The Dynamics of Interfaith Relationships

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[Signatures]

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to show a correlation and causation effect between interfaith relationships and three aspects of dating: age, education, and economic status. Unfortunately, there is little information about interfaith couples. The literature suggests correlation between dating aspects and interfaith relationships. However, it is not high enough to show causation. This paper analyzes the dating concepts, dynamics, and social forces working against interfaith relationships. The data was collected from Yahoo personal advertisements found within nine major regions of the United States (created from the GSS categories): Pacific, Mountain, West South Central, West North Central, East South Central, East North Central, New England, South Atlantic, and Middle Atlantic. Nine cities were chosen from each region along with the corresponding Yahoo personal advertising daters. The final sample resulted in 1,060 daters. There is a substantial amount of information regarding the dater’s preferences, personal attributes, and desires allowing for many variables to be coded and examined. The results of this analysis may be used as a foundation for future in depth research.
Introduction

Traditionally people have taken an endogamous approach when looking at interfaith dating. In the past it has been customary that one marries another with the same background as himself or herself, which is known as endogamy (Crohn, 1995). This allowed for harmony within the family (Crohn, 1995). As we advanced through history, we have steered away from this traditional custom and have created new social norms to account for the new ideology of the present times (Gordon, 1964).

According to Albert Gordon (1964), “The breakdown of old forms and patterns of behavior, so characteristic of our day, and the consequent growth of individualism must certainly be regarded as a factor contributing to the increase in mixed marriages” (p. 57). Today in America, we hold an individualistic philosophy. This ideology allows for personal choice of the individual and places the self with the utmost importance (Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995; Crohn, 1995). This individualistic outlook shapes the way we now look at interfaith relationships. Currently people accept exogamy within interfaith dating. There is now an emphasis on exploration and diversity instead of conformity (Crohn, 1995). Many people see interrelationships as enriching experiences (Crohn, 1995). In the United States, dating people of other faiths is not as contentious as in the past.

The intention of this research is to identify characteristics of those who participate in and accept interfaith dating through deductive nomothetic social research. Through the examination of the functions and types of dating we can better depict the attitudes toward religiously exogamous relationships. This research also deals with the individualistic ideology of the current American society. This is essential because it plays a crucial role in interfaith relationships. The ideology will be applied to religion and its counterpart; which is known as
spirituality. The label of “religious” or “spiritual” is a key component in interfaith romances. To evaluate the acceptance levels of interfaith dating among Americans, three theories were conceptualized based on assorted social variables: education, income, and age. This report will inform the outcome of the hypotheses built on these theories in relation to the acceptance of interfaith dating.

Literature Review

Functional Dating

People within the current American society are constantly being surrounded with the cosmopolitan ways of life. Not only can one check the personal ads in the local newspapers or speed date, the new trend has come to internet dating advertising. Now, one can join an online dating service that allows him or her to find a soul mate through just a few clicks. Dating is essential for people because it is the first step leading to a long intimate relationship (Cherlin, 2005; Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Prince, 1956; Gordon, 1964).

Dating is a crucial aspect of maturing in life (Crohn, 1995). Building intimate relationships is healthy to expand our interpersonal relationships as well as to allow our identity to grow and develop (Crohn, 1995). According to the popular trends, dating leads to marriage; it is the first step to lifelong commitment (Cherlin, 2005). Past research has placed an emphasis on mate selection, or spouse selection, over other aspects of the dating schema (Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Cherlin, 2005; Prince, 1956; Gordon, 1964).

The United States has a progressive point of view towards interrelationships (Jayson, 2006; Gordon, 1964). When personally questioned about whether or not one would date interreligiously we notice varying results (Prince, 1956; Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Gordon, 1964). Although people do not want to date or marry others of different faiths, many times they
find themselves in an interfaith relationship (Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Jayson, 2006; Prince, 1956).

Casual dating and serious dating are factors that greatly impact interfaith relationships (Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Cherlin, 2005; Prince, 1956). Many teens feel the ideal of dating is part of the process of finding a marital partner also known as serious dating. Serious dating leads to the partner becoming a potential marital spouse; it is also known as “going steady” (Prince, 1956; Cherlin, 2005; Markstrom-Adams, 1991). Studies have found that at this level of dating most people think it is not acceptable to date between faiths (Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Prince, 1956). Casual dating is dating for recreational motives (Cherlin, 2005). However, the relationship frequently does not proceed past this point. In this instance, interfaith dating is tolerable as long as one tries to convert the other to his or her own faith (Barnett, 1962; Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Prince, 1956).

