

Examining the Nature and Extent of Hazing at Five NCAA Division III Institutions and Considering the Implications for Prevention

David Kerschner

Elizabeth Allan

University of Maine

Building on the scholarship of Hoover (1999) and Allan and Madden (2008, 2012), we examined the nature and extent of hazing at five NCAA Division III institutions. NCAA Division III athletics has not been a focus of scholarly inquiry on the subject of hazing, despite documented accounts of athletes experiencing hazing and the outsized impact varsity athlete hazing can have on campus climate, given the high percentage of the student body at Division III institutions that may be at risk. Across the five institutions in this study, 40.9% of athletes experienced hazing, compared to 24.8% of non-athletes. The percentage of athletes that experienced hazing at the five Division III institutions ranged from 19.6% to 56.5%. Athletes experienced high-risk and abusive behaviors and were more likely than their non-athlete peers to have attitudes and perceptions supportive of hazing. These results indicate there is a need for research-informed hazing prevention strategies that can be utilized by Division III colleges and universities. Researchers can build upon these findings by continuing to examine hazing and factors predictive of hazing across institutional type within NCAA Division III.

On March 19, 2016, a 19-year-old Wheaton College (Illinois) football player who had recently transferred to the college was kidnapped from his dorm room by five of his teammates (Gutowski & St. Clair, 2017a). According to reports, the first-year athlete was punched, bound with duct tape, par-

tially stripped, and had his head covered with a pillowcase before being forced into a car. In the car, the kidnappers allegedly played Middle Eastern music and suggested Muslims wanted to assault the first-year athlete. The veteran athletes drove him to an unfamiliar off-campus baseball field, threw dirt on him, took his

cell phone and wallet, and left him stranded and underdressed in 45-degree weather (Gutowski & St Clair, 2017b; Stack & Hauser, 2017). Prior to midnight, the athlete reportedly made it to the emergency room and learned he had experienced muscle tears in both shoulders requiring surgery. Later withdrawing from Wheaton College, the first-year athlete was quoted as saying the hazing incident “had a devastating effect on my life. What was done to me should never occur in connection with a football program or any other activity” (Gutowski & St. Clair, 2017a).

In September 2017, the five athletes who kidnapped the first-year athlete were charged with aggravated battery, mob action, and unlawful restraint (Stack & Hauser, 2017). Wheaton College, a member of Division III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), suspended the five athletes from the fourth ranked football team and released a statement referring to hazing as unacceptable and counter to the institution’s values (Gutowski & St. Clair, 2017b; Stack & Hauser, 2017; Wheaton College, 2017). It is alleged, however, the institutional community knew about hazing and downplayed its severity prior to the lawsuit being filed. According to the first-year athlete’s lawyer, hazing was “an open secret at Wheaton College, a practice well-established and long-standing within the Wheaton College football program, handed down from class to class while the head coach and other adults, aware of the practice, looked the other way” (Gutowski & St. Clair, 2018). In the aftermath of the suspensions and charges, some

parents of Wheaton football athletes came forward and said they had previously heard about hazing associated with the program (Koop, 2017). Charged with felonies, each of the hazers eventually accepted plea deals, were convicted of misdemeanors, and completed community service. Wheaton College reached a confidential settlement with the first-year athlete (Ward, 2018, 2019).

This example of hazing at Wheaton College illustrates some of the effects college athlete hazing can have on individuals, teams, and postsecondary institutions. With more than 190,000 athletes participating in college athletics at the NCAA Division III level (NCAA, 2019), and varsity athletes more likely to experience hazing than their non-athlete peers (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008; Campo, Poulos, & Sipple, 2005), it is not surprising there have been recent public accounts of hazing at NCAA Division III institutions (e.g., Brogan, 2013; Dymski, 2012; Markham, 2016). Bowdoin College administrators, for example, reworked the institutional hazing policy in 2008 after discovering “mild and moderate hazing” occurred within the women’s squash and sailing programs. Later, the college vacated a 2010-2011 men’s hockey conference championship and cancelled the second half of the 2013 men’s tennis season due to hazing allegations involving alcohol (Brogan, 2013; Herz, 2008). SUNY Geneseo cancelled their 2012 women’s volleyball season after a report surfaced that returning players brought first-year athletes to an off-campus apartment, blindfolded and handcuffed them, and ordered them

to drink alcoholic beverages (Dymski, 2012). Middlebury College, the University of Mary Washington, and Ursinus College each cancelled swimming seasons or suspended swimmers for participating in hazing involving alcohol consumption and the Connecticut College student newspaper documented alcohol related hazing across several varsity athletics teams (Dorning, 2011; Keith, 2019; Markham, 2016; Mayer, 2006; Schwartzburg, 2010). Beyond hazing involving alcohol consumption, Salve Regina University investigated allegations of sexually inappropriate hazing in its football program. Furthermore, six members of the Claremont-Mudd-Scripps men's track team, some of whom were naked, were reported for stealing a photo of a runner from rival Pomona College, assaulting a student employee in the process (Borg, 2018; Hutchinson, 2018; Snowdon & Rod, 2018).

