A VALUES-BASED LEARNING MODEL TO IMPACT MATURATIONAL CHANGE: THE COLLEGE FRATERNITY AS DEVELOPMENTAL CRUCIBLE

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The period of late adolescence and early adulthood is a critical time during which individual identity is developed. One fraternity recently implemented a developmental process that facilitated identity maturation within its members by emphasizing self-awareness and reflection. Utilizing a learning model as the core component of all aspects of its programming, the fraternity conducted research to determine the impact of its learning model on the development of self-awareness. This article provides data from three years of implementation that documents significant increases in this critical developmental competency.

The period of late adolescence and early adulthood is a time in which individual identity development is actively shaped by a wide range of biological, cognitive, and psychosocial variables (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Renn, 2010; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002). During this critical time period, individuals are working to integrate a sense of self, refine the values that will direct their life trajectories, and practice the development of intimate relationships. The literature explicates the many dimensions of these developmental tasks and the dynamics that can either support or derail their accomplishment. Therefore, it is essential to create environments that nurture learning and contribute to positive identity development (Strange & Banning, 2001). To enhance the positive maturation of such capacities and the cohesion of stable identity, college-aged men need and can benefit from specific and supportive interventions (Harper & Harris, 2010).

There are many environmental contexts that might be utilized to provide experiences to enhance maturation. Among these, the college men's fraternity seems like a natural crucible given the historical emphasis on ideals that develop positive character and leadership. Unfortunately, evidence also suggests fraternities have become compromised by a range of negative behaviors and activities which occupy the time and attention of administrators and create a negative impression of fraternity-based experiences (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Ellsworth, 2006). The college fraternity has potential to return to its initial idealistic aspirations and serve as a forum that positively influences young men cognitively, socially, and affectively (Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009; Harms, Wood, Roberts, Bureau & Green, 2006; Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh, 2002; Kelley, 2008; Pike, 2003; Roberts & Johnson, 2006). Such a reprioritization of mission and purpose would replace an emphasis on purely social activities with an investment in a range of educational and interpersonal experiences designed to facilitate maturational success. This reconceptualization of the college fraternity establishes it as a co-curricular organization aligned with the missions and goals of the broader higher education community.

Context

Lambda Chi Alpha, an international men's fraternity founded at Boston University in 1909, currently has approximately 200 chapters on college campuses across North America

and serves approximately 11,000 undergraduate members. The fraternity recently moved to embrace a mission focused on goals designed to facilitate the developmental maturation of its members along a wide array of developmental continua, which include inter-psychic and interpersonal benchmarks of identity maturation. Consistent with this sense of mission, Lambda Chi Alpha has created an experiential, educational model focused on fostering student development during college, making student experiences increasingly meaningful, evocative, and enriching (Hunter & Lutzky, 2009). This model expands the traditional fraternity emphases on education as a prelude to initiation and creates a set of experiences designed to foster ongoing individual development throughout the college years. Termed the Lambda Chi Alpha Learning Model (LCALM), this grounded approach has become the core component of all aspects of programming. Research has been conducted to determine the effect of its utilization on a range of developmental competencies. This article provides data from three years of implementation and investigation that suggests students in the fraternity chapters using the learning model are evidencing significant increases in self-awareness.

Review of Literature

This section is an overview of literature focusing on student learning, identity formation, creating educational environments, and the means through which the LCALM has been established to facilitate related outcomes. The literature reviewed demonstrates the aspects of relevant research used to ground the LCALM model, serving as its conceptual framework.

Student Learning

Several areas of the literature are particularly relevant to the explication of the LCALM processes. These include the transformative learning model (Mezirow, 1991; 1997; 2000), social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). The learning emphasized in this approach is not merely related to the acquisition of knowledge but more cogently focuses on the evolving sense of identity (Evans et al., 2010) and how the environment should facilitate such growth (Strange & Banning, 2001).

Transformative Learning

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) emphasized that learning occurs primarily through interaction in a continuing environment of interpersonal relationships (e.g. a college fraternity); recurring experiences influence the development of worldviews. Cognitively, students move from dualistic perspectives to multiplicity and relativism as they form epistemological foundations for meaning-making and for the prioritization of values and personal goals (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Perry, 1970). Interactions with others help individuals to examine what they have experienced and potentially to reform existing perceptions and organizing schemata. These interactions can therefore change the interior perceptual map and foster transformative learning (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Mezirow, 1991; 2000).

Mezirow (1991; 2000) described transformative learning as "potentially significantly" changing ideas that are no longer dependable or relevant. The individual reconsiders existing views of self and others based on the accumulation of new, generative experiences. Such processes occur during late adolescence and continue to be influential throughout young adulthood. As a result, perspective transformation occurs (Mezirow, 2000) and maturation follows (Cranton, 2006; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Mezirow, 2000). Perspective transformation is greatly determined by the influence of peers as role-models (Bandura, 1977; Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2000).

Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1977; 1986) believed people learned from observing others in the same environment. Individuals compare others' actions to their own and their previously held perceptions of appropriate behavior. These models, attributions, and related feedback create a sense of how to act in a select environment (e.g., as a member of a college fraternity). Such experiences are integrated into a sense of what is real, what is expected, and what one "knows" about the worlds of others and the place of self in that world. Individuals create meaning as a function of how they interpret this evocative intersection of the past in relation to experience in the present. In this way, epistemological beliefs may be reshaped. Affective components may also change. Moral development, tolerance for ambiguity, and commitment to social norms can be enhanced. The potential for positive norm development is thereby enhanced by experiential learning activities in this interpersonal environment (Bandura 1977; 1986).

Experiential Learning

Most students enter college conditioned to be passive recipients of knowledge. This perspective stems from prior educational experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Richlin, 2006). College educators can be more effective when they help students to assume control of and responsibility for learning (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential learning is a primary strategy to pursue this desired outcome and can be practiced in the context of advising and supporting the operations of a college fraternity.

Experiential learning is the "process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of [one's] experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). Learning involves the integration of thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) and occurs as a result of the individual interacting with others in the environment. It is this core component of interaction which makes the experience central to this form of learning. Individual learners go through a cycle of concrete experiences, reflect on experiences, conceptualize experiences in the abstract, and then apply new constructions to develop understanding (Cranton, 2006; Kolb, 1984). Such experiences form a basis for observation and reflection. These observational and reflective processes then generate and/or transform perceptions and world views, providing the cognitive basis for "new implications for action [that] can be discerned" (Kolb, 1984, p. 209).

As the individual learns, he/she alternates experientially between opposing modes of reflection and action and between feeling and thinking (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This process creates new or reaffirms existing approaches to decision-making and problem solving. Simultaneously, beliefs and values are created, integrated, and enterprised. This process is most effective when the individual engages it in an open-minded way, which allows for the simultaneous development of multiple perspectives and creativity (Cranton, 2006; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 2000). As Mezirow concluded, the ability of experiential learning to foster transformative, cognitive, and interpersonal construction is due to the central roles of introspection and self-reflection.

Komives et al. (2005) explained experiential learning as particularly powerful in helping college students to develop leadership skills. Such experiences can be salient when considering the environment of a college fraternity (Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella, 2012). Students learn to interact with others and to foster common strategies with which to accomplish shared goals. When successful, such processes positively influence self-esteem and a sense of social competence (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Identity Formation

The years of 18-24 appear to constitute a critical period for the development of a sense of self (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Erickson, 1968; Kegan, 1982; 1994) and for the differentiation of those values that will create both goals and the underpinnings of moral character (Evans et al., 2010; Kohlberg, 1975). Theories of the process of identity development have guided the field of student affairs for almost 40 years (Evans et al., 2010; Hamrick et al., 2002). Numerous developmental theories exist including psychosocial (focusing on affective and interpersonal aspects of one's development), cognitive (constructs which create a sense of understanding and knowing), self-reflection (a sense of how I see myself and how others view me), and integrative theories (those which connect each of the aforementioned types and typically incorporate environmental considerations) (Evans et al.). Experiences are internalized in a fashion that influences the individuals' existing sense of self and reciprocally determine the nature of future experiences. Most theories are explained through stages: progression through each stage is a function of the successful integration of experiences from the previous stage, often conceptualized around core developmental tasks.

Environment

Environments have a clear role as the context in which learning and development occurs and as the source of numerous contingencies influencing these developmental processes (Evans et al., 2010; Strange & Banning, 2001). Individuals identify commonly held values in the environment as one source of their own perspectives and beliefs (Strange & Banning, 2001). The values prioritized by some environments may be subjective, but widely held values do exist in all environments, including the college campus context. Typically, these values are aligned with broad societal values (Dalton, 1985; Nash & Murray, 2010).

Among the environmental variables that influence college students is the immediate peer group. This variable may be particularly powerful for the college men's fraternity (Astin, 1993; Strange & Banning, 2001). Astin identified the immediate peer group as those with whom the individual most strongly identifies. As a result of interactions, one's beliefs are influenced and possibly modified. Students move in and out of peer groups in the context of their college experience resulting in groups having differing levels of influence on learning and development. The peer group exerts a powerful influence over the individual especially during adolescence and young adult years. Astin observed that, "every aspect of the student's development…is affected in some way by peer group characteristics, and usually by several peer characteristics. Generally, students tend to change their values, behavior, and academic plans in the direction of the group's dominant orientation" (p. 363). Due to the unique environment of fraternities, the time spent with fellow members renders the population an especially powerful immediate peer group (Astin).

Student involvement was originally viewed as regulated by the student (Astin, 1993); however, researchers more recently have emphasized the role of institutions in connecting students to enriching educational experiences. Involvement has shifted to engagement, emphasizing the shared responsibility of all to support student success (Wolf-Wendle, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). Strayhorn (2008) examined the relationship between engagement in educationally meaningful activities and perceived personal/social learning outcomes (e.g., values, character) among college students perceived or objectively measured. He found students involved in experiential learning tended to feel as if they had grown more than their counterparts who experienced passive learning; peer interactions were the greatest influence on learning. These findings are consistent with previous

research that the peer group is likely the most powerful influence on college students (Astin; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) and the environment selected by the student has significant impact (Strange & Banning, 2001).