Studies have revealed that individuals who belong to the same social unit are more likely to marry because they share the same practices and beliefs (Cavan, 1971; Cherlin, 2005; Prince, 1956). Previous work has addressed concerns of when to consider dating outside of one’s faith (Prince, 1956; Crohn, 1995). A choice is made after looking at every facet vigilantly with consideration of the effects. Conversely, who is likely to engage in interfaith romance is a question that has yet to be addressed.

Religion and Faith

In the United States, the individualism ideology has a great effect on religion and spirituality (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Tusting, 2005; Larson & Olson, 2006; Hughes & Dickson, 2005; Gordon, 1964). Religion is the set of beliefs, practices, rituals, and events that are common or shared with or among a group of people, thus creating a social
network (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Tusting, 2005; Larson & Olson, 2006; Hughes & Dickson, 2005). Nonetheless, there is a distinction between the institution of religion and the role of spirituality in people’s lives (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Tusting, 2005; Hughes & Dickson, 2005; Larson & Olson, 2006).

Spirituality is the individual’s divine beliefs particular to each person (Hughes & Dickson, 2005; Larson & Olson, 2006). The individual’s spirituality comes from the ideal of taking things from other religions that suit one’s personal needs the best (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Tusting, 2005; Hughes & Dickson, 2005; Coomes, 2004; Larson & Olson, 2006). It shapes the morals and standards of an individual, as well as his or her perception and outlook in daily situations (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Tusting, 2005; Hughes & Dickson, 2005). Since the individual’s main focus is inward in all aspects of life, so is the person’s spiritual outlook (Coomes, 2004).

Recently in the United States there has been a decline in the value of the institution of religion (Schwartz, 2000; Gordon, 1964; Larson & Olson, 2006). In many cases a lower priority has been placed on religious affiliation of those in one’s social network. Friends and lovers need to share the same morals and values but not the same religion. We must look beyond the individual and their spirituality; rather we must look at how the two people apply their spirituality in the relationship (Larson & Olson, 2006). Thus, people disregard their own religious affiliation and put less emphasis on the importance of their partner’s religious views as well (Gordon, 1964; Brody, n.d.; Larson & Olson, 2006; Hughes & Dickson, 2005).

**Education Theory**

Education leads people to believe and behave in a progressive way, especially when looking at the values of civil liberties (Gordon, 1964; Jayson, 2006; Link, Moore, Phelan, &
Stueve, 1995; Prince, 1956; Weil, 1982). This traditional ideology is only true when the "official culture" is based on liberal and progressive perspectives (Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995). Individualism is the ideology of the present American society (Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995; Crohn, 1995). There is an acknowledgment of the diversity and the rights of people to take an individualistic outlook on societal situations (Coomes, 2004; Gordon, 1964). This liberal ideology usually comes from the democratic structure of the political organization in a society (Weil, 1982; Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995; Gordon, 1964).

**Income Theory**

It has become the contemporary belief that higher education and income will lead to a willingness to intermarry (Crohn, 1995). The customary idea of the educational system is that through socialization one learns liberal or democratic values (Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995; Weil, 1982). Our education shapes our future viewpoint. Those without the capability to educate themselves or their children typically have different values, beliefs, and behaviors (Levit & Thayer, 1969; Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995). This has been called "working class authoritarianism" (Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995). This ideology is the belief in obedience and conventionality, especially to authority (Levit & Thayer, 1969; Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995). On the other hand, individuals in upper classes are able to afford higher education and therefore have the ability to work in an environment that encourages individuality and diversity (Barber, 1957; Levit & Thayer, 1969; Coleman & Rainwater, 1978). Those in the lower classes have less access to the higher education system. They usually work in an environment that encourages conformity and standardized laws, rather than diversity (Barber, 1957; Levit & Thayer, 1969; Coleman & Rainwater, 1978). As past research shows, the higher one is on the American social and economic classification ladder (i.e., upper class, middle class,
and lower class), the more liberal his/her views on institutional issues become. The highly educated are expected to be more open on the issue of interfaith marriage.

**Age Theory**

The “Millennial” generation consists of those born in the early 1980s and thereafter (Jayson, 2006). They are putting the idea of religion in the back of their minds and meeting people based on similar interests (Jayson, 2006).