Problem Statement

Although these examples of hazing illustrate Division III athletes are at risk for experiencing potentially humiliating, degrading, or dangerous hazing activities, there is a dearth of scholarship focused on NCAA Division III athlete hazing experiences. Empirical research focused on hazing in NCAA college athletics has not often specified the divisional level of participants, instead hazing is typically analyzed from a cross-divisional perspective (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008; Van Raalte, Cornelius, Linder, & Brewer, 2007). Other researchers examining hazing in postsecondary athletics have

focused on university athletes in Canada (e.g., Bryshun & Young, 1999; Johnson, Guerrero, Holman, Chin, & Signer-Kroeker, 2018) or the United Kingdom (e.g., Anderson, McCormack, & Lee, 2012; Lafferty, Wakefield, & Brown, 2016).

Hoover (1999) concluded that NCAA Division III athletes experienced similar rates of hazing as their Division I and Division II peers, but the division has changed substantially in the two decades since these findings were published. Division III—the largest division of the NCAA, constituting approximately 40% of the association's overall membership—has experienced tremendous growth since 1990, expanding from 300 members to 449 members as many former National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) colleges and universities opted to join the NCAA (Lederman, 2008; NCAA, 2019; Powers, 2008). Much of this growth was realized between 1990 and 2008, with NCAA Division III membership increasing roughly seven institutions per year during this time. This expansion led to greater institutional and philosophical diversity within NCAA Division III, with newer members tending to support sponsoring fewer sports, lower overall student body sport participation rates, and increased levels of competitiveness (Lederman, 2008; Powers, 2008). Beaver (2014) documented the shifting landscape of Division III during this time and reported the addition of less selective, athlete enrollment-driven institutions. Miranda (2009) noted the variety of academic profiles and athletic philosophies of the

institutions comprising NCAA Division III after this growth, commented on the relative lack of empirical research focused on the division, and asserted that future research should focus on examining institutional differences and athlete outcomes within the division.

Given this membership growth, greater emphasis on competitiveness, and increase in institutional diversity in the two decades since Hoover's (1999) findings, research focused on hazing in the context of NCAA Division III athletics examining athlete experiences within the division, rather than comparing their experiences to their Division I and Division II peers, is warranted. We aimed to begin filling this gap by examining hazing experiences of athletes at five NCAA Division III institutions and sought to answer the following research questions: (a) What is the nature and extent of Division III athlete hazing experiences at these institutions? (b) Do athlete hazing experiences differ across these Division III campuses? (c) Do athletes at these Division III institutions have different hazing experiences than their non-athlete peers?

Relevant Literature

Hazing, defined by Hoover (1999) as "any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers, regardless of the person's willingness to participate" (p. 8)¹, is a form of interpersonal violence

¹ This definition has expanded since Hoover (1999) to include activities expected of someone joining or maintaining membership in a group. See Allan and Madden (2008, 2012).

that can interfere with the goals of post-secondary education and impede the benefits of participating in college athletics by threatening the health and safety of college athletes (Langford, 2004; Srabstein, 2008; Srabstein et al., 2008). Emotional, psychological, and physical harm are documented outcomes of hazing and, at times, the consequences of hazing can be lethal (Allan & Madden, 2008; Nuwer, 2018). Survey-based inquiries (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008; Hamilton, Scott, O'Sullivan, & LaChapelle, 2013; Hoover, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018; Waldron, 2015) in the United States and Canada have found: (a) college athletes experience hazing at high rates and/or rates higher than their non-athlete peers, with between 58% and 79% of athletes indicating they participated in behaviors meeting the definition of hazing; (b) college athletes participate in high-risk and abusive hazing behaviors (e.g., participation in a drinking game, drinking large amounts of alcohol, verbal abuse from other members, acting as a servant to other members, sleep deprivation, wearing embarrassing clothing); (c) hazing occurs across a range of collegiate athletic teams; (d) athletes perceive their coaches to have awareness of hazing and, at times, report that their coaches are present for the hazing activities; and (e) a gap exists between college athlete experiences of hazing and their ability to recognize and label those experiences as hazing (e.g., Hoover, 1999; Allan & Madden, 2008).

