

Public Abstract

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Title:ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY OF SORORITY WOMEN: THE INTERPLAY OF BELONGING, APPEARANCE, REPRESENTATION AND INSTITUTIONAL MEANING

This research answers questions about the degree to which sorority women perform and connect physical appearance to their identities. This study also examines how sorority members incorporate appearance standards held by the larger culture, the collegiate Greek system, and/or their individual sorority in shaping their appearance, presentation, and representation of their chapter. The use of appearance as a method of demonstrating organizational membership and constructing group belonging are focal points of this research. Sorority women forge a sense of belonging as members of their organizations along several distinct fronts. This construction of an identity as a sorority member occurs through careful management of clothing, makeup, and body maintenance, as well as through actions during sorority recruitment and beyond. While sorority women use several interrelated strategies, no strategy dominates. Rather, all interconnections between appearance, actions, and identity are used equally to shape a woman's sense of belonging in her sorority and the Greek community as a whole.