The Impact of Formal Panhellenic Recruitment on the Development of Efficacy for Sorority Women

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THE IMPACT OF FORMAL PANHELLENIC RECRUITMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFICACY FOR SORORITY WOMEN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Leadership & Research
School of Education

by
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My journey toward the completion of my degree has been both inspiring and challenging. Years ago I would have never imagined that I would be pursuing doctoral studies. My family and friends have been such an incredible part of this experience. Their love, support, and belief in me helped me to know that I could accomplish anything. This dissertation is dedicated to my Mom who taught me to never doubt myself and always do my best; to my Aunt Marilyn who, although she did not see me through this process physically, I felt with me every step of the way; to my Poppy who taught me to laugh often and love with everything you have; to my Theta Phi Alpha sisters, especially Sue Check, who have taught me what sisterhood truly means; and to sorority women past, present, and future, who have overcome adversity and worked to pursue the true idea of the sorority experience. Thank you to all of you for without you, I would not be the woman I am today. Your love and support has been my biggest inspiration.
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ABSTRACT

Little to no research has been conducted to assess the impact of formal sorority recruitment processes on efficacy levels of sorority women. While numerous studies have been conducted concerning the development of individual women and skills gathered throughout their collegiate experience, there has been limited research on how participation in sorority recruitment may impact psychological and physiological states, and increase or decrease self and collective efficacy.

If the original intent of sororities was to provide friendship, support, and encouragement, are current formal recruitment methods, supported by the National Panhellenic Conference, meeting that goal? Addressing this question requires an in-depth understanding of the concept of self-efficacy and collective efficacy and an examination of the sorority recruitment experience on sorority women. Research was conducted through in-depth focus group interviews to help determine if formal sorority recruitment may impact efficacy levels. The theory of women’s moral development, environmental theory, and the development of self-efficacy and collective efficacy have helped to guide this study. Sorority women’s perception of efficacy throughout a recruitment process will be explored through an analysis of their thoughts and feelings on formal recruitment methods.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Women supporting and encouraging women within a sisterhood is a concept that is as relevant today as it was during the women’s movement throughout the 19th century. Today, greater numbers of women are in leadership roles in work and politics; yet, competition between women might be seen as fierce and unsupportive of one another in some environments (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Vaccaro, 2011; Witkowsky, 2010). Women need to continue to empower and support one another, yet there still seems to be women working against one another in several areas (Vaccaro, 2011). The importance of role modeling and mentoring is paramount as women continue to work toward a sense of confidence and empowerment (Sandberg, 2011). “The creation of women’s mentoring programs is a way to foster support and sisterhood on campus” (Vaccaro, 2011, p. 44). All of this can be seen throughout the workforce, but as Solomon (1985) explained, the original intent of sororities was to create a group based on sisterhood and solidarity for a group of women. Furthermore, a sense of confidence for women can also be reflected in the formal recruitment processes of sorority life on college campuses today, if managed appropriately. Further examination of women supporting and encouraging one another is explored further.

WOMEN TODAY

Derks, Ellemers, van Laar, & de Groot (2011) defined empowerment as the authority or power given to someone to achieve something. Women’s empowerment may be seen as a process of becoming stronger and more confident as women look to control their life and their decision-making. Locus of control studies that have been conducted have been instrumental in helping to understand how people handle internal and external stressors. Those who base their success on their own work and believe they control their life have an internal locus of control. In
contrast, people who attribute their success or failure to outside influences have an external locus of control. Abouerise (1994) studied the sources and levels of stress in relation to locus of control in university students. She explained that intense anxiety in students arose from two areas of stress: namely, those associated with academic expectations and performance, and those related to social factors such as developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Abouerise (1994) found that female students struggle more with external locus of control and that there is a significant correlation between stressors and level of self-esteem and feelings of empowerment.

Today, the concept of women’s empowerment is widespread and continues to be highlighted as women move into more leadership roles. In the 2017 American College President Study from the American Council on Education, 35% of colleges and universities have a female as president, while in 2018 only 4.8% of CEO positions within Fortune 500 companies were led by women (American Council on Education, 2017; Lee, 2018). However, women within our society negatively treat other women. In spite of past obstacles and the growth of women’s empowerment, women continue to cause and live through animosity toward one another, all while the same kind of negative attention is portrayed in the media (Lee, 2018; Wood, 1994). Women in politics, such as Hilary Clinton, Sarah Palin, or Michelle Obama, have continued to be treated poorly by other women (Haber-Curran, Miguel, Levy Shankman, & Allen, 2018). As far as women have advanced over time, there is a continued sense of how women work against other women to potentially cause a decreased sense of confidence in one’s self.

In a professional setting, the “queen bee” phenomenon is seen time and time again. This phenomenon was first coined in the 1970s and was defined as, “the tendency of apparent token women in senior organizational positions to disassociate from their own gender and block other
women’s ascension in organizations” (Allen & Flood, 2018, p. 12). This idea works against much of what women’s empowerment and the idea of sorority life have tried to accomplish. “Far from nurturing the growth of younger female talent, queen bees push aside possible competitors by chipping away at their self-confidence or undermining their professional standing” (Derks, et al., 2011, p 523). The very concept of this phenomenon completely negates the advancement of women’s empowerment or a sense of sisterhood. “It is a trend undergirded by irony: the very women who have complained for decades about unequal treatment from men now perpetuate many of the same problems by turning on other female colleagues” (Allen & Flood, 2018, p. 12). The overall concept of sisterhood may be applied to the formal sorority recruitment processes that are found in American colleges and universities today.

CONCEPT OF SISTERHOOD

Each year thousands of women seek membership in Greek-letter sororities on college campuses throughout the United States. Some women find membership in a sorority appealing due to their promise of lifelong sisterhood. Sisterhood is defined as a shared social experience with a common purpose, while fostering a sense of belonging and accountability (Cohen, McCreary, & Schutts, 2017). The bonds of sisterhood are formed through friendships developed, and may be maintained over time, resulting in a lifetime of commitment to the women of that particular organization. The first commitment, however, that women make in sorority life is fully participating in a recruitment process, which would ideally culminate in women receiving an invitation to membership.

Sororities were originally founded as a way to connect women to other women in order to support and care for one another during a time when they were not welcome on many college campuses (Solomon, 1985). Men were the majority and women were a distant second in all
opportunities available at colleges and universities (Thelin, 2011). Women found comfort in coming together and creating a home away from home for one another within their individual sororities (Mongell & Roth, 2001). Each respective sorority developed a common purpose for which they would strive for, while the universal concepts of friendship, care, and support continued to be at the core of what participation in sorority life promised (National Panhellenic Conference, 2018).

Sorority women often described sisterhood as something from the inside one can’t explain; yet, from the outside looking in, one can’t understand. While the stereotypical current idea of sorority may be altered slightly from its original founding, the idea of sisterhood as support and care of one another under the mission and purpose of any Greek-letter organization offered women the opportunity to become the best version of themselves and empowered others to do the same. As explained by Palmer (2011),

The good news is that no one expects us to do it all by ourselves. That is what fraternity means. It is our sisterhood. What that means is that we all chose to be a part of Theta Phi Alpha of our own free will. We freely chose to associate with each other, as equals, for the mutually beneficial purpose…to help make each other better women, super women (p. 11).

Cohen, et al. (2017) described sisterhood as a developmental process, indicating that most members join the sorority expecting and experiencing the social nature of sisterhood but, over time, understand and experience the more advanced notions of sisterhood.

As a developmental process, the sorority experience may also be seen as an educational tool where women continue to advance their knowledge on a variety of skills, while also evolving into women of character who display their organization’s values throughout their lifetime. Women who join sororities are often looking for a place to belong and find deeper connections within their chapter over time. When a sorority is at its best, it offers its membership
support, care, friendship, and love. The National Panhellenic Conference (2018) also noted that sororities exist because they “offer a good, democratic social experience, provide lifelong value, create, through their ideals, an ever-widening circle of service beyond membership, develop an individual’s potential through leadership opportunities and group effort, and fill the need of belonging” (p. 11). Throughout the sorority experience women help to encourage one another and levels of confidence are strengthened as they grow up and grow older together. This concept is also highlighted by Kay and Shipman (2014) for women in general.

Kay and Shipman (2014) defined confidence as the purity of action produced by a mind free of doubt. Women who are confident in themselves may produce better results in tasks performed. An overwhelming sense of confidence often comes from mastering a particular skill or perfecting concentration while completing a task. Kay and Shipman (2014) explained this further:

But confidence provides so much more than that. It tends to get unfairly tagged as a showy quality that is all about competition and outward success. We found it has a much broader impact. Scholars are coming to see it as an essential element of internal well-being and happiness, a necessity for a fulfilled life. Without it you can’t achieve flow, the almost euphoric state described by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as perfect concentration; the alignment of one’s skills with the task at hand. Flow is like being in the athletic zone; it is a state of mastery impossible to reach without confidence (p. 24).

In terms of sorority recruitment one can also explore the concept of confidence through the lens of self-efficacy, which Kay and Shipman (2014) also explained assists in building confidence. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as a belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. In seeking to gain the feelings of sisterhood and shared social belonging within a sorority (goal), women may participate in formal sorority recruitment (task) as the first step in becoming a sorority woman.
Many individual women and individual sorority chapters view this is as a challenge due to the stressful nature of a formalized recruitment process. As noted by Kay and Shipman (2014),

If you have a strong sense of self-efficacy, you will look at challenges as tasks to be completed; you will be more deeply involved in the activities you take on, and you will recover faster from setbacks. A lack of self-efficacy leads us to avoid challenges, to believe that difficult things are beyond our capability, and to dwell on negative results. As is the case with confidence, mastery is fundamental to self-efficacy—a belief you can succeed (p. 47-48).

SORORITY RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is a period of time when women attend sorority events through a mutual selection process in hopes of receiving an invitation to membership to a particular organization at their college or university. During a formal recruitment process many campuses utilize a computerized system, which employs a mathematical equation, the Release Figure Method (RFM), to match women with a sorority. RFM is designed to assist in determining how many invitations will be issued for each invitational round of a formal recruitment process. RFM may also limit the amount of women each participating chapter invites back to each round or may expect participating chapters to invite all of the women going through recruitment back for each round. The latter may have a more significant effect on individual chapters instead, because they perceive that they may have no actual choice in regard to selecting women the chapter may want to invite back during each round of recruitment. The chapters’ sense of efficacy, as described above, may decrease as the chapter is expected to adhere to the numbers given to them. When examined this way, further research may assist in discovering how a formalized sorority recruitment process may positively or negatively affect efficacy level for potential new members, chapter members, and individual chapters.
WHY STUDY RECRUITMENT: RESEARCHER DISCLOSURE

Throughout my time working with and advising sorority chapters during their formalized recruitment processes, I have seen chapters who are excited to welcome their new members as well as chapters that feel let down after completing the recruitment process. Those who may feel let down or disappointed in their recruitment results have often pointed toward the Release Figure Method (RFM), which is fully supported by the National Panhellenic Conference, as the main cause of their discouragement. They have explained that they feel defeated because RFM gives them a number to attain, rather than allowing a chapter to select members based on core values, fit, or sense of belonging. Women perceive they have no choice in membership selection and that the system is set up to give everyone an invitation to membership.

I have had individual sorority women tell me that whatever is planned for a recruitment event does not matter because every potential new member will be invited back regardless of how the women may feel about a particular potential new member. Sorority women explained that the chapter loses momentum and tends to feel discouraged when they are told to meet a certain number of potential new members, instead of recruiting women whose experience and values align with the mission of the organization and will do well in the chapter. The women in the chapter are well aware of how well or poorly they are performing throughout a formalized recruitment process by the number of potential new members they are told to invite back to each round of recruitment. Their sense of confidence may be diminished and level of mastery questioned, which might lower the overall self and collective efficacy for individual women in the chapter, as well as the chapter as a whole. Sorority women have explained the loss of positive feelings regarding how the chapter is progressing throughout the recruitment process and perceive the chapter will never be successful in the recruitment process.
I believe the sorority experience can be a valuable tool for women as they gather life skills while in college. While the idea of sisterhood for women within a sorority should help build feelings of efficacy, by their own description it seems as though utilizing RFM in a formalized recruitment process may be working against strengthening those feelings. I maintain that there is a direct relationship between formal sorority recruitment and feelings of efficacy, yet I have found no research that characterizes this relationship. For this reason, I have decided to study efficacy levels of women during a recruitment process in greater depth.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of this study is to examine formal sorority recruitment and its impact on the development of efficacy levels. I have conducted a qualitative study at three universities, including one private, one public, and one religiously-affiliated institution, with female students ages 18-23 that are members of the National Panhellenic Conference member groups on that particular campus.

The research questions that have guided this study are:

- How may participation in formal sorority recruitment impact feelings of self and collective efficacy?
- How may formal sorority recruitment efficacy expectancy influence the development of self and collective efficacy?

I will focus specifically on how women feel prior to, during, and after a formalized recruitment process.

In this research I have investigated the development of women’s moral development, environmental theory, and the development of self and collective efficacy to better understand how sorority women grow and progress throughout their collegiate sorority experience (Bandura,
By beginning to study the relationship between efficacy and formal sorority recruitment, I have gained specific knowledge of women and hope to provide useful information for other researchers in the field of fraternity/sorority life, inter/national sororities, volunteer advisors, sorority members, parents, and student affairs professionals.

I was motivated to conduct this research due to the need for scholarly analysis of the impact of formal sorority recruitment on the development of efficacy. Currently, no research has been conducted specifically to examine and evaluate the role of formal sorority recruitment on the development of efficacy levels. It is my hope that future researchers will be encouraged by this study in order to continue considering and evaluating the role of efficacy within a formal recruitment process and within sorority life. I would like to provide a solid research foundation that challenges scholars to assess the sorority recruitment process and the development of self and collective efficacy for young women.

The possibility that participation in formal sorority recruitment may have an impact on efficacy levels could have significant influence on how organizations educate and train their women on recruitment practices, but also could provide sorority chapters a way to work towards a more balanced idea of what sisterhood could really mean to them. This research may be the starting point for future studies to be conducted to assist in creating a base of scholarly literature on the concept of efficacy within the sorority experience.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study, I have conducted qualitative research by utilizing a case study design as I am looking to explore the preparation and process of formal sorority recruitment and how the concept of efficacy expectancy can be applied. In selecting a case study design, I am seeking to
explain the contemporary circumstance of how a formal sorority recruitment process impacts levels of self and collective efficacy by taking an extensive and in depth review of this social phenomenon (Yin, 2018). In choosing focus group research I am looking for a range of opinions and perceptions that sorority women have about the practice of formal sorority recruitment, uncovering factors that influence opinions, behavior, and motivation regarding the use of the Release Figure Method (RFM), while trying to understand differences in perspectives among several types of inter/national sorority chapters (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

I have conducted focus group interviews with sorority leaders from two of the top and bottom recruiting strength chapters, as well as College Panhellenic Council leaders. A demographic questionnaire and a confidentiality statement were distributed to all of the women participating in the study. Through focus group interviews, I focused on women’s subjective experiences and their interpretation of formal sorority recruitment experiences. For this research, I asked sorority chapter leadership for their thoughts and experiences with a formal recruitment process and the Release Figure Method in an attempt to determine how it may positively or negatively effect the development of efficacy within individual women and chapters. All focus group interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded to identify and organize common themes.

DATA ANALYSIS

Managing and organizing recruitment results provided by fraternity/sorority life advisors on chapter recruiting strength assisted in grouping low and high recruiting strength chapters for a more detailed within case analysis. Organizing information gathered allowed for cross-case analysis where an examination of individual case studies were conducted, which led to further comparison of cases and provided new knowledge. Once transcribed, coding of focus group
interviews assisted in developing a list of significant statements from participants. All significant statements were then grouped into broader themes of information, which “provides the foundation for interpretations because it creates clusters and removes repetition” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 201). I created a description of what actually occurred for participants in relation to their formal sorority recruitment experiences and utilized verbatim examples to explore these items further. I then developed a structural description of how formal sorority recruitment occurs on each campus and the effect it may have on participants. Finally, I related and assessed the information shared throughout each focus group interview in comparison to the theories explored.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Throughout my research, I have found that scholars and practitioners have studied a variety of topics surrounding sorority life, including but not limited to hazing, alcohol and drug use, involvement levels, and academic standing (Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009; Hevel, Martin, Weeden, & Pascarella, 2015; Nuwer, 1999; Pike, 2000), but none have investigated the relationship between efficacy and sorority recruitment. Are sorority chapters recruiting women who best fit their organization or are they simply trying to reach a number that has been decreed upon them by a National Panhellenic Conference Release Figure Method Specialist? Are women positively or negatively affected by their decision-making being taken away from them during the recruitment process? Does the concept of efficacy impact a chapter’s level of attainment throughout the recruitment process?

In order for student affairs professionals, sorority national staff, and volunteers to make purposeful and substantive changes to the recruitment process, they must clearly understand the impact of self and collective efficacy on individual women and chapters as they assist in their
growth and development as citizens of the world. The intent of this study is to provide a solid foundation of how efficacy is developed in order to begin establishing a better understanding of how a formal sorority recruitment process may be considered and utilized in the future.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This introduction provides detailed information regarding the importance of this study. It includes a brief history of the concept of sisterhood and a formal sorority recruitment process, as well as the purpose and significance of the study, research design, and analysis. There is little to no research on formal sorority recruitment or its effects on individual and collective efficacy. Researching and analyzing formal sorority recruitment processes and its impact on the development of self and collective efficacy may bring new strategies to implement as sorority women are introduced to new ways of organizing training opportunities, educating on the role of mentoring and role modeling, and building a stronger sense of self and collective efficacy.

A review of literature on the history and development of sororities and the National Panhellenic Conference is provided in Chapter II. That chapter will present an explanation of a formal sorority recruitment process. Also presented are several theories concerning women’s development, environmental theory, and the development of self and collective efficacy. All of these theories have been integrated as they relate to the sorority culture, and more specifically the sorority recruitment process.

The third chapter introduces and describes the methodology I used for this study. It reviews parameters for the interview process and procedures. The final two chapters will provide a detailed account of the findings of interviews conducted, their connection to the literature reviewed and conceptual model introduced, as well as a discussion of conclusions and implications for the future.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

In order to better understand the development of sororities and the current recruitment processes used today, it is important to have a clear understanding of terms that are used throughout this research.

Accept percentage is the number of potential new members who accept an invitation to the next round of recruitment for a particular chapter.

Bid refers to an invitation to sorority membership.

Carry figure is the number of potential new members that a sorority should invite back to each invitational round of formal recruitment.

Flex list is a list of additional potential new members for a chapter to invite or release in case recruitment numbers fluctuate beyond prediction.

Flex minus list includes names of potential new members that a chapter would subtract from their invitation list for the next round of recruitment if the chapter is over performing and more than enough women have selected that organization.

Flex plus list includes names of potential new members that a chapter would add to their invitation list for the next round of recruitment if the chapter is under performing and there are not enough women who have selected that organization.

Formal recruitment refers to a period of time, either prior to or immediately following the beginning of a semester, when women attend structured sorority invitational events through a mutual selection process ideally culminating in an invitation to membership.

Informal recruitment is a continuous period of time throughout a semester when women attend sorority events in anticipation of being offered an invitation to membership.
National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) serves as an umbrella group for its twenty-six member groups (sororities) and is the largest organization of women in the world.

Panhellenic refers to all Greek-letter women’s fraternities and sororities on a campus.

Potential New Member (PNM) is a woman participating in the recruitment process who is seeking an invitation to membership.

Priority Ranking serves as the percentage of potential new members who list a chapter/organization as their first choice throughout a recruitment process.

Quota refers to the number of new members to whom each chapter on a campus can offer an invitation to membership during formal recruitment.

Recruitment efficacy is a chapter’s belief in their capability to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments, as defined by the chapter.

Release figure is the number of potential new members that a sorority cannot invite back, therefore, they must “release” throughout a formal recruitment period.

Release Figure Method (RFM) is based on a mathematical formula to determine the number of invitations to each round of recruitment issued by each participating chapter in the recruitment process.

Return rate serves as the percentage of potential new members who accept an invitation from each participating chapter to the next round of recruitment.

RFM Specialist is a trained volunteer that is assigned several campuses to work with throughout a formalized recruitment process. She also assists the fraternity/sorority advisor with determining quota and total for the campus.

Sorority refers to an all-female, national organization with exclusive membership that identifies itself by a series of two or three Greek letters.
**Total** is the maximum number of women each chapter can have on a campus that is determined by the RFM Specialist and the fraternity/sorority advisor.

**Values-Based Recruitment** refers to a recruitment process that focuses on conversations between chapter members and potential new members about organizational values and member organizations.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I present information on current practices and research previously conducted regarding formal Panhellenic sorority recruitment methods. The concepts of self and collective efficacy are explored in relation to sorority recruitment, as well as the growth and development of sorority women over time. The literature presented provides a backdrop for my research foci on the impact of a formal sorority recruitment process on the development of self and collective efficacy on sorority recruitment and the sorority experience.

HISTORY OF SORORITIES AND THE NATIONAL PANHELLENIC CONFERENCE

Since their original founding, collegiate women’s fraternal organizations (also referred to as women’s fraternities or sororities) offered a variety of benefits to their members (Thelin, 2011). Those benefits included a sense of belonging within a group of women and feeling supported and encouraged by that group of women, while developing deeper friendships based on a set of common values (Johnson, 1974). The term fraternity was originally used for women’s organizations due to the fact that the term ‘sorority’ was not coined until 1874 by Gamma Phi Beta Sorority as the first women’s organization to use sorority in the official name of their organization (Solomon, 1985). It “should” be noted that a fraternity was originally seen as an organized group of men associated by common values. A number of sororities still use the word fraternity in their official name, but identify as a women’s organization in their governing documents.

Sororities historically provided a source of solidarity and support for their members who may have found themselves as unwanted minorities on male-dominated college campuses in the 19th century (Turk, 2004). Women found solace in coming together to forge a common purpose on their campuses. Turk (2004) explained, “Female fraternities acted at the forefront of women’s...
progress, even while retaining largely conservative notions of how ‘true women’ ought to act” (p. 76). While the fair treatment of women was being debated in society, women’s groups were struggling with specific membership policies. Although perhaps wishing to be progressive, women’s groups reportedly demonstrated discrimination amongst their ranks (Sanua, 2003). Notably, women’s fraternities had restrictive membership clauses that disqualified groups of women from membership based on religious beliefs, socioeconomic standing, and race (Sanua, 2003; Torbenson, 2005; Syrett, 2009). For this reason, there are currently 26 National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) groups today, many of which were formed by women who were not included for membership in the original fraternities and sororities. Indeed, women who were initially barred from sorority membership on the basis of religious affiliation began several membership organizations founded on the ideals of those very religions. The Divine Nine, which are historically Black Greek-letter organizations (BGLO), were also created during this time because African American men and women were not admitted into historically White fraternities and sororities (Ross, 2000). Turk (2004) explained that it was the undergraduate chapters of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, spurred on by campus legislation that withheld recognition from organizations with discriminatory memberships, that finally pushed those Greek-letter fraternities and sororities with restrictive clauses to drop them (p. 101-102).

Due to the growth and establishment of several women’s groups, several questions arose regarding recruitment, pledging, and membership. Groups on individual campuses initiated agreements with one another regarding pledging and recruitment methods so they could all continue to mutually exist on campuses (National Panhellenic Conference, 2018). At a time when women were not welcome on campuses, yet possessing an unshakeable belief in the power of women’s friendship, several of these groups came to understand that they could not afford
intergroup conflict. Spurred by this awareness, several groups came together in 1891 to discuss mutual existence on campuses. Recruitment was a key topic and the consensus was that “lifting” a woman who had already belonged to another fraternity was dishonorable (Mongell & Roth, 2001) and thus the idea of the Panhellenic spirit was born. Panhellenic is defined as relating to all Greek-letter women’s fraternities and sororities on a campus (National Panhellenic Conference, 2018). The Inter-Sorority Conference was founded in 1902 and later renamed the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) in 1945.