Hazing and gender is one area where scholars that have utilized quantitative

methods have not produced consistent results. Hoover (1999) and Allan & Madden (2008) found that male college athletes were more likely to experience hazing than female athletes. Hamilton et al. (2013) and McGlone (2010), however, found there was no difference related to hazing and gender and Waldron (2015) concluded that gender was not a statistically significant predictor of athlete participation in mild or severe hazing behaviors. Furthermore, Johnson et al. (2018) found that female college athletes were more likely to experience hazing. Hamilton and colleagues hypothesized that evolving attitudes related to gender, sexuality, and sport might be the cause for these divergent results. While gender norms, attitudes toward sexual identity, and the role of sport in society provide part of the rationale for college athlete hazing and explain the hazing behaviors athletes experience, researchers that have examined hazing in the context of college athletics have also concluded that hazing persists due to: (a) an incorrect belief that hazing is an effective method of developing team cohesion, (b) athlete inability to recognize hazing and unwillingness to report hazing, and (c) coaches and athletic administrators acting as barriers to hazing prevention (Campo et al., 2005; Caperchione & Holman, 2004; Kowalski & Waldron, 2010; McGlone, 2010; Van Raalte et al., 2007; Waldron & Kowalski, 2009).

Conceptual Framing

Our research sought to explore athlete hazing through the lenses of campus

ecology and campus climate. Campus climate refers to the “overall ethos or atmosphere of a college campus mediated by the extent to which individuals feel a sense of safety, belonging, engagement within the environment, and value as members of the community” (Renn & Patton, 2011, p. 248). Throughout this investigation, the concept of campus climate framed the design of data gathering and analysis related to current attitudes and perceptions about the institutional and organizational environment and perceptions of hazing at a particular campus. Given the diversity of Division III institutions, this inquiry was also designed to account for institutional context including institutional type, student demographics, and geographic location. Campus ecology, as adapted from a public health framework, informed our approach to the study design, analysis, and interpretation of data by exploring factors that may influence hazing at multiple levels of the campus environment including intrapersonal, interpersonal, group/organization, university, community, and societal (Dahlburg & Krug, 2002).

Methods

Bass and colleagues (2014) suggested that four types of Division III institutions exist: academically elite institutions, large public universities, mission-driven privates, and liberal arts colleges and universities (Katz, Pflieger, Schaeperkoetter, & Bass, 2015). Accordingly, the five institutions from which data were collected for this investigation included a

mission-driven private college located in the Midwest, a liberal arts college located in the West, a large public university in the Northeast, and two academically elite institutions in the Northeast. These institutions were selected from a larger group of colleges and universities that expressed an interest in assessing the nature and extent of hazing on their campuses between April 2013 and May 2018. Waldron (2016) commented on the importance of administrative approval for conducting hazing research in the context of athletics (i.e., administrators may not be willing to provide approval for participant recruitment because a) the research might reveal a major hazing issue or b) administrators might hold a belief that hazing is not an issue at their institution). Participating institutions were selected for inclusion in this study if they had NCAA Division III athletics programs. Undergraduate enrollment at each of the selected institutions ranged from approximately 1,500 to 5,500. Table 1 provides an overview of each of the institutions.

Sample

Each institution provided researchers with a random sample of student email addresses, representing at least 25% of their full-time undergraduate student population between the ages of 18-25. Participating colleges and universities provided samples that represented between 46.6% and 100% of their undergraduate student population, 67.7% overall across all five institutions. Surveys were administered for the five campuses and remained open for either a two or three-week period, depending on institutional needs. Campus response rates ranged from 13.0% to 43.6%, 26.5% overall, and exceeded response rates from previous examinations of hazing in a postsecondary context. Completion rates ranged from 68.2% to 84.3%, 72.1% overall, and are comparable to rates observed in previous studies (Allan & Madden, 2008; Allan, Kerschner, & Payne, 2019).

In aggregate, 2,999 students participated across the five Division III campuses. These participants were asked

Table 1

Institutional Overview

NCAA Division III Campus	Location	Undergrad Enrollment	Overall Athlete Percentage	Sample Athlete Percentage
Academically Elite Institution A	Northeast	1,900	34.2%	33.9%
Private Liberal Arts College	West	1,500	26.5%	25.0%
Academically Elite Institution B	Northeast	5,500	17.7%	15.2%
Mission-Driven Private College	Midwest	2,300	20.7%	31.5%
Large Public University	Northeast	5,500	9.9%	9.8%

which type of organization, group, or team they had been most involved with during their time on campus (e.g., varsity athletic team, fraternity or sorority, performing arts organization, academic club), referred to as their “primary organization” throughout the remainder of the survey. Some respondents indicated they had not belonged to any groups, organizations, or teams while on campus. Of the 2,505 respondents who identified a primary organization, 590 (23.6%) indicated their primary organization was a varsity athletic team and 1,915 (76.4%) indicated their primary organization was a group other than a varsity athletic team. Participants who selected varsity athletic team as their primary organization were not asked to specify the sports in which they participated in order to avoid potentially collecting personally identifiable information, shorten the length of the survey, and ensure a viable survey response rate compared to other student groups. Due to institutional constraints, demographic data regarding race/ethnicity and gender identity were not collected for the Mission-Driven Private College, but across the four institutions where demographic information were collected, 41.7% of varsity athletes identified as men, 58.3% identified as women,

