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Online Dating and Relationships On Campus: Gender, Religion, and Parental Marital Status Influencing Expectations and Experiences

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ONLINE DATING AND RELATIONSHIPS ON CAMPUS:
GENDER, RELIGION, AND PARENTAL MARITAL
STATUS INFLUENCING EXPECTATIONS AND
EXPERIENCES

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Advisor: Professor Timothy Stablein

* * * * *

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Honors in
the Department of Sociology

UNION COLLEGE
Schenectady, New York
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ABSTRACT

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ADVISOR: Timothy Stablein

Past research of college campus relationships and dating has found that gender, religion, and parental marital status may each play a role in determining expectations and experiences. Due to the recent popularity with online dating, I explore college student's expectations and experiences and the roles that gender, religion, and parental marital status play in this pursuit. An anonymous survey was sent to a random sample of 918 student e-mail addresses. Students were asked what they expected from online dating, and what the experiences have been like for those who have participated. The survey, containing both open and closed ended questions, was used to gain descriptive and exploratory information regarding the online dating culture on campus. Results indicate that contrary to gender stereotypes, males and females venture online for similar reasons while females have higher expectations to hook up on campus (through non-online meeting) than do males. Jewish students expected to meet other Jewish partners through online dating platforms more so than other religious affiliated students. Students with married parents expected to marry someone within the same religion and also expected to form serious relationships from on campus dating. Higher rates of students of divorced or separated parents expected "hooking up" (over forming a serious relationship) as an outcome of meeting others through online dating platforms. I discuss the implications of my findings in relation to the existing literature on these topics.

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INTRODUCTION

While traditional dating still exists, online dating has become more prevalent in society and on college campuses. Online dating has opened the doors towards a new type of dating experience on college campuses. However, a few questions about online dating remain. For example, do these relationships become serious or do they remain casual for participants and what factors (gender, age, race, parental divorce, religion) may shape one's choice to venture online to date for the reasons that they do? According to Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs (2006) "the online dating arena represents an opportunity to document changing cultural norms surrounding technology-mediated relationship formation and to gain insight into important aspects of online behavior" (415). Many students have become reliant on online dating applications and websites to meet others. Exploring this platform by which people meet will provide insight into the dating culture today on college campuses and the rationale for venturing online to meet others.

The purpose of this study is to explore the following topics regarding online dating and the dating culture at Union College. This new phenomenon has changed the ways in which individuals perceive dating and relationships. The intent of this study is to examine the rates and rationale for online dating among American college students between the ages of 18 and 22. I asked students what they expected from online dating, and what the experiences have been like for those who have engaged in online dating. A survey was used to gain descriptive and exploratory information regarding the online dating culture on campus. Analyzing these data will

enhance our understanding of relationships and whether demographical information correlates with expectations.

CHAPTER ONE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I. THE “HOOKUP CULTURE”

The dating culture today, with no surprise is dramatically different than it used to be. Whether or not this change is due to the increasingly high rate of social networking and online dating, this change is prevalent. Bogle (2008) notes:

Only yesterday boys and girls spoke of embracing and kissing (necking) as getting to first base. Second base was deep kissing, plus groping and fondling this and that. Third base was oral sex. Home plate was going all the way. That was yesterday. Here in the year of 2000 we can forget about necking. Today's boys and girls have never heard of anything that dainty. Today's first base is deep kissing, now known as tonsil hockey, plus groping and fondling this and that. Second base is oral sex. Third base is going all the way. Home plate is learning each other's names (p. 1).

The emphasis on sex through the media has become increasingly dominant in our society. Therefore, the once known traditional dating culture has transformed into something known as a hooking up culture (Bogle, 2008). Bogle (2008) notes that, “unlike previous generations, college students today are not forming relationship via dating” (p.2). She suggests that in this new hookup culture young people are postponing marriage, moving instead in greater number to college during the early years of adult life. Each of these factors contributes to the lack of traditional dating on college campuses (Bogle, 2008). Relationships on college campuses have drastically shifted towards a more impersonal type of dating experience; sometimes the emotional factors are eliminated completely, resulting in a “hookup culture”.

Previous research indicates that over the past few decades, students' attitudes and behaviors concerning casual sex or premarital sex have become more liberal over the years (Bogle, 2008). For example, a study, which focused on this new hookup terminology, found that

“three fourths of respondents agreed that a ‘hookup’ is ‘when a girl and a guy get together for a physical encounter and don’t necessarily expect anything further’” (Glenn and Marquardt, 2001, 4). According to this report, respondents said, “a hook up is anything ranging from kissing to having sex and that it takes place outside the context of commitment” (Ibid, 13). Many of the respondents from Bogle’s study also explained that hooking up usually occurs when both participants are either drinking or are drunk (Ibid, 2001). Moreover, when interviewing a student in their study, one reported, ““some people like hook up because they’re drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up”” (Ibid, 16).