The twenty-six member groups of the National Panhellenic Conference follow in alphabetical order:

Table 2.1. National Panhellenic Conference Member Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Date of Founding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Chi Omega Fraternity</td>
<td>October 15, 1885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Delta Pi Sorority</td>
<td>May 15, 1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Epsilon Phi Sorority</td>
<td>October 24, 1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Gamma Delta Fraternity</td>
<td>May 30, 1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Omicron Pi Fraternity</td>
<td>January 2, 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Phi Fraternity</td>
<td>October 10, 1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority</td>
<td>November 15, 1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Sigma Tau Sorority</td>
<td>November 4, 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Xi Delta Fraternity</td>
<td>April 17, 1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Omega Fraternity</td>
<td>April 5, 1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta Delta Delta Fraternity</td>
<td>November 27, 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta Gamma Fraternity</td>
<td>December 25, 1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority</td>
<td>March 17, 1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta Zeta Sorority</td>
<td>October 24, 1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamma Phi Beta Sorority</td>
<td>November 11, 1874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity</td>
<td>January 27, 1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kappa Delta Sorority</td>
<td>October 23, 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kappa Kappa Gamma Fraternity</td>
<td>October 13, 1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Mu Fraternity</td>
<td>March 4, 1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Sigma Sigma Fraternity</td>
<td>November 29, 1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pi Beta Phi Fraternity</td>
<td>April 28, 1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Delta Tau Sorority</td>
<td>March 25, 1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Kappa Sorority</td>
<td>November 9, 1874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority</td>
<td>April 20, 1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theta Phi Alpha Fraternity</td>
<td>August 30, 1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity</td>
<td>October 15, 1898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(National Panhellenic Conference, 2018, p. 16-28)
The National Panhellenic Conference serves as an umbrella group for its 26 member groups (sororities) and is the largest organization of women worldwide. The NPC was established to assist collegiate and alumnae chapters of the member organizations to cooperate with colleges and universities and foster interfraternal relationships (National Panhellenic Conference, 2018). Each sorority functions as a national organization that governs and monitors chapters on campuses throughout the United States and Canada. Each chapter is a guest at a particular campus and operates under both the guidelines of the host institution and the national organization with which it is affiliated. The National Panhellenic Conference sororities are located on more than 670 campuses with 411,242 undergraduate members in 3,288 chapters (“Our Member Organizations”, n.d.).

The nature of sororities fulfilling the need for a deeper friendship, support and encouragement, and a sense of belonging continues on campuses across the United States today (Thelin, 2011). Although a variety of organizations exist, the common purpose of sisterhood and continued development in academics, leadership skills, and confidence building among these groups is as relevant today as it was in 1851. The concept of confidence as a learned skill within sorority life was described by Martin in *The Sorority Handbook* (1909),

It is just here that the sorority is in a position to supplement the work of the college in its endeavors to prepare for leadership by presenting opportunities for apprenticeship such as the college itself is unable to give save in limited degree. To understand the peculiar fitness of the sorority for this work it is necessary to consider the essential qualities of a leader. Whether leadership is to be in small ventures or great enterprises, the prime essentials are the same. Most important of all is self-confidence. Self-confidence begets enthusiasm, enthusiasm to inspire. Self-confidence begets courage, courage to dare. Self-confidence begets strength, strength to fulfill. By taking its members out of the crowd and making each a distinct unit in a small group, the sorority is able to foster individuality. By providing every initiate with innumerable opportunities for all sorts of service and for all kinds of experience, first in the simple work of the chapter and later in the larger effort of the national organization, the sorority is particularly well qualified to lay a strong foundation for the growth of self-confidence (p.50).
Although originally mainly focused on academics, sororities became more about a sense of belonging and friendship, while living by a common set of values. At the time many of these groups were founded, women either attended women’s colleges or normal schools, which prepared them to be teachers or nurses, or men’s colleges and universities where they were the minority. As the minority, women were looking for a place to call home, and when they came together they were able to become a stronger and better-known entity on campus. Solomon (1985) described the growth of sororities as:

Over the period illustrates well the mixed purposes and results of organized social groups. Sororities were originally founded as secret societies to affirm the ties of friendship. Gradually, however, they took over public functions, and, to varying extents, became influential forces on many campuses...In addition, especially at coeducation schools, they provided institutional group support for young women (p.107).

Due to the popularity of sororities, much research has been conducted on the collegiate experiences of sorority membership, with the majority of studies focusing on levels of alcohol and drug use, disordered eating, and sexual assault victimization. However, limited research on the sorority experience focusing on educational outcomes has been conducted (Cohen, McCreary, & Schutts, 2017). The first part of sorority life is the recruitment process and further study is warranted.

**FORMAL SORORITY RECRUITMENT**

It is through recruitment, formal or informal, that a sorority offers a woman an invitation to membership. *Formal recruitment* is a fixed and designated period of time, generally prior to or immediately following the beginning of a semester, when women attend structured sorority invitational events through a mutual selection process. The culminating event that women aspire to achieve as the outcome of this process is an invitation to membership in a sorority. *Informal recruitment* is a continuous period of time throughout a semester when women attend sorority
events in anticipation of being offered an invitation to membership. Formal recruitment will be the focus of this study.

Recruitment as a rite of passage into sorority life dates back to the inception of sororities. Organizations recruited women as soon as they arrived at the train station on their travels to campus. There was an early competition for members as noted by Brown (1920):

In the early days of the fraternities, only seniors were admitted to membership, but the sharp rivalry for desirable candidates soon pushed the contest into the junior class, and so on down, until at some colleges it scarcely stops, at the academy. The general rule is, however, that members shall be drawn from the four undergraduate classes (p. 14).

The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) has continued to create best practices and several policies in relation to recruitment methods and processes for its 26 member groups. All practices and policies that have been implemented are the result of years of cumulative experience and study of many campuses (National Panhellenic Conference, 2018). The NPC (2018) defined policies and best practices for each member organization to abide by as follows:

Policies are standards and procedures created by NPC vote, usually to address recurrent problems or operating issues that local Panhellenics face. The policies must be followed because they reflect the combined knowledge and experience of the 26 autonomous member organizations. Policies are adopted by a majority vote of the NPC Board of Directors and amended by a majority vote. Best practices are procedures formulated to help local Panhellenics and their member chapters achieve the greatest success. Adherence to these practices is not required but is strongly recommended. Best practices are recommended by an NPC (standing, sub- or special) committee and approved by the Executive Committee and/or the NPC Board of Directors, as appropriate (p. 41).

**Values-Based Recruitment**

The idea of a values-based recruitment was introduced to all member groups in 1989 as a way to offer several policies regarding recruitment. NPC defined values-based recruitment as “a recruitment that focuses on conversations between chapter members and potential new members about organizational values and member organizations” (National Panhellenic Conference, 2018, p. 93). With the responsibility of ensuring a values-based recruitment, NPC states that all
collegiate Panhellenic councils and individual member organizations should adhere to the following policy:

*Values-Based Recruitment Policy* (1989, 1991, 1997, 2003, 2015): All College Panhellenics and their member chapters shall incorporate the following policies into their membership recruitment programs:

- Focus on conversations between chapter members and potential new members about organizational values and member organizations.
- Establish guidelines for membership recruitment budgets and set a cap on membership recruitment expenses, including the value of all donated goods and services.
- Keep decorations to a minimum and confined to the interior space used for recruitment rounds.
- Determine recruitment event attire for chapter members that reduces individual financial burden and eliminates costuming.
- Eliminate gifts, favors, letters and notes for potential new members.
- Eliminate recruitment skits (National Panhellenic Conference, 2018, p. 54)

**Release Figure Methodology (RFM)**

The Release Figure Methodology (RFM) was originally introduced in 2003 by NPC on ten campuses.

The purpose of RFM is threefold: (1) maximize the number of potential new members who will ultimately affiliate with a chapter through recruitment; (2) allow each potential new member to investigate realistic options and ultimately match with a chapter for which she has a preference among those options; and (3) enable each chapter to invite a sufficient number of potential new members to each event round to match to quota at the conclusion of recruitment (National Panhellenic Conference, 2018, p. 124).

Since its original implementation in 2003, RFM has allowed for a higher percentage of chapters to pledge quota. *Quota* may be defined as the number of potential new members each chapter may offer an invitation to membership during a formalized recruitment period (National Panhellenic Conference, 2017).

The thought behind the implementation of RFM was that the more successful chapters on a campus would release potential new members earlier in the process, allowing those women to continue to attend recruitment events for organizations that would actually issue them an invitation to membership, leading to a greater percentage of women being placed in a sorority.
Although the percentage of women to receive an invitation to membership increased, the implementation of RFM did not always match potential new members with the sorority they wanted the most. Sorority membership numbers grew tremendously, but chapters were getting to a size that was unprecedented and sometimes unmanageable.

Mari Ann Callais, past national President of Theta Phi Alpha Fraternity, explained the impact of RFM on individual chapters and concerns that arose after its original implementation.

What we didn’t anticipate was what that was going to look like for chapters. Large new member classes back in the day might have been 50 people. Now they might be 150 people. So what did that mean for chapters and physical spaces? Once we got on the RFM bandwagon chapters started growing. National organizations started building their budgets around these larger chapters. Facilities started being built because chapters were larger and they were outgrowing their processes. I don’t know if we looked at all the pieces that were going to be wrapped around that a little bit. I just think we thought, well if we get the people (chapters) who are successful to release it would give the more middle to not as successful chapters an opportunity to grow. I think the intent was really good. I think as time went on, we didn’t really look at as the chapters started growing, new member classes started doubling and tripling in sizes. I don’t think we thought what is this going to mean for the long haul. My concern with RFM has been one, we haven’t studied it, at all. It’s kind of like one of those things if it’s working then don’t do anything, if it’s not broken don’t fix it and yet I don’t even know if we know if it’s not broken or if it’s just kind of one of those operational things now that we depend upon and now we’ve got houses that need to be supported by very large chapters. We’ve got struggling chapters who whether we tell them or not, they know that they are getting the people that were released, so why didn’t they release them and that is where confidence comes into play. (M. Callais, personal communication, October 17, 2017)

When RFM is utilized, mutual selection is highlighted as a positive attribute for both the potential new members (PNM) participating in recruitment and the organizations on a campus, (i.e., both women and organizations select one another). Women participating in recruitment are known as potential new members (PNM). Each PNM and each participating organization ranks one another to achieve a point of mutual selection. College Panhellenic Associations use an interactive computer-based system that integrates the university system, sororities, and PNMs
based on an algorithm that generates the best potential match. This process eliminates managing paper documents from the matching process.

Due to the fact that RFM has been used to promote parity among the organizations on campus, an explanation of how this occurs is warranted. Based on the amount of members in each particular chapter, the maximum number of women each chapter may have as members on a particular campus is set by the fraternity/sorority advisor and a trained RFM specialist, which is also known as total. The goal of RFM is to allow each chapter to reach total. Each organization may have a different amount of women prior to recruitment. Quota is the number of new members each chapter may offer an invitation to membership during formal recruitment. This number is determined by assessing the number of potential new members and the number of groups on a campus.

For example, consider a campus with five sororities with total set at 100 and 118 potential new members (PNMs) going through formal recruitment.

**Table 2.2. Example of five sororities with even recruitment numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th># of members prior to formal recruitment</th>
<th># of new members needed to get to total</th>
<th>Final # of members after recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorority A</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority B</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority C</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority D</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority E</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 provides numbers of a perfect system where all sororities get to total during a formal recruitment process. However, most campuses that participate in formal recruitment using a total/quota system do not work out perfectly as suggested above. Chapter size often varies and the number of potential new members (PNMs) might fluctuate throughout a formal recruitment
process, both of which influence the quota set for all groups. Table 2.3 displays a more realistic version of what often occurs.

Table 2.3. Example of five sororities with varied numbers in chapter size and PNMs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th># of members prior to formal recruitment</th>
<th># of new members needed to get to total of 100</th>
<th>Quota</th>
<th>Final # of members after recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorority A</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority B</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority C</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority D</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority E</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With total still set at 100 and quota set at 25, this example shows that some groups may go above total and some groups fall slightly below total. The groups that are at or above total (100) have completed their recruitment efforts. The groups that still remain under total should continue to recruit new members informally to get total. This example also shows that all of the groups meet quota during a formal recruitment process, however this does not always happen either. With quota still set at 25 and total still set at 100, Table 2.4 shows how some groups may not get to either number during a formal recruitment process.

Table 2.4. Example of five sororities who exceed or do not match to quota and/or total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th># of members prior to formal recruitment</th>
<th># of new members needed to get to total (100)</th>
<th>Quota (25)</th>
<th>Final # of members after recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorority A</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority B</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority C</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority D</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorority E</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This example shows that not all of the groups make quota and therefore remain under total and should continue to informally recruit new members to get to 100 members overall. This example also displays the fact that several groups struggled with their recruitment efforts and may not be strong recruiting chapters.

The system of RFM is utilized to determine how many potential new members may be invited back to each organization during each round of recruitment. This is accomplished through the use of carry figures (number of PNMs that an organization may invite back) and release figures (number of PNMs that an organization cannot invite back, therefore, that they must “release”). Women who are invited back to organizations during each round of recruitment are typically required to attend the events to which they are invited.

Table 2.5. Example of a high performing chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invitation Results</th>
<th>Carry Figure</th>
<th>Actual Flex Used</th>
<th># PNMs Invited</th>
<th># PNMs Accepting Invites</th>
<th>Accept %</th>
<th>Priority %</th>
<th>Prior Year Priority %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round 1</td>
<td>Open House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 2</td>
<td>Sisterhood</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 3</td>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More successful recruiting chapters tend to have a lower carry figure and a higher release figure based on a three-year average, which can also mean that the overall number of members is higher than a lower recruiting strength chapter. This means that the carry figure, or the number of potential new members to invite back, is low and the release figure is high. In the example above one can see that during Round 1 (Open House), 129 potential new members attended. The carry figure or the number of invitations extended for Round 2 (Sisterhood) is lower (97) and the
chapter was actually able to release 34 potential new members. The flex used is -2, which means that the chapter was able to create a flex minus list of the women they would release first. A flex number that is positive indicates that the chapter was able to add women to their list in order to get as close as possible to the carry figure number. Eighty-six potential new members accepted their invitation to attend round two, which is a 91% accept rate. Of the 86 women that accepted an invitation to round two, 78% listed this chapter as their top choice (Priority %).

Table 2.6. Example of a low performing chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invitational Results</th>
<th>Carry Figure</th>
<th>Actual Flex Used</th>
<th># PNMs Invited</th>
<th># PNMs Accepting Invites</th>
<th>Accept %</th>
<th>Priority %</th>
<th>Prior Year Priority %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round 1</td>
<td>Open House</td>
<td></td>
<td>182</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 2</td>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 3</td>
<td>Coffee Talk</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 4</td>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although RFM is highlighted as a mutual selection process, chapters who may be less successful during recruitment are given a higher carry figure and a lower release figure, meaning the number of potential new members to invite back is high and the number of potential new members to release is low. This allows those chapters more opportunity to meet a larger number of PNMs and offer an invitation to membership to successfully match to quota. From the example above one can see that during Round 1 (Open House Pool), 182 potential new members attended that round. Going into Round 2 (Philanthropy), the chapter was given a high carry figure of 182 so they had to invite everyone who attended during the first round back to the second round. Out of the 182 invitations they extended, only 149 potential new members returned during round two, which is an 82% return rate. Out of the 149 women who accepted the invitation to round two, only 37% of them listed this chapter as their top choice (Priority %). The same formula is utilized for each round.
These figures are determined by past recruitment performance of the chapter (a three-year average is calculated), the percentage of PNMs who accept an invitation to return to each round of recruitment, and the priority ranking of those who accept an invitation to return to each round. A priority ranking is the percentage of PNMs who list the chapter as their first choice. This, in turn, allows for overall chapter numbers to be more equal at the end of recruitment, however, several questions regarding the impact of RFM on chapter confidence, or how a chapter feels about their performance based on the numbers given to them through RFM, and retention remain.

EFFECTS OF SORORITY RECRUITMENT

Panhellenic sorority recruitment has been occurring for well over a hundred years (Turk, 2004) with the intent of welcoming women into organizations that would support and encourage them, while offering opportunities for personal growth and development throughout their lifetime. The ideal of friendship, still at the forefront of membership, continues to carry on the original purpose of Panhellenic organizations today. Several studies have been conducted to examine the effects of sorority recruitment on women participating in a formal process.

Kase, Rivera, and Hunt (2016) studied the effects of formal sorority recruitment on the psychological well-being of undergraduate women at the University of Pennsylvania. Women reported that one of their primary goals for participating in sorority recruitment was to gain opportunities for friendship, social support, and feelings of belonging to a community (Fouts, 2010).

Recruitment may be perceived as involving the judgment of candidates primarily on the basis of their personalities, likely leading unsuccessful candidates to feel rejected on the basis of core, unchangeable attributes about themselves. Furthermore, it is possible that even some successful candidates may go throughout one or more rejections before completing the process (Kase et. al, 2016, p. 12).
Although the recruitment process itself does not offer increased social benefits, overall sorority membership increases the availability of social support and belonging for women who join (Fouts, 2010). Kase, et al. (2016) proposed further study of recruitment practices, including changes to the process whereby potential new members be allowed to choose to visit sororities of interest to them during the first round of recruitment and, if the campus had only enough new member slots available, to accommodate all of the women participating in the process to alleviate the feelings of rejection.

Fouts (2010) studied the attraction to, and retention in, fraternities and sororities. She suggested there is much work to be done and richer qualitative data would enhance the body of research on recruitment and intake programs. Fouts (2010) continued to explain recruitment conversations trying to persuade PNMs to join must have depth and specificity and convey the mutual benefits received through membership.

Even high achieving chapters with successful recruitment or intake programs must continuously evaluate their procedures. Complacency will only lead to extinction. Communication about the benefits of membership must meet the diverse and distinct needs of various populations of students; messages about chapter life must be tailored to address the unique questions and concerns of students of different ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ethnicities (Fouts, 2010, p. 32).

Fouts (2010) suggested that further research needed to be conducted on recruitment methods and on how to appropriately evaluate procedures based on the unique, ever-changing population of students. As the needs of students change over time, there should be a consistent evaluation process in place to ensure specific needs are being met within the sorority community.

**BENEFITS OF SORORITY MEMBERSHIP**

As members of fraternities and sororities, men and women view the benefits and outcomes of their membership differently. While fraternity men conceptualize brotherhood as solidarity, shared social experiences, belonging, and accountability (McCreary & Schutts, 2015),
women may conceptualize sisterhood as something different. Cohen, et al. (2017) determined sorority women use five distinct themes to explain or define sisterhood: (1) sisterhood based on shared social experiences, (2) support and encouragement, (3) belonging, (4) accountability, and (5) common purpose.

Women described sisterhood as a developmental process, indicating that most members come into the sorority expecting and experiencing the social nature of sisterhood but, over time, begin to understand and experience the more advanced notions of sisterhood. It can be described as a transcendence from a sisterhood of selfishness to selflessness. As they get older and gain experiences within the sorority, they begin to understand that sisterhood is also about serving others, and sacrificing your own needs for the good of the whole (Cohen, et al., 2017, p 43).

This helps to understand how women experience sorority life, not only within a developmental process, but also as a progression through several stages. As women develop and mature throughout their collegiate experiences, Cohen, et al. (2017) have provided solid research that can be used to help evaluate how organizations (sororities) can create and implement further resources for members to live their lifetime commitment. They also suggested ways an organization can implement a values-based recruitment method as they select members in the best interests of their chapter and organization.

RELEVANT THEORIES

With the discussion of sorority formal recruitment, it is essential to also provide further details on how women collect and perceive information, the growth and development of how women interact with the world around them, as well as some of their expectations of themselves as they develop an increased level of efficacy. The following theories are presented in order to help establish a correlation between how participation in formal sorority recruitment may be impacted by the development of women throughout their collegiate experience.
**Gilligan’s Theory of Women’s Moral Development**

Gilligan’s Theory of Women’s Moral Development may be applied as one studies the development and impact of efficacy during recruitment and the sorority experience. Gilligan’s research and work was written as a response to Kohlberg’s work on moral development. Women were seen as deficient compared to men. Kohlberg’s research included only male subjects so it was determined that women would never reach all stages outlined in his developmental theories. Gilligan (1982) wrote “the failure of women to fit existing models of human growth may point to a problem in the representation, a limitation in the conception of human condition, and omission of certain truths about life” (p. 2).

In 1982, Carol Gilligan published her research, which presented findings about the moral development of women. According to Gilligan (1982), up to that point previous models of development did not fit women’s experiences, and she distinguished how women identify the themes of care and responsibility as their moral compass. The sorority experience may be viewed through Gilligan’s three levels and transitions as one works to develop a sense of efficacy, or the ability to produce a desired result, and move toward a sense of selflessness, as Cohen, et al., (2017) described.

As a woman enters the recruitment process as a PNM, she may come into the experience with a pre-conceived idea of what it will entail and look to fulfill the desire of a shared social experience, similar to the experience described by Cohen and colleagues’ (2017) research. Gilligan’s Level I: *Orientation to Individual Survival* (Gilligan, 1982) may be used to describe a woman who is “looking to fulfill individual desires and needs for the purpose of preserving the self” (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010, p. 112). A woman may be looking for new friendships and social interaction on campus and decide to participate in sorority recruitment.
The new member phase is one of orientation to the particular sorority from which the new member received an invitation to membership. During this phase, new members learn about the history, purpose, and structure of the sorority and receive guidance on understanding the responsibility of membership and their lifetime commitment. Once a sorority woman completes her new member phase, a transition begins to occur.

Gilligan’s (1982) first transition is *Selfishness to Responsibility*, where a woman forms connections and recognizes responsibilities to others. As that transition is completed one moves on to Gilligan’s Level II: *Goodness to Self-Sacrifice*. As a woman moves into Gilligan’s (1982) Level II, she shifts from an independent view of the world to a broader perspective with reliance on others, where social acceptance is paramount. It is during this time that a woman may form connections with other women within the sorority and develop an attachment to the larger group of women. It is in this transition that she will likely move from an orientation to self and motivation for self-concern to a sense of responsibility because of her gained connectedness to others in the sorority. A sorority woman looks to further define herself by relying on others’ perspectives as a way to feel accepted and remain connected with others. It is here where decision making during a recruitment process may be highlighted.

As fully initiated sorority women, the chapter members have the responsibility in future cycles of sorority recruitment of deciding whom to invite back for each round of recruitment. This new responsibility is critical to their role in further establishing their relationship and connection to their sisters. Chapters tend to vote after each recruitment event on PNMs and the process for voting is outlined in governing documents. As women have transitioned into Level II, they may now make choices guided by a sense of self-sacrifice in order for a consensus to be reached on whom to invite to membership. For a lower recruiting chapter that may not have the
ability to release any PNMs, the decisions about whom to invite back become obsolete due to a high carry figure being established for them with the RFM system. When chapters are not given an opportunity to make membership decisions for themselves and a strict reliance on the number of women to invite back is the priority, a stall in potential development may occur.