The existing research describes the fraternity environment as a complex phenomenon (Asel et al., 2009; Jelke & Kuh, 2003) with both potentially positive and negative influences. Factors that negatively impact learning include alcohol misuse (Wechsler, Kuh & Davenport, 1996), homogeneity and a lack of appreciation for diversity (Asel et al.), and detrimental activities such as hazing (Ellsworth, 2006). Such activities interfere with learning and positive development (Asel et al.; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998). Positive influences within the fraternity environment include an emphasis on engagement (Asel et al.; Astin, 1993; Bureau, Ryan, Ahren, Shoup, & Torres, 2011; Hayek et al., 2002; Martin et al., 2012; Pike, 2003), allegiance to alma mater (Kelley, 2008), and participation in community service and leadership activities (Harms et al., 2006; Hayek et al; Kelley; Roberts & Johnson, 2006). The college fraternity can be a forum in which learning occurs, although the results may be mixed (Asel et al.; Bureau et al.; Hayek et al.; Martin et al.; Pascarella, Flowers & Whitt, 2001; Pike; Whipple & Sullivan). Research on educational gains that may be attributed to fraternity membership suggested that the influence is multi-dimensional, complicated, and cannot be interpreted monolithically (Asel et al.; Hayek et. al.; Pike).

The Lambda Chi Alpha Learning Model (LCALM)

The LCALM was informed by the developmental theories of Erickson (1968; 1980), Kegan, (1982; 1994), and Baxter Magolda (2001) and emphasizes Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and Kolb's model of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The LCALM uses experiences in the fraternity environment to help members examine possible courses of action that will help them develop skills needed to be a good member and person. The LCALM emphasizes reflection through journaling. Through the journal, the member works to make meaning of his experiences. Sharing these experiences with others in the organization can help to influence the overall fraternity environment.

Reflecting

The role of reflection is considered to be central in facilitating the influence of LCALM and has been linked in the literature to a range of developmental contingencies that enhance the maturation of character and the development of leadership skills (Bandura, 1978; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005). The act of reflecting varies from simply thinking about experiences to increasing awareness of thoughts, feelings, values, or actions to considering possible alternatives to existing worldviews (Bandura, 1977). Through reflection, individuals can reconcile personal and group approaches to regulating behavior and make judgments about those behaviors. Gradually, the person develops a sense of competence required for adaptation to the environment (Bandura, 1977). Through what Mezirow (2000) called "premise reflection" one examines long-held, socially constructed assumptions (e.g. gender roles of men), values, and beliefs about a phenomenon.

Critical thinking and reflecting on experience is essential to transformative learning (Cranton, 2006; Keeling, 2004; Mezirow, 1997). Ways of thinking are transformed through critical reflection on our assumptions, interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view (Mezirow). From this review, the individual is able to reaffirm or revise his/her ways of acting with others (Cranton). New knowledge is then applied in future contexts (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Throughout the process, self-initiative is pivotal.

Researchers have found that students engaging in reflective activities report increased self-awareness, self-confidence, and feelings of empowerment to recreate their own self-concept and to clarify values (Roberts, 2008). Komives et al. (2005) and Roberts explained the importance of reflection as a key component in the development of future leaders and suggested strategies for incorporating reflection into leadership education as well as mechanisms for its assessment. These results indicate reflection is important, and those who work within educational organizations, in this case a men's fraternity, have a responsibility to create environments that support critical reflection.

Meaning Making

Reflection is followed by a period of meaning making in which individuals journal around a series of structured exercises to understand the significance of the experience for themselves and their relationship to others. The LCALM emphasizes meaning making as a process in the learning continuum where reflections are placed within the context of self. This occurs through guided journaling. Putting thoughts and feelings into words allows for a bridging function to connect the cognitive and affective, the private and shared, and internal and external functions. Meaning making allows for individuals to see how the past continues to influence the present.

Students construct meaning through observations and interactions with the world around them. Meaning making occurs as a result of efforts to comprehend the essence and significance of events, relationships, and learning, to gain understanding of themselves in a larger context, and to experience a sense of wholeness (Nash & Murray, 2010). Students make sense of and interpret experiences in relation to previous experiences. Further, students' values influence their behavior and provide the basis for making ethical judgments (Nash & Murray). Through reflection and meaning making, students develop a clearer sense of who they are in relation to their own values and who they are in relation to the values of others in the larger world. This not only consolidates an important sense of personal identity but also develops an understanding of the position of self in relation to others who may have differing values and world views (Keeling, 2004). There is no one way to make meaning; however, interventions by educators are important to help students make sense of themselves and their relationships with others (Keeling, 2004; Mezirow, 2000; Nash & Murray).