It is with these results that we can begin to understand the evolution of dating in our society. Although it might be suggested that the term “hooking up” is a new term, according to Bogle’s (2008) analysis, this term has been around since the mid 1980’s. In fact, the shift from traditional dating began in the mid 1960s, when college students began “partying” and experiencing sexual encounters (Ibid, 2008). At this time, women were also more likely to be enrolled in college, a new phenomena that would change college campuses forever.

An age where alcohol and drugs became part of campus cultures, sexual encounters became more prevalent (Ibid, 2008). “The advent and increased availability of the birth control pill coupled with a liberalization of attitudes toward sexuality led to changes in what was socially acceptable to do sexually” (Ibid, 21). Evidently, the environments that we surround ourselves in play large roles in determining these romantic and sexual outcomes.

According to Glenn and Marquardt’s (2001) report regarding the hookup culture today, hookups take place in variety of settings. Respondents stated that hookups might take place in public spaces including bars, on the dance floor, or in dorms; these instances usually involve both participants to be intoxicated.

If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone... (and) drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing...and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs (p. 16).

Bogle states that our youth today are influenced by their social settings, peers and the era that our society is currently in (Bogle, 2008).

Bogle (2008) examines what might happen after the initial encounter of a hookup on college campuses. Both men and women expected nothing to come out of these sexual encounters. Bogle (2008) explains that, "no romantic relationship is directly pursued by either party, and their relationship returns to whatever they were to each other prior to the hookup" (39). Although students admit having no expectations regarding the aftermath of a hookup forming into a relationship, the reason the hookup culture still exists is because there is a possibility (Ibid, 2008). This slight possibility overrules the fact that college students are aware of the rarity of forming a relationship following a hookup. College students explained how their expectations decreased over their college years through experiences with the hookup culture (Ibid, 2008).

The environment might play an important role in determining the romantic lives of students on college campuses. Such factors contributing to the nature and various expectations of romantic lives might involve: gender, religion and the marital status of parents. The upbringing of a family and the values that a family upholds might determine these expectations and enhance our understanding of the hookup culture today.

i. Hooking Up and Religion

Many college campuses throughout the country are religiously affiliated. Therefore, a study analyzing religion and "hooking up" looked closely at these so-called religiously affiliated

schools to see if there was a correlation. With knowledge regarding the traditional views of Conservative Protestant and Catholic leadership, which emphasize on restrictions pertaining to contemporary dating and premarital sex, might influence the hookup culture within those religious affiliations (Burdette, Ellison, Hill, and Glenn, 2009). Thornton, et al (2007) suggests, “people who initiate romantics and sexual experiences early may decrease their religious commitment and become more approving of premarital sex, cohabitation, and divorce” (186). Some research indicates that highly religious adolescents might report fewer sexual partners later in their lives while other research finds that more religious teens might use less contraception (Burdette, Ellison, Hill, and Glenn, 2009). With a general lack of research on this subject, this study focused on independent variables such as: religious affiliation, religious service attendance, and subjective religiousness pertaining to young women on college campuses (Ibid, 2009).

The Burdette, Ellison, Hill, and Glenn (2009) study used casual physical encounters or “hooking up” as their dependent variable in order to understand hooking up on college campuses; religion was used as an independent variable in three different forms. This study found that Catholic college women are more likely to engage in physical encounters than women with no religious affiliations. Conversely, conservative Protestant women are less likely to “hook up” than women with no religious affiliation. Their last finding suggests that women who attend a college maintaining a Catholic affiliation have a higher likelihood of “hooking up” during their college careers (Ibid, 2009). Although this study lacks information regarding dating and what happens after “hooking up”, it is useful to know that the findings of this study portrayed a variety of results. Burdette et al (2009) states, “the startling finding that “hooking up” is much more common at some religious schools clearly invites further investigation of romantic and sexual

activity” (548). Therefore, religion might not play as large a role in the hookup culture and dating world as one might think.

Donna Freitas (2008) examined seven colleges and universities that were each religiously unique or not religiously affiliated schools. Students from these schools participated in online interviews, which questioned their religious and sexual experiences at college. A randomly selected number of the students who participated in the online survey were chosen to participate in face-to-face interviews with the researcher (Ibid, 2008). Findings suggested that Catholics were more lax about their religion and teachings about sex; evangelical colleges consisted of students who conformed to their Christian teachings about sex (Freitas, 2008). Although many non-religious students engaged in sexual encounters during college, it was rare to hear of a positive story regarding their experiences (Freitas, 2008).