Gilligan (1982) goes on to describe a second transition period, *Goodness to Truth*, where a woman begins to question putting others before oneself. During this transition, again, a woman begins to evaluate her self-concept. It is here that a woman will take the thoughts and ideas of those around her, as well as her own needs, into account in order to make decisions. Sorority women may see a dilemma occur here when the ideas of others, the values held by the organization, and personal beliefs collide. Those participating in the recruitment process may have difficulty deciding what is best for the chapter when invitations to membership are discussed. Women may know individual PNMs, or might be aware of certain characteristics of PNMs, throughout the recruitment processes. If women make decisions on the basis of care, justice, and in the best interest of the chapter in terms of membership, then it is here that women may demonstrate maturation of characteristics resembling Gilligan’s (1982) Level III: *Morality of Nonviolence*.

In Level III, a woman’s decisions are made through the lens of care, both of the larger world surrounding her and with an understanding of self (Gilligan, 1982). It is here that a sorority woman’s development leads to individual recognition of the value she adds to the larger chapter. She is connected to other women in the chapter, has a firm understanding of the organization’s values, is secure in her own beliefs, and is able to make moral decisions centered around the concept of care. For example, as a recruitment chair, a woman needs to be open and unbiased in her actions and portray attributes of a good role model for PNMs to experience
throughout their recruitment process. She must also empower other chapter members throughout the recruitment process to base their membership selection decisions on the values of the organization. This sense of empowerment may also lead to the development of individual confidence as responsibility of choice is given to women in the chapter. Again, when a chapter with a lower recruiting strength is not given an opportunity of choice, the potential development of confidence may be diminished.

**Women’s Way of Knowing**

When examining the idea of empowerment, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule’s (1986) Theory of Women’s Way of Knowing is essential to review. It is through this theory that the authors determined that empowerment is an essential element in developing the power of one’s mind. A woman learns by listening and she may experience this throughout her experience in sorority life. Belenky, et al. (1986) stated “that they [women] can strengthen themselves through the empowerment of others is essential wisdom often gathered by women” (p. 39). A sorority should be a place where a woman can become a better version of herself and gain confidence through the empowerment she receives from other members throughout her experience. The sorority experience is designed to create an environment where women encourage one another and offer guidance and support as each works to accomplish individual and chapter goals.

**Strange and Banning’s Environmental Theory**

Strange and Banning (2001) developed an environmental theory model that outlined four aspects of an environment that influence student development. Similar to institutions of higher education, sororities may utilize this theory to evaluate the development of its members within a chapter environment. As it has already been outlined, the sorority experience should be one of
growth, care, and support. With this in mind, one may look to Strange and Banning’s (2001) theory to focus on nurturing the development that may occur within the sorority environment. Strange and Banning’s (2015) model described key environmental components to help organizations in meeting their goals: (a) the physical environment; (b) the human aggregate environment; (c) the organizational environment; and (d) the constructed environment.

In respect to formal sorority recruitment, concentration is given specifically to the human aggregate and the constructed environment. Strange and Banning (2015) found that relationships have the potential to raise or suppress students’ motivation to learn. The human aggregate environment includes an exploration of the collective personalities, styles, preferences, strengths, and engagement types of those in an environment (Strange & Banning, 2015). The constructed environment emphasizes the subjective views and experiences of those inhabiting the environment (Strange & Banning, 2015). Students’ perceptions are the reality of the environment. Sorority recruitment is an opportunity for potential new members (PNMs) to explore both the chapter environment and individual members’ personalities and styles as they interact with sorority women.

These first impressions may allow PNMs to become interested in a particular group if an engaging conversation takes place and encourage women to want to return to the next recruitment round. Throughout the recruitment process, the same woman may be perceived as welcoming and friendly by one potential new member while simultaneously be seen as uninviting by another. Members are able to influence, plan, and construct their own environment because members play a significant role in altering the dominant features of said environment (Banning, 1986). Asel, Seifert, and Pascarella (2009) found support for the notion that the culture and organizational features of undergraduate fraternity/sorority life tend to facilitate social
integration and enhance the development of close and influential relationships.

If sorority women are prepared to effectively communicate their experiences, discuss the value of membership, and explain the type of woman they desire to be a chapter member (Gendron & Coffey, 2009), they will likely create a welcoming and inclusive environment where PNMs perceive a positive experience. Creating this sort of environment reflects shared experiences, beliefs, and values that influence an experience. “An environment and therefore a culture will exist, but when treated with intention it can hold greater magnitude to achieve intended outcomes” (Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, 2012, p. 31). Those outcomes should include a healthy, positive, and successful recruitment process for the chapter. Success could be measured by the retention of members through graduation. Knowing then that the collegiate sorority experience, overall, is intended to assist in one’s growth and development, it is essential to ensure members are supported, encouraged, and entrusted with responsibilities of membership, including membership decisions. If the ability to select members is taken away throughout the formal sorority recruitment process, it may also take with it a developmental piece where members are not able to fully learn how to make choices based on shared values and the surrounding environment. The culture of the chapter potentially shifts to one where individual decisions are not valued, encouraged, or supported and the loss of the original intention of sorority overall may be detected.

**Bandura’s Efficacy Model**

When the sense of belonging, support, and encouragement hold steady, sororities provide opportunities to develop leadership, life skills, and confidence. For women the essential element of task accomplishment success helps to lead to the idea of self-efficacy, but it tends to be unexpectedly complex as they unconsciously build it internally. With sororities being a conduit
of support and encouragement, they provide the perfect opportunity to build up the idea of self-efficacy for members. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “a belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3).

Research has consistently revealed that self-efficacy is linked to achievement and motivation (Thompson, Oberle, & Lilley, 2011), given that those with higher self-efficacy tend to participate more readily, work harder, pursue challenging goals, spend greater effort toward fulfilling identified goals, and persist longer in the face of difficulty (Bandura, 1997). When one considers the formal sorority recruitment processes, one may first examine how the concept of self-efficacy might be applied.

Albert Bandura (1997) first initiated the idea of a social learning theory, which claimed that learning occurs through observing the behavior of others. He speculated that personal beliefs about any given situation were as important as the actual behaviors. Furthermore, those beliefs may be shaped by a multitude of factors, including one’s observation of events occurring around them. The concept of learned behavior may be reflected in a sorority recruitment process in a number of ways. Formal Panhellenic sorority recruitment is a series of multiple events over a designated period of time. The events should be planned and properly executed by a chapter. In order for this to occur women should be educated on the process and the role they play within that process. A chapter who plans events and practices recruitment strategies tends to be more prepared during the actual events. Members who are able to appropriately model good conversation skills, discuss their own sorority experience, and display good decision making throughout the recruitment period are essential as new members observe those behaviors and learn new skills to be utilized throughout a recruitment process. As discussed in Strange and Banning’s Environmental Theory (2001), sorority women have the ability to utilize the
relationships they have with one another and their chapter environment to assist in their development of efficacy. Bandura’s social learning theory focused on the person, their behavior, and their environment and how each relates to one another as self-efficacy is increased.

![Figure 2.1: Self-efficacy is comprised of three areas that interrelate: person, environment, and behavior.]

Bandura (1997) explained that in this transactional view of self and society, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events, behavior, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another. The determinants do not have equal strength at all times, but rather their influence will vary depending on different activities and under different circumstances, nor do they come forth as a holistic entity.

Mendez, Witkowsky, Alle, Christensen, and Stiles (2017) studied the relationship between sorority ritual and self-efficacy and found that participants related their internalized values (person) to their sisterly bonding (behavior), which directly influenced their ability to impact and innovate in their surroundings (environment). Regardless of the age of participants in the study, it appeared that no matter the starting place, sorority membership had a positive impact on the development of self-efficacy (Mendez, et al., 2017). They also noted participants
attributed their self-efficacy to be directly related to their sorority involvement and felt that the use of shared impact may be used to encourage participation in recruitment processes for the future.

Each component of Bandura’s theory may be related to the sorority recruitment process individually as one looks to develop self-efficacy and as a chapter looks to attain recruitment efficacy. Recruitment efficacy, for the purposes of this study, can be defined as a chapters’ belief in their capability to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments, such as a recruiting a certain number of new members.

Unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act. Efficacy belief, therefore, is a major basis of action. People guide their lives by their beliefs of personal efficacy. The events over which personal influence is exercised vary widely, however. Influence may entail regulating one’s own motivation, thought processes, affective states, and actions, or it may involve changing environmental conditions, depending on what one seeks to manage. People’s beliefs in their efficacy have diverse effects. Such beliefs influence the courses of action people choose to pursue, how much effort they put forth in given endeavors, how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, their resilience to adversity, whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands, and the level of accomplishments they realize (Bandura, 1997, p. 2-3).

This explanation may be used as one explores chapters with a high recruiting strength versus a low recruiting strength. Those chapters that have the ability to invite women they want as members of the chapter and are successful in doing so (high recruiting strength) display characteristics of recruitment efficacy. Chapters that must invite everyone back to their events and have little to no choice in who receives an invitation to membership (lower recruiting strength), may struggle with recruitment efficacy. The ability to select members during a recruitment process may influence chapter members’ motivation and thought processes, while creating unnecessary environmental demands based on the reliance on numbers produced through the Release Figure Methodology (RFM).
Efficacy Expectancy

Efficacy expectancy is the specific belief that one can achieve particular tasks and is seen as a determinant of whether one attempts those tasks, how persistent one is in achieving those tasks, and ultimately how successful one is. Principal sources of efficacy beliefs and the processes that help govern the selection, interpretation, and integration of efficacy information into appraisals of personal efficacy are discussed by Bandura:

Self efficacy beliefs are constructed from four principal sources of information: enactive mastery experiences that serve as indicators of capability; vicarious experiences that alter efficacy beliefs through transmission of competencies and comparison with the attainments of others; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influence that one possesses certain capabilities; and physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura, 1997, p. 79).

Enactive mastery experiences (also called performance accomplishments) are the most influential sources of efficacy expectancy, as they provide the most authentic evidence of whether or not one will be able to succeed. Bandura (1997) noted a sense of efficacy is developed through mastery experiences that involve acquiring the cognitive, behavioral, and self-regulatory behaviors to manage ever-changing life circumstances. Successes help to build personal efficacy while repeated performance failures tend to undermine it. Even a small success may enable individuals to reach performance attainment and potentially succeed in new activities. One’s perceived efficacy based on performance may be influenced by many factors, which include their preconceptions of their capabilities, the perceived difficulty of tasks, the amount of effort they expend, the amount of external aid they receive, the circumstances under which they perform, the temporal pattern of their successes and failures, and the way these enactive experiences are cognitively organized and reconstructed in memory (Bandura, 1997).
Modeling serves as the backdrop for vicarious experiences that help lead to efficacy expectancy. People tend to appraise their personal capabilities in relation to the attainments of others, while social comparison operates as a primary factor in the self-appraisal of capabilities. Surpassing others or competitors raises efficacy beliefs, while being outperformed lowers them. Modeling influences tend to provide much more than a simple standard for comparison. “People actively seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire. By their behavior and expressed ways of thinking, competent models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands” (Bandura, 1997, p. 88).

Verbal persuasion serves as a further means of strengthening one’s efficacy expectancy beliefs where they possess the capability to achieve what they seek. “People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given tasks are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when difficulties arise” (Bandura, 1997, p. 101). Verbal persuasion alone cannot substitute for skill development. One must be presented with information that skill attainment can be acquired, which then increases the belief in ability. This approach should be a multifaceted strategy where an optimistic social appraisal is presented over time, not just a focus on high accomplishments. Diagnosing strengths and weaknesses can also be used in a positive light as another way to strengthen one’s belief in ability. Encouragement to measure successes in terms of self-improvement rather than in terms of triumphs over others may be explored as another way to develop efficacy.
Finally, one can judge their own capabilities based on their physiological and affective states at any given time. People may read their physiological states in stressful situations and relate symptoms to signs of vulnerability.

Mood states also affect people’s judgments of their personal efficacy. Physiological indicators of efficacy play an especially influential role in health functioning and in activities requiring physical strength and stamina. Affective states can have widely generalized effects on beliefs of personal efficacy. Thus, the fourth major way of altering efficacy beliefs is to enhance physical status, reduce stress levels and negative emotional proclivities, and correct misinterpretations of bodily states (Bandura, 1991a; Cioffi, 1991a, p. 106).

When exploring enactive mastery experiences and utilizing the Release Figure Method (RFM), recruitment event success or need for improvement can be seen in the return rates of each chapter after each invitational round. A return rate is the percentage of potential new members who accept an invitation to the next round of recruitment. A successful recruitment round is seen as a high return rate percentage (above 70%). A return rate below 70% may be considered as a round that may need further improvement. Once a chapter receives their return rate, members who feel that they did well during the recruitment round may be disappointed if their percentage is below 70%. Chapter members may use the number provided to them as a way to determine success or failure regardless of their overall feeling. It is here that the factors influencing performance as described by Bandura could also be considered and discussed by a chapter in order to better determine perceived success, but that is not factored in to the analysis of RFM.

Consideration should be given to the vicarious experiences part of Bandura’s (1997) model as one examines formal sorority recruitment on several levels. The social comparison is very much a factor that occurs within a Panhellenic system, and one may often find chapters looking to outperform one another by planning extravagant recruitment events that demonstrate
little regard for the National Panhellenic Conference values-based recruitment policy for member
groups. Many recruitment processes are becoming larger scale performances, rather than values-
based conversations as originally intended. Those who may be looking towards a proficient
model to aspire to may easily lose their way by focusing on the number of women they need to
recruit in order to be competitive with another group on campus.

Instead, perhaps, sororities might look to focus on sharing appropriate recruitment
methods with one another in the spirit of developing a stronger Panhellenic community, as
originally intended. As stated by Block (2008),

“Community occurs in part as a shift in context, the mental models we bring to our
collective efforts. It is a new context that gives greater impact to the ways we work to
make our communities better. Context is the set of beliefs, at times one that we are
unaware of, that dictate how we think, how we frame the world, what we pay attention to,
and consequently how we behave” (p. 29).

A positive way to look at vicarious experiences may be sorority women displaying strong
recruitment methods for younger members to observe, develop their knowledge, and increase
their proficiency. “In aspirational modeling, people actively select proficient models from whom
they can learn what they aspire to become” (Bandura, 1997, p. 101).

An example of verbal persuasion is as chapters participate in formal recruitment the
women should be encouraged throughout the entire process to assist in strengthening their ability
to achieve success. Less concentration on return rates and overall numbers should be a priority in
hopes of encouraging their success as a chapter. As a multifaceted approach to chapter
leadership, a chapter advisor or university official could develop plans to help discuss
recruitment events and help build skills that will prove useful for members to utilize throughout
formal recruitment. Positive alumnae involvement prior to, during, and after a formalized
recruitment process may give the chapter a good amount of confidence in their ability to
successfully participate. “The chapter with an engaged alumni board or active alumni advisor is almost always a better performing organization that requires less attention from either campus or headquarters staff” (Hogan, Koepsell, & Eberly, 2012).

Members should be comfortable discussing their organization, their experiences, and the value of their membership. Training can be provided by alumnae advisors to assist in educating members on how to do this in order to help strengthen the belief in one’s ability. Success may be measured as women become affiliated with the organization and display positive characteristics that match the organization’s values. This can be incentivized within the chapter as another way to assist in strengthening their ability to achieve success.

When evaluating physiological and affective states, consideration should definitely be given to both potential new members and chapter members as they prepare and participate in a formal sorority recruitment period. Both sets of women may be nervous when coming in to a room for the first time to meet new people and begin discussing themselves and their experiences. Women may also lack confidence in themselves and feel as though they have not done a good enough job introducing themselves or explaining what their organization is about. A positive side of this may be women who remain confident throughout the process and feel as though they are succeeding in recruiting more women into their chapter.

An examination of the development of self-efficacy within sorority recruitment processes leads to sufficient evidence on how women grow and develop throughout their sorority experiences. The descriptions provided help to describe how women may grow individually, but also as a collective unit (chapter) of their respective organization (sorority). Further examination of collective efficacy provides a deeper analysis of how the concept of efficacy affects a formal sorority recruitment process.
Collective Efficacy

A high sense of self-efficacy is just as important to a group as it is to an individual. In many ways self-efficacy is vital for a group’s success as individuals work to use their personal capabilities to the best collective use. “A firm group loyalty creates strong personal obligations to do one’s part in group pursuits as efficaciously as one can. Members are respected for their personal contributions to group accomplishments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 32). In his social cognitive theory, Bandura (1997) emphasized personal mechanisms and outcomes, but he also recognized how people work together within social units or teams. Bandura defined collective efficacy as a groups’ shared beliefs in its conjoined capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment (1997).

As collective efficacy is considered, it should also be noted that effective collective action requires more complex, socially mediated directions of influence than individual self-direction. As such Bandura (1997) explained:

People have to depend upon one another in performing tasks and in carrying out their complementary roles. Group success requires effective interdependent linkage of tasks, skills, and roles. Group members not only have to coordinate what they are doing individually with the work of others, but they are affected by the beliefs, motivation, and quality of performance of their coworkers. Belief of collective efficacy affects the sense of mission and purpose of a system, the strength of common commitment to what it seeks to achieve, how well its members work together to produce results, and the group’s resiliency in the face of difficulties (p. 468-469).

Team activities require a high level of coordination to produce positive outcomes. Members of the team must perform their tasks interdependently and should also manage the instructional, motivational, interpersonal, and operational aspects of their work. “As is true at the individual level, perceived team efficacy is not a static group attribute. It rises and falls with fluctuations in the interlinking relationships among the members and changing external realities and pressures” (Bandura, 1997, p. 470).
The sorority experience may be described in a similar way. Chapter members use individual skills to achieve specific tasks throughout their collegiate experience. Women depend on their relationships with one another and their collective action to complete a variety of tasks in chapter life. This may include, but is not limited to, academic standing, financial commitment, attendance requirements, conduct standards, philanthropy and fundraising, community service opportunities, event planning, and recruitment. Each of these tasks requires teamwork, collaboration, ability to follow instructions, and strong personal relationships. For example, academic standing should be a priority in sorority life. When most, if not all chapter members, receive a favorable cumulative grade point average, the combined chapter grade point average is higher and the entire chapter is often recognized by the institution. On the other hand the combined cumulative grade point average decreases if individual members are not academically successful. The chapter depends on individual success that leads to a combined effort for chapter recognition. The recognition received serves as a tool to encourage and support their efforts as a chapter. As relationships are built, women continue to support one another and assist in tutoring efforts to help increase individual grade point averages, in hopes of positively impacting the overall chapter average.

“At the individual level, efficacy may emerge as the result of vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, or enactive mastery experience” (Bandura, 1997, p.470). While one can also observe:

At the group level, research has focused almost exclusively on the role of enactive mastery in which confidence builds over time as the group receives feedback about their performance on a particular task. In groups, enactive mastery experiences may build through a series of performance episodes defined, as a distinguishable period of time over which performance accrues and feedback is available. Therefore the relationship between past performance and collective efficacy is recursive-the receipt of positive feedback on challenging tasks leads to stronger efficacy beliefs, which in turn lead to greater success (Gist & Mitchell, 1992, p. 185).
Based on existing literature on collective efficacy, researchers concluded that groups who have high confidence in their ability to achieve a given attainment are more effective in achieving their task than those who doubt themselves (Katz & Erez, 2005).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When examining formal Panhellenic sorority recruitment, the concept of developing self-efficacy expectancy runs parallel to the development of collective efficacy and may be applied on several levels when one examines the idea of productive and successful teamwork and collective action. Efficacy expectancy relates to one’s belief in successfully performing a task or behavior and are seen as determinants of whether one attempts those tasks, how persistent one is in achieving those tasks, and ultimately how successful one is. The model below demonstrates how this process may occur within the sorority experience during a formal sorority recruitment period.

Figure 2.2. Conceptual Model of Sorority Recruitment Efficacy
As women enter college they may or may not have experienced the four steps leading up to self-efficacy expectancy (Enactive Mastery, Vicarious Modeling, Verbal Persuasion, and Physiological/Affective States) depending on what tasks they have already set out to accomplish. As potential new members proceed through a formal sorority recruitment period, they may come with an already developed sense of efficacy on what they have encountered in their lives thus far. However, by participating in a formal sorority recruitment period, women become exposed to new people, thoughts, behaviors, and environments where they may find themselves questioning their feeling of self-efficacy. As women become members of sororities, they can reestablish some of their feelings of efficacy by working through the four stages and return to a higher level of self-efficacy. As self-efficacy is established, women can also work to establish a feeling of collective efficacy simultaneously with other chapter members as they begin to develop recruitment goals for future semesters. The performance of the chapter during a formal recruitment period either leads to a chapter believing in positive or negative performance overall. A positive performance means that goals were achieved as originally stated, but that a re-evaluation of performance methods should occur every two years as the population of women on a campus changes over time. A negative performance should lead immediately back to the development stages of Self-Efficacy Expectancy and the process begins again as outlined previously.

An example of this may be women being exposed to the concept of sorority life and being overwhelmed. As invitations to each round of recruitment are distributed to potential new members based on the Release Figure Method, some women may find their invitations are not matching with their choice of particular organizations where they felt comfortable, and therefore their efficacy levels could be negatively impacted. The result may be a woman receiving an
invitation to membership to a sorority where she may feel as though she does not belong, but because she is looking for a sense of belonging, as outlined previously according to Cohen, et al (2017), she accepts the invitation of membership. As she enters the chapter, she develops new skills, gathers new information, and is offered support and guidance from other women in the chapter that help to restore her efficacy level.

A chapter who is participating in formal sorority recruitment is also built into this conceptual model as they look to attain new members for the organization. Once a woman becomes a member of a sorority she continues to be exposed to new people, behaviors, and experiences, while developing individual and collective efficacy in the area of recruitment.

Table 2.7. Examples related to each area of conceptual model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Conceptual Model</th>
<th>Relation to Formal Sorority Recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enactive Mastery</td>
<td>Knowledge of organization and specific chapter through new member education, including responsibilities of membership. Recruitment methods and techniques utilized by the chapter, both formal and informal, throughout academic year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious Modeling</td>
<td>Positive role models (big sisters/chapter leaders) within the chapter to help teach women best practices utilized by the chapter throughout a formal recruitment process. Concept of sisterhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Persuasion</td>
<td>Continuous positive reinforcement and feedback provided to individual women and the entire chapter from one another, chapter advisors, and fraternity/sorority life advisors as preparation and participation in formal recruitment process occurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological/Affective State</td>
<td>Enhance physical status, reduce stress levels and negative emotional proclivities, and correct misinterpretations of recruitment environment (positive).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy Expectancy</td>
<td>Belief in the ability to individually achieve specific tasks, including conversation techniques to describe the chapter, its members, and the experiences the sorority can offer throughout to potential new members during the recruitment process as one works to find women who will be an asset to the chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Efficacy</td>
<td>Chapter’s shared belief in its conjoined capabilities to organize and execute successful recruitment procedures required to produce given levels of attainment (women who will be an asset to the chapter).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>May be positive or negative overall at the completion of all recruitment events.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
One must fully learn about the organization she has joined and work toward increasing her knowledge and skill base through enactive mastery. Throughout the new member education phase, one gathers detailed information on the history of the sorority, its mission and values, responsibilities of membership, and lifetime commitment. Once initiated, a woman can begin to learn more about recruitment processes and procedures the chapter utilizes throughout a formalized recruitment period and become more comfortable in her skill set. Vicarious modeling may be seen as one continues her sorority experience and is exposed to positive role models in the chapter, who are able to model appropriate behaviors, teach successful recruitment techniques, and display values-based decision-making. Women may find positive role models in alumnae who are also supportive of the chapter and their efforts. Some women may be drawn to getting to know older chapter alumnae as they may offer a distinct historical perspective on the chapter and the organization that collegian women may not have. The value of sisterhood should also be a continuous experience for women as they grow and develop in the chapter. Alumnae of the chapter may also be seen as role models to women in the chapter due to their continued involvement in the sorority, locally or nationally.