Self-reflective journals are one of the most common reflection strategies due to the ease of implementation and potential depth of response (Jarvis, 2001; Lukinsky, 1990; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Roberts, 2008). Journaling helps students become reflective learners as they record personal stories about experiences and observations and as they consider their increased ability to identify and articulate the issues about which they are learning (Cranton, 2006; Jarvis, 2001; Lukinsky, 1990). Through this process, they increase self-awareness (Cranton, 2006; Hatcher & Bringle, 1997). The format and structure may vary from free stream-of-consciousness writing to a guided examination of specific events. For example, DiPaolo (2008) examined the experiences of six fraternity members during a leadership institute. Through individual journaling and group reflection, participants reflected on how their experiences shaped their thoughts on leadership.

Sharing

While individuals can make meaning on their own, structuring opportunities for sharing new ideas with peers allows students to place their sense of self in relation to external others. Common perceptions and beliefs become normalized when shared with others, contributing to a sense of community. Sharing

then becomes a process to help individuals use their understanding to successfully navigate their environment. As the final component of the LCALM, sharing becomes a pivotal process for consolidating personal knowledge and understanding and for integrating new understanding based on perspectives and feedback from others.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) defined good practice in undergraduate education in terms of a process that "develops reciprocity and cooperation among students" (p. 3). A way to increase the propensity for cooperation is creating environments in which sharing knowledge is expected. Conducting reflection activities and then sharing thoughts with the group helps students to co-create knowledge and revise previous worldviews (Bandura, 1977; Cranton, 2006; Nash & Murray, 2010; Chickering & Gamson). From these interactions, participants sense how their identity is similar to and different from others around them (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). Such self-awareness serves as a launching point for ongoing learning and identity development (Chickering & Gamson) and for the maturation of respect and mutuality in the environment of the fraternity.

Methodology

Longitudinal Study Process

During the 2006-2007 academic year, Lambda Chi Alpha initiated a psychometric research study and pilot implementation effort to evaluate the efficacy of its (then) newly developed LCALM and redeveloped educational curriculum. The organization committed to a ten-year investment of resources to evaluate the self-awareness of its members at various points during their participation in the fraternity. The organization is now in year four of that commitment. Since implementing LCALM and redeveloping educational curriculum for distribution to all undergraduate members during the 2007-2008 academic year, undergraduate chapters have incorporated the model to varying degrees. This has allowed Lambda Chi Alpha to evaluate the influence of the LCALM by comparing member scores on a self-awareness inventory between those implementing the model and those not using it.

The researchers hypothesized that individuals who utilized the LCALM would show significantly greater growth in the development of self-awareness than those who did not make use of the model. In addition, the researchers hypothesized organizational changes consistent with the degree to which the LCALM was implemented, e.g., mean scores would continually increase commensurate with the degree of implementation.

Operationalization of the Lambda Chi Alpha Learning Model

Lambda Chi Alpha staff designed the LCALM with the intention of facilitating the maturational development of its late adolescent members. Operationalizing the LCALM in such a way that was both appealing to students and simple to implement required that Lambda Chi Alpha reconsider its approach to new member development and approach the process as more of an orientation than a simple education program, requiring additional resources and materials for both participants and educators. This process produced an eight-week new member development process that utilizes the LCALM to acclimate members to Lambda Chi Alpha's Seven Core Values, making up the acronym LDRSHIP (loyalty, duty, service & stewardship, honor, integrity, and personal courage). One core value is explored per week, with the eighth week providing participants the opportunity to make meaning of the entire new member development process. A detailed overview of the eight week program curriculum is available from the first author by request.

Survey Participants (Subjects)

Participants in this study consisted of 4,024 undergraduate males enrolled at approximately 200 colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada. All of the participants were undergraduate members of Lambda Chi Alpha at the time of their participation in this study and received no compensation. Survey participants either completed this study as new associate members (newly affiliated, non-initiated members) or newly initiated members. Subjects were between the ages of 18 and 26 (M=18.94, SD=1.23) for the associate survey and 18 and 28 (M=19.34, SD = 1.28) for the initiate survey.

Instrumentation

Member-Level Data

To measure self-awareness of members, Lambda Chi Alpha administered the Self-Consciousness Scale developed by Fenigstein, Scheir, and Buss (1975). This measure has demonstrated excellent psychometrics elsewhere in emergent adulthood samples (Fenigstein et al, 1975; Turner, Carver, Scheier & Ickes, 1978). The Self-Consciousness Scale is a 16 item self-report inventory, scored on a four-point Likert scale with one (1) being extremely uncharacteristic and four (4) being extremely characteristic. It is widely used in the literature and provides a relevant comparison sample group for college freshmen and college-aged men. The researchers were able to use the Self-Consciousness Scale to measure the efficacy of the organization's curriculum and LCALM in terms of this aspect of the maturational development of its members.

Chapter-Level Data

To investigate a potential correlation between the LCALM and the development of self-awareness among individual participants, the researchers collected data on the degrees to which the LCALM was utilized by the local chapter in which the participant is a member. The LCALM implementation data were collected by members of Lambda Chi Alpha's professional staff, Educational Leadership Consultants (ELCs), who rated each chapter during bi-annual visits. This process allowed the researchers to understand the levels to which chapters were implementing the organization's educational curriculum, and, specifically, the LCALM. Examples from the 27 question evaluation system included:

- Does the chapter utilize the Seven Core Values in bid discussions?
- Is the chapter's associate member development curriculum organized around the Seven Core Values?
- Does the chapter utilize experiential learning (associates actively participate in an experience related to a core value) as part of associate member development?
- Is the process of reflection and meaning-making explained to the associate members?
- Do the associate members reflect on their experiences and make meaning of them?
- Do associate members share their reflections and the meaning they made weekly during weekly debrief (share and discuss) sessions?