and 0.0% identified as transgender. For non-varsity athletes, 30.8% identified as men, 68.4% identified as women, and 0.8% identified as transgender. Nearly 80 percent (78.9%) of varsity athletes identified as white and 21.1% of varsity athletes identified with a minoritized student population, whereas 70.1% of non-athletes indicated they were white and 29.9% belonged to minoritized student populations. Table 2 provides a summary of athlete and non-athlete respondent demographics.

The demographics of participants and characteristics of the site sample share commonalities with the overall demographics and composition of NCAA Division III. Site selection yielded five institutions that, when considered in the typology outlined by Bass et al. (2014), cover all the institutional types and much of the institutional diversity within the division. As with the entirety of NCAA Division III, participating institutions had a range of enrollments, scope, and missions and there is geographic diversity with institutions located in the Northeast, Midwest, and West. Furthermore, four of the five participating institutions are private, a percentage in line with the overall NCAA Division III figure of 80%. The athlete sample percentage

Table 2

Participant Demographic Overview

Demographic Item	Male Percentage	Female Percentage	Transgender Percentage	White Percentage	Minoritized Percentage
Varsity Athletes	41.7%	58.3%	0.0%	78.9%	21.1%
Non-Athletes	30.8%	68.4%	0.8%	70.1%	29.9%

(23.6%) at these Division III campuses closely mirrors the overall athlete percentage throughout NCAA Division III (25.0%), as does the percentage of white and minoritized students attending these institutions (“Division III 2018-2019 facts and figures,” 2018). One weakness of the sample, however, is the relatively low percentage of male athlete responses. Although male athletes comprise a higher percentage of athlete participants than the percentage of male non-athlete participants, this percentage (41.7%) is much lower than the percentage of male athletes throughout NCAA Division III (58.3%). Other researchers using survey-based inquiries to examine hazing in college athletics such as Waldron (2015) and Johnson et al. (2018) have had similar disproportionality. Table 3 provides an overview of sample athlete demographics compared to overall NCAA Division III demographics.

Instrument

A modified version of the National Survey of Student Hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008), amended to include questions examining students’ attitudes and beliefs about hazing, was used to

gather data for this investigation. After providing demographic information and selecting a primary organization, respondents were then given a list of behaviors which met Hoover’s (1999) definition of hazing and were asked if the behaviors happened to them as part of joining their varsity athletic team or participating in their non-varsity athletic team groups, organizations, and clubs. In total, the modified survey incorporated more than 100 data points related to student experiences with behaviors meeting the definition of hazing, student experiences with hazing prevention strategies, perceptions of hazing on campus, experiences with hazing prior to college, and attitudes and beliefs about hazing. Replicating methods used in previous studies of hazing (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2012; Allan et al., 2019; Hoover, 1999), the term “hazing” was not used in the survey invitation or until after students responded to which behaviors they had experienced as members of their groups, teams, and organizations in the survey.

Analysis

In response to the research questions guiding the investigation, data from 2,999

Table 3

Demographic Overview

Demographic Item	NCAA Division III Percentage	Athlete Sample Percentage
Male Athletes	58.3%	41.7%
Female Athletes	41.7%	58.3%
White Athletes	76.4%	78.9%
Minoritized Athletes	23.6%	21.1%
Overall Athlete Percentage	25.0%	23.6%

students across the five NCAA Division III campuses that completed the survey were first analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to aggregate databases generated by each institutional survey and to conduct basic descriptive statistics. Chi-square tests for independence were utilized to examine the relationship between categorical independent variables such as varsity athlete status, gender, and race and categorical dependent variables such as whether or not a student had experienced hazing and attitudes and perceptions of hazing. The descriptive statistics and basic inferential statistics were used to examine the nature and extent of Division III athlete hazing experiences and if athletes at the participating Division III campuses had different hazing experiences than their non-athlete peers, informing the findings subsequently presented.