Verbal persuasion or consistent feedback and positive reinforcement should be offered by chapter members to one another, as well as from chapter advisors and fraternity/sorority advisors to the chapter, throughout preparation and execution of the recruitment period. If chapter alumnae are seen as role models by the chapter, women may also take what guidance and support alumnae offer as significantly relevant and meaningful as they are developing self-efficacy throughout recruitment. Finally recruitment planning and the actual recruitment period should be one that enhances physical status and reduces stress levels and any negative emotional proclivities while also correcting any adverse feelings toward the environment in order to offer a
positive physiological and affective state. One should feel a desire to act and fully participate in the recruitment process.

As these four principle sources of information combine to construct self-efficacy expectancy, a woman then has the belief in her ability to achieve specific tasks related to sorority recruitment required to produce given attainments. A woman should have a strong knowledge base of the organization and the ability to engage in productive conversation about sorority life and the sorority experience within her own chapter with the goal of offering invitations to membership to potential new members who will be an asset to the chapter in the future.

Individual women coming together to form a group (chapter) and sharing the belief that in their conjoined capabilities are able to plan and execute specific tasks required to produce a strong recruitment period. Utilizing the Release Figure Method (RFM) stresses the importance of ensuring a particular number of women are invited to participate in membership (quantity) on a given campus rather than focus on inviting women to membership based on shared values and beliefs. One might argue that this approach to membership undermines the original intent of sororities as previously described.

Finally, performance of an actual recruitment period that utilizes RFM may be seen as positive or negative. A chapter who has a positive performance outcome (successful recruitment) may plan to use the same methods in the future and assess what worked well throughout the process. Minimally these chapters should re-evaluate their methods every two years since the members of the chapter change over time in order to better meet the needs and expectations of women going through formal recruitment. A chapter who has a negative performance outcome in recruitment will automatically feel as though they failed in their efforts to get a certain number of women to accept an invitation to membership or even get close to quota (number of new
members). They might also feel poorly about their accept rate (number of women who accept an invitation to each round of recruitment) each day of recruitment because the Release Figure Method measures success by numbers. This negates the feeling of efficacy, both self and collective, and may impact relationships within the chapter and create additional external realities for the chapter to manage in the future. Based on the collective performance of the chapter, individual women may retreat back to the four principle sources of information (enactive mastery experiences, vicarious modeling, and physiological/affective states) as they may question their knowledge and ability to complete recruitment tasks and attain a certain number of new members.

The Release Figure Methodology may fail in several aspects related to formal sorority recruitment and efficacy beliefs, specifically its impact on individual members and the entire chapter, should a negative performance occur. As one of the largest organizations of women in the world, the National Panhellenic Conference should be advocating for better methods to help measure success in the area of recruitment and return to fulfilling the needs for deeper friendships, support and encouragement, and a sense of belonging within all membership organizations.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Participation in a recruitment process is the first step into sorority life. Creating a positive environment where members and potential new members are enjoying their recruitment experience helps to build an engaging and stress-free environment. Concentration on numbers and return rates may negate a positive environment for members. The sorority experience is intended to be enjoyable and a place where women can feel comfortable within their environment. The sole focus on numbers, relied upon by the Release Figure Method, creates a
stressful period of time that can stretch for weeks leading up to a formalized recruitment process up to and including the day women receive their invitations to membership. Shifting the recruitment focus from numbers to all that a sorority experience may offer to potential new members should be the guiding premise of preparation, execution, and evaluation. This shift in focus may help to alleviate any stress that may occur within a chapter or with a potential new member, therefore setting all involved up for success leading to enhanced feelings of self and collective efficacy.

Each of the studies discussed and theories explored may be related to the sorority experience and the recruitment process. The development of individual sorority women throughout their experiences can also be accurately described, and one may explore how the person, environment, and behavior all influence one another as explained by Bandura (1997). Since the implementation of the Release Figure Method in 2003 there has been negligible research conducted of its impact on sorority chapters or individual members. The evidence presented in this chapter leads to several unanswered questions for further exploration.

Within a sorority, the influence a group of women may have on individual members is extensive. Outcomes of membership may include, but are certainly not limited to, communication skills, time management, organization skills, academic excellence, ethical decision-making, responsibility, collaboration, leadership, diversity, and certainly a sense of personal efficacy. As one explores the sense of efficacy that sorority women, both as individuals and collectively as a chapter, may develop from their membership experience, there may be a correlation as to how that can further impact her participation in the recruitment process and the creation of a stronger chapter culture. The intent of this study is to take a deeper look at chapter
performance through Bandura’s development of self and collective efficacy and the impact it can have on individual members, and in turn on sorority recruitment.
CHAPTER III. STUDY METHODS

This study was designed to provide an understanding of how chapter release or carry figures (RFM) may have influenced a chapter and how the development and impact of efficacy might be related to a sorority chapter's level of attainment during recruitment. I have conducted a qualitative study through in-depth focus group interviews. The research design and data collection methods, as well as population and sample descriptions, have been included in this chapter.

METHODS

Qualitative methods offer the ability to collect data through human subjects, rather than through a computerized questionnaire or survey tool. Patton (2015) described qualitative research as

[a]n effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of the setting – what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what’s going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting – the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting...The analysis strives for depth of understanding (p. 6).

The selection of a qualitative method allowed for the opportunity to gather data that is rich in content and to experience firsthand the reactions and emotions of sorority women as they discussed sorority recruitment methods, the impact of the Release Figure Method (RFM) on efficacy levels, and outcomes of utilizing the RFM. According to Merriam (1998), interviewing is necessary when one cannot observe behavior and the feelings and emotions towards something. Recruitment processes for all National Panhellenic Conference member groups are typically not something I could have observed. Although I have experienced formal sorority
recruitment on several campuses, actual observance of all sorority recruitment processes is not an option due to time and travel constraints.

**Design**

While collecting data a multiple case study design, organized around two or more cases, was used to explore different institutions. Yin (2018) defined case study research as a social science research method, generally used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and in its real-world context. I sought to explore the phenomenon of formal sorority recruitment using the Release Figure Method (RFM) and how the concept of efficacy may be applied to individual women, as well as collective sorority chapters. I followed a replication design with each institution selected for this study as described by Yin (2018, p.55), as I sought to determine the impact of formalized sorority recruitment processes on efficacy levels of sorority women. I have focused on women’s subjective experiences and their interpretation of recruitment participation.

To address any ethical concerns that may occur, I have assured all participants of anonymity as it is related to their individual identity and their particular sorority affiliation and had them sign an informed consent form, along with a demographic sheet to track the demographics of those involved in the focus group interviews. I informed all participants prior to the focus group that their campus identity would be included in the study and that I would make certain all procedures related to data access will be followed. I obtained permission to interview undergraduate sorority members by individual campuses and the National Panhellenic Conference Research Committee (Appendix E).

A qualitative approach offered the best data collection opportunity due to the fact that the topic of recruitment is one that is extremely personal to individual women and the organization
with which they are affiliated. This approach also allows for further exploration of experiences of sorority women on their particular campus, as well as within their affiliation. A quantitative approach fails to allow for deeper exploration of experiences and emotions. The intent of this study is two-fold: gather information from sorority women on their experiences with recruitment, both as a PNM and as a fully initiated member, and discover and explore how a formal recruitment process many impact the development of individual and collective efficacy.

**National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) Sorority Participants Only Included in the Study**

As previously noted in Chapter II, I could have included several different types of sororities in this study: historically Black, local, Latino(a), and Asian American sororities, which all exist on campuses today. Having had numerous experiences working with mostly NPC member groups, the most important reasons that I have chosen to limit my study to only NPC member groups are access and purpose. Other types of sororities that are not a member of NPC are very protective of their intake processes and have a much longer recruitment process. Potentially researching non-NPC groups would present a challenge in gathering participants and data. In addition, local sororities, groups that only have one chapter, have no national structure on which to gather information and self-govern their organization with no standing purpose, rules or processes outlined and upheld by a national organization.

**Data Collection**

Campuses were selected based on the type of institution (public, private, and religiously affiliated), the type of sorority community that is on a campus, as well as the ability of the researcher to travel to an institution. Each type of institution listed above was used in this study for a total of three institutions. The institutions selected were University A (private), University B (religiously affiliated), and University C (public).
There were five total focus groups conducted at each institution, for a total of 15 focus group interviews for further analysis. The same questions were used for all focus group interviews. I contacted the fraternity/sorority life advisor at each campus to identify their National Panhellenic sororities and each chapter’s recruiting strength. Two from among the lowest and two from among the highest recruiting strength chapters at each campus were selected to participate in this study, as well as College Panhellenic Council members.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants for this study were undergraduate, upper-class sorority women who attend the previously named institutions. The same questions were used for all focus group interviews. The chapter focus groups were comprised of Executive Board members from the same chapter on the same campus. A chapter Executive Board includes an elected group of women within the same chapter affiliation who serve as leadership and decision makers for the chapter during the academic year. I also conducted a focus group interview with the College Panhellenic Council Executive Board members for each institution involved in the study. The College Panhellenic Council at an individual campus is a group of women who represent all National Panhellenic Conference member groups represented on that particular campus. The National Panhellenic Conference (2018) defines a College Panhellenic Council as:

The associations’ governing body and is composed of one delegate and one alternate from each regular, provisional and associate member chapter at the institution. The College Panhellenic Council is responsible for local Panhellenic operations in accordance with NPC Unanimous Agreements, policies, best practices and procedures (p. 67).

I decided to host a total of five focus groups per campus with the Executive Board members of four individual chapters and one with the Executive Board members of the College Panhellenic Council in order to get a broad enough view of recruitment strength for each
campus, while not reaching so broadly that the study becomes overwhelming in content collected.

Table 3.1 Focus Group Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th># of Focus Group Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University A</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University B</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University C</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total # of Focus Group Interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sorority women were asked to volunteer to participate in this study by a chapter president, chapter advisor, a fraternity/sorority life advisor, or the researcher. The chapters that participated in the study ranged in membership size from 20 members up to 150 members. Chapters also varied in types of sorority facilities one resided in, such as houses, residence halls, and commuter students. An established range of various sorority experiences include age of chapter (old or young), organization size (large or small), class standing (sophomore to senior), and length of time in the chapter. The criteria included sorority women from various size campuses, various chapter sizes, established chapters, and emerging chapters. Chapters who participated were either a part of a larger national/international sorority, while others were part of a smaller national/international sorority.

INSTRUMENTATION

The topic of recruitment is an interest of mine due to the fact that I have seen numerous sorority chapters become very disenchanted with the formal recruitment process and the use of
the Release Figure Method, where they continue to believe they will never be good enough to recruit the women they would like to see in their chapter. In order to assure that my bias would not interfere with any of the focus group interviews, I developed focus group interview questions that are clear, concise, and not leading. While utilizing structured focus group interview questions, I did not make any personal comments about my thoughts or beliefs throughout the interview process. I took every precaution that I could in order to allow for the sorority women’s responses to be solely their own, without any guidance from me. Patton (1990) stressed the importance of understanding the power of interviewing and taking a proactive approach in dealing with the ethical dimensions of qualitative inquiry:

Because qualitative methods are highly personal and interpersonal, because materialistic inquiry takes the researcher into the real world where people live and work, and because in-depth interviewing opens up what is inside people, qualitative inquiry may be more intrusive and involve greater reactivity than surveys, tests, and other qualitative approaches (p. 356).

PROCEDURES

Interview questions were designed to challenge participants to reflect on recruitment methods and the use of the Release Figure Method (RFM). The questions were designed to focus on the research questions:

• How may participation in formal sorority recruitment impact feelings of self and collective efficacy?

• How may formal sorority recruitment efficacy expectancy influence the development of self and collective efficacy?

Each interview conducted was recorded, transcribed, and coded to identify common themes. Chapter focus group interviews allowed participants to share personal experiences within their own chapter and Panhellenic Council Executive Board focus group interviews
allowed participants to share perspectives across chapters of affiliation. Regarding focus groups Patton (2015) shared:

It is a highly efficient qualitative data collection technique. In one hour, the evaluator can gather information from eight people instead of only one person. Thus the sample size can be increased significantly in an evaluation using qualitative methods through focus group interviewing. Focus group interviews also provide some quality controls on data collection in that participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other that weed out false or extreme views (pp. 335-336).

Focus group interviews allowed me to gather perspectives from groups of sorority women who are from the same chapter of affiliation. “Groups are not just a convenient way to accumulate the individualized knowledge of their members, they give rise synergistically to insights and solutions that would not come about without them” (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989, p. 40).

Interviews were conducted in meeting room space on a campus or within a residential facility owned by the institution or national organization. Focus group interviews were no longer than one hour. Interviews were constructed to allow enough time for participants to reflect on their experiences and adhere to the time constraints.

The focus group interview timeline allowed enough time for participants to engage in the interview, while also allowing an additional few minutes to wrap up the interview. Although no pilot study was conducted prior to actual focus group interviews during late Fall 2018 and early Spring 2019, I did receive feedback from a variety of fraternity/sorority life professionals at different campuses, as well as national headquarters staff. The feedback offered gave me the opportunity to re-evaluate several questions to allow for more detailed and in-depth responses from participants.
DATA ANALYSIS

Individual interviews and focus group interviews were recorded and coded to look for common themes and thoughts to see if a particular pattern exists. Cross-case analysis was utilized to group together responses from different participants to common questions and analyze different perspectives on issues related to the study. Category construction began immediately following the initial interview. Field notes were taken and were reviewed and initially categorized based on points of interest and items relevant to the study. A review of university websites, information and brochures from campus Panhellenic Councils, and any other additional information gathered was conducted. Further collection of individual national organization information, chapter structure, and past RFM reports were gathered and analyzed to assist in identifying themes within a chapter. Classifying data and categorizing main themes for the purpose of the study assisted in the organization of findings. All information compiled through individual interviews and focus group interviews was kept chronologically. Additional thoughts, feelings and actions that occurred during interviews were recorded appropriately.

Merriam (1998) stated, “Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields, such as education, in which practitioners intervene in people’s lives” (p. 27). Lincoln and Guba (1991) establish a “truth value” (p. 290) or trustworthiness of qualitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1991), there are four constructs for qualitative inquiry, which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which establish the “truth value” (p. 290), or trustworthiness, of qualitative research.

The first construct of qualitative inquiry established by Lincoln and Guba (1991) is credibility and one of the primary goals of credibility is that the study should be conducted such that the “probability that the findings will be found to be credible is enhanced” (p. 296). In order
to enhance the credibility of my study and its findings, two colleagues have conducted “peer examinations” (Merriam, 1998, p. 204) of the transcripts and the findings of the study. The peer examiners have worked with me throughout this study to enhance internal validity. One of the peer examiners is very familiar with the sorority environment and recruitment methods, while the other is a researcher of the sorority experience.

Verbatim quotes are used throughout this study in order to convey the participants’ thoughts and feelings to the reader. Merriam (1998) also recommended the use of “rich, thick description…providing enough description so that the readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence whether the findings can be transferred” (p. 211). Lincoln and Guba (1991) indicate that the construct of transferability is the concept that one set of findings may be applicable in another study. Lincoln and Guba postulated that determining the transferability is not the sole responsibility of the original researcher because that researcher cannot determine what future studies to which the findings may be applied. Therefore, the burden of transferability lies with future researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1991).

Confirmability as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1991) corresponds with the quantitative research concept of objectivity. Whether or not the data is confirmable is the primary objective for the researcher according to Lincoln and Guba (1991), not whether or not the researcher is objective. “Objectivity is not a state which qualitative researchers strive to achieve. By nature, qualitative research is subjective. All researchers approach the research process with certain inherent biases” (Williams, 1997, p.54). At the beginning of my research study I outlined and identified my personal experiences and preconceptions related to this and
established a system of data inquiry and analysis that would assist me in maintaining neutrality in reporting all results of the study.

**OBSERVATION OF FORMAL SORORITY RECRUITMENT**

As outlined in Chapter I, it was not feasible for me to observe recruitment practices at the institutions selected for this research study. However, based on my personal experiences observing recruitment methods previous to this research, I was able to fully grasp what participants were describing throughout each focus group interview. Although I was unable to thoroughly review individual sorority recruitment plans, I was able to inquire as to the practices and processes of each chapter interviewed throughout their planning and implementation of a formalized recruitment period.

One key component of this study was the approval of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC). I had several conversations with NPC staff and volunteers, as well as a variety of NPC member organization volunteers, specifically in relation to formal recruitment and the Release Figure Method (RFM). I attempted to reassure staff members and volunteers that my interest in this study was to help create a better understanding of how the Release Figure Method may impact feelings of efficacy of individual and collective sorority women. Those who work with sororities at all levels have described a desire to have a broader perspective on the impact of recruitment methods on efficacy levels. I have conducted all focus group interviews as well as participated in all aspects involved in the data gathering process.

**CHALLENGES FACED DURING THE STUDY**

One of the greatest challenges I encountered throughout my research was being cautioned by many fraternity/sorority advisors and volunteers to be clear in my research efforts to not come across as being biased toward or against the National Panhellenic Conference Release Figure
Method. I felt the advice was meaningful, yet I still felt it was important to pursue answers to my research questions in order to meaningfully add context to a formal recruitment process for further educational opportunities of sorority women and begin to give organizations a more concrete model to examine as recruitment methods were being discussed.

I believe my bias toward the utilization of RFM comes from my experience in working with sorority chapters that are not strong recruiting strength chapters. Having two peer examiners review my focus group questions, transcripts, and coding has helped to enhance the study and avoid any biases in my findings. Although my bias can be seen as a passion of mine, I have also worked with my advisor and my dissertation committee to take precautions to evaluate my bias and to be conscience of my bias at all times during this study. Despite the fact that I may not be fully aware of different sorority recruitment practices, I do have a firm understanding of the goal of formal recruitment, the structure in place for formal recruitment, and the impact recruitment may have on a chapter.

Another challenge I encountered was the limited knowledge that sorority women have about the Release Figure Method during a formal recruitment period. During almost every focus group interview when I asked about the overall purpose of the Release Figure Method (RFM), one of the participants asked for further explanation. I was able to explain what RFM was by describing it as the computer system where chapters input their invitation lists after each round of recruitment. Participants then understood what I was referring to, but they did not seem to fully comprehend the extent of implementing RFM on their campus. Women seemed as though they just knew they had to implement RFM because that is what has always been done or that is what they have been told, instead of truly comprehending how the method worked. This signifies
to me that an increased focus on educating sorority women on this method would be helpful as they coordinate their recruitment efforts and devise best practices for their chapter.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I encountered a few limitations as my research progressed. First, I was not able to experience recruitment at any of the campuses used in my study. It would have been interesting to experience their full formal recruitment processes and get a better sense of how they manage recruitment in each individual chapter. I would have also appreciated getting to observe each campus College Panhellenic Council’s planning and implementation efforts for each formal recruitment process. I believe the addition of both experiences could have enhanced my study and given me the opportunity to observe potential physiological and affective states of women participating in the formal recruitment process.

I selected sites for the study that met the type of institutions I wanted to include in the study. I knew a professional staff member in either fraternity/sorority life or student life who could connect me to chapter leadership. This was a second limitation of my study, as access provided to sorority communities was simply based on professional connections.

A third limitation of the study was not considering recruitment counselors as another group of women to participate in the focus groups that were conducted. Throughout my focus group interviews women brought up recruitment counselors (Rho Gammas) numerous times, the work they do throughout a recruitment process, and the amount of responsibility given to them, as well as the potential for stress and anxiety. Recruitment counselors often assist in mediating and managing concerns from potential new members who may not get invited back to chapters they were interested in. The unique perspective they could have provided would have been
invaluable to how potential new members manage their emotions throughout a formal recruitment period.

Although this could be seen as somewhat of a challenge, my approach was one that afforded the sorority women an opportunity to discuss the role of recruitment in a non-intrusive environment. By working with chapters not of my affiliation, I have learned how to discuss the concept of recruitment and the Release Figure Method and the impact it can have on individual women as well as the chapter by including commonalities, expectation standards, and communication methods with which all sororities are familiar with. Clarity and openness with the undergraduate sorority women and national representatives have been crucial components of this study.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The goal of this chapter was to outline the research methodology used to answer the research questions that are outlined in Chapter I. A discussion of the research design, data collection, research participants, procedure, and data analysis outline the specifics of how the study was conducted and who participated in the study. A cross-case analysis helped to provide a description of lived experiences of participants in relation to formal sorority recruitment processes, while a within case analysis helped to compare low and high recruiting strength chapters.

The goal of Chapter IV is to provide the findings of the study and demonstrate that the methodology described in Chapter III was followed.
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are examined in this chapter. This chapter is organized into four main sections: (a) the participants in the study, (b) campus descriptions, (c) the findings of the study, and (d) a summary of the findings.

THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

In this section, a brief description of the sorority women who participated in this study is presented. Due to the nature of the subject and the level of confidentiality, it is not possible to describe individual sorority chapter recruitment processes and their chapter culture, or to go into great detail about the sorority women themselves. Basic demographic and sorority involvement information provided by the participants are included in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2.

Demographic Profile of the Participants

I interviewed seventy-five undergraduate sorority women on three different campuses. All interviews were focus group interviews. As indicated in Table 4.1, the participants ranged in age from 19 to 22 years of age. All participants were Executive Board members of each individual sorority chapter or College Panhellenic Council and had participated in at least one formal recruitment period as a potential new member of their sorority. All focus group interviews occurred during an academic term. One of the three institutions selected for this study held recruitment during the beginning of the fall semester, while the other two were planning for a deferred spring recruitment period.

The demographic profile of the 75 participants in the study (see Table 4.1) consisted of age groups ranging from 19 to 22, with only nine participants (12%) age 19, forty at age 20 (53%), twenty-four at age 21 (32%), and two participants at age 22 (3%). In addition, no
participants were American Indian, one was Asian/Pacific Islander (1%), two were African American (3%), six were Hispanic/Latina (8%), and sixty-six were Caucasian (88%).

The age ranges seem to be comparable to the national average of traditionally aged women who are involved in sororities, as indicated earlier in this study. In most sororities, it seems that the majority of the women are traditional college age, ranging from 18 to 22 years of age. The ethnicity seems to be that the majority of women who are in National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sororities are Caucasian. This demographic may vary depending upon the geographic location of their college or university and the demographics of a particular campus.

Table 4.1. Demographic Profile of Sorority Women Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
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<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of participants</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
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<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latina</td>
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<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 contains the demographic profile of the study participants by age and ethnicity.
The seventy-five participants all joined their sororities between 2015 and 2018. One (1%) participant pledged her sorority in 2015, twenty-five (33%) in 2016, forty-four (59%) in 2017, and five (7%) in 2018. No first year students participated in the interviews due to the fact that women in leadership roles within chapter (Executive Board) tend to be upper-class students. Some of the sorority women had participated in deferred formal sorority recruitment in Spring 2018, but they designated their status in their chapters as second year.

**Table 4.2. Sorority Involvement of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Became a New Member</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Currently in Chapter</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third</td>
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<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td><strong>Year in School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Of the seventy-five participants, the majority of them were upperclassmen in their second and third years as members of the chapter. There were two participants in their first year (3%), twenty-seven (36%) in their second year, thirty-six (48%) in their third year, and ten (13%) in their fourth year. Although participants were asked about what class standing they are in school and what year they joined their chapter, years in school and years in a chapter do not always match. Several women joined their sorority during their sophomore and junior years, so even though a woman is currently in her junior year in school, she may not have pledged her sorority until her sophomore year, which makes 2019 her second year as a member of the chapter. Many women indicated throughout the focus group interviews that they had been in past leadership positions within their chapter prior to becoming a member of the current chapter or College Panhellenic Council Executive Board.

