition of hazing ($X^2 [4, n = 726] = 20.86, p < 0.001$) and witnessing other organizations on campus engaging in hazing behaviors ($X^2 [4, n = 4,720] = 16.00, p = 0.003$). Additionally, White students were more likely than minoritized students to report hearing of organizations engaging in hazing and indicate they (themselves) were hazed when asked directly.

Further, chi-square analyses (see Table 10) indicate there is a statistically significant relationship between race and attitudes toward hazing and perceptions of hazing, with White students less likely than their minoritized peers to agree with the following statements:

1. Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding.
2. There is no good reason to haze new members of a group.
3. Hazing is a problem on this campus.
4. Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members.
5. I would be more likely to report hazing if I could do it anonymously.
6. I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference.

According to the data from this investigation, the most common hazing behaviors for minoritized students were (a) associate with specific people and not others, (b) participate in a drinking game, (c) act as a personal servant to other members, (d) be yelled, screamed, or cursed at, and (e) be awakened at night by other members.

Location and Awareness of Hazing Behaviors

Students were also asked about their awareness of hazing activities prior to joining their group; the location and time of day these hazing behaviors occurred; the involvement of coaches, advisors, and alumni; and individuals with whom they discussed their hazing experiences. The majority of respondents (73%) indicated they were previously aware or somewhat aware of the hazing activities in which their group engaged, and 27.0% indicating they were unaware. On campus, nearly 70% of respondents said they were aware of other groups engaging in hazing behaviors, and 26.2% indicated they had witnessed hazing in other groups.

Respondents reported that hazing was most likely to happen off campus in a private residence (57.1%). However, respondents also reported public aspects to hazing, with nearly half (48.0%) reporting that at least some of the hazing occurred in outdoor public spaces or in a public building on campus, with nearly one in two (48.0%) saying that hazing occurred during the day or both during the day and night.

A little more than half of respondents (50.3%) did not perceive their coaches or advisors to have any level of awareness or involvement with the hazing they experienced, although many reported they were either present and involved in the activity (19.6%), present but not involved

during the activity (8.3%), or aware of the activity but not present (14.6%). Thus, more than 40% of respondents reported that a coach or organization advisor had knowledge of hazing activities, and more than a quarter say these individuals were physically present when hazing occurred. Twenty-nine percent of students reported alumni presence during some of the hazing behaviors experienced, and as noted in [Table 11](#), students most frequently discussed their hazing experiences with other group members, friends not on the team or in the group, and family members. Most respondents (82.0%) reported they did not post pictures of hazing to any social media site or application.

Perceived Outcomes and Recognition of Hazing Experiences

Students were asked about outcomes they experienced as a result of participating in behaviors meeting the definition of hazing in order to join their team or organization. Students frequently reported positive associations with their hazing experiences such as feeling more like a part of the team or group (62.8%), feeling a sense of accomplishment (54.0%), and feeling stronger (35.7%). Some respondents, however, did report experiencing negative outcomes such as feeling stressed (26.4%), having trouble with academics (12.6%), feeling humiliated or degraded (9.0%), having difficulty sleeping (8.7%), having difficulty concentrating in class (8.5%), and feeling depressed (7.4%), among other negative outcomes.

Further, there is a gap between students who experienced at least one hazing behavior and those who label their experience as hazing when given a definition and asked directly if they have been hazed while at their institution. Of the 4,232 students who affiliate with a student organization or team and responded to the hazing behavior questions, 26.0% ($n = 1,092$) reported experiencing at least one behavior that meets the definition of hazing. When asked directly however, only 4.4% report they were hazed.

For students who recognize their experiences as hazing, low reporting percentages and substantial barriers to reporting persist. Few students who recognized they were hazed indicated they reported the hazing to organization presidents or team captains (8.3%), university/college staff or faculty (5.8%), organizational advisors or coaches (3.9%), anonymously through hotlines (3.9%), national organizations (3.4%), or anonymously through websites (2.9%). When asked why they did not report, the most common responses included: "I chose to participate" (75.9%), "it was no big deal" (64.4%), "it was tradition" (58.6%), and "no one got hurt" (50.8%).

Discussion

This investigation gathered data from students at universities with a demonstrated commitment to hazing prevention. Data collection occurred prior to their full engagement in comprehensive hazing prevention, and as such, findings do not serve as outcome data or a summative evaluation. As a snapshot of campus hazing culture across these universities, more than a quarter (26.0%) of respondents involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experienced hazing, and more than two-thirds (69.8%) of students say they are aware of hazing on campus. The overall extent of hazing in this group of college campuses is lower than reports from previous studies, but the proportion of students who indicate they are aware of hazing remains about the same as reports from a prior investigation (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012). It is possible the decrease in the percentage of students reporting hazing behaviors may be attributable to a change in the survey instrument, where previously respondents could report on behaviors for up to three membership groups (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012); in this investigation respondents were limited to reporting on behaviors related to one group.

Expanding on findings from previous studies (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008; Campo et al., 2005; Hamilton, Scott, O'Sullivan, & LaChappelle, 2013), this investigation found that hazing occurs across a range of student groups and that there is a statistically significant relationship between primary group membership and student experiences with hazing. Students involved in varsity athletics, fraternities and sororities, and club sports reported experiencing hazing behaviors most frequently and reported participating in more activities meeting the definition of hazing than their peers. As in previous studies, this investigation also found a disconnect, of similar proportion, between students' experiences of hazing and their willingness to label it as such when asked directly.