Once the ELCs collected this data, it was input into a report, which was shared with the chapter and stored electronically at Lambda Chi Alpha's headquarters. Once chapter visits for an academic year concluded, Lambda Chi Alpha staff inputted these data into a spreadsheet to measure curriculum and LCALM implementation. A binary scoring system was used with responses of "yes" to a question on the system equaling one (1) point and an answer of "no" resulting in a zero (0). Since the rating instrument had a total of 27 questions, the maximum score a chapter could receive was 27, with the minimum score, 0. Data was

then entered into an aggregate data file and sorted for analyses and comparison purposes to understand which chapters most fully implemented Lambda Chi Alpha's curriculum and the LCALM.

Individual Member Data Collection

Administered internally by Lambda Chi Alpha staff during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 testing periods, and in 2009-2010 through Scantron Corporation, newly associated members and recently initiated members were sent the Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein, Scheir, and Buss, 1975) through emails. Each potential participant was told the surveys were anonymous and individual identities would not be recorded or reported. The recipients of the survey are initially reported to the fraternity through standard forms that record association and initiation data. The participants are then assigned a unique identification number. Only these numbers are used to ensure that consistent data from the same participant are appropriately recorded and analyzed. No further identification is available at any point during data collection or analysis. Data regarding the chapters to which individual members belonged were collected; however, the only utility for that data lies in the stratified sample comparison.

Candidates were given two weeks to complete the survey. If the survey was completed, the participant responses were then logged in the database. If the survey was not completed, individual candidates received an email reminder to participate in the survey process. After three weeks of non-participation, the survey link was terminated and the individual was no longer eligible to participate in the survey. This same process was replicated for newly initiated members. Capturing data from new associate members and newly initiated members allowed the researchers to measure baseline levels of self-awareness prior to participation in the organization's curriculum and evaluate at the conclusion of the new member development process.

Group and Individual Member Data Comparison

At the conclusion of the academic year, Lambda Chi Alpha staff identified chapters most completely implementing the curriculum evaluated by the ELCs. Chapters in each cohort for the 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 academic years were identified as the following groups:

1. Ten highest scoring chapters, in terms of curriculum and LCALM implementation as determined by evaluations conducted by the ELCs (TBI)
2. Upper quartile, as determined by evaluations conducted by the ELCs(TBTop50)
3. Lower quartile, as determined by evaluations conducted by the ELCs (TBBottom50)
4. Aggregate set, all Lambda Chi Alpha chapters(TBAggregate)

Once the aforementioned chapter groupings were identified, individual data were organized and placed into the appropriate groups. Thus, if an individual survey participant (new associate member, newly initiated member or both) was a member of a chapter identified in the group, his survey scores were combined with other individuals from chapters who were organized as a sample group. Sample group means were then identified and compared to one another, as well as the aggregate mean to determine the maturational development of survey participants and its correlation to participating in Lambda Chi Alpha's educational curriculum and the LCALM.

Limitations

Due to the complexity of the research and to the context and delivery of the surveys utilized, there is the possibility to lose potential subjects due to errors in data collection or the choice by large groups of subjects to not participate in the study. Examples of such errors include the lack of correct email address reported at the point of association or lack of timeliness in reporting of association and initiation, which interfered with appropriate and timely points for data collection. A second limitation is the large number of subjects who completed only one of the two survey administrations, possibly skewing the results by limiting the opportunities for full pre/post intervention analysis.

A third limitation involves potential cultural differences among individuals in the sample. Researchers have demonstrated that cultural variation can be associated with differing levels of self-awareness, specifically when comparing Eastern cultures to a North American sample (Heine, Takemoto, Moskalenko, Lasaleta, & Henrich, 2008). However, demographic data such as race and ethnicity were not available for analysis in the current study. Consequently, we cannot be sure whether or not culture played a role in influencing levels of self-awareness among our sample. Finally, the results of our preliminary and novel study must be interpreted with caution due to the limited nature of the data analysis. Statistical analyses to test the significance of mean differences between the non-aggregate groups were not conducted. Future research should investigate the significance of such mean differences. For example, t-test analyses could be supplemented by a more robust statistical technique (e.g., ANOVA) to measure the significance of mean differences between aggregate groups.

Analysis and Results

Independent data sets from the three sample populations TBI, TBTop50, TBBottom50, and the aggregate population, TBAggregate, were compared at the points of association and initiation to determine levels of change in self-awareness of Lambda Chi Alpha's members over time. Additionally, the influence of the LCALM was assessed by comparisons of means across the stratified samples. The data were also compared across the three years of the study to evaluate for similarities or differences in the sample populations in order to ensure the consistency of our data for the analyses conducted.