All focus group participants were only members of the Executive Board for their respective chapter or College Panhellenic Council (CPC). No general members of any of the chapters were involved in these focus groups.

Table 4.3. Number of Participants by University and Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Individual Chapter Interviewed</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast University</td>
<td>Chapter 1 <em>(low recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 2 <em>(high recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 3 <em>(low recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4 <em>(high recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest University</td>
<td>Chapter 1 <em>(low recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 2 <em>(low recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 3 <em>(high recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4 <em>(high recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast University</td>
<td>Chapter 1 <em>(low recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 2 <em>(high recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter 3 <em>(high recruiting strength)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4 <em>(low recruiting strength)</em></td>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Focus Group Dynamics

All interviews were conducted in a quiet office conference room, with participants seated around a conference table where I could see all of them and how they reacted to questions and other responses from participants. All participants seemed relaxed and prepared to discuss their experiences within their own chapter. All women were comfortable with one another discussing their individual experiences with formal sorority recruitment and continued to share more thoughts as the interviews progressed. It was rare to find a participant that did not engage in the interview or with other members in each focus group. It was clear that many of the women within individual focus groups had discussed the topic of recruitment previously and had engaged in several facilitated recruitment training workshops throughout their experiences within their respective chapters.

When I began to discuss the Release Figure Method (RFM) during each focus group, many women were confused as to what I was actually referring to and needed further information or clarification. Once I was able to describe RFM as the computer system utilized throughout a formalized recruitment period, women understood what I was referring to, but did not fully understand the three-fold purpose of RFM or how the system actually works.

Another dynamic observed throughout each focus group interview were members who had been in the chapters the longest were the individuals to respond to the questions first and offer extremely detailed responses. Women who were newer to the chapter answered questions after the “more experienced” women responded. Newer women were quick to agree with many responses before they would offer their own experiences. Toward the middle to end of each focus group interview it seemed as though they were more comfortable sharing their own opinions and experiences.
As an outside observer of each chapter Executive Board and Panhellenic Council, it appeared that individual members of each group got along well, knew how to work together, laughed together, and were excited by the work they were doing together. They showed a genuine interest in one another as they rarely interrupted one another and clearly respected one another’s opinions. Overall each group of women got along with one another and were passionate when discussing their recruitment experiences.

CAMPUS DESCRIPTIONS

A description of each campus participating in this study is presented in order to create an understanding of the campus culture and each Panhellenic community. These descriptions were gathered from personal observation, information from the campus Fraternity/Sorority Life Advisor, the University websites, and publications from the institutions. Throughout the interview process I reiterated to the participants that their institutions would be discussed as part of this study, but not their individual identity or sorority affiliation.

I did want to select specific types of campuses for this study-public, private, and religiously affiliated-primarily because each campus may offer a different experience to students based on their institutional missions and geographic locations. Campuses were selected for this study due in large part to time constraints, geography, and my inability to travel to all parts of the United States. Two of the campuses that were selected typically attract local students; the third campus attracts students from various parts of the country.

University-Northeast

The first interviews were conducted at a university in the Northeast. This university was founded in 1896 and is Long Island’s oldest, private co-educational university. The university has approximately 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled and the campus is a mix
of traditional buildings and newly constructed classroom buildings and residence halls. Located just 23 miles from New York City, the university offers students diverse opportunities throughout the area. The sorority community at this institution was originally founded in the early 1900s and has seven National Panhellenic Conference sororities that average between 55 and 95 members, yet only 2% of the female population at this institution is a member of a sorority. The last sorority to join the Panhellenic community was in 2017. The sororities do not have their own housing facilities, nor does the university provide residential facilities for them. Most women live at home with their parents, in off-campus housing, or the on campus residence halls. Approximately 81% of students are from the New York area and tend to stay connected to their families. One Panhellenic sorority at this university is the oldest chapter for their respective organization, which helped to create an established sorority community on campus. The Fraternity/Sorority Life Advisor describes the Panhellenic sorority community at this institution as:

“a strong group of dedicated and passionate women. Our community continues to grow and it is due to their positive reputation on campus. Recruitment is competitive but our seven groups come together to help one another, from practicing recruitment scenarios together, borrowing recruitment items, and encouraging one another. I’m very proud of this community and the improvements they have made to make recruitment less competitive and more welcoming” (University-Northeast past Fraternity/Sorority Life Advisor, personal communication, March 10, 2019).

**University-Midwest**

The second set of focus group interviews was conducted at a university in the Midwest. The university was founded by in 1850 and currently has an enrollment of over 10,000 undergraduate, graduate, and law school students. The university is recognized as a Doctoral University: High Research Activity, rooted in the Catholic tradition. Admissions at this university are very competitive and students come from all over the country. Sororities began at
this university in 1933, but have only been recognized by the university since 1967. There are seven National Panhellenic Conference sororities at this institution, which make up 21% of the undergraduate female population and average approximately 116 members per chapter. The last sorority to join this Panhellenic community was in 2016. Each Panhellenic sorority has a house near campus that sleeps 6 to 21 chapter women. The university owns all chapter houses near campus and leases the property to each recognized Panhellenic sorority on campus. The campus is very academically focused with 72% of female students completing their undergraduate degree within four years.

**University-Southeast**

The third and final set of focus group interviews were conducted at a university in the Southeast. Established in 1898, this university is the second largest public institution in the state with an enrollment of 19,387 undergraduate and graduate students. There are six Panhellenic sororities at this university at, which make up approximately 12% of the undergraduate female population. Average chapter size ranges between 135 to 160 members. All Panhellenic sororities have an organization-owned house near campus where women gather for meetings and a shared social experience. Only one sorority has a house where women gather and reside. The Panhellenic community is described as providing women with opportunities in community service, campus involvement, leadership, and life-long friendships, while maintaining high academic standards with an average semester cumulative GPA of 3.24 according to the Collegiate Panhellenic Council.

**FINDINGS**

The findings of this study are presented in this section. The focus group participants shared experiences, thoughts, attitudes, and feelings regarding recruitment and how their
personal feelings of efficacy can positively or negatively affect individual women and a sorority chapter. The data from the focus group interviews are separated into categories of responses highlighting each part of self and collective efficacy. The focus group interview questions were designed to solicit the participants’ understandings, thoughts, and feelings concerning the impact of formal sorority recruitment efficacy expectancy on self and collective efficacy levels of participants. Responses are presented in the words of the participants.

As indicated in Chapter III, two sources of data were used in the study: a structured focus group interview and the Undergraduate Sorority Member Profile Questionnaire (USMPQ) (Appendix A). Responses to the interview questions by the participants provided their perceptions of the role of formal sorority recruitment on the development of self and collective efficacy. The demographic information from the questionnaire provided general background information of the participants as well as general sorority participation information. Through cross-case and within case analysis, several themes emerged regarding impact of formal sorority recruitment on the development of self and collective efficacy. Statements made by participants throughout the focus group interviews helped to provide critical reflection of themes discovered. Each theme identified is discussed in the following sections.

Table 4.4. Codes Used to Determine Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Codes Related to Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme #1: Expectations of the Sorority Experience</td>
<td>Preconceived notions, social experiences, connectedness, making friends, support, sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #2: Recruitment Education for Sorority Women</td>
<td>Workshops hosted, training, practicing, repetitive, education received, training caused more stress, alumnae involvement, performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #3: Positive Role Modeling Relationships</td>
<td>Social comparison, competition, personal relationships, seeking mentor/big sister, numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #4: The Role of Positive Reinforcement in Formal Sorority Recruitment</td>
<td>Retention rates, encouragement, support, chapter advisors, fraternity/sorority advisors, headquarter volunteers, relationships with Greek advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #5: The Psychological and</td>
<td>Stress, anxiety, late nights, early mornings, no sleep,</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Theme #1: Expectations of the Sorority Experience

The first theme that emerged was the expectation women had of the sorority experience prior to their participation in formal recruitment. Women shared why they decided to join a sorority or what prompted them to participate in sorority recruitment. Some participants shared their impression of fraternity and sorority life on college campuses as extremely negative based on what they have seen in the media and stories they may have heard. Several of the participants did reference that the reason they selected a particular sorority during the recruitment process was because they perceived that organization as “having women that represented the values and standards of that organization”.

Most women explained that they were looking for a social environment where they could connect with a specific community and feel a sense of belonging.

The number one reason I decided to join a sorority was because moving three hours from home, I was like I’m not going to know anyone. It was a great way to go through the process, to meet new people, to find friends, to have familiar faces on campus. Just coming to college is a big jump and you have to adjust to everything and for me going through recruitment, I found a home in an organization that I belonged to and I just wasn’t by myself.

It was evident that women felt as though participating in recruitment would lead to connectedness (shared social experience) within the organization they would join (sense of belonging) and assist in their personal development.

It was my first time living away from home and it was my first time on campus so that was my way of getting involved in something greater, not just a club that would meet every week. Something more than that. Something with sisters that I could rely on and
not just be a club member. Someone to do things with, attend events on campus with, create a sisterhood bond, and build myself up as a person.

Participants also shared how as they were transitioning to college life they were seeking social experiences similar to those they had throughout high school as they were transitioning to college life.

I came from out of state and my freshmen year I was just friends with people in my dorm and my roommate and her friends and then I went back home for the whole summer. I came back and I wanted something more. I had a close group of friends in high school and I cheered so I had that nice group of girls and I really wanted that. I felt like that (recruitment) was a really good way to make a final push to break out of my shell. If I could move across the country for school, I could do this! And I never looked back!

Women discussed how deciding to go through recruitment was a personal decision for them based on experiences with other friends and family.

I also joined as a sophomore and I had found by that time that all of my friends were my boyfriend’s friends. I wanted something that was just my own. I kind of joined for that sisterhood aspect.

Some explained the opposite where women in their family had been involved in a sorority and they saw first-hand the positive experiences they had throughout college and beyond.

My sister was in a sorority. She’s four years older than me and I saw her progress through it. Seeing her made me want to go through it. Just to be able to get involved with leadership positions and meeting new people and finding people who share my same values and relationships to go through college with, would keep me grounded.

The three primary components that framed the participants’ feelings on sisterhood and the sorority experience were a shared social experience, support and encouragement, and a sense of belonging. As discussed in Chapter II, Cohen, et al. (2017) determined sorority women use five distinct themes to explain sisterhood as a progression throughout their collegiate experience: (1) sisterhood based on shared social experiences, (2) support and encouragement, (3) belonging, (4) accountability, and (5) common purpose. These themes are clearly indicated in the comments of sorority women who have participated in recruitment. The expectations that women brought
into recruitment regarding the sorority experience are consistently linked to the sisterhood themes presented by Cohen, et al. (2017). Women come in to recruitment with a basic idea of what they are looking for and then they continue to develop a more robust idea of what sisterhood can be throughout their entire sorority experience as they continue to build and develop the ideas of accountability and a common purpose.

**Theme #2: Recruitment Education for Sorority Women**

The idea of being successful is accomplished by believing that one can achieve a particular task (recruitment). Specifically in relation to formal sorority recruitment, women will attempt the tasks associated with facilitating a formal recruitment process for a chapter, persist in achieving those tasks (each invitational round of recruitment), and strive for success in each task associated with formal recruitment (matching to quota). Bandura’s Efficacy Model (1997) states that enactive mastery experiences are the most influential sources of efficacy expectancy. These experiences provide the most credible evidence of whether or not one will be able to succeed. Efficacy is developed through mastery experiences that involve acquiring the cognitive, behavioral, and self-regulatory behaviors to manage ever-changing circumstances. A small success may empower individuals to go far beyond performance attainment and succeed at new activities.

The education of women in sorority chapters is a crucial step in enactive mastery for several reasons. If success is defined by a chapter as a high return rate and matching to quota at the end of recruitment, women need to be appropriately educated on all parts of formal recruitment including what the ultimate goal is for the chapter and how one must behave and engage themselves in a formal recruitment period. Sororities use the months leading up to
recruitment as an attempt to educate and train chapter women on everything they need to know for recruitment purposes:

We talk to our advisors a lot. It’s a lot of basically teaching – that is the main thing. You make a list and an outline and schedule of everything you want to talk about. We have a lot of our older members share their experiences because there is just so much to think about and there is so much especially for girls who have not gone through on the sorority side. There’s a lot to learn. It is not just learning how to have a conversation with people. It is learning how to figure out who this girl is and it is not just five seconds but you have to do it by looking at their body language, asking them the important questions, seeing if you are actually able to have a connection with this girls with not a lot of time. Besides the workshops we do have a lot of sisterhood events where we kind of talk about different things and share our experiences.

Yet another said:

I feel like there wasn’t really that much education in regard to like what steps you needed to take for the ones who are recruiting members. It was just kind of like don’t talk about this, don’t talk about that and we were never really prepped for the actual day of the recruitment. I feel like there are situations that you don’t realize how to go about them or how to talk through them. If we had more workshops or something that taught us how to navigate certain situations that may have helped us with recruitment.

Participants shared different methods they use for educating their chapter members on formal recruitment:

So we hold recruitment workshops. We have a new member recruitment workshop and then we have two summer recruitment workshops for all chapter members and then an entire work week or spirit week and at the workshops we go through all of the powerpoints about our process. These are the songs we sing and we rehearse the songs over and over again until they are perfect. We do mock recruitment where half the chapter are potential new members and the other half are chapter members. We walk through the door, sit down, and have a mock conversation, which is also hard to control because some of the girls don’t take it seriously. The recruitment director tells you the information and then you have to act on the information. We act it out through mock exercises.

Yet another participant shared how the training she received caused more stress on her as she was speaking with potential new members:

It was ingrained in us to be prepared for the next step. All I knew was how to sing and clap when they walked in during the first round, but beyond that I couldn’t talk and I can usually talk to anybody. My family has always told me that I can talk to a brick wall but
for some reason when I went in there, I couldn’t talk to anybody because we were always
told to think about what we were going to do next instead of just living in the moment.

One participant shared her perspective on timing of the training that occurred for her chapter
and how she wanted to handle recruitment workshops differently:

The presentation was very informative, but the only fault that we had was like it was
showed to us like a week or two before recruitment, so I didn’t feel like we had enough
time to really absorb the material. Coming into the position I wanted to be training the
girls from the start of the year.

Another participant from a top recruiting strength chapter spoke about her prior experiences
and skill level in being able to talk to people and socialize before she even went into any sort
of training for a formal recruitment process:

I feel like our answers are all going to be similar because we are used to putting ourselves
out there and we are the leaders and being orientation leaders and stuff like that. I feel
like what I really learned as a recruiter came before I even went to school, through
socialization.

When discussing how women have trained their chapter on recruitment methods in
the past, several women expressed how helpful it was to have older members of the chapter
share their past experiences with recruitment. Women felt that a facilitated recruitment
training program offered to them was extremely helpful in managing each workshop. One
participant explained how their organization was recently rebranded and the difference it
made in their recruitment training efforts:

We rebranded about two years ago. They (national organization) gave us new plans for
everything and our new recruitment plans have been phenomenal. I couldn’t imagine
teaching people to recruit without the workshops they provided. I don’t know how they
did it before!

Regardless of the amount of recruitment training women may receive or the timing of
the actual workshops, several women shared how unprepared they felt for the first set of
recruitment events:
I had no idea what was going on even after an entire week of recruitment workshops. I had no idea what to do and how unprepared I actually was. I was very overwhelmed because I had never done it before and I didn’t feel prepared, so I was just kind of hoping for the best.

Another participant shared:

Girls in the chapter will tell us that they are not confident and we try to do everything we can to help make them feel more confident. We hold conversation workshops where we have a sister pretend to be a potential new member and another sister be a sister. We pair girls up so they don’t know each other very well and can practice talking. We do what we can to try to help them and I think they just psych themselves out about it.

Based on enactive mastery involving the acquisition of cognitive, behavioral, and self-regulatory behaviors in order to manage ever-changing circumstances, numerous women shared that a large amount of information was given to them in a small amount of time and they struggled with the management of their behaviors due to changing circumstances throughout the formal recruitment process. They did not always feel that what was covered during training workshops prepared them to be successful in recruiting women to their chapter or helping their chapter match to quota. Many questioned themselves as they were involved in the formal recruitment process and stated that they were worried about saying the wrong thing, thinking about the next thing to say, or concerned about what should happen next. If women are not able to master information provided to them, execute tasks associated with formal recruitment, or feel successful about their performance throughout a recruitment event, then it is evident that the development of self-efficacy does not advance for individual women, nor is a formal recruitment process positively impacted within a chapter.

In interviewing both high and low recruiting strength chapters, there was a distinct difference in how they felt about their performance during a formal recruitment period, as well as how successful they may or may not have been. Women who are members of a high
performing chapter with consistently high return rates, who always match to quota were much more efficacious.

Not to brag but we are very strong. Like I said we have 100% retention rate. Usually for like the first two or three days and that shows we do well. I just think our girls are so genuine and honestly really love what they do during recruitment and I think that is what makes it so strong because they are making connections with freshman.

While lower performing chapters with return rates lower than 70% consistently and often do not match to quota shared:

There is no way we can talk to every girl and them just make a decision at the end of the week, but I feel like we have been set up to fail consistently because we have been told by people outside of our chapter that it’s ridiculous that we can’t release. We are told by Panhellenic that we should be giving the girls a chance to choose us and we shouldn’t be picky, but that’s not fair to us because it is our sisterhood. Quality over quantity. After the first two days of recruitment other groups have 2-3 parties, where we are still having 6-7 and I hate to go there but to me it always feels personal. They are always like our chapter doesn’t have their numbers up anyway so we shouldn’t mind the extra people.

One chapter member shared her experience with other women on campus defining recruitment success by matching to quota:

Well last year we had 32 on bid day and quota was 40 and for us that was a huge improvement from the year before so we were pumped about that number! Even though we did not hit quota, it felt amazing and then a girl in another chapter asked me how many new members did you get? And I said 32, super proud of it and then she said oh sorry you did not hit quota and I was like it is not a negative! We are proud of this! So I think other chapters do view it that you do your best if you hit quota.

Theme #3: Positive Role Modeling Relationships

Sorority women tend to evaluate their personal capabilities in relation to the attainments of others and social comparison operates as a primary factor in the evaluation of capabilities. Outperforming others or competitors raises efficacy beliefs, while being outperformed lowers them. As a numbers-based recruitment approach, the Release Figures Method (RFM) automatically directs emphasis toward the highest numbers possible. RFM and the way numbers are seen is similar to grading systems used throughout the education system where the highest
percentages constitute success. Several participants spoke about how the dependence on numbers presents a challenge for chapters when they do not have a high return rate, they not only see themselves as less successful but other chapters also associate not matching to quota or being under total as failure.

It is a list of all of the chapters and how many members they have. If they are under total, then you can go into informal recruitment, but I think more of the pressure comes when you are sized up against all of the chapters. We are a little bit smaller than we were last year and now we are the biggest sorority or now we have to get ten more women so we get back on par with everybody. I think from a hard number standpoint, that is where it comes from a little bit more because it [list of chapters] is public information and we all know where the other chapters stand numbers wise. Feeling more pressure when we are doing informal recruitment for me to find six more women so we can actually get back to being on par with all of the other chapters. Pressure like that can be hard.

Another participant discussed how competitive recruitment can feel between sororities when being expected to match to quota:

I don’t want to say it is kind of like a competition between sororities about who can reach quota and who won’t. They just think oh that chapter reached quota and they did better than the chapter that didn’t, which may not always be the case because the girls in the chapter that reached quota may drop out after they start. It is definitely kind of seen as a success marker for recruitment.

One woman shared her experience with the recruitment process as a member of her sorority and what occurs on her campus:

There is a lot of cattiness and animosity between sororities because it is a small community compared to other schools. We now have seven sororities. Everyone knows everyone else. It is a very small school. A lot of potential new members that we have maybe looked at we get to know them and we enjoy the values they share during recruitment. Other organizations have the same feelings towards them. We have very strict rules during recruitment. It is a lot of ratting on each other for things that don’t technically break the rules. It is a lot of trying to get back at each other because you want the same kind of girl. It is always the biggest negative for me of recruitment that I always tell our Greek Advisor.

One participant explained how even after recruitment is over, members of different organizations still try to alter your reputation on campus:
Other organizations are out to get you. I remember our new members once they got their bid, other girls from other organizations texted them and were like I can’t believe you got a bid from (sorority name). You are going to get hazed, like good luck! They are going to haze you. Why did you go to them? They try to scare them away from us once they become our new members, so they already come into our process scared because other organizations are trying to bring us down and say negative things about us.

A chapter with a high recruiting strength does not seem to let the goal of reaching quota or total negatively affect them throughout their recruitment process. One member of a high recruiting strength chapter shared:

I was recruitment chair last year and I was not really scared of the quota number because I knew a lot of potential new members wanted our organization and we never had to struggle with snap bidding or continuous open recruitment. We have a good reputation on campus and we always perform well over recruitment so I was not really nervous about that.

On the opposite side, a lower recruiting strength chapter shared what occurs for them before and during a formal recruitment process:

I believe that the biggest problem with our community is there are a bunch of local girls who decide to stay here and they don’t venture out. All of their moms were in sororities and the ones who have strong alumnae are from the moms who stay here and raise daughters here. Then they send them here and they say you need to join a sorority and they are automatically a legacy, or if they are not a legacy, all of their friends are so they have these preconceived notions about what each sorority is. They all have them. I mean all of our chapters here have their own little stereotype and it is really hard to shake that. It is like 60 years of information ingrained in them and as a newer chapter on campus we don’t have the same amount of legacies going through recruitment as potential new members at this point in time. It is just really hard, like she said the sidewalk talk is not even just that – it is the other chapters breaking rules to go above and beyond and dirty recruit. They don’t care. They have the money and they have the alumnae support in the area and if they just get an infraction, they will just pay it or they will make their new members pay it. It is just so aggravating because we don’t have the resources. Everyone who joins, the majority of people who join our chapter stay and end up becoming these wonderful women on campus and you are just not seeing that from other chapters and yet their numbers are higher and they will continue to be higher because we just shake the negative stereotype talk.

Both of these examples present how a high and low recruiting strength chapter may handle a formal recruitment process and what may influence their efficacy levels throughout the
process. Campus reputation seems to significantly influence how women in a chapter feel about their ability to match to quota. If the women in the chapter feel good about themselves, know that they have a positive reputation on campus, and are aware that many potential new members want to receive an invitation to membership from them, this helps to create a higher sense of efficacy for the chapter. A lower recruiting strength chapter who already goes into recruitment feeling as though the odds are stacked against them from the start then have a lower sense of efficacy levels because they have not received positive role modeling previously. They also tend to believe that they will never be able to change their stereotype or reputation they have on campus. With all of these perceptions in place, it calls into question if the original intent of sorority as providing a sense of belonging, feeling supported and encouraged by a group of women, and the development of deeper friendships based on a common set of values is even a consideration during formal recruitment processes or are sororities relying solely on numbers to determine success.

Women seek role models who possess the competencies to which they aspire. These competent role models can then transmit their knowledge and advise or teach women on different strategies and coping skills for managing environmental demands. Formal sorority recruitment can be seen as one of those environmental demands for sorority women. Role modeling or mentorship serves as a backdrop for vicarious experiences that assist women in moving towards efficacy expectancy. In sorority life, alumnae members and older collegiate members of the chapter may help in serving as a role model or mentor to newer members of the chapter as they are being introduced to new areas of chapter life as a sorority woman.

During a formal recruitment process, potential new members are seeking an invitation to membership in one of the sororities on their campus. As mentioned earlier they are seeking a
sense of belonging in an already established community. They are looking for women to help them grow and develop throughout their collegiate experience and beyond. By participating in recruitment, potential new members are seeking potential role models within an organization who can help to teach them not only about the sorority, but also to model the way for them as they progress throughout their sorority experience. Sororities tout that membership offers personal growth and development of life skills, so potential new members are automatically expecting those benefits out of their experiences.