Findings

Of the 2,505 students who indicated a primary organization at their NCAA Division III institution, 2,168 (86.5%) responded to the questions about specific behaviors they may have encountered to join or maintain membership in that primary team or organization. Of these respondents, 28.8% indicated they experienced at least one behavior

meeting the definition of hazing. Chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between varsity athlete status and students experiencing behaviors meeting the definition of hazing, $X^2(1, n=2,168)=50.779, p<0.001$. As noted in Table 4, 40.9% of varsity athletes experienced behaviors meeting the definition of hazing and 24.8% of non-varsity athletes (i.e., individuals belonging to primary organizations other than varsity athletic teams) experienced hazing. Varsity athletes (93.4%) were also statistically more likely than their non-varsity athlete peers (87.1%) to participate in non-hazing team-building / prevention activities such as participating in group outings led by trained professionals, attending alcohol-free functions, doing volunteer community service, and participating in facilitated ropes courses ($X^2(1, n=2,178)=69.164, p<0.001$).

Varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes experienced many of the same hazing behaviors most frequently, as noted in Table 5. The hazing behaviors varsity athletes most frequently experienced were participating in a drinking game (21.8%), attending a skit night or roast where other members were humiliated (13.2%), associating with specific people and not others (11.2%), singing or chanting in a public situation that is

Table 4

Hazing and NCAA Division III Varsity Athlete Status

Varsity Athlete Status	N	Number Experiencing Hazing	Percentage Experiencing Hazing
Varsity Athletes	541	221	40.9%
Non-Varsity Athletes	1,627	404	24.8%

not a related event (10.4%), and wearing embarrassing clothing (8.9%). There was a statistically significant relationship between varsity athlete status and experiencing hazing across 13 of the 35 hazing behaviors (37.1%) included in the survey. In order to join or maintain membership in their group, team, or organization, varsity athletes were statistically more likely than their non-varsity athlete peers to participate in the following activities:

- Attend a skit night or roast where other members were humiliated.
- Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not a part of a uniform.
- Get a tattoo or pierce a body part.
- Shave their head or other body parts.
- Associate with specific people and not others.

- Act as a personal servant to other members.
- Be nude or partially nude in front of a group or in a public place.
- Participate in a “kangaroo court” or mock trial.
- Be tied up, taped, or confined to a small space.
- Be dropped off in an unfamiliar location.
- Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage.
- Participate in a drinking game.
- Keep a tally of men or women with whom they had sex.

Non-varsity athletes were not statistically more likely than their NCAA Division III athlete peers to experience any hazing behaviors included in the survey.

Table 5

Most Frequently Experienced Athlete Hazing Behaviors

Behavior	Athlete Percentage	Non-Athlete Percentage
Participate in a drinking game	21.8%	9.0%
Attend a skit night or roast where other members are humiliated	13.2%	3.9%
Associate with specific people and not others	11.2%	7.8%
Sing or chant in a public situation that is not a related event	10.4%	7.9%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	8.9%	4.2%
Act as a personal servant to other members	8.0%	4.8%
Be yelled, screamed, or cursed at by other members	6.3%	5.3%
Be awakened at night by other members	4.8%	4.2%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	4.3%	1.5%
Dropped off in an unfamiliar location	4.1%	1.7%

Table 6

Hazing Variables with a Statistically Significant Relationship with Athlete Status

Variables	df	n	Chi-Square Value	p-value
Students experienced hazing joining their primary organization	1	2,168	50.779	<0.001
Students were aware of hazing activities prior to joining their primary organization	2	566	7.963	0.019
Alumni present during hazing	1	326	5.524	0.019
Students had heard of other groups hazing on campus	1	1,599	14.100	<0.001
Students indicate they were hazed to join or maintain participation in primary organization	2	1,606	16.579	<0.001

Athlete Hazing Experiences and Attitudes

Additional chi-square tests indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between varsity athlete status and several hazing variables, as illustrated in Table 6.

Varsity athletes (22.9%) responded that they were less likely than their non-athlete peers (34.1%) to be aware of the activities meeting the definition of hazing prior to joining their group, organization, or team. Furthermore, athletes were also statistically significantly less likely to indicate that alumni were present during hazing activities (24.8% of athletes indicated alumni were present, 37.8% of non-athletes indicated alumni were present) and that they had heard of other groups engaging in hazing on campus (72.1% of athletes, 81.0% of non-athletes). When asked directly, varsity athletes (6.9%) were more likely to indicate that they were hazed when joining their teams than other student respondents (4.0%). Finally, chi-square analyses indicated a statistically signifi-

cant relationship between varsity athlete status and attitudes towards hazing and perceptions of hazing, with athletes less likely than their non-athlete peers to agree with the following statements:

- It can be hazing even if someone agrees to participate.
- Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding.
- There is no good reason to haze new members of a group.
- Hazing is a problem on this campus.
- Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members.
- Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm.
- Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm.
- I do not need to be hazed to feel like I belong.
- I would be more likely to report hazing if I could do it anonymously.
- I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference.