The most common hazing practices across all types of student groups involved behaviors requiring high-risk drinking, social isolation, personal servitude, and humiliation. Students identifying as male reported participating in more behaviors meeting the definition of hazing than their female peers. Further, echoing previous investigations, results indicate hazing is a part of campus culture with public aspects to hazing, awareness of hazing incidents extending beyond those directly participating, alumni involvement in hazing, and coach and/or advisor participation in or awareness of hazing.

Aligning with previous studies (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012; Hoover & Pollard, 1999), findings portray a complex picture of campus hazing culture with a strong disconnect between students experiencing hazing and their ability or willingness to correctly identify their experiences as hazing when asked directly. According to the data, White and minoritized students are experiencing similar rates of hazing, however, there are differences in reported awareness of hazing, alumni involvement, and witnessing of hazing. And most students, particularly female students, tend to have pro-social attitudes and do not believe hazing is beneficial to team or organizational membership, some perceive positive outcomes of hazing experiences. For those who identify their experience as hazing, fewer than one in 10 students say they report it to team captains, organizational leaders or advisors, and less than 6% report to a campus professional.

Limitations

The demographic characteristics of the sample for this investigation are largely comparable to national data for public and private research universities. Nevertheless, given low response rates, data from this investigation may not be generalizable. And while HPC institutions represent a range of university types (e.g., private/public status, urban/suburban location, and in different regions of the United States), findings are nevertheless reflective of a subset of universities that demonstrated a high level of commitment to hazing prevention by joining the HPC and are therefore not representative of all postsecondary institutions.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The findings from this investigation depict the nature and extent of student hazing, and student awareness of policies and reporting mechanisms relative to hazing. As well, the findings offer clues about student perceptions of their peers' experiences of hazing within certain groups, which can serve as an important indicator of how students perceive social norms relative to hazing. Such perceived social norms may influence the extent to which students choose to participate in and/or tolerate hazing as an acceptable part of the particular student group, and thereby provide a critical point of reference for hazing prevention (Berkowitz, 2009).

Situated within the context of prevention, findings from this investigation hold promise for guiding campus hazing prevention and providing insight for developing a data-driven, social-

norms approach for hazing prevention. The disconnect between student experiences of hazing and their willingness to label it as such underscores the need to help students and other campus community members build skills to identify hazing and take action to intervene or report it.

This study adds to the literature about the nature and extent of hazing by providing a particular focus on hazing experiences and attitudes among students enrolled at universities with a demonstrated commitment to hazing prevention. As such, the findings are best interpreted against the backdrop of campus culture where institutional history, traditions, and current issues and policies contribute to shaping student attitudes and beliefs about acceptable behavior. While these findings may not be generalizable to all college students, they reflect the reported experiences of students belonging to a range of campus groups and can thus provide guidance for an overall campus orientation or approach to hazing prevention. Based on findings from this investigation, we recommend the following:

1. Develop hazing prevention as a campus-wide orientation designed to impact all students and student organizations, as well as the staff, alumni, parents, and guardians who regularly interface with students.
2. Develop broad, multi-pronged student hazing prevention trainings, including some that target students and organizations or teams that are at high risk, low risk, and the broader student population within and outside of those organizations, since each population is likely to participate in, observe, or wish to avoid or prevent hazing.
3. Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to hazing prevention by ensuring campus professionals are trained in a culturally competent approach to hazing prevention.
4. Develop campus-wide trainings that provide clarity about the definition of hazing, understanding about the role of power and coercion along a spectrum of hazing, and skills to take action for prevention.
5. Continually highlight and disseminate positive social norms data to communicate a consistent message about pro-social student attitudes and behaviors related to hazing.
6. Cultivate broad awareness and accountability among campus staff and faculty across all units (e.g., not just in units that oversee student organizations and teams) to increase likelihood that campus community members can recognize and act to prevent or intervene in hazing when it happens.
7. Emphasize positive approaches to prevention that highlight and help build skills for desired social norms, including bystander intervention, ethical leadership, and alternative unity-building activities without hazing.
8. Implement systems to closely track and report incidents and investigation processes for hazing as a means to complement other hazing assessment and education efforts.

Recommendations for Research

Since this investigation found lower rates of hazing than those reported in previous studies (Allan & Madden, 2008; Hoover & Pollard, 1999), future research should seek to determine whether this difference can be attributed to larger shifts in the occurrence of hazing and/or reflective of the uniqueness of the group of institutions from which the sample was drawn. Data on student attitudes toward hazing, which were not collected in previous national studies, adds to the knowledge base and can be used to inform hazing prevention and is particularly useful for social norms campaigns (Berkowitz, 2009).

The recommendations provided in this report model the use of assessment data to inform hazing prevention strategies, signaling a critical shift in the field as we pay increased attention to prevention that is data-driven. Future work is needed to continue expanding the pool of research on the nature of hazing in diverse educational settings. And in the longer term, more work is needed to measure the pipeline from assessment data, to strategy implementation, and ultimately strategy evaluation as a means to contribute to the nascent evidence base for hazing prevention.

Hazing is a complex issue and a problem that can interfere with the health and safety of students and can impede the development of a positive campus climate. At present, there are no simple solutions or foolproof methods of eliminating hazing on a college campus. However, continued research can help shed light on the nature and extent of the hazing and provide important insights to help guide campus staff and administrators in developing and refining approaches to hazing prevention.

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