Sororities also offer an innate modeling relationship through a big sister/little sister program during new member education, where each new member receives a big sister who serves as a role model and guide to her throughout her collegiate experience. Although this program occurs after a formal recruitment process, it can also be a part of conversations that occur throughout recruitment as a means to explain to women the benefits of membership. Chapters need to be taught more about the mentoring relationship that should occur through a big sister/little sister program in order to offer increased positive vicarious modeling opportunities for newer women in the chapter.

**Theme #4: The Role of Positive Reinforcement in Formal Sorority Recruitment**

Verbal persuasion serves as an additional means of increasing and strengthening one’s efficacy expectancy beliefs that they possess the capability to achieve a goal they would like to accomplish successfully. Individuals who may dwell on personal deficiencies and doubt their ability to successfully manage and complete a task struggle with maintaining efficacy expectancy. Those who consistently receive positive reinforcement through optimistic and potentially challenging times are able to gain higher levels of efficacy over time. Recognizing strengths and weaknesses while determining ways to better manage both may help to strengthen
the belief in one’s own ability. Encouragement to measure successes in terms of self-improvement rather than just successes over others can also be explored as a means to increase efficacy levels.

A high performing chapter may receive high praise and encouragement from chapter leadership or advisors when they perform well throughout a recruitment process, which can help lead to increased efficacy expectancy. On the opposite side, for chapters that may be a lower performing chapter with chapter leadership or advisors not providing encouragement and support throughout a difficult recruitment period may lead to a lower or decreased level of efficacy expectancy. Less concentration on daily return rates and overall numbers to meet may be seen as beneficial for all chapters. When interviewing sorority women who are participating in formal sorority recruitment, several different experiences are recalled by chapter members:

Our retention rate went up so our advisors were telling us to be stoked. We are doing this right, so in our chapter we are willing to just keep going versus the big Debbie downer the next day. We tend to struggle and be really down the next day and try to figure out what we are going to do. When our numbers are up, everyone is a bit more relieved.

Leaders of the chapter described several ways they try to support and motivate the chapter throughout a formal recruitment process:

I think also during recruitment I tried my best to reiterate and encourage everyone in between every round by saying ‘ok, guys we’ve got this! We are going to do it one more time and it is going to be over soon. We are killing it and we are doing a great job!’ I want to make sure that everyone is on the same page and is excited about what is coming next so the chapter morale during recruitment is high.

Several also women explained how important and meaningful support from their fraternity/sorority life advisor is throughout the academic year, including a formal recruitment process:

Our relationship with our Greek advisor is amazing! She has saved us and ever since she got here, she is the one to believe in us. She always says ‘you guys can do this!’ and ‘I
believe in you.’ She supports us through everything. We have a good relationship with her, but she also challenges us. She is great! The fact that she has so many other things to do and she still puts her time and so much effort into us really helps. I’m sure she does the same for other organizations on campus.

Another participant shared her experience with her fraternity/sorority life advisor versus her experiences with her national chapter advisor and how they approach the chapter and manage issues differently:

Our fraternity/sorority advisor definitely supports us through everything, 365 days a year, she is there especially during recruitment. She helps us with anything. Sometimes its hard with our chapter advisor. We try to keep it respectful and understand where she is coming from but it does get hard sometimes. Our alumnae advisor is amazing. She is so nice and she is always there to say congratulations or she will be with our Executive Board once a month and she will encourage us or congratulate us on something small, but she is attentive to everything. Meanwhile our chapter advisor is kind of like this is it! She sees more eye to eye with our national in a sense that our organization has to be the best—well not the best but we have to be on top. Our image has to be the best. Anything else that ends up to be a chapter issue we can figure out later, but if our image is messed up that is what has to be fixed first. Meanwhile our fraternity/sorority life advisor says work on yourselves first and everything else will fall into place.

While another participant expressed some of her frustration with their fraternity/sorority life advisor and how she interacts with their chapter:

Personally I feel like I genuinely can’t talk to her about anything regarding our chapter. She has us set on this pedestal below everyone else. She has deliberately said things to all of our chapters members as well. One day during our recruitment training the recruitment counselors come in and we have a mock recruitment party with them. Our girls pick them up at the door, sit down with them and she came in after that and said ‘y’all don’t have the most sexy philanthropy so you really need to learn how to sell it because yours isn’t as great as everyone else’ and we’re like well to us it is great. Thanks for saying that and putting that into my mind to make me more concerned when I’m talking to a potential new member about it. So it is things like that where she consistently says things so I feel like why even try to make a connection anymore.

In addition this participant shared another example of how she feels as though her fraternity/sorority life advisor is not helpful in addressing concerns. In this situation the participant explains how the lack of support has impacted her feelings on the university.
We had a direct issue with another chapter spring recruiting and deliberately telling women that they cannot come to our recruitment events and go to theirs. They deliberately told the potential new members that they could not accept a bid a week later. I went to her because it was a big deal for us and she insists that our numbers need to increase. She just asked if I talked to the other chapter about it. I explained that I did so what can we do from here. I never got a response and that is a big example, but I have also been trying to get our grade report from last spring and I have even tried to ask numerous times. I have tried to ask at Panhellenic meetings and she does not show up. My chapter advisor has emailed her with no response. She had an assistant this past year who did care about us and she was so hands on and we knew we could go to her for anything. She is no longer the assistant and they are not replacing her so now we are just back to where we were and it’s like we don’t have anyone at this university that is vouching for us.

Another woman indicated a similar situation regarding the lack of support and guidance from the university:

We are not very supported here by Greek Life and kind of thrown under the bus. There was a new chapter introduced on campus two years ago I think and we were a struggling chapter on this campus. Instead of putting their efforts into us, they put all of their efforts into this new chapter. We felt very abandoned. We have been here for years and once that chapter took some of our potential new members, we definitely felt like Greek Life was not supporting us. Working now with Greek Life there have definitely been times when we need paperwork processed during informal recruitment. We are doing informal recruitment because we didn’t get to quota during formal recruitment so we need this paperwork to distribute bids and they will just ignore it and we have to hound them for it. So it is like hey we have the least amount of girls, we really need members. You need to help us! We can’t do this without you, so Greek Life I would say are not very supportive of us!

Several women discussed their experiences with their national organization or a national representative of their organization. A few participants recognized how impactful an alumnae representative from headquarters could be to their chapter, both positively and negatively. The support, or lack thereof, that chapters received from these women throughout recruitment has offered either an increased or decreased sense of efficacy.

We have an alumnae recruitment advisor and so she is the one, along with our president and preference chair, who is doing all of the behind the scenes. She is the one who will come out and give us numbers (return rates) every day and say we are doing great. She kind of gives us a pep talk each day and is just sort of like the rock for the chapter in the middle of recruitment between parties and at the end of the day.
I guess from a chapter perspective I don’t think nationally we got a lot of support in the past. Our advisors would come and tell us all of these things that we would have to do based on the rules we have for recruitment, but because we recruit a little differently than down South, or wherever they went to school. They just had no understanding of that and it has always been such a struggle for us.

As young women, potential new members as well as chapter members are seeking a learning and development process that helps to shape them as individuals. As discussed earlier in this chapter, women are looking for a positive social experience and sense of belonging by deciding to join a sorority. When reviewing the progress in the development of efficacy, verbal persuasion is found to be one factor that many people can influence throughout the sorority recruitment process. Chapters that receive information about return rates after every round of recruitment are impacted by the information they receive. A high return rate indicates that they have been successful, while a lower return rate suggests that they are not as successful. According to Bandura’s model (1997), a chapter may believe they are not successful due to repeated shortcomings in their recruitment performance. The reliance on numbers through the Release Figure Method can therefore negatively affect a chapter when a repeated failure continues to occur year after year.

A multifaceted approach to positive reinforcement throughout a formal recruitment process is essential as an optimistic social appraisal of efficacy expectancy. Chapter members who offer words of encouragement to one another help support women who may feel less confident in their performance. Fraternity/sorority life advisors need to offer support and encouragement throughout the academic year by acknowledging a chapter may need further assistance with their recruitment methods, while continuing to work with the women to improve recruitment strategies and diagnosing strengths and areas of improvement to help bolster the belief in their own ability. Fraternity/sorority life advisors should also have strong
communication with the national organization so everyone involved with the chapter is working together to support the chapter in a meaningful way. National volunteers who serve as chapter advisors should spend time getting to know the women in the chapter, as well as the culture of the Greek community on campus. In gathering this information one has a better sense of the women in the chapter and how recruitment is structured. One should also continue to offer guidance and support to the chapter throughout the academic year. Training can be offered by all parties involved to help educate members and strengthen their belief in their ability.

**Theme #5: The Psychological and Physiological Effect of Formal Recruitment on Sorority Women**

When examining the development of efficacy one tends to judge personal capabilities based on the situation one is in and individuals psychological and physiological states when working through a more challenging situation. Women may read their own physiological state in any stressful situation and then relate their symptoms to signs of vulnerability. Formal sorority recruitment can be the conduit for several different psychological and physiological reactions from chapter members as well as potential new members. In this stage one may look to alter efficacy beliefs by enhancing physical status, and reduce stress levels and negative emotional thoughts. However, the high emphasis on Release Figure Method numbers (return rates and matching to quota) can be cause for a number of negative psychological and physiological symptoms.

Participating in formal recruitment for potential new members may lead to stressful situations in a variety of ways. Women may go into recruitment thinking they need to sell themselves to each chapter participating in recruitment, but if a formal recruitment period is strictly values-based as the National Panhellenic Conference has implemented, women should be looking to join a chapter where they feel at home and feel some sort of connection to the
organization and members. One participant described her thoughts and feelings when she was a potential new member:

I just think the stress involved in being a potential new member is hard. You want everyone to like you and then if you get released from a sorority your self-esteem gets dropped because you think you had such a good conversation with them and then you are released and you are kind of like what the heck? So I feel that kind of stress is a negative. I also think recruitment favors really outgoing people, which is hard for…I was pretty quiet when I went through recruitment and I felt like I was awkward. People who were super outgoing thrived and I thought it was a disadvantage.

Another participant shared her thoughts about how she felt going into recruitment as a potential new member and how her perspective changed throughout the process:

Being from here and having such a strong, big group of girls go through recruitment there was this huge—we all followed the stereotypes. This chapter has this stereotype and this chapter has this stereotype. There are the chapters you should go to so I was telling everyone that I had an open mind and I thought I had an open mind, but whenever I went through the process and got released from a certain chapter, I realized I didn’t have an open mind. I cried a lot during recruitment because I didn’t get a house and at that moment I thought it was the end of the world. The actual process of going through recruitment and being a PNM was one of the worst weeks of my life. I hated every moment of it just because you want to—I thought my worth would be in those houses and that people told me I should be there. Now looking back I know that was stupid but it was like the expectation that everyone thinks in a certain way and you want to go with the crowd because you want to be accepted. That sounds negative, but I have found PNMs that go through they think the same thing. I don’t want to be in that house because of XYZ and now I’m on the other side of that and I know people in those houses and I wish I would have known that about those houses because I would have given them a better chance.

One woman indicated how stressful going through formal recruitment was and how anxious the decision making process made her feel:

When I was a PNM I went through formal recruitment and I was like oh my God this is so stressful. Coming there every morning being like who did I get called back to and who didn’t I get called back to? A lot of girls have anxiety and I feel like a lot of the times you are pressured to make such a rash decision (to select chapters) so quickly and we don’t really have a lot of time You could say oh we have all the time in the world, but by the end of the night we have to get those lists in. You can’t go home and think about it. You made your decision and that was it!
One participant shared her experience with being released as a potential new member and how it impacted her:

From a PNM point of view on the second day out of our whole friend group, I was the only one who got what I wanted back and everyone else was really upset because they didn’t get them. The third day I was released from every other house that I wanted and the last two days of recruitment I had to go to two houses that I did not like at all. I stuck through it, but the release part of it ruined my experience even though the first two days I was on such a high. I felt that someone else’s perspective measured my worth and where I fell on a list, but people are still saying they don’t want you.

Another women shared a similar experience as a chapter member:

On the negative side because of the sidewalk talk and sometimes you even hear what other sororities have to say about you when they think you aren’t listening. I know there were times when people walked into the bathroom and then you hear something negative being said about your chapter. You start thinking that you’re not worth this much and your chapter isn’t worth this much, even though we are all founded on different things.

There is also a good amount of stress put onto chapter members and chapter leadership throughout a formal recruitment process. Not only do the women in the chapter practice correct recruitment routines, but they also plan for elaborate decorations and attire for each day of recruitment events. Women from high and low recruiting strength chapters tend to stress about several elements of the recruitment process. A few women shared what they were thinking about while participating in recruitment as a chapter member:

I think for me the most nerve wracking thing wasn’t even having the conversation with the potential new member, but just doing the chants beforehand and then leading her to the table correctly. The logistics of doing everything is what made me the most nervous about not messing up, not tripping, not bringing her to the wrong place or picking up the wrong girl at the door.

And it is just different for everybody, whether you are the person in charge of it or you are the person behind the scenes. Whether you are one of the chapter members talking to a girl or whether you are a recruitment counselor outside the door. There are so many different little things and you are constantly thinking every little thing that you have to think about while basically trying to focus on this girl and then you may end up forgetting her name. She may walk out the door with a cup but it is bound to happen to one person every single round basically.
I think the most nervous part for me was the rotation. I was so nervous that I was going to mess it up and mess up everyone. It wasn’t even the one on one conversations. I think I was talking the whole time, but I was like where do I go next? Oh cool, where do I go next? For the first like maybe 25 minutes of the day I just was all I don’t want to mess up, especially for the seniors. I didn’t want them to be like oh this freshman is messing up our rotation, which they’re not like that but I just didn’t want to let them down and so I think that is the most nerve wracking part of the day was that I didn’t want to mess up the rotation for everybody.

From my experience if I’m nervous or anxious about something then I’m not putting my best self forward. So if I’m scared during recruitment that means I’m not presenting myself in the best way or even in the truest form I guess. So that is not going to be a good reflection of the chapter. So if we go in with these scared, nervous feelings maybe we are going to attract women who might not exactly be in line with out values. So I feel just those anxious feelings can have an impact on recruitment.

Women also discussed how knowing return rates and how many women are needed to match to quota is an additional layer of stress for chapter members and the chapter leadership:

I feel like a lot of girls just see the numbers and get stressed. They know how to have a conversation. They know how to recruit girls. They know exactly what they are doing, but they put so much pressure on themselves and they get stressed and they don’t know what to do anymore. It is just a panic the entire weekend. If they weren’t stressed and were exactly themselves, then we would be golden in my opinion!

I know during a brief period of time we were able to fall recruit and we were given a specific number that we had to get to, but it was very stressful at the time for our recruitment chair. We were like how do we find these specific people because we are used to spring formal recruitment. For the formal part of it, it is also stressful to get to meet quota because you need these numbers but then if you don’t meet our requirements or won’t be good members or things of that nature, then why would we take people just for numbers? Like why quantity over quality?

Chapters with a lower recruiting strength focused on being expected to get to a certain number to match to quota and what has occurred for them throughout a recruitment process:

I think it is very stressful because it is easy to think about our success on bid day as solely numbers based, but when we could have fifty girls that just kind of maybe show up to some things and aren’t very involved or we could get thirty girls that are super involved and a really good group of leaders. I think it is very stressful to think we need to get to X number of girls.

Genuinely I left recruitment feeling like crap! We shouldn’t even be on this campus because we are not hitting these numbers that everyone else is and everyone else wants us
to be. Like I said I saw the amount of girls that picked up first and the amount of girls who wanted us versus who didn’t and it is disheartening. If everyone gave all of the chapters a chance, then yeah you might want this one house but if you just came in and put on a smile in another house, you never know what can happen so it definitely leaves your self-confidence in the trashcan!

The emotional toll of continuing to invite back and recruit women who would prefer to be elsewhere was another large area of concentration for participants:

Every single girl that I really liked would have an awesome conversation with me for the whole party. We would have a phenomenal conversation the whole time. It would be like 45 minutes non-stop. When she came back on preference day she told me that she didn’t want to be here and was this very different person. I was very upset and then I had to talk to her for another 45 minutes where she is this horrible, rude person to me. It is just making a human connection with someone. I just don’t understand why people have to make it personal every time they come to us.

I think the second they (chapter members) hear I found my home somewhere else, it is like immediate shutdown and then we lose the chance to get them when they may not get their first choice. I mean I know it’s hard to hear six times a day, ‘I found my home somewhere else. I don’t like it here!’ It does eventually hit you, but I think we take too much to heart.

It is really frustrating and it feels very, very personal like with the girls who was crying. She was like stop bringing me back here and that day she got released from recruitment. I think she would have been an awesome member if she would have stayed and made connections. She could have been an awesome leader in our chapter, but she would rather entirely not be a part of a Greek organization than join us. That is what they told us about people who didn’t come to bid day. That is what hurt me the most.

I have seen sisters on bid day who are really upset to the point where they throw up because they talked to girls back to back that have said ‘I don’t want this house. I don’t want y’all. What don’t you understand’. For them to be like just stop. Stop inviting me back. For them to think that it is better not to be in a sorority than in this one. It is hard to hear over and over again and to not question what is wrong with us? If I’m here, what is wrong with me? When you go back and are getting ready for the next party and people are crying because I just saw someone who I thought would be great here and they said they don’t want to be here. Some people would be sobbing and it seems so ridiculous and so cliché to be crying over a girl going to a different house, but it is just the whole personal attack that comes with it. Then you have to go back to your house for bid day and act happy.

Next, two participants also addressed what they perceive is the aftermath they need to deal with once recruitment and bid day is over:
It is definitely kind of embarrassing to go back to class with all of the other Greek women that you have been talking with from the beginning of the semester. You have been talking to them and they are kind of like oh yeah we are so excited for recruitment. Each day you see one another in class and you’re like we are ready for bid day. We are ready to get all of our new sisters and they know they are going to meet campus total and we are always like we are going to do it this year (meet total). Then to come back and be asked before while I’m clearly upset ‘so what was the exact number of girls that you got on bid day?’

And then when you try to answer it just seems like more unnecessary cattiness and pettiness and then it is like a competition. Again, we are not on that level. We are on our own playing field right now. We will eventually get there but if you keep putting us up there with people that we are not on the same level with of course I’m going to feel like crap going to class the next day. I’m not going to want to go and instead I want to skip because I don’t want to see them, but if I skip they are going to be like well this and this must have happened. It just brings back high school feelings and the whole rejection feeling comes back from the first time you went through recruitment.

Interestingly, a final point made by chapters was how the Release Figure Method impacts potential new members as they are going into preference round. A high recruiting strength chapter shared a few perspectives:

I feel like it almost makes it less personal too and like I mentioned before with quota-I really believe quota is doing a disservice to sororities because like if you notice, at least in my chapter and I can’t really vouch for other chapters, disaffiliation rates really started going up as soon as we started implementing this new system. It really disconnects with our roots. It focuses on getting girls but not really connecting with girls who have the same values as we have and it makes it more robotic.

It could also be unfair to the potential new members because some people get put into organizations that they don’t want to be in and they’re like well now I’m unhappy in this organization and I’m like in it so I can’t drop it and go to a new one unless its before initiation, so I feel like its also negative for them too in a way.

It almost feels like we are forced to release women just because our return rate is higher, but I feel like we should be able to keep certain girls if we like them and they want us. Otherwise you have girls that end up going to a house where they were at the bottom of their bid list and they end up being unhappy there. If it is truly mutual selection let us play that out instead of just telling us how many women we can invite back after each round.
A lower recruiting strength chapter shared some similar thoughts about the chapter being
required to invite everyone back instead of being able to release women that they don’t want
to invite back or who may have already made up their mind about where they want to go:

It is like we are back where we started. If we could have released that 20% of girls going
through recruitment, we wouldn’t have had those girls that were iffy and then dropped
anyway. After the first two days they only have two or three parties, where we are still
having six or seven, so to me, Panhellenic, and I hate to go there but it honestly feels
personal. They are like this chapter already doesn’t have their numbers up anyway so they
wouldn’t mind the extra people in their parties.

We could have given out bids to women who we could have kept around. We can give
out as many bids as we want but if they fall higher on someone else’s bid list, we can’t do
anything about it, but the girls that we can do something about we can no longer take
because we had to take these other women who have no other houses and they just fall
on our list because of that. Every other chapter is as selective as they want to be.
Panhellenic covers it up by saying we are doing you a favor by giving you these extra
parties instead of us having the same amount of parties as everyone else, but we have to
pick up two women at the door instead of one. They give us extra parties through the day
to like spread out the potential new members and they act like that is a favor to us so we
shouldn’t be complaining about it.

Everybody basically has our chapter on preference day and the one that they actually
want and it isn’t good because if they don’t get the bid to the sorority that they want, they
are not going to accept a bid from us. We can only snap bid the people who dropped out
of recruitment and those women never accept a snap bid from us. Then if we want to snap
bid a girl who didn’t get a bid from the chapter she wanted – it is generally the top
chapter that she is die hard for. She got stuck with us after the second party.

These examples directly correlate to Gilligan’s Level III, where decision-making is taken away
from women as they are progressing through each round of recruitment. High recruiting strength
chapter and low recruiting strength chapter both explained how they feel about their decisions
being taken away from them when a numbers based formula is utilized in a formal recruitment
process.

Based on what participants shared throughout the focus group interviews it seems as
though using the Release Figure Method during a formal sorority recruitment process causes
significant decrease in efficacy levels for both potential new members and chapter members.
Many women shared how negatively they have been affected by the stress of recruitment and the psychological and physiological states they find themselves in before, during, and after formal sorority recruitment. Even as potential new members women are faced with questioning their self-worth, being disappointed or let down by the mutual selection process, feeling forced to attend events with chapters they may not be interested in, and the possibility of being placed in a chapter where they may not feel comfortable. If they are looking for a sense of belonging within a group of women that offers support and encouragement, further examination on use of the Release Figure Method during a formal recruitment process seems necessary.

**Theme #6: The Impact of the Lack of Collective Efficacy on Performance**

The term collective efficacy can be defined as a group’s shared beliefs in its combined capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment (Bandura, 1997). Individual self-efficacy is crucial for a collective group of people to come together and use their positive capabilities to the best collective use. As Bandura (1997) noted, each member of the group is loyal to one another and the goal the group is working to attain by creating strong personal obligations to contribute to group accomplishments. Individual members of the group depend on one another in performing tasks by interdependence of tasks, skills, and roles. Group members must coordinate what they are doing individually with the work of others and they are also affected by the beliefs, motivation, and quality of performance of other group members. The belief of collective efficacy affects the sense of mission and purpose of a system, the strength of common commitment to what it seeks to achieve, how well its members work together to produce results, and the group’s resiliency in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1997).
Many tasks are associated with sorority life and the collective effort is often what helps to make exceptional things occur. The recruitment process is probably one of the largest, most in-depth tasks associated with sorority life. When a chapter comes together and depends on their relationships with one another to complete a variety of tasks, a positive collective action and outcome may occur. The role of enactive mastery or performance accomplishments is essential in order for a group to develop collective efficacy. The positive feedback received by a group on their performance during formal sorority recruitment leads to stronger efficacy beliefs, which in turn lead to greater success (Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

Where several women described their experiences receiving low return rates throughout the formal sorority recruitment process, several women also explained how important it is for the chapter members to all know and understand what their overall goal was. One participant shared how important a common goal was:

Also I tried to make teambuilding sort of a thing before recruitment so that you feel closer as a chapter before you start recruiting new members. It is really important to be on the same page before you start taking new women in because if you are not on the same page then you are not going to get a solid new member class with the same people that everyone wants. You want to recruit good members and make sure we know who we all want in the chapter for the future, going forward.