Table 7

Varsity Athlete Attitudes and Beliefs about Hazing

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree > Disagree	Disagree > Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It can be hazing even if someone agrees to participate	20.8%	32.7%	18.6%	14.1%	8.8%	5.1%
Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding	33.8%	26.4%	18.2%	11.3%	4.9%	5.3%
There is no good reason to haze new members of a group	39.0%	26.7%	18.6%	7.2%	4.3%	4.1%
Hazing is a problem on this campus	6.2%	8.7%	13.7%	27.6%	25.9%	17.8%
Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members	33.9%	30.8%	18.0%	9.1%	5.0%	3.3%
Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm	38.4%	38.0%	13.8%	5.8%	1.7%	2.3%
Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm	45.5%	34.5%	12.6%	3.7%	1.7%	2.1%
I do not need to be hazed to feel like I belong to a group	58.9%	32.4%	5.8%	1.2%	0.4%	1.2%
I would be more likely to report hazing if I could do it anonymously	24.0%	26.9%	20.2%	11.6%	8.3%	9.1%
I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference	26.0%	31.7%	19.6%	7.7%	8.5%	6.5%

Table 8

Non-Varsity Athlete Attitudes and Beliefs about Hazing

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree > Disagree	Disagree > Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It can be hazing even if someone agrees to participate	34.9%	37.0%	14.5%	7.4%	3.2%	2.9%
Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding	43.5%	26.0%	14.2%	9.6%	4.3%	2.4%
There is no good reason to haze new members of a group	47.2%	29.2%	13.4%	5.8%	2.7%	1.7%
Hazing is a problem on this campus	10.1%	16.3%	24.1%	23.0%	15.5%	10.9%
Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members	43.1%	31.0%	14.5%	7.0%	3.0%	1.4%
Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm	53.7%	33.5%	8.3%	2.8%	1.3%	0.5%
Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm	60.9%	29.2%	6.7%	1.7%	0.9%	0.5%
I do not need to be hazed to feel like I belong to a group	70.4%	24.7%	3.5%	1.0%	0.3%	0.1%
I would be more likely to report hazing if I could do it anonymously	31.8%	31.0%	20.1%	6.8%	6.2%	4.1%
I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference	37.2%	33.7%	16.7%	4.7%	4.3%	3.4%

Athlete Hazing and NCAA Division III Institutions

Chi-square tests for independence also revealed a significant association between NCAA Division III campus and whether or not varsity athletes experienced hazing behaviors $\chi^2(4, n=541)=30.052, p<0.001$. Overall, 56.5% of athletes at Academically Elite Institution A, 42.4% of athletes at Private Liberal Arts College, 36.8% of athletes at Academically Elite Institution B, 35.2% of athletes at Mission Driven Private College, and 19.6% of athletes at Large Public University experienced behaviors meeting the definition of hazing. As shown in Table 9, varsity athletes at four out of the five NCAA Division III campuses were more likely to experience hazing than their non-varsity athlete peers. Athletes at Academically Elite Institutions A and B (4.7%) were more likely to indicate that they had participated in hazing someone else at their college

than their peers at Private Liberal Arts College (1.8%), Mission Driven Private College (0.5%), or Large Public University (1.8%).

Furthermore, there was a statistically significant relationship between institutional type and attitudes towards hazing and perceptions of hazing, with varsity athletes at academically elite institutions less likely, as illustrated in Table 10, to agree with the following statements:

- Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding.
- There is no good reason to haze new members of a group.
- Hazing is a problem on this campus.
- Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members.
- Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm.
- Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm.

Table 9

Hazing and NCAA Division III Campuses

NCAA Division III Campus	Athletes Experiencing Hazing	Percentage of Athletes Hazed	Non-Athletes Experiencing Hazing	Percentage of Non-Athletes Hazed
Academically Elite Institution A	91 / 161	56.5%	85 / 286	29.7%
Private Liberal Arts College	25 / 59	42.4%	60 / 162	37.0%
Academically Elite Institution B	14 / 38	36.8%	56 / 224	25.0%
Mission-Driven Private College	80 / 227	35.2%	92 / 494	18.6%
Large Public University	11 / 56	19.6%	111 / 469	23.7%

Table 10

Institutional Type and Varsity Athlete Attitudes and Beliefs about Hazing

Statement	Academically Elite Institutions % Agree	Private Liberal Arts College % Agree	Mission Driven Private % Agree	Large Public University % Agree
Hazing is not an effective way to create bonding	44.1%	64.3%	70.4%	71.2%
There is no good reason to haze new members of a group	53.1%	67.3%	72.8%	80.0%
Hazing is a problem on this campus	8.0%	14.3%	20.3%	18.4%
Hazing is not an effective way to initiate new members	54.0%	64.3%	70.4%	79.6%
Hazing is a problem because it can cause physical harm	73.9%	76.8%	76.2%	86.0%
Hazing is a problem because it can cause emotional harm	76.7%	78.6%	80.7%	90.0%
I would be more likely to report hazing if I thought it would make a difference	48.0%	66.1%	60.0%	73.5%

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

Athlete Hazing, Gender, and Race

Data on participant race and gender were collected at four of the five institutions participating in this study. We were unable to collect demographic information at the Mission Driven Private College where 35.2% of athletes overall experienced hazing behaviors. Across the four campuses where demographic information was collected, a slightly higher percentage of male varsity athletes (47.4%) experienced hazing behaviors

than female varsity athletes (43.1%), as illustrated in Table 11.