There are those who feel that this diversity is harmful to our mores (Gordon, 1964; Jayson, 2006). Although the youth are making acquaintances with others from different backgrounds they are not looking at the big picture. Many people with diverse friends are still being condemnatory towards others outside their own ethnicity and religion (Jayson, 2006). They ignore the fact that their comrade is a part of the outsiders they discriminate against. They see him/her as an exception to their stance against the outsiders of their faith (Jayson, 2006).

There is a high percentage of the new generation that approve of diversity in the United States. This was apparent in 1964; according to Albert Gordon, in his book entitled *Interracial Marriage*, there is a growing acceptance of dating and marriage among those of different races, religious backgrounds, and other societal circumstances (p. 38). The forbearance towards diversity will continue to grow within the United States due to the increasing mixed population and the larger total of intermarriages we are observing throughout our society (Jayson, 2006). Therefore those who are younger are possibly more open to the idea of interfaith dating. Although one cannot accurately depict the “millennial” generation’s attitude on interfaith dating, a comparison of existing age differences may guide future research prospects.
There is not much research about interfaith dating; however, there is a substantial portion about interfaith marriages. Among the many challenges that the institution of marriage has faced these past few years, the trouble with interfaith marriage is a notable one. Those who engage in interfaith relations can face separation from the church, family, and loss of identity (Schwartz, 2000).

Church leaders and parental involvement influence the choices and views of interfaith daters. Church leaders are inclined to bluntly insist that there should be no dating across religions, while parents have a tendency to socialize their children to their values rather than demand their wishes (Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Barnett, 1962). Parents influence the social interactions rather than bluntly come out and demand their child date within the same religion (Prince, 1956).

When intermarrying, a person must be ready to detach from his/her family and build a new one, but psychologically we feel we must get approval from our kin before embarking on this journey (Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Gordon, 1964; Prince, 1956; Schwartz, 2000; Barnett, 1962). When approval is not granted, due to the partner’s faith, this usually leads to quarrels. Interfaith couples must face being ridiculed by family, friends, and religious leaders. If one converts to the other religion they feel they are abandoning their established religious community (Schwartz, 2000; Prince, 1956; Markstrom-Adams, 1991). Many times families are afraid of damnation upon the individual leaving, especially in the case of a family member (Schwartz, 2000; Barnett, 1962).

Some factors to consider when looking at the problems with interfaith relationships are the symbols, food, nonverbal communication, holidays, and terminology that is specific to each
partner’s culture (Schwartz, 2000; Hughes & Dickson, 2005; Barnett, 1962). The importance of understanding is the key to building intimacy (Schwartz, 2000; Hughes & Dickson, 2005). This gives both partners a feeling of identification and understanding between each other. When the couple comes from two different cultures, there is a lack of understanding that leads to less intimacy and ultimately leads to divorce.

Another force against interfaith dating is the ideal of social distance (Cavan, 1971; Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Barnett, 1962). Social distance refers to the social interaction gap between those in the inferior and superior socio-economic levels (Cavan, 1971; Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Hughes & Dickson, 2005; Barnett, 1962). There are two aspects that reinforce the principle of social distance: vertical social distance and horizontal social distance (Cavan, 1971). The vertical social distance, also known as stratification, is formed from a status hierarchy based on class, economic level, education, and occupation. The greater the difference in these social aspects, the less likely one is to intermarry (Cavan, 1971; Markstrom-Adams, 1991; Barnett, 1962). Horizontal social distance, or differentiation, refers to the idea that all are on the same plane, but hold different beliefs (Cavan, 1971). When looking at the overall effect of social distance, one can conclude that differences between a couple’s social status and religion lead to more social distance. If the couple holds the same social status, then religion would be the determining factor leading to marriage (Cavan, 1971; Markstrom-Adams, 1991). If the couple holds the same religious background, then the social status of the individuals would be the determining factor that leads to a marriage (Cavan, 1971).

The literature has shown that people who are more religiously devout are less likely to date or marry one of a different faith. However, we are still seeing a growth in interfaith relationships (Barnett, 1962; Hughes & Dickson, 2005).
Past Research

The central focus in past research has been on interfaith marriages. There is little information about the dating aspect of interfaith relationships (Larson & Olson, 2006). There is a great deal of information on interracial dating but there are many more aspects to take into consideration when dealing with religion (i.e., holidays, family ties, rituals, practices, morals, and children) (Schwartz, 2000). Current research has identified a correlation between religion and marital satisfaction, but there are no direct links to be precise (Hughes & Dickson, 2005; Larson & Olson, 2006). Many times people who are of the same faith background share similar marital problems as those who are in interfaith marriages (Larson & Olson, 2006). The only difference between those intermarried and those who are not is the aspect of religion in the relationship; therefore we tend to recognize their marital problems as unique.