One woman explained the pressure she felt during the first time she was participating in recruitment as a chapter member:

I think for my chapter, like my chapter is a little unique from everyone else-not in a good or bad way. We have always been on the smaller side and always kind of…When I was a sophomore part of what made me so anxious about recruitment was that there was like this huge pressure because we were going to lose all of these seniors and we needed to like replace them. I felt like we needed to recruit so many girls and it wasn’t like we were going to do great in recruitment because we are so prepared and ready to do this. It was like we have to do good in recruitment. We have prepared you how we think you should be prepared but I never felt like they really cared, like genuinely really cared about individual girls being confident going into recruitment. It was just like this big push and pressure to recruit a lot of girls and I don’t think that really helped our group recruit well.
One participant from a high recruiting strength chapter explained how an individual woman may feel when a potential new member that she believes would be a good addition to the chapter does not accept an invitation to the next round of recruitment:

I feel like the moment that people start to falter as far as their confidence goes and maybe how the chapter and maybe personally how we are doing in recruitment. A lot of times there is a person who they feel would fit well in the chapter. Their values align with ours, but they don’t come back to our room the next day. It was known that they were placed high on our list. I feel like that is when a lot of people start to doubt our ability in recruitment. That is when we will be like well this girl didn’t come back so we are doing terribly, but we are really not!

However, a few women also shared their feelings on chapters matching to quota and the effect it can have on chapter members, as well as potential new members:

If we were in a sorority and we didn’t meet quota, I don’t want to have someone’s, not leftovers, but the girls that we wanted but they didn’t want us. I mean if they get the bid and they reject it automatically, so what is the point? I think you want the most girls involved in the Greek community but when you give them the house that they don’t want so that chapter meets quota, that is where I think they are going in the wrong direction because those girls aren’t going to accept that bid and then you have less girls in the Greek community.

And I think a problem, or this is just me being a future thinker or thinking about things too much. It’s like you want more people but you don’t want to bring more in just for bodies. You actually want to be bringing people in who represent your values and that can be kind of hard. I imagine it can be stressful for you guys wanting to get more people but not wanting to get people that don’t represent us.

I know that we had like a little bit of hard feelings because like sometimes it just feels like we are not getting a reflective, like all of the chapters, we are not getting a reflective number of how many women we should give a bid to. We are a larger chapter and we will get the same amount of women as a smaller chapter on campus and I know that causes people to get upset just because we end up cutting women that we really wanted just because it should be an equal kind of thing.

We had a headquarters guest come. If it weren’t for her, we would probably have no clue how it worked. We definitely keep our chapter in the dark when it comes to specific numbers. This year we actually told them all after recruitment was over. So we try to keep the morale up while recruitment is going on. We don’t dip off at the end because our return rate isn’t that great but this year we told them we had a 39% return figure or return percent. When it comes to RFM that is the one where we have to invite back so many girls. We always have like 100% to invite back. They tell us we have to invite back every
single girl. Our Panhellenic says that you should have 100% invited back so to us that feels like we can’t choose the women we want.

All of these examples provide insight as to how pressure and doubts may lead to a decreased level of self-efficacy. Women are also being told what their recruitment goals should be instead of a chapter evaluating what their own goal may be. If individual women are doubting their own ability to recruit, then they are not able to work towards a collective goal during formal sorority recruitment. They lose confidence in themselves and may negatively affect other women in the chapter when they are all supposed to be working interdependently toward a successful recruitment period.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

These findings give powerful insight for those who work with sorority women and emphasize the need to evaluate the use of the Release Figure Method and its effects on self and collective efficacy for potential new members and chapter members. Several questions were raised by the data regarding the ways sororities recruit women. Do sororities offer the experiences that women are expecting coming into formal sorority recruitment? Are we educating our women in a way that helps to build self and collective efficacy? Do older chapter members and alumnae serve as mentors to younger collegian women? Does utilizing the Release Figure Method increase or decrease feelings of self and collective efficacy in sorority women? Can programs be developed to help the sorority women understand their development of self and collective efficacy? To examine the questions raised by this research, a summary of the study, discussion of the conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations for future research are discussed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation focused on the impact of formal sorority recruitment on the development of self and collective efficacy, with specific concentration on the use of the Release Figure Method in a formal recruitment process. I studied undergraduate sorority women and their experiences with formal sorority recruitment as it relates to their feelings of self-efficacy and the progression toward efficacy expectancy. I explored sorority women and their experiences with formal sorority recruitment through a detailed analysis of their stories in their own words. This final chapter begins with the summary of the study, discussion of the common themes that emerged during the cross-case and within case analysis, and relates these themes to the current body of literature pertinent to this study. The analysis is followed by recommendations for future research and conclusions.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The participants for this study were sorority women who serve as Executive Board members of their chapter or College Panhellenic Council at four-year colleges and universities within the United States. I collected data via focus group interviews. I conducted fifteen focus group interviews on three different campuses. The campuses selected for the study were from various parts of the United States. I interviewed a total of seventy-five sorority women. The campuses were chosen based the type of institution (public, private, and religiously affiliated), the size of the institution (large or small), the type of sorority community that was on campus, and my ability as the researcher to travel to that institution. The same questions were used for all focus group interviews. The focus groups were comprised of three to nine sorority women who serve as chapter leadership either from the same chapter or different chapter (College Panhellenic Council members) on the same campus. The chapters selected to participate in this study were
from the top two recruiting strength chapters and the bottom two recruiting strength chapters on each campus. The women were asked to volunteer to participate in the study by a chapter officer, the fraternity/sorority life advisor, or me. This study included one public, one private, and one religiously affiliated institution with enrollments ranging from 8,000 to 19,300 undergraduate and graduate students. Chapter sizes ranged in membership from 30 members to 170 members. Some participants lived in sorority facilities such as houses or in campus residence halls, and others were commuter students. I planned interviews with this criteria established in order to include a wide range of sorority experiences. The criteria included sorority women from various size campuses and different parts of the country, various chapter sizes, various national organization sizes, as well as residential and commuter campuses. Some of the chapters were older, more established and traditional chapters, while some were still emerging and growing on their campus. Some chapters were part of large national/international sororities, while others were a part of smaller national/international sororities. The sorority women who participated in the focus group interviews were members who held Executive Board leadership positions for each chapter or College Panhellenic Council and ranged from sophomore to senior year status. Some were older, more experienced leaders while others were younger leaders in the chapter.

DISCUSSION OF COMMON THEMES

In this section, I present and discuss the findings that appeared to be significant to my study. In structuring this section, the major themes the participants identified when discussing their experiences during formal sorority recruitment and its effect on the development of self and collective efficacy are: (a) expectations of the sorority experience, (b) efficacy expectations for formal sorority recruitment, (c) recruitment education of sorority women, (d) positive role modeling relationships, (e) the role of positive reinforcement in formal sorority recruitment, (f)
the psychological and physiological effects of formal recruitment on sorority women, and (g) the impact of the lack of collective efficacy on performance.

**Expectations of the Sorority Experience**

The first major theme captured the participants’ perception regarding expectations of potential new members regarding the sorority experience. Several components emerged in the participants’ feelings about what they are looking for within not only the formal recruitment process, but also sorority membership overall. Women were looking for a sense of belonging within an established community. Once a woman receives an invitation to membership she begins to feel as though she belongs to a community and therefore has increased feelings of efficacy due to her success throughout the recruitment process. As the first research question inquires, participation in the formal sorority recruitment process may impact the participants’ feelings of self-efficacy.

Although many were aware of the negative stories presented by the media, they still wanted to belong and placed a high value on becoming a member of a National Panhellenic Conference organization on their campus. They indicated that a feeling of connectedness would lead to an enhanced social experience as described by Cohen, et al (2017). Many women shared that the influence of those they surrounded themselves with often led them to make the decision about going through formal sorority recruitment.

**Recruitment Education for Sorority Women**

The second theme that emerged from participants was that a recruitment education model that relies on differentiated instruction may be one of the most useful tools when provided by their national organizations. Differentiated instruction was important because several women shared how they did not feel fully trained or prepared for their participation in recruitment the
first time as a chapter member. Many chapters prepared their own training curriculum instead of being given specific training topics to facilitate. The one organization with a recruitment chair that felt fully prepared to teach the chapter on recruitment methods received a full recruitment training program from her national organization. All other organizations had their recruitment chair produce their own training curriculum and found that it was often focused on one or two areas, when most women felt like they needed a more robust training experience to feel more prepared and comfortable for formal recruitment.

Furthermore, several women spoke about how their recruitment workshops caused more stress and anxiety instead of alleviating any of those feelings. Here the environment created during recruitment workshops resulted in feelings of anxiety, which led to behavior that impacted individual members as Bandura (1997) originally stated. Participants also discussed the importance of having older chapter members and local alumnae help to lead and facilitate some recruitment training areas in order to gain a broader perspective. This can also lead to a deeper level of connectedness as Gilligan (1982) discussed how women move into Level II: Goodness to Self-Sacrifice. They felt that older chapter members and alumnae are more respected by chapter members and would be able to offer years of experience and enhanced knowledge about how important recruitment is for the chapter.

Most, if not all women explained how recruitment success is measured by a high return rate and matching to quota. All participating chapters described this standard. They described their feelings on success and the level of efficacy expectancy it brings. Bandura (1997) described that a sense of self-efficacy is developed through mastery experiences that involve acquiring the cognitive, behavioral, and self-regulatory behaviors to manage ever-changing life circumstances. If sorority women are concentrating on numbers to gauge their successes, then an evaluation of
success needs to be explored. The pattern of successes or failures throughout a formal sorority recruitment process helps to determine potential increase or decrease of feelings and thoughts of self and collective efficacy levels. A lower recruiting chapter stressed the fact that they continue to feel as though they are not as successful during recruitment because a lower return rate (less than 70%) is not seen as a success. There was one woman who even described how a different chapter member apologized to her for her chapter’s low return rate. While a high recruiting strength chapter continues to feel successful because they consistently get a higher return rate and explained that this helps to improve their overall efficacy levels round after round, and year after year. This theme answers the second research question in relation to formal sorority recruitment efficacy expectancy influences the development of self and collective efficacy.

**Positive Role Modeling Relationships**

Another set of themes that emerged throughout the focus group interviews were the unnecessary comparison that occurs between sororities and the importance of positive role modeling behaviors for younger women in a chapter. All lower recruiting strength chapters discussed how judged they felt by other sororities and students throughout campus. A negative judgment causes women to automatically feel as though they are being compared to other sorority women on campus and leads to a decreased feeling of efficacy. The comparison of numbers occurs every year after formal recruitment. Chapters with a lower number of women in the chapter overall often gets the reputation of not being successful during a formal recruitment process and on a lower tier than other sororities.

This tier system often becomes a socially constructed system with a separation between high recruiting strength chapter and low recruiting strength chapters. Women tend to appraise their personal capabilities in relation to the attainments of others and social comparison operates
as a primary factor in one’s self-appraisal of capabilities (Bandura, 1997). The lower recruiting strength chapter feels as though they can never overcome this reputation because they cannot catch up numbers wise within a formal recruitment process. This provides an answer to the first research question indicating that participation in formal sorority recruitment can positively or negatively effect feelings of self and collective efficacy. Therefore, as Bandura (1997) explained, a chapter who may be looking towards a proficient recruitment model may quickly lose their way by focusing solely on a number of women they need to recruit in order to be competitive with other groups on campus.

The negative talk about certain sororities often spreads to potential new members who are seeking membership into a sorority. Some women described their experience as a potential new member and how several women they went through the process with came in with preconceived notions about certain organizations before attending recruitment rounds. Women who did not get an invitation to membership of the chapter they wanted withdrawing ultimately from recruitment altogether because they would rather not be a member of any chapter than to become a member of a chapter with a poor reputation.

Several participants brought up the fact that they are looking for a supportive environment within their sorority experience. Several felt as though they received that throughout the formal recruitment process and they wanted more of it, so they were excited to seek more connections with other women in the chapter. They were looking for women who would lead them in a positive direction, serve as a role model or mentor, and help provide a good experience for them throughout their collegiate years. Again, “in aspirational modeling, people actively select proficient models from whom they can learn what they aspire to become” (Bandura, 1997, p. 101). A few women indicated that their big sister in the chapter helped to provide a solid
mentoring relationship in which a full explanation of membership expectations was given, appropriate direction and support was maintained, and stressed the importance of role modeling good behavior as an individual chapter member and for the chapter overall.

**The Role of Positive Reinforcement in Formal Sorority Recruitment**

As stated previously a high performing chapter will always feel good about their recruitment performance because of the high return rate they receive after each round of recruitment. Conversely a low performing chapter has a decreased sense of efficacy due to their lower return rate after each round of recruitment. Several women indicated that fraternity/sorority life advisors and national chapter advisors are essential to help make chapters feel more successful throughout a formal recruitment process. They explained the positive reinforcement received by their advisors help them evaluate their performance a little differently and they tend to feel more confident going into the next round of recruitment. As Bandura (1997) noted, people who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given tasks are likely to mobilize great effort to sustain that effort, rather than harboring self-doubts and dwelling on personal deficiencies when difficulties arise.

Conversely, several participants indicated their definition of success, or lack thereof, is oftentimes based on how they are treated by their fraternity/sorority advisor or chapter advisors. For chapters that explained their negative relationship with any advisor tends to cause them to feel defeated and almost like they have no one to turn to for reassurance or assistance with anything related to their organization’s success, including formal recruitment. A few women explained how the negative relationship with their fraternity/sorority advisor impacts the morale of the chapter. The second research question is answered within this study, as positive
reinforcement directly impacts feelings of self and collective efficacy for chapter members participating in formal sorority recruitment process.

One participant shared how her chapter advisor never really got to know the chapter or the Greek community on campus, which led to very different views on how to appropriately facilitate recruitment. She felt as though the chapter advisor was encouraging the women in the chapter to be something they were not and that left them feeling more at a disadvantage because they felt no one believed in them and the message they wanted to communicate during a formal recruitment process. Advisors have the ability to truly offer unique guidance and support to collegiate sorority women. Bandura’s (1997) verbal persuasion can take several forms for fraternity/sorority and chapter advisors. Women should be encouraged before, during, and after the recruitment process in order to assist in strengthening their ability to achieve success. Advisors may help to develop skills that would prove useful for members to utilize throughout formal recruitment. Assisting members to explore their experiences as sorority women and the value of their membership may help to strengthen the belief in their ability to communicate.

The Psychological and Physiological Effect of Formal Recruitment on Sorority Women

The fifth theme that emerged was perhaps the most interesting due to the extent that women shared how much their participation in formal recruitment damaged their feelings of efficacy and caused high levels of stress and anxiety. Bandura (1991) stated the fourth major way of altering efficacy beliefs is to enhance physical status, reduce stress levels and negative emotional proclivities, and correct misinterpretations of bodily states. Information shared during most focus group interviews indicated that the use of the Release Figure Method during formal sorority recruitment leads to the opposite effect and therefore decreases feelings of efficacy. This theme provides an answer to both research questions by explaining how potential new members
participating in formal sorority recruitment can impact feelings of self-efficacy, while also indicating how efficacy expectancy can influence the development of self and collective efficacy.

First, women shared that a repeatedly practiced routine causes stress for them because they do not want to mess up or miss anything during a round. They spend more time worrying about what comes next for them, rather than really trying to get to know the potential new member with whom they are speaking. This emphasis on logistics rather than conversation can lead to being unaware of how a woman may fit with the chapter or if she upholds the same values as the chapter.

Women from high and low recruiting strength chapters spoke strongly against using the Release Figure Method for a variety of reasons. Most participants stressed the fact that knowing return rates after each round caused an additional layer of stress which led to high anxiety. The level of anxiety for recruitment chairs specifically was so high they felt as though they were going to be sick. When a lower return rate was shared women felt as though they had failed as individual members and as a chapter. Anxiety levels were then at an all-time high level when the chapter would meet to discuss inviting back potential new members, so much so that women became easily annoyed and fought with one another during these conversations.

Several participants shared their thoughts on how the Release Figure Method impacts morale for all chapters participating in formal recruitment. The women from high recruiting strength chapters felt as though they were being forced to release women they did not want to release just so lower recruiting strength chapters would potentially match to quota. Women indicated that they knew potential new members wanted to be a member of their chapter, but that choice was taken away from them as well because a number dictated release figures. These high recruiting chapters felt as though their membership decisions were being sacrificed as a means to
ensure lower recruiting strength chapters would get higher numbers and be seen as more successful.

On the opposite side, participants from lower recruiting strength chapters feel as though their membership decisions are being left to a numbers only method, instead of any consideration being given to how the chapter may feel about their potential new members. They see this as a deterrent for women as they make their decisions after each recruitment round. Therefore a potential new member may want to attend recruitment events with certain chapters, but they are forced to attend recruitment events for chapters for which they are no longer interested or desire. The lower recruiting strength chapter has a higher number of potential new members to invite back after each round, which leaves them feeling as though they are being forced to take everyone even if they don’t match with that chapter and chapter morale decreases. Women were also very vocal about how taking everyone that they are told to take leads to a good portion of women dropping their new member status since they didn’t want to be there in the first place. Chapters who find themselves in this position explained they would rather have a lower amount of women in the chapter instead of forcing women to join them that don’t actually want to be there.

**The Impact of the Lack of Collective Efficacy on Performance**

Finally, the last theme uncovered throughout the focus group interviews was how the lack of collective efficacy can impact performance during a formal sorority recruitment process. Throughout all of my interviews women continued to stress the importance of a successful recruitment. They defined successful performance in recruitment as a number—a high number was good and a low number was bad. Several women explained that setting and sharing a common goal is important so everyone knows what they are working towards. Members of the chapter
must perform their tasks interdependently and should also manage the instructional, motivational, interpersonal, and operational aspects of their work. Without this common goal there is no consistency, no interdependence on one another to complete the task, no common commitment to achieve success, and no resiliency in the face of difficulties. The absence of all of these things do not produce collective efficacy in order to perform well during a formal recruitment process.

If members of a chapter do not have a common goal then members have nothing to collectively work towards or strive for. The National Panhellenic Conference has endorsed the use of the Release Figure Method, which relies solely on numbers (quantity), with no consideration given to organization’s values, standards, mission or purpose or the potential new member that may share any of those beliefs (quality). A chapter who does not recruit women who share the same ideals and values may then be operating in a system where the original intent of sorority has been forgotten. As chapters welcome women into their organizations that are supposed to encourage and support them, but we purposefully invite them or release them within a formal sorority recruitment process due to a number that has been decreed upon them by a National Panhellenic Conference Release Figure Method Specialist, then it seems as though organizations are more concerned with getting to a certain number. Throughout my focus groups many women felt as though numbers determined their success or failure during a formal sorority recruitment process. If this is the case, we have completely altered our founders’ original purpose of providing a community of women who offer a sense of belonging, a set of shared values, while supporting and encouraging one another.

As organizations that were originally founded to offer support and encouragement to one another, the Release Figure Method and its impact on individual women and the full chapter seems to negate the true purpose of our organizations. The negative thoughts and feelings
individual women shared throughout my focus group interviews indicate that the utilization of the Release Figure Method during a formal recruitment process goes against the development of self and collective efficacy. As Gist & Mitchell (1992) explained, mastery experiences build through a series of performance episodes defined, as a distinguishable period of time over which performance accrues and feedback is available. The relationship between past performance and collective efficacy is recursive – the receipt of positive feedback on challenging tasks leads to stronger efficacy beliefs, which in turn lead to greater success. Therefore I believe the second research question is answered as participants indicated the use of the Release Figure Method during a formal sorority recruitment process goes against the original intent of sororities and significantly decreases efficacy levels for individual members and the collective chapter.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE**

The major implication for this research is the lack of prior studies concerning the exploration of formal sorority recruitment methods and the ability to generalize these findings for all National Panhellenic Conference member organizations. With this in mind, it may be that sorority women need to be educated further about the history of sororities, why they came to be, and the original purpose of them. Another aspect that may strengthen the sorority women’s understanding of recruitment may be for inter/national sororities to develop and implement a guided recruitment training or workshop that would address recruitment methods that begin to purposefully acknowledge increased level of efficacy.

**Undergraduate Sorority Women**

Evidence in this study suggested that sorority women understand the importance of recruitment, but do not fully understand how formal recruitment works, specifically how the Release Figure Method is implemented currently. The implementation of facilitated recruitment
workshops by alumnae and national officers of the organization can help to provide context to recruitment methods for the chapter. The workshops would stress the importance of the sorority’s mission and purpose, facilitate conversations so women can increase levels of self-efficacy, create recruitment goals based on criteria others than quantity, and develop and initiate tasks associated with participation in a formal recruitment setting. Time should be spent developing a stronger sense of sisterhood within the chapter and between individual members, so women are feeling comfortable and confident in their roles and the roles of their sisters within the chapter during a formalized recruitment period.

Undergraduate sorority women need to understand reasons for potential changes in their traditional and familiar recruitment methods. Examining formal recruitment methods (Release Figure Method) through an efficacy lens opens up various ways to consider how to implement an effective recruitment efficacy model. If recruitment efficacy is defined as chapters’ belief in their capability to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainment, then consideration must be given to innovative and appropriate methods to achieve recruitment success. These methods would then allow chapter members to better understand how they should expect their sorority experience to be enhanced by the original intent of sorority life and develop deeper connections to other members of their chapter, as well as the sorority itself.

**Fraternity/Sorority Life Advisors**

The shared experiences of participants in this study regarding relationships and communication between chapter members and fraternity/sorority life advisors indicate a need for a more structured interaction between these parties. Women are seeking ways to enhance the recruitment experience for potential new members and chapter members. The amount of time and effort needed by fraternity/sorority life advisors to actually support, encourage, and guide a
number of Greek-letter organizations on their campus should be recognized and appreciated. Additional financial, time, and personal resources are needed in order for a fraternity/sorority life advisor to successfully manage these organizations. This may include resources such as videos, written information, and educational speakers and programs that educate sorority women how to facilitate discussion on formal sorority recruitment methods.

In addition, fraternity/sorority life advisors need to fully examine the culture of the Greek community on their campus. Difficult decisions may have to be made, but as an advisor and/or a fraternity man or sorority woman, one must continue to strive to uphold the original intent of sororities, the values and standards of each organization, and purposefully encourage all chapter members. Failure to do so may result in the deterioration of the Greek community on that campus.

Should any negative situations occur with a sorority on a campus, the fraternity/sorority life advisor should immediately be in conversation with the headquarters staff for that national organization. If a chapter is struggling in the area of recruitment, both parties should develop a detailed plan for improvement. Providing support and an opportunity for dialogue may be all that a chapter needs to open these recruitment based discussions.

**Sorority Chapter Advisors and Alumnae**

Similar to undergraduate sorority women, chapter advisors and alumnae should consider creating opportunities for undergraduate members to form relationships with them. This would allow the undergraduate sorority women to better understand how to live the organization’s shared values and reaffirm the lifetime commitment to their sorority. These opportunities can be in a formal or informal setting and allow the chapter members to ask questions of the advisors and alumnae why they have remained committed to their sorority. There could be open dialogue
about recruitment methods and how to build levels of efficacy throughout the sorority experience. This also provides a great awareness for chapter advisors and alumnae to understand the importance of their role in educating undergraduate sorority women.

Chapter advisors and alumnae also have a responsibility to take time to really understand the chapter and campus culture, specifically regarding formal recruitment process. This allows chapter members to see advisors and alumnae are interested in learning in order to best advise the chapter. With additional knowledge, advisors and alumnae have the ability to tailor their advising methods to best suit the chapter they are working with, specifically if given the tools to understand and initiate the development of self and collective efficacy levels. If advisors are able to build and expand on the concept of efficacy throughout one’s sorority experience, more sorority women will have a strong belief in their own ability to complete given attainments during college and beyond.