Chi-square analyses, however, revealed that this difference is not statistically significant $\chi^2(1, n=314)=0.566, p=0.452$ and that there were not statistically significant associations between gender and athlete experiences with hazing or between gender and athlete attitudes and perceptions of hazing. Furthermore, chi-square tests for independence also indicated that there were no statistically significant relationships between race and athlete hazing experiences, attitudes towards hazing, and perceptions of hazing.

Table 11

Varsity Athlete Hazing and Gender

Gender	N	Number Experiencing Hazing	Percentage Experiencing Hazing
Male Athletes	133	63	47.4%
Female Athletes	181	78	43.1%

Limitations

As previously stated, the demographic characteristics of the sample for this investigation were collected across four of the five participating institutions, with demographic data missing from the Mission Driven Private College. While the demographics of participants and characteristics of the sample share many commonalities with the overall demographics and composition of NCAA Division III, one limitation is that, across the four institutions where demographic data were collected, the percentage of athlete respondents who identified as men and women is not representative of the entire NCAA Division III athlete population. While this limitation may be mitigated by the fact that researchers have found male and female athletes to experience similar rates of hazing (Hamilton et al., 2013; McGlone, 2010; Waldron, 2015), it must be acknowledged. Additionally, given low response rates on some campuses, the length of time over which data were collected, and the fact that the institutions examined here account for 1.1% of the total institutional membership of NCAA Division III, data from this investigation may not be generalizable across the entire population

of NCAA Division III athletes. Finally, these findings are reflective of a subset of NCAA Division III institutions that demonstrated a willingness to commit resources toward assessing the nature and extent of hazing on their campuses and therefore may not be representative of all NCAA Division III institutions.

Discussion and Implications

NCAA Division III institutions have not traditionally been the subject of scholarly inquiry, despite being the largest NCAA division in number of institutions and athletes (“Division III 2018-2019 facts and figures,” 2018; Miranda, 2009). Previous researchers focused on athlete hazing in the United States have examined across NCAA divisions (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008; Van Raalte et al., 2007), with the notable exception of Hoover (1999) who concluded that athletes participating in NCAA Division III sports were equally as likely as their Division I and Division II peers to experience hazing. Given the membership growth, greater emphasis on competitiveness, and increase in institutional diversity NCAA Division III has experienced in the two decades since Hoover’s findings, further examination of hazing in the context of

NCAA Division III was warranted.

Our results are congruent with previous scholars who concluded: (a) athletes experience hazing at rates higher than their non-athlete peers (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008; Campo et al., 2005), (b) athletes are participating in high-risk and abusive hazing behaviors, (c) there is not a significant difference between the percentage of male and female athletes experiencing hazing (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2013; McGlone, 2010; Waldron, 2015), and (d) a gap exists between college athlete experiences of hazing and their ability to recognize and label those experiences as hazing (e.g., Hoover, 1999; Allan & Madden, 2008). Despite this gap, when asked directly, varsity athletes were significantly more likely than their peers to indicate they were hazed even though they were less likely than peers to be aware of potential hazing on their teams prior to joining. This finding might suggest these athletes were more skilled or willing to identify hazing or they were less likely than their peers to minimize it or justify it as “just a tradition” or “team bonding”, as documented in other investigations (Allan & Madden, 2008). Interestingly though, the findings also revealed that Division III athletes in this investigation were significantly less likely than their peers to agree with attitude and perception questions that support non-hazing behavior (e.g., “hazing is not an effective way to create bonding”) indicating athletes may be more tolerant of hazing. Taken together, these findings may indicate that having a foundational understanding about hazing, including

the ability and willingness to label hazing behavior when it occurs, does not necessarily translate to possessing attitudes and beliefs that are thought to support non-hazing behavior and environments. Given this, more research is needed to understand the relationship between hazing knowledge (e.g., gained from a training or reading a policy) and attitudes and beliefs associated with hazing behavior. In addition to these findings that illuminate the nature and extent of hazing at the individual and group levels of the socio-ecological framework, findings from this research indicate there are factors at the institutional level as well and we turn to this discussion next.