With my research I hope to show the increase in interfaith dating acceptance. This will help give my peers a better idea of the interfaith dating probability.

Hypothesis

There are three variables that will be tested in relation to interfaith dating: education, income, and age. The first hypothesis of this research is that education and the acceptance of interfaith dating should have a positive correlation. According to the education theory, people who obtain a higher education are more accepting towards interfaith dating. This means that the data should support the relationships of those holding a higher education degree and the readiness to date outside of their faith.

The second hypothesis of this study is that income and the acceptance of interfaith dating should show a positive association. The income theory proposes the idea that the working environment has great influence on the general attitudes of people. Through socialization the
workers of each class approve the set values and principles for the assembly. Those within the economic upper class should be more tolerant towards interfaith dating. If this premise is true, then the research should illustrate that those who make a higher income should also be more compliant towards interfaith dating.

Finally, age and interfaith intimacy should have a positive relationship according to previous speculation. This hypothesis is based on the age theory. This study should provide evidence for the proposal that those who are younger in age are more accepting of interfaith relationships. Although we are not currently capable of examining the effects of the “millennial” generation, understanding the effects of the current younger people in our society can help lead future research.

Methodology

Participants & Materials

Content analysis is a frequently used methodology among researchers. This method of research provides a good representation of the general population and environmental realism. I utilized the content analysis research method while looking at Yahoo internet personal advertisements. This analysis allows for a limited comparison between interfaith daters to other daters. However, I cannot specify the interfaith dater’s identification traits; therefore I have not found any ethical or safety hazards.

The Yahoo personal advertisements were collected in June 2005. The daters were limited to those residing within the United States. After collecting all the daters, they were broken down into nine main regions (Pacific, Mountain, West South Central, West North Central, East South Central, East North Central, New England, South Atlantic, and Middle Atlantic) created from the General Social Survey (GSS) categories. The data was collected with a stratified sampling
technique. The largest city in each region was automatically selected. Then three cities with a population over 25,000 randomly selected from each region. Finally five cities with a population less than 25,000 were randomly selected from each region. Overall nine cities from each region were selected to provide a diverse sample. Within the largest populated city in each region, twenty males and twenty females were selected. Within the cities with a population over 25,000 five males and five females were selected for each region. Within the cities with a population less than 25,000, two males and two females were selected for each region. If there were no daters to account for in a selected city, a corresponding city, with the same population size, would be chosen along with the dater.

*Procedures*

To account for the lack of random sampling, the percentage of individuals in each region and the recorded size of the city according to the U.S. Census records were gathered. This information was used to weight the region and city sample gathered through the data collection. In order to account for the disproportionate numbers chosen in the larger cities, the number of people in the large cities was divided by 2.5 to weight the size of the population, the group with a population over 25,000 (medium group) was divided by 1.8, the small sample (the group with a population less than 25,000) was left alone due to the small population account. The final sample included 1,060 online daters.

When analyzing the Yahoo personal advertisements, the dater was able to not only list the traits that represented themselves, but they were able to include the traits that they were looking for in a partner. The dater filled out a form that included social and personal characteristics of themselves, as well as appealing traits for their prospective partners. These characteristics included age, sex, race, education, income, political orientation, and religion.
With the pre-coded data I compared traits of those who choose to date between faiths. The use of t-tests allowed for the significance between variables to be shown. I looked at three characteristics: age groups, economic levels, and educational background to see how these dynamics influence interfaith dating.

Results

The study shows that overall 70% (frequency of 1462) of the Yahoo daters said that they accept interfaith dating. About 29.1% do not accept interfaith dating (frequency of 602). Table I refers to all the daters and the comparisons between the attributes of education, income, and age. All of the variables in the figure were tested amongst the overall Yahoo daters.

The first variable that was tested was education. This division was separated into two different categories, those with a degree and those without. After assessing the difference in means of the attributes, there was no significance to be found. Those with a degree had an overall acceptance average of 69.3% and those without a degree had an acceptance average of 71.3% as shown in Table I. The difference between these two means is not significant enough to show a correlation between education and interfaith dating. Those within the two groups are probably as likely to date others outside of their faith.