Scores were reported for each participant as a total score based on the participant responses to 16 questions, which could be rated from zero to four on a Likert-Type scale. Due to the adjustment of the scores to prevent response bias, some items were scored in the opposite direction of others (four represents a lower degree of agreement with the item than one). In other words, some items utilized reverse scoring. The maximum score for the survey would therefore be 64, with a range of 16 to 64 as possible scores.

Analysis of Sample and Aggregate Population Mean Scores from Association to Initiation

In each subject group, data demonstrated positive changes for independent samples from the point of affiliating with Lambda Chi Alpha (associate) and the beginning of the LCALM intervention to the points where subjects concluded their association and the LCALM intervention (initiate). This allowed for a pre-post- intervention analysis design.

2007-2008

The 2007-2008 data showed subjects from the TBI chapters achieved a self-awareness

mean score of M = 40.58 (SD = 4.49, n = 26) at association and a mean score of 41.63 (SD = 3.76, n = 19) at initiation, producing a positive change of 1.05. A slightly larger positive change of 1.13 was shown by the subjects from the TBBottom50 (associate n = 52, M = 40.92, SD = 4.58; initiate n = 58, M = 42.05, SD = 4.93), while lesser positive changes where shown by subjects from the TBAggregate (associate n = 209, M = 40.56, SD = 5.13; initiate n = 334, M = 41.55, SD = 5.07) and TBTop50 (associate n = 85, M = 41.40, SD = 4.49; initiate n = 88, M = 41.94, SD = 4.34). Analyses comparing means of the TBI, TBTop50, and TBBottom50 association and initiation groups were not conducted due to often small and/or largely discrepant sample sizes. However, analysis of the TBAggregate data demonstrated significant increases from association to initiation, $t(541) = 2.199$, $p < .05$. Assumptive reasons for this finding will be discussed in the limitations of this paper.

2008-2009

The 2008-2009 data showed slight positive changes on self-awareness mean scores from association to initiation for each of the four subject groups. The associate TBI group had a mean score of M = 44.06 (SD = 5.15, n = 87) while the initiate TBI group had a mean of M = 44.41 (SD = 5.17, n = 32), yielding a net mean difference of 0.35. The TBTop50 associate group had a mean of M = 43.53 (SD = 4.87, n = 327) while the initiate group had a mean of M = 43.98 (SD = 4.91, n = 127), yielding a larger mean difference of 0.45. The TBBottom50 associate group was observed with a self-awareness mean score of M = 43.77 (SD = 5.38, n = 158) while the initiate group had a mean of M = 44.61 (SD = 5.14, n = 64), yielding larger yet, mean difference of 0.84. Again, none of these means were analyzed for within-group differences. However, within-group analyses comparing the means of the TBAggregate group across the two data points indicated significant increases from association (M = 43.21, SD = 6.43, n = 779) to initiation (M = 44.09, SD = 5.08, n = 370), $t(1147) = 2.309$, $p<.05$.

2009-2010

In 2009-2010, larger changes from association to initiation on self-awareness mean scores were noted for each of the four subject groups. Most notably, the subjects from TBI chapters demonstrated a positive change from association with a mean of M = 43.61 (SD = 5.36, n = 175) to initiation with a mean of M = 46.41 (SD = 4.12, n = 41) yielding a mean difference of 2.8, which represents the largest positive change obtained in the current investigation. Subjects from the TBBottom50 chapters showed a positive change of 2.18 from association (M = 42.72, SD = 5.13, n = 397) to initiation (M = 44.90, SD = 5.95 n = 79). Almost equal levels of change shown by subjects from chapters identified as TBTop50 (associate: M = 43.79, SD = 5.36, n = 574; initiate: M = 45.43, SD = 4.59, n = 159) and TBAggregate (associate: M = 43.28, SD = 5.38, n = 1764; initiate: M = 44.89, SD = 5.16, n = 574), yielding mean differences of 1.64, and 1.61 respectively. In summary, these data offer strong support for the hypothesis that participation in Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity programming and the LCALM intervention during the period from association to initiation increases members' self-awareness. Further, subjects from chapters most completely implementing in the LCALM intervention show the greatest positive change, followed by the TBTop50, TBBottom50, and TBaggregate subject groups. A within-group analysis comparing the means of the TBAggregate groups showed significant increases from association to initiation, $t(2336) = 6.293$, $p<.001$.

Analysis of Sample and Aggregate Population Mean Scores over Time

Another observation of analysis from the data not only reflects the positive change for each individual from association to initiation but also demonstrates significant increases in overall mean scores at the point of initiation across the three years of the study (2007-2008 to 2008-2009 and 2009-2010). The largest increases in the point of initiation scores across the three years of the study are again found in the TBI subject group, which can be observed in Figure 1.