The findings from this study suggest the potential for athlete hazing experiences and beliefs about hazing to significantly vary across NCAA Division III institutions, and perhaps along the lines of institutional-type as well. In contrast to NCAA Division I institutions where athletes tend to account for a smaller percentage of the student population, the overall institutional hazing climate—as conceptualized by scholars such as Cress (2002) and Hart and Fellabaum (2008)—at NCAA Division III institutions may be amplified by the illustrated differences in athlete and non-athlete hazing experiences and beliefs about hazing. NCAA Division III athletes on average comprise 25% of the overall student body and may account for as much as 55% of the student population at some institutions (“Division III 2018-2019 facts and figures,” 2018). Given this, it is likely varsity athletes can have a significant impact on

the overall institutional hazing climate at NCAA Division III institutions. Scholars have noted the importance of targeting communities at-risk for interpersonal violence (e.g., Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007) and suggested the visible position athletes occupy on campus may afford them the status to encourage non-athlete peers to engage in prevention efforts (e.g., Banyard, Moynihan, & Crossman, 2009). Given this, we recommend practitioners prioritize this population with targeted prevention strategies that hold the potential to shift attitudes and change behaviors that are linked with hazing.

In the context of college athletics, hazing prevention is in nascent stages and literature evaluating prevention strategies is scarce (e.g., Capretto & Keeler, 2012; Johnson & Chin, 2016). Lessons learned from more established fields of prevention in college athletics and post-secondary contexts (e.g., sexual violence, binge drinking, and substance abuse) may be useful for Division III colleges and universities and provide a guide for hazing prevention. The campus ecology framework and established principles of prevention science (e.g., Dahlburg & Krug, 2002; Nation et al., 2003) provide lenses for practitioners to translate promising strategies from other fields to prevent college athlete hazing. For example, like other interpersonal violence prevention on college campuses, our findings underscore the importance of examining individual, group, and community factors when developing strategies for hazing prevention (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Dahl-

burg & Krug, 2002; Langford, 2004). Researchers have found media campaigns, bystander intervention trainings, and social norms messaging to be effective across individual, team, university community, and broader community levels for preventing interpersonal violence and substance misuse with college athletes (e.g., Doumas, Haustveit, & Coll, 2010; Hummer, LaBrie, & Lac, 2009; Moynihan, Banyard, Arnold, Eckstein, & Stapleton, 2010).

While designing prevention efforts specific to college athletes is vital, a comprehensive approach seeks to promote institution-wide transformation so the factors that support and shape hazing behavior broadly are shifted to support campus safety instead. As such, strategies to effect change among athletes should ideally be integrated within broader efforts to address hazing as a campus-wide phenomenon. As well, rather than a “one size fits all” approach, findings from prevention science point to a comprehensive approach to hazing prevention that emphasizes the importance of assessment and provides for a targeted and tailored approach by considering different levels of the campus social ecology.

Findings shared from this research indicate these five NCAA Division III institutions, despite their interest in assessing and preventing hazing on their campuses, continued to have issues with hazing in the context of intercollegiate athletics, albeit at rates lower than previously observed. While researchers such as Hoover (1999) and Allan and Madden (2008) found that close to 80% of ath-

letes experienced behaviors meeting the definition of hazing, the 40.9% of varsity athletes experiencing hazing in this study is congruent with several recent studies which have found between 50% and 58% of college athletes reporting hazing experiences (Johnson et al., 2018; Waldron, 2015), suggesting the need for further research to determine whether or not these results are limited to the context of institutions with concerted prevention efforts in place or if they represent larger shifts.

Providing an overview of NCAA Division III-focused research, Miranda (2009) noted that scholars examining athlete experiences in the division tended to be limited by inadequate sample sizes and unrepresentative groups. While not constrained by these limitations, given the previously outlined size and institutional diversity of Division III (Bass et al., 2014), assessing the nature and extent of athlete hazing at five colleges and universities is not sufficient to generalize results to the broader NCAA Division III population. Future research can seek to extend the preliminary findings shared here by broadening the number of institutions included in the data gathering pool, deepening analysis of hazing across institutional type within NCAA Division III, examining hazing across sports / sport type within the division, and gathering additional data on athlete perceptions of hazing experiences that can be used to inform social norms campaigns. Such research could lead to impactful hazing prevention strategies both with athletes and across the general student body.

In sum, while more research is warranted, this investigation helps fill gaps in the literature by exploring athlete hazing within NCAA Division III institutions specifically. Findings indicate that hazing continues to be a concern at these institutions, for both male and female athletes regardless of race, and that hazing may manifest differently depending on the type of DIII institution. While the findings may not be generalizable to all Division III institutions, the data suggest that, in order to support the health and safety of college students, hazing prevention is warranted at institutions with NCAA Division III athletes.

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