The second variable to be tested was income. This group was divided into two different categories, those earning more than 50K and those earning less than 50K. There is not a high correlation between income and interfaith dating acceptance. Those making more than 50K showed an acceptance average of 77.4% and those making less than 50K showed an acceptance average of 72.3%. The difference between these two attributes is not significant enough to show a relationship.
Within the age class two categories were chosen, those who are forty and older and those who are under forty years old. This variable did show a slight relationship between age and the acceptance of interfaith dating. The acceptance mean of those 40 and over was 66.7% while those under 40 years old had an acceptance mean of 73.5%. There is a relationship between age and interfaith dating because of the significant probability value of 0.001 as shown in Table I. This tells us that those who are under 40 years old are possibly more liable to date individuals of diverse faiths. This slight association shows potential exploratory research.

Since there were no strong correlations found amongst all the daters, specifying a particular faction might help reduce a third variable causation. Christians are the largest religious group in the United States. By examining this group, there is a possibility of getting an enhanced analysis of how the three variables (education, income, and age) affect the approval of interfaith dating [refer to Table II].

The variable of education was tested again. This class was divided into the same two categories, those with a degree and those without. Even among Christians, education and interfaith dating do not show a correlation. Those holding a degree had an acceptance average of 31.1% while those with no degree had an acceptance average of 27.1% as revealed in Table II. There is no significant relationship because Christians in both groups are just as likely to date others outside of their faith.

The income variable was again divided into two different categories, those earning more than 50K and those earning less than 50K. When comparing the acceptance means of the two different categories of income, more than 50K – 30.5% and less than 50K – 25.8%, there was no correlation to be found. These results tell us that Christians in both of these categories are just as likely to date others outside of their faith.
The variable of age was tested again; however, the results were very different. The same two categories were chosen, those who are 40 and older and those who are under 40 years old as shown in Table II. With an acceptance average of 30% and 27.6%, there was no significant correlation. This tells us that Christians of all ages are similar in their attitudes towards interfaith dating.

Discussion

The literature leads to the idea that education and progressive viewpoints had a positive correlation (Gordon, 1964; Prince, 1956; Link, Moore, Phelan, Stueve; 1995; Levit & Thayer, 1969; Barber, 1957). After collecting all the data, there is not a strong relationship between education and interfaith dating. Those with a degree and those without, both from the Christian side and those from all backgrounds, were just as likely to date between faiths. This leads me to reject my hypothesis on the positive correlation between education and the acceptance of interfaith dating.

From the literature, we recognize that higher incomes lead to progressive morals and values (Barber, 1957; Coleman & Rainwater, 1978; Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995). Therefore, those with more than 50K should have had a strong relationship with interfaith dating. Both Christians and those from all backgrounds, showed there were no strong correlations to be found. The results show that my hypothesis on the positive correlation between income and the acceptance of interfaith dating is not valid.

When looking at income and education, both tie in together. The texts conclude that a higher education leads to more income than those without education (Barber, 1957; Coleman & Rainwater, 1978; Gordon, 1964; Levit & Thayer, 1969; Link, Moore, Phelan, & Stueve, 1995). Both of these factors should be looked at together in relationship to interfaith dating.
Although neither the education and income attribute demonstrated a strong correlation to interfaith dating, the aspect of age was unique. When comparing age among all the daters who said yes to interfaith dating, there was a significant relationship. Those under forty were more likely to date between faiths than those forty and older. Yet, this relationship may be due to other factors as well. The literature leads to the idea that those who are younger are more likely to date between faiths (Gordon, 1964; Jayson, 2006; Prince, 1956; Coomes, 2004). Only further research can attribute other factors in this relationship. Both education and income may play correlating roles in this relationship. When looking at Christians older than forty and under forty, they showed a similar likelihood to participate in interfaith relations. Therefore, when comparing age and daters who said yes to interfaith dating among Christians, there was not a strong relationship.

There are still other contributing factors that need to be examined in this relationship. Perhaps the mixture of casual and serious daters may have contributed to the non-significant data within the research. Also, this report cannot show the distinction between religion and spirituality applied to interfaith relationships, though we can tell that both structures are important to the individuals. This differentiation may be a basis for the approval of interfaith dating. Religion tends to have a more structured role in one’s life. This can bring tension when faced with an interfaith relationship. Dating is the first step to intimacy. By looking at this aspect instead of latter steps in relationship development (i.e., marriage, long term cohabitation) we have the ability to establish the roots of this social issue. Although age and income were not contributing factors towards the acceptance of interfaith dating, a more in depth study over this topic may uncover other factors that can explain this negative correlation. When looking at the
number of people in the study that said yes to participating in interfaith dating (1462 or 70%), we can tell that the number of people represents significant portions that need further examination.