Mean scores increased from 41.63 in 2007-2008 to 44.41 in 2008-2009 to 46.41 in 2009-2010, a 6.68% increase from year one to year two of the study, a 4.50% increase from year two to year three of the study and a total increase of 10.3% across the three years of the study. The other large and consistent increases in point of initiation scores across the three years of the study are found within the TBTop50 subject group (found in Figure 2). This group evidenced means scores of 41.94 in 2007-2008, 43.98 in 2008-2009 to 45.43 in 2009-2010, a 4.86% increase from year one to year two of the study, a 3.30% increase from year two to year three of the study and a total increase of 7.68% across the three years of the study. Both the TBBottom50 and TBAggregate evidenced similar increases in mean initiate scores from year one to year two of the study, with only slight changes from year two to year three of the study. The TBBottom50 scores increased from 40.92 in 2007-2008 to 43.77 in 2008-2009, an increase of 6.96%. However, the scores decreased in 2009-2010 to 42.72, resulting in a net increase of only 4.40%. The TBAggregate scores increased from 40.56 in 2007-2008 to 43.21 in 2008-2009 to 43.28 in 2009-2010, an increase of 6.53% from year one to year two of the study, and a net increase of 6.71% across all three years of data. These data again support the impact of the LCALM on levels of self-awareness among all subjects. The two subject groups most fully participating in LCALM (TBI and TBTop50) showed not only the largest increases in scores from year one to year three of the study but also replicated progressive percentage increases in mean initiate scores from year one to year two.

The results of this study demonstrate the positive impact of Lambda Chi Alpha's educational programming and, specifically, of the LCALM intervention on the development of self-awareness. The mean degree of improvement coupled with the degree to which the LCALM was implemented suggests that these changes can be most directly attributed to the intervention itself.

Discussion and Implications

The current investigation evaluated the capacity for the LCALM to foster growth of self-awareness in a sample of college-aged men within in the context of an international men's fraternity. The LCALM is a specific learning model grounded in research from a number of fields including social learning (e.g., Bandura 1977; 1986), experiential learning (e.g., Kolb 1984), and identity development (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Erikson, 1968). Consistent with predictions, the researchers observed a systematic increase among individuals most utilizing the LCALM relative to their counterparts utilizing the LCALM less so.

These findings support the value of a specific learning model in the development of self-awareness among late adolescent males in the undergraduate, collegiate fraternity environment. Additionally, this study suggests the value of a developmentally focused educational curriculum, as developed by Lambda Chi Alpha, in supporting the maturation of this critical developmental capacity. No other literature uncovered has utilized this methodology to evaluate the efficacy of a specific learning model intervention, nor was any literature identified that empirically demonstrated the impact of

participation in an educational curriculum or learning model intervention within the context of an undergraduate college fraternity on the growth and maturation of its members.

In addition to the empirical support noted in the data analysis, numerous anecdotal reports also support the efficacy of the LCALM. Members from Lambda Chi Alpha chapters that most completely implemented the LCALM not only evidenced the largest increases in the development of self-awareness from association to initiation, but also evidenced the largest increases in mean point of initiation scores across each year of the study. In other words, each new cohort evidenced higher scores than the previous cohort. Considering the context of the undergraduate fraternity in which this study was conducted, this finding is consistent with research literature on transformative learning and the influence of peer groups. Research on transformative learning indicates that learning primarily occurs through continued interactions of interpersonal relationships (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991), while Astin (1993) describes how the immediate peer group (i.e., the fraternity) can shape one's beliefs, values, and behaviors.

Results from this study emphasize the positive impact of the LCALM and its process components in facilitating the development of self-awareness among late adolescent males. This model operationalizes recommendations from authorities (Harris & Harper, 2010) regarding the specific needs of men in this age group for support, mentoring, and developmentally focused educational interventions. The significant role of guided reflection and the opportunity to share thoughts, feelings, and emotions in a "safe" environment of peer and adult mentors is perhaps the greatest reason the LCALM had a positive impact on subject groups.

In a broader sense, the results of this study support the existing data about the continued malleability of factors related to the formation of the self during this critical developmental period. The targeted approach demonstrated in this research addresses how a range of positive influences can change an individual's capacity to introspect and become more self-conscious. The implications of this finding are exciting in demonstrating that this core capacity can be altered in a relatively brief period, in a fashion which increases the individual's ability to thoughtfully engage all the developmental processes which rely on the examination of one's inner experience and its relationship to others in the external world. By extension, this study extends numerous findings regarding individual development which indicate the centrality of self-awareness in the development of a broader sense of one's identity in the world. It supports the importance of this construct in many theories of student development and personal maturation.

Further, consistent with research literature on maturational development (e.g., Bandura, 1978; Erickson, 1968; Kegan, 1982; 1994) this study supports the importance of reflection as a core component in the development of self-awareness, which relates more generally to a consolidated sense of self. As Socrates observed centuries ago, the examined life offers opportunities for meaning not available when self-examination is neglected. The results of this study would further suggest that the development of an integrated and consistent sense of identity is an additional positive outcome that derives from reflective self-awareness.