**Inter/national Sororities**

As explained above, it is imperative for the volunteers and staff of inter/national sororities to be in regular contact with the fraternity/sorority life advisors on campuses where their organization has been established. This will help to make the chapter aware that there is an established working relationship between the two parties, who are working together for the best interest of the chapter. Most, if not all, participants expressed their concerns with how a formal recruitment process occurs currently. Inter/national sororities have an obligation to study the concerns of undergraduate sorority women in order to provide the best sorority experience for all members. This can be accomplished by redirecting the focus of recruitment from a numbers based model (quantity) to a more values based approach (quality), which would assist in
establishing a more positive recruitment experience for potential new members, individual chapter members, and the collective chapter.

If inter/national sororities are intentional about the growth and development of their members, exploring the tasks of a collegiate experience through an efficacy lens could re-establish sorority life as originally intended by our founders. As alumnae volunteers and headquarters staff there is a responsibility to create a sense of belonging, establish a feeling of support and encouragement, and initiate opportunities to develop deeper relationships based on a set of common values within all of the chapters, as well as within the organization as a whole. Inter/national sororities could develop and implement new recruitment methods and models focused specifically on efficacy expectancy levels. Based on the *Conceptual Model of Sorority Recruitment Efficacy* (Figure 2.2) described in Chapter II, inter/national sororities could establish a revised training, recruitment method, and evaluation process in order to offer increased awareness of chapter strengths and areas of improvement.

As a means to provide additional learning opportunities, inter/national sororities could also expand the idea of efficacy expectancy to other tasks associated with the sorority experience. This would enhance not only the collegiate experience for sorority women, but also establish greater levels of self and collective efficacy after graduation.

**National Panhellenic Conference**

The findings of this research directly connect to the feelings focus group participants have about self and collective efficacy levels, or lack thereof. If the National Panhellenic Conference wants to be seen as possessing an unshakeable belief in the power of women’s friendship based on a common set of values, while mutually existing on college campuses, it is imperative that a detailed review of formal sorority recruitment processes, specifically the impact of the Release
Figure Method, occur immediately. Sorority women from various member organizations, both large and small, explained numerous times throughout my focus group interviews how the methods used during formal sorority recruitment causes stress and anxiety, along with feelings of self doubt. This is not what the sorority experience should be. The methods used currently are dated and need to be re-evaluated to better serve our collegiate population and the expectations they are coming into their recruitment experience with.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The initial foray into scholarly research on the impact of formal sorority recruitment methods on the development of self and collective efficacy levels opens the door for future research on this topic. Further research could explore how formal recruitment impacts the development of self and collective efficacy of sorority women from the same chapter at various stages in their development. Pieces of Gilligan’s Theory of Women’s Moral Development directly relate to Bandura’s Efficacy Model. Further research could identify different stages of each model and how they impact a sorority woman’s growth and development over time. Further examination of Gilligan’s Theory of Moral Development would also allow a full exploration of the power struggle women may come up against within their own chapters as they work with one another and towards a common goal. Furthermore, women’s identity development could also be considered for future studies as a way to assist inter/national sororities in developing and implementing updated recruitment methods as members grow and develop throughout their collegiate years. It would be interesting to know whether the sorority women from established chapters, founded fifty years or more, and the sorority women from emerging chapters, founded within the last several years, are learning about recruitment methods differently.
Further research could examine the ways sorority chapter members are educated during their new member education program and their perception of recruitment. Further study could also be conducted to determine if the results are consistent in chapters from various geographical regions.

A similar qualitative study could be conducted with women who are members of historically black sororities from the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) to determine how their recruitment methods impact self and collective efficacy.

Further research would be warranted on several other aspects of sorority life. How is the lifetime commitment of sorority women impacted by the ways in which they were taught the meaning and purpose of formal recruitment processes? Is there a discussion within the chapter to determine if there is a collective goal set for the recruitment process?

In addition, further study comparing women’s greek-lettered organizations recruitment method and structure to men’s recruitment methods and structure may be of interest to explore considering they are implemented and managed very differently.

Further consideration could also be given to how an organization would appropriately educate their members on the concept of efficacy, how one develops it, and how it is formed within a collective unit. Fraternity/sorority advisors and chapter advisors could be studied as well in hopes of determining some of their positive methods of support and encouragement to sorority women.

A full study on the retention of members in relation to decisions made throughout a formal recruitment process would prove an interesting topic to explore further. Are women staying involved with the chapter they may not have wanted originally or are they disaffiliating
with the chapter before initiation? Are women who were matched with their top chapter staying involved throughout their collegiate experience?

By broadening the scope of this study, greater generalizing would be achieved and would benefit the general body of knowledge concerning sororities and similar populations (i.e. other single sex organizations, other organizations that recruit members, students of color, fraternity men).

In the future, other studies could incorporate their findings concerning the impact of formal sorority recruitment on the development of self and collective efficacy for sorority women. These findings would provide future opportunities to evaluate sorority women and the role of recruitment in their development as individuals.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The research conducted in this study focused on the impact of formal sorority recruitment on the development of self and collective efficacy, specifically the use of the Release Figure Method (RFM) in a formal recruitment process. Findings suggest the use of RFM in a formal recruitment process cause negative experiences for potential new members who are seeking membership in a sorority, as well as collegiate sorority women who are facilitating the recruitment process. Potential future research topics have been included for further consideration and implications for practice of all involved with formal sorority recruitment process are discussed in detail. To many, inside and outside the sorority world, formal recruitment is seen as a superficial process. Developing more detailed recruitment processes with the concept of self and collective efficacy at the forefront, helps to connect back to the original purpose and intent of the founders of sororities. If sororities are going to continue to positively contribute to the lives of their members, then exploring the concept of efficacy throughout the sorority experience is
essential. Placing an emphasis on the development of efficacy levels could make the difference in the sorority experience and help to form deeper bonds of sisterhood.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A. UNDERGRADUATE SORORITY MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS
Undergraduate Sorority Member Profile Questions

Please tell me the following information by checking the appropriate boxes that apply to you:

1. Age at the time of the interview? ( ) 18 ( ) 19 ( ) 20 ( ) 21
   ( ) 22 ( ) 23

2. Ethnicity: ( ) American Indian ( ) Asian/Pacific Islander
   ( ) African American ( ) Hispanic/Latina ( ) Caucasian
   ( ) Other ________________________________

3. In what year did you become a member of a sorority? ____________

4. What year are you currently in the chapter (i.e. first, second)? ____________

5. What year are you currently in school (i.e. freshman, sophomore)? ____________

6. What officer position do you hold on the Executive Board? _________________________

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RESEARCHER USE ONLY

Interview # _______________________ Chapter _______________________
Tape # __________________________ National Affiliation ___________________
Date of Interview __________________ Campus _________________________
APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM
Consent Form for a Non-Clinical Study

Study Title: The Impact and Development of Efficacy on Formal Sorority Recruitment

Performance Site: Adelphi University, University of Louisiana-Lafayette, and University of Dayton

Investigators: The following investigators are available for questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

- Dr. Joy Blanchard 225-578-2192
- Amanda Horvat 516-361-2816

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to determine whether or not self and collective efficacy have an impact on formal sorority recruitment.

Subject Inclusion: Individuals between the ages of 18 and 23 who do not report psychological or neurological conditions.

Number of subjects: up to 120

Study Procedures: The study will be conducted in focus group interview format. Interview questions should be designed to challenge participants to reflect on recruitment methods and the use of the Release Figure Method (RFM). Interviews should allow participants to share personal experiences within their own chapter and share perspectives across chapters of affiliation. Focus group interviews will be no longer than one hour each. All focus group interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions will kept by the researcher and placed in a secure location.

Benefits: Subjects who volunteer to participate in the study will receive a $5 gift card. Additionally, the study may yield valuable information about sorority recruitment strategies to employ in the future.

Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent release of sensitive information shared in the interview. However, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access.

Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

Signatures: The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject Signature:_______________________________ Date:________________________
APPENDIX C. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Focus Group Interview Questions

First, thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the concept of self and collective efficacy within a formal sorority recruitment process. The focus of this interview will be your experience as an Executive Board member of your chapter’s/Panhellenic’s recruitment outcomes, specifically in relation to the Release Figure Method, and how efficacy may impact those outcomes. If you need to clarify what efficacy or the Release Figure Method is, that is fine. Efficacy may be defined as a belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. The following questions have been developed to open dialogue regarding your thoughts, feelings, and impressions on the impact of self and collective efficacy throughout a formal recruitment process.

Please take a moment to complete the Undergraduate Sorority Member Profile Questions, the Confidentiality Statement, and the Interview Consent Form. The interviews will be recorded and coded. Your identity and affiliation will be kept confidential.

1. Why did you decide to join a sorority?

2. What are some of the positive and/or negative experiences that you have had with formal recruitment?

3. How were you educated about your participation in recruitment as a chapter member?

4. How confident were you going into your first experience with formal recruitment as a member of your chapter?

5. The Release Figure Method (RFM) is utilized on your campus. What do you believe is the general purpose of RFM is? What would you say your chapter believes is the general purpose of RFM?
6. How do you feel about being expected to recruit a certain number of women to match to quota? Do you communicate that number to the chapter and if so, how?

7. How do those feelings impact you and your chapter?

8. What aspects of recruitment do you think are beneficial to you? Is there anything you would change? Please explain.

9. How strong is your chapter at recruiting?

10. How is your chapter supported and encouraged by your fraternity/sorority life advisor and your alumnae throughout a formal recruitment process? Please explain.

11. In your experience as an Executive Board member, how do your chapter members manage emotions in the decision making process during recruitment?

12. How confident are you that the chapter feels self-assured/confident throughout the formalized recruitment process?
APPENDIX D. NATIONAL PANHELLENIC CONFERENCE RESEARCH REQUEST AND APPROVAL
Memorandum

To: Nicole Cronenwett, Director of Special Projects, National Panhellenic Conference

From: Amanda Horvat

RE: Dissertation Topic and Permission for Research

Date: October 17, 2018

Introduction and Overview

As a sorority woman I have had the opportunity to continue my lifetime commitment by working with chapters and undergraduate students as they pursue excellence on their campus. I have continued to volunteer in several roles for Theta Phi Alpha Fraternity, including NPC 3rd Alternate Delegate, National Vice President-Collegians, and Chapter Advisor for several chapters. My experiences throughout the fraternity/sorority community have encouraged and enabled me to empower, teach, and support chapters throughout the United States.

During the past three years I have been pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership & Research in Higher Education at Louisiana State University. I have completed all course requirements and passed my general exam. At this phase, I must have my dissertation proposal approved by my graduate committee. I have been working with my committee for the past six months conducting research to support my field research and to develop a plan to accomplish my goal of the completion of my dissertation and graduation.

I would like to ask permission of the National Panhellenic Conference to conduct my study as it solely relates to sorority women. I will present an overview of my study and a list of proposed questions that will be used.
Research Proposal

Researcher’s Position with Relation to Research Topic

Throughout my time working with and advising sorority chapters during their formalized recruitment processes, I have seen chapters who are excited to welcome their new members and chapters that feel let down after completing the recruitment process. Those who may feel let down or disappointed in their recruitment results have often pointed toward the Release Figure Method (RFM) as the main cause of their discouragement. They have explained that they feel defeated because RFM gives them a number to attain, rather than allowing a chapter to select members based on core values, fit, or sense of belonging. Women perceive they have no choice in membership selection and that the system is set up to give everyone an invitation to membership.

I have had individual sorority women tell me that whatever is planned for a recruitment event does not matter because every potential new member will be invited back regardless of how the women may feel about a particular potential new member. Sorority women explained that the chapter loses momentum and tends to feel discouraged when they are told to meet a certain number of potential new members, instead of recruiting quality women to their chapter. The women in the chapter are well aware of how well or poorly they are performing throughout a formalized recruitment process by the number of potential new members they are told to invite back to each round of recruitment. Their sense of confidence may be diminished and level of mastery questioned, which might lower the overall self and collective efficacy for individual women in the chapter, as well as the chapter as a whole. Sorority women have explained the loss of positive feelings regarding how the chapter is progressing throughout the recruitment process and perceive the chapter will never be successful in the recruitment process.
I believe the sorority experience can be a valuable tool for women as they gather life skills while in college. While the idea of sisterhood for women within a sorority should help build feelings of efficacy, by their own description it seems as though utilizing RFM in a formalized recruitment process may be working against strengthening those feelings. I maintain that there is a direct relationship between formal sorority recruitment and feelings of efficacy, yet I have found no research that characterizes this relationship. For this reason, I have decided to study efficacy levels of women during a formalized recruitment process in greater depth.

When I first began exploring the concept of efficacy during a formal recruitment process, I felt like it would be seen as a bit controversial in the NPC community due to the fact that the perception and impact of RFM for individual sorority women and sorority chapters have not been studied in detail. I do not want anyone to feel like this research is an attack on utilizing RFM. That is not my intent with this study. Instead, I am really looking to explore how participation in a formal recruitment process is impacted by levels of efficacy for sorority women.

**Purpose and Goals of Research**

The primary purpose of this study will be to examine the impact of formal sorority recruitment on the development of self and collective efficacy levels. I will conduct a qualitative study at three universities, including one private, one public, and one religiously affiliated institution, with female students ages 18-25 that are members of National Panhellenic Conference sorority chapters on that particular campus.

The research questions that will guide this study are:

- How may participation in formal sorority recruitment impact feelings of self and collective efficacy?
• How may formal sorority recruitment efficacy expectancy influence the
development of self and collective efficacy?

I will focus specifically how women feel prior to, during, and after a formalized recruitment process.

In this research I have investigated the development of women’s moral development, environmental theory, and the development of self and collective efficacy to better understand how sorority women grow and progress throughout their collegiate sorority experience. By beginning to study the relationship between efficacy and formal sorority recruitment, I have gained specific knowledge of women and hope to provide useful information for stakeholders, including but not limited to, other researchers in the field of fraternity/sorority life, inter/national sororities, volunteer advisors, sorority members, parents, and student affairs professionals.

Methodology

I will conduct a study through in-depth focus group interviews. Qualitative design offers the ability to collect data through human subjects, rather than through a computerized questionnaire or survey tool. The selection of a qualitative method allows for the opportunity to gather data that is rich in content and to experience firsthand the reactions and emotions of sorority women as they discuss recruitment methods, the impact of the Release Figure Method (RFM) on efficacy levels, and outcomes of utilizing that method. I am seeking to explore the phenomenon of formal sorority recruitment and how the concept of efficacy may be applied to individual women, as well as sorority chapters. I will focus on women’s subjective experiences and their interpretation of recruitment experiences.

To address any ethical concerns that may occur, I will assure all participants of anonymity as it is related to their individual identity and their particular sorority affiliation and
have them sign an informed consent form, along with a demographic sheet to help track the demographics of those involved in the focus group interviews. I will inform all participants prior to the focus group that their campus identity would be included in the study and I will make certain all procedures related to data access will be followed.

**Limitation**

Although I have experienced formal sorority recruitment on several campuses, actual observance of all sorority recruitment processes is not an option due to time constraints and the inability to observe all chapter formal recruitment processes on several campuses within the first month of a semester. This study does, however, concentrate on the development of efficacy levels through experiences with recruitment and how sorority women perceive different aspects of the recruitment process.

**Predicted Benefits of Research**

I was motivated to conduct this research due to the need for scholarly analysis of the impact of efficacy on sorority recruitment. Currently, no research has been conducted specifically to examine and evaluate the role of efficacy on formal sorority recruitment. It is hoped that future researchers will be encouraged by this study in order to continue considering and evaluating the role of efficacy within a formal recruitment process and within sorority life. I would like to provide a solid research foundation that challenges scholars to assess the sorority recruitment process and the development of self and collective efficacy for young women.

The possibility that formal sorority recruitment could have an impact on efficacy levels could have significant influence on how organizations are educating and training their women on not only recruitment practices, but also how sorority chapters can work towards a more balanced idea of what sisterhood could really mean to them. This research may be the starting point for
future studies to be conducted to assist in creating a base of scholarly literature on the concept of efficacy within the sorority experience.
Consent Form for a Non-Clinical Study

**Study Title:** The Impact and Development of Efficacy on Formal Sorority Recruitment

**Performance Site:** Adelphi University, University of Louisiana-Lafayette, and University of Dayton

**Investigators:** The following investigators are available for questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

- Dr. Joy Blanchard 225-578-2192
- Amanda Horvat 516-361-2816

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research project is to determine whether or not self and collective efficacy have an impact on formal sorority recruitment.

**Subject Inclusion:** Individuals between the ages of 18 and 23 who do not report psychological or neurological conditions.

**Number of subjects:** up to 120

**Study Procedures:** The study will be conducted in focus group interview format. Interview questions should be designed to challenge participants to reflect on recruitment methods and the use of the Release Figure Method (RFM). Interviews should allow participants to share personal experiences within their own chapter and share perspectives across chapters of affiliation. Focus group interviews will be no longer than one hour each. All focus group interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions will be kept by the researcher and placed in a secure location.

**Benefits:** Subjects who volunteer to participate in the study will receive a $5 gift card. Additionally, the study may yield valuable information about sorority recruitment strategies to employ in the future.

**Risks:** The only study risk is the inadvertent release of sensitive information shared in the interview. However, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access.

**Right to Refuse:** Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

**Privacy:** Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

**Signatures:** The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________________
Confidentiality Statement

Included in Informed Consent for a Non-Clinical Study document

Script and Focus Group Questions to be Used for the Study

First, thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the concept of self and collective efficacy within a formal sorority recruitment process. The focus of this interview will be recruitment outcomes, specifically in relation to the Release Figure Method, and how efficacy may be impacted by those outcomes. If you need to clarify what efficacy or the Release Figure Method is, that is fine. Efficacy may be defined as a belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. The following questions have been developed to open dialogue regarding your thoughts, feelings, and impressions on the impact of self and collective efficacy throughout a formal recruitment process.

Please take a moment to complete the Undergraduate Sorority Member Profile Questions and the Interview Consent Form. The interviews will be recorded and coded. Your identity and affiliation will be kept confidential.

1. Why did you decide to join a sorority?
2. What are some of the positive and/or negative experiences that you have had with formal recruitment?
3. How were you educated about your participation in recruitment as a chapter member?
4. How confident were you going into your first experience with formal recruitment as a member of your chapter?
5. The Release Figure Method (RFM) is utilized on your campus. What do you believe is the general purpose of RFM is? What would you say your chapter believes is the general purpose of RFM?

6. How do you feel about being expected to recruit a certain number of women to match to quota? Do you communicate that number to the chapter and if so, how?

7. How do those feelings impact you and your chapter?

8. What aspects of recruitment do you think are beneficial to you? Is there anything you would change? Please explain.

9. How strong is your chapter at recruiting?

10. How is your chapter supported and encouraged by your fraternity/sorority life advisor and your local alumnae throughout a formal recruitment process? Please explain.

11. In your experience as an Executive Board member, how do your chapter members manage emotions in the decision making process during recruitment?

12. How confident are you that the chapter feels self-assured/confident throughout the formalized recruitment process?

Compensation Details

Each participant will receive a $5 gift card from the researcher.

Research Results Assimilation

I believe studying the impact of efficacy on recruitment process will be beneficial to the National Panhellenic Conference community. Not only will it open the door for future research to be conducted, but it also allows a framework to be developed for a recruitment efficacy model that can be utilized by all NPC organizations. I also maintain that the study will give NPC an
opportunity to explore how training and participation in recruitment practices influence the growth and development of collegiate women throughout their time chapter experience.
Approval received from the National Panhellenic Conference:

Nicole Cronenwett <nicole@npcwomen.org>

Mon, Nov 12, 2018, 8:59 AM

to ahovat78@gmail.com

Good morning Amanda,

I have heard back from the research proposal committee and they have granted approval of your research proposal. I will be contacting the member organizations on the campuses of University, University of Louisiana-Lafayette, and University of Dayton to let them of your study.

If you have any questions or if we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Thank you!

Nicole

On Wed, Nov 7, 2018 at 10:25 AM Amanda Horvat <ahovat78@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Nicole,
I have contacted Adelphi University, University of Louisiana-Lafayette, and University of Dayton. Please let me know if there are any other questions at all. Thank you so much!

Amanda

On Wed, Nov 7, 2018 at 9:05 AM Nicole Cronenwett <nicole@npcwomen.org> wrote:

Good morning Amanda,

I have heard back from the committee regarding your proposal. They have a question-what campuses will you be reaching out to, to gain your participants?

Thank you,

Nicole
APPENDIX E. ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISORS
AWARD LETTER
Dear Amanda:

Thank you for taking the time to submit a proposal for a research grant from AFA and the AFA Foundation during our spring funding period. AFA has made research in the profession a high priority, and assisting scholars and professionals that are conducting research is a way to ensure this happens. We could not provide this funding without the support of the AFA Foundation, including specific donations from supporters including Justin and Heather Kirk to make these research grants possible.

We are pleased to announce that your proposal has been accepted for full funding contingent on securing an RFM specialist or equivalent that will assist you in getting access to this type of data. You have been funded in the amount of $1,000 (and the committee would consider funding up to $2,000) for your project titled: *The Development of Efficacy and its Impact on Formal Sorority Recruitment*. Our selection team was impressed by your proposal, and believes that your research will have a positive impact on the field of fraternity and sorority advising and our work as a profession.

The grant award payment or reimbursement process can begin immediately. The process will involve reimbursement for expenses unless arrangements are made in advance. Please keep and submit itemized receipts. An expense form will be send upon confirmation that you are accepting this award. We will be sharing the results of this funding cycle with the membership and will use the description from the proposal unless otherwise indicated.

As part of your award acceptance, you are also agreeing to the following:

- Submission of a proposal for a program at the 2018 or 2019 AFA Annual Meeting, depending upon completion of your project. The call for programs is generally announced in late May. Submission is not a guarantee for selection.
- Submission of a manuscript to *Oracle: The Research Journal of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors*. Submission is not a guarantee for selection.

Please notify me by **Wednesday, May 9** if you are planning to accept this research grant. Feel free to email me at lynda@afa1976.org or call me at 317-417-0231. Thank you for your commitment to AFA and the field of fraternity/sorority advising.

Sincerely,

Lynda Wiley, EdD
AFA Executive Director

865 W Carmel Drive, Suite 116, Carmel, IN 46032 970.797.4361 | www.afa1976.org | info@afa1976.org
VITA

Amanda Jill Horvat was born in 1978 to Carol and Joseph P. Horvat and lived in Long Island, New York, until she moved to State College, Pennsylvania for her first professional position.

Amanda graduated in 2000 from St. John’s University in Jamaica, New York, with a bachelor’s degree in paralegal studies. In 2002, she received a master’s degree in student development practice in higher education from St. John’s University in Jamaica, New York.

Amanda has attended Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she is pursuing doctoral work in educational leadership and research.

Amanda was employed at The Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pennsylvania as a Residence Life Coordinator from July 2002 until March of 2006. Amanda also served in several positions at Hofstra University in Residential Programs from March 2006 until February 2015. Amanda is currently serving as the Interim Director of University Housing at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana.

Amanda is also an established volunteer for Theta Phi Alpha Fraternity and has served in numerous roles, including Chapter Advisor, Conference Director, Conference Administrator, National Panhellenic Conference 3rd Alternate Delegate, and National Vice President-Collegians.

Amanda was a recipient of the Jean M. Cusack Endowed Scholarship from the Theta Phi Alpha Foundation in 2016 and was awarded an Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors Research Grant in 2018.

Amanda is a member of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors and The Association of College and University Housing Officers.
Amanda is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and plans to graduate in August 2019.