

TITLE Leadership Development Within Sororities

RESEARCHER Colbi Beam
College of Education and Professional Studies
University of Central Oklahoma
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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this research was to explore whether sorority members develop more leadership skills, the more time they are involved in their sorority experience.

METHODOLOGY

The sample was one randomly sorority chapter at a large public university in the Midwest with an active Greek community. Of the 100 members, 42 participated by completing the student version of the Leadership Practices Inventory and answering questions about how their sorority, academic classes, other co-curricular activities, and life experiences could have contributed to their leadership development.. The typical respondent was Caucasian (88%), and between 18 and 23 years of age.

KEY FINDINGS

The most frequently engaged in leadership practice was Encourage, followed by Enable and Model, and then Inspire and Challenge. No significant differences or correlations were found on any of the five leadership practices with regards to the length of time (number of semesters active) in the sorority.

Time in the sorority did not seem to affect the S-LPI scores; however, all but one participant claimed that their sorority directly benefitted their leadership growth. A significant majority of the women reported that their other co-curricular activities, academic courses, life experiences and their sorority all contributed to their leadership development. In their responses to how these activities developed their skills as leaders, the author says,

they synthesized their experiences to explain how they related to one another. One subject said, "Being in my major's club is what made me want to take a leadership role in my sorority." Another subject wrote, "My sorority requires me to have an outside organization and I love doing it!" Almost all the subjects who responded to the question about how the sorority helped them develop leadership skills spoke of the amount of opportunities they are given to be a leader because of their sorority and how their sisters push them beyond their comfort zone to try new things. One subject said, "It has developed my leadership skills in every way. My sorority has shown me leadership and given me every leadership opportunity there could be, from Homecoming to serving on our Executive Board." More women credit their sorority with their leadership development than any other factor (p. 18).