Conclusion

The overall acceptance levels of interfaith dating were very strong among all the online daters. This implies that people are becoming more open to diversity. The results of this study show that there may be a trend within the younger generations of Americans that lead to the acceptance of interfaith romance. This study did not allow for an accurate depiction of the millennial generations attitude’s towards interfaith dating. However, one must take into account the age ranges that were examined. The millennial generation is made up of those who were born in the early 1980s and thereafter. This may explain why some of the results were not as significant as expected. The majority of the people analyzed in this study were older than the millennial generation. Their influence has been and is likely to continue to effect the younger generations. We can conclude from the findings that exogamous relationships are a growing trend.

People within the American culture are constantly being surrounded with the cosmopolitan ways of life. This lifestyle produces a post-modern philosophy that consistently encourages individuals to explore and try new things so that we can become more knowledgeable about the world. This is to help our inner awareness grow. The westernized interpretation of individualism is slowly transforming our social norms. The structured endogamous society of our culture is quickly changing to an exogamous one. As we can construe from this study, interfaith dating is likely to continue to be a part of that changing society.
Ideally a researcher should further this report through the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods; the validity and reliability of the study increases when there is a mixture of these two methods. This allows for a qualitative aspect within the study. This study was limited due to time, money, and resources. Future researchers should consider using a qualitative approach to this topic. With more resources, one should conduct self administered interviews with individuals and couples in interfaith relationships. This would allow for questions such as why people are likely to participate in interfaith dating and who is likely to participate in interfaith dating, to be specifically answered. It would also allow for the investigator to identify the characteristics of the individuals. In this type of research method, the researcher is at an advantage because he or she has more control over the data collection process.

In addition to the interviewing approach, one should consider national telephone or mail surveys. This would allow for a national probability sample that can be generalized to the U.S. population. This survey should deal with the types of dating styles, religious affiliations, age differences, and diversity acceptance questions. It is important to keep the questions relevant and unbiased. This technique will provide the researcher with more qualitative data. However, the characteristics of the subjects can be recorded and coded for the use of quantitative data as well. It would be ideal to provide information from past quantitative research studies so that the researcher can show growth or decline in relationships within the longitudinal studies. By analyzing the information given in previous surveys such as The National Survey of Families and Households, The National Longitudinal Surveys, and The General Social Survey, one can compare the general figures accumulated with the outcomes of their research. This allows the researcher to make the data more representative of the population and increases the validity and reliability.
Timeline

I will be researching with Dr. George Yancey throughout the rest of the year. I will be looking at the data provided by Dr. Yancey to conduct content analysis research about interfaith dating and its dynamics. I will be meeting with Dr. Yancey at least one hour a week to conduct our research. Then I will follow up our meeting with a conclusive review/writing period. I plan on presenting my work with Dr. Yancey at a national religion conference in the fall of 2007, the Great Plains Honors Council Meeting in the spring of 2008, as well as another undeclared national conference under the guidance of Dr. Susan Eve.
References


References Continued


References Continued


Table I

Comparison of Attributes in Education, Income, and Age Applied to the Acceptance of Interfaith Dating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>No Degree</td>
<td>1203</td>
<td>0.713 accept interfaith dating</td>
<td>0.453</td>
<td>No, 0.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>0.693 accept interfaith dating</td>
<td>0.462</td>
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<td>Income</td>
<td>Less than 50K</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>0.723 accept interfaith dating</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>No, 0.097</td>
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<td></td>
<td>More than 50K</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>0.774 accept interfaith dating</td>
<td>0.419</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>1265</td>
<td>0.735 accept interfaith dating</td>
<td>0.442</td>
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<td></td>
<td>40 or Older</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>0.667 accept interfaith dating</td>
<td>0.472</td>
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</table>

*N. = number, Std. = standard deviation, Sig. = significance (Yes or No)
Table II

Comparison of Attributes in Education, Income, and Age Applied to
the Acceptance of Interfaith Dating in Christians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>675</td>
<td>0.271 accept interfaith dating</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Degree</td>
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<td>0.311 accept interfaith dating</td>
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<td>Income</td>
<td>Less than 50K</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>0.258 accept interfaith dating</td>
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<td></td>
<td>More than 50K</td>
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<td>0.305 accept interfaith dating</td>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>0.300 accept interfaith dating</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>No, 0.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 or Older</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>0.276 accept interfaith dating</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N. = number, Std. = standard deviation, Sig. = significance (Yes or No)*