In addition, these data support the role of symbolization through writing and speaking as a vehicle by which identity is integrated. Both interpersonal (e.g. Baxter Magolda, 2001) and cognitive models (e.g. Kohlberg, 1975) of identity formation emphasize the central role of intellectual processes internally developed and interpersonally shared as the consensual schemata on which the architecture of identity evolves. The LCALM combines internal meaning making with interpersonal communication

to provide the consolidating force for meaningful self-awareness and therefore for the meaningful evolution of the sense of self. These theoretical notions are broadly documented as important variables in the existing literature but seldom investigated in a fraternal setting or specifically addressed to the developmental tasks of late adolescents so central to the lives of college men.

After years of published literature challenging the social value of the college fraternity (e.g., Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport, & Castillo, 1995; Wechsler et al., 1996; Wechsler, Kuo, Lee, & Dowdall, 2000), it is significant to note and to substantiate with empirical data that this environment can serve as a positive developmental influence. These data make clear that the college fraternity can foster positive factors to support the maturation of its members in a fashion which has broad implications for personal maturity and capacity to assume a positive role in broader society. It is reassuring to find research support for more than a century of anecdotal evidence. Fraternity membership, when directed along the lines described in this study, can help young men to grow into fuller, healthier, and more mature adults and can provide the environment which facilitates positive personal development.

This research also underscores the positive potential of peer influence in fostering growth. Many models have called for the availability of peer role models to enhance personal adjustment and development. In particular, the sharing/mentoring aspects of the LCALM substantiate how these peer influences can reinforce and consolidate maturational accomplishments correlated with the development of positive identity in college-aged men. Further, it presents a model for meaningful and authentic communication which the stated values of the college fraternity should evoke but which stereotypic environments often thwart. When men can talk openly with other men about their inner-experience, their values and vulnerabilities, and their unique perceptions of the world they co-inhabit, extremely valuable processes which enhance individual maturation are potentiated. This social domain is the unique crucible of fraternal experience but one which has been seldom engaged for the purpose of promoting self-awareness.

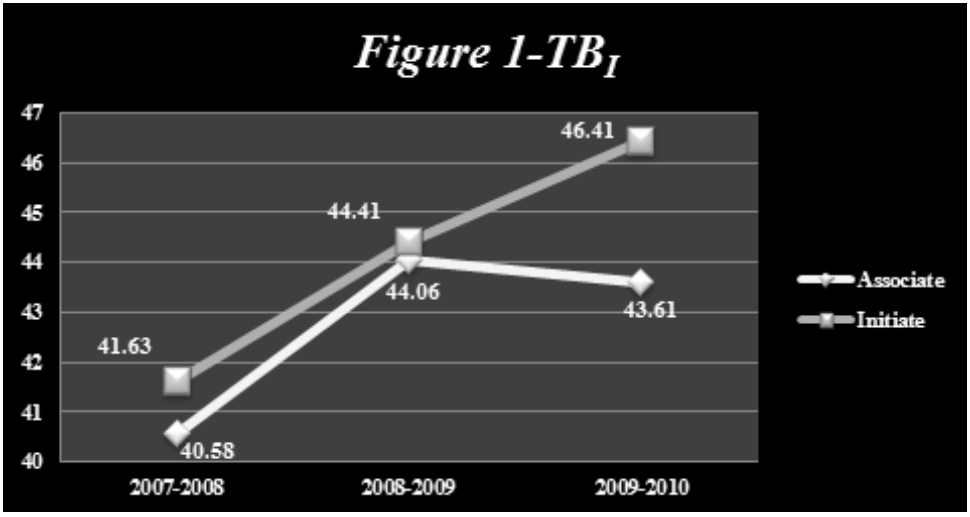
These findings suggest developmentally focused educational programming and learning interventions and, specifically, the LCALM and curriculum developed by Lambda Chi Alpha staff, can be a positive force in supporting maturation among college-aged men, particularly as related to the capacity for introspection and self-awareness. This approach to the collegiate fraternity and male student development also provides a vehicle through which developmental journeys can be positively impacted and allows for the role of the fraternity to evolve beyond that of social in nature.

To help realize the full capacity of the LCALM to positively influence emergent adulthood men, these findings call for additional research to determine the impact of this model on other developmental competencies and to clarify the elements and mechanisms that are responsible for the changes documented. Findings may also hold promise for applications in endless settings where adolescents and young adults meet in an interpersonally interactive environment with positive mentoring relationships. Future research is therefore advised to investigate the feasibility of one such education model in other contexts.

Conclusion

At a time when the undergraduate, collegiate fraternity is garnering increasing attention for negative attributes, harmful effects, and perpetuation of the hegemonic masculinity amongst the socio-ethnically privileged, there is an increasing need for interventions like the LCALM and for research to demonstrate the

efficacy of such educational programming and learning models. An intervention such as this not only reconceptualizes the role and mission of the undergraduate collegiate fraternity but also potentiates its ability to positively influence its members, the greater college campus, and all of society. The model demonstrates that the interpersonal environment of the college fraternity can be effectively used as a developmental crucible to foster growth and maturation among its members. The impact of such a finding can well be amplified with collaboration among faculty and administrators as well as fraternal movement stakeholders who share a common interest in the development of character, leadership, and personal maturation among all the students who we serve.



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