Today, younger adults are attending fewer religious services; sociologists might say that this generation of young adults is simply less religious than previous generations (Brimeyer and Smith, 2012). “Except for Evangelicals, students who are affiliated with a religious tradition have disconnected their religious or spiritual consciousness from the choices they make about sex (Ibid, 464). The Brimeyer and Smith’s (2012) study focused on religion as a factor pertaining to hooking up on college campuses. Their results emphasized that Catholics are more likely to hookup in college; students who attend religious services and Protestant students are less likely to engage in sexual encounters (Ibid, 2012). As many young Protestants might take a literal interpretation of the Bible, relating specifically to premarital relationships, it seems sensible that these students would not participate in the hookup culture comparative to other less religious students. Freitas (2008) notes,

Students at evangelical campuses, by contrast, usually engage in social activities that have nothing to do with drinking or hooking

up, and they live in communities where all rules- including
parietals, which bar men and women not only from living in the
same residence hall but also from being in each other's rooms- are
strictly enforced (118).

Freitas (2008) found it common on Evangelical college campuses that men and women during their senior years had not yet experienced kissing or dating entirely. Of these students, many of them had been in long-term relationships exemplifying the impact of their religious faith (Ibid, 2008). The findings of Freitas (2008) and Brimeyer and Smith (2012), found that it is common for students to ignore their religious knowledge regarding sex and romance and therefore, engage in premarital sexual encounters; it is less common for Protestants to ignore their faith. Catholic schools and the values that they teach their students create an entirely different social scene between men and women where a hookup culture is eliminated entirely (Freitas. 2008). Students attending evangelical colleges are fully aware that officials monitor romantic relationships on campus, enforcing strict rules prohibiting various instances, which might lead to sexual behaviors between men and women (Ibid, 2008). Freitas' (2008) results found that "what matters most to either faith maturation or spiritual seeking at college is not so much whether an institution has a religious affiliation, but whether it has a religious campus culture" (213). Students attending religious colleges or universities where strict rules are enforced are less likely to engage in sexual behavior as well (Ibid, 2008). From these findings, religion and various values that students uphold play roles in determining whether students will engage in the hookup culture on college campuses.

ii. Hooking Up and Gender

In order to understand gender pertaining to the hookup culture today, it is crucial to explore the past. Heather Albanise's (2010) book, "Gender and Sexual Agency: How Young

People Make Choices About Sex” touches upon this exact topic. The 1950’s and 1960’s involved more conservative views towards sex, until the 1970s when the sexual revolution unleashed a new cultural standpoint towards sex (Albanise, 2010). Albanise (2010) notes, “of particular promise was the denunciation of the traditional sexual double standard, which chastised women for any sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage while for the most part ignoring men’s participation in such activities” (3). Changes during the sexual and feminist movements such as, the advancement of the birth control pill allowed society to differentiate sexual pleasure from reproduction (Ibid, 2010). “The social pressure to refuse pre-marital sex was quickly replaced with an equally heavy pressure to sexually experiment” (Ibid, 4). Although the feminist movement was successful in many ways, women today are still stigmatized towards the issue of sexuality, and the double standard still exists.

Maureen C. McHugh, a professor in Psychology taught a psychology of women class where she was able to gather opinions from students regarding the sexual double standard. She was able to gain an understanding as to whether the double standard was prevalent throughout the college campus. This double standard involves a skewed reaction towards women engaging in sexual behavior different to men. “For women, to engage in sexual acts casually and outside the confines of a serious relationship is perceived as inappropriate or immoral” (McHugh, Pearlson, and Poet, 2012). It is more likely that males will initiate hookups; however, as soon as women show any interest back, they are negated for their sexual encounters (Ibid, 2012). The women from Glenn and Marquardt’s (2001) study who stated their experiences regarding hooking up in college stated that many times they would hook up with a guy and feel awkward and hurt afterwards. It was unclear to many women what the guy expected, which was usually to hook up again with no strings attached (Glenn and Marquardt, 2001). Many women have felt

undermined by the hookup culture and by the power that they feel men have in deciding whether a hookup will turn into something more serious (Ibid, 2001). Although the sexual revolution and feminist movements have contributed towards women's equality, there are still stigmas towards gender inequality today.

Following the feminist movements of the 1970s, the AIDs epidemic of the 1980s shifted reactions towards sexuality yet again. This new epidemic brought a new light into the conservative views towards sexuality, because "sex suddenly had the power to kill" (Albanise, 4). The beginning of sexual education especially in college dorms became the new norm and today can begin as early as high school. Right wing activists dismissed the idea of enforcing sex education in public schools and therefore, the federal legislation supported abstinence-only curriculums (Albanise, 2010). "The abstinence-only curriculum simultaneously frames sex as sacred while highly risky and diseased" (Ibid, 5). Although this scare might have been thought to change sexual attitudes towards more traditional behaviors, it is just the opposite. Since the AIDs epidemic, our society has only "become dramatically more sexualized, bemoaned by many as an increased coarseness" (Ibid, 4). With new advancements in technology, the Internet and television have enhanced sexual imagery and therefore have lead to more assertive attitudes pertaining to sex (Ibid, 2010).

Many recent studies regarding gender and hooking up have looked specifically at women and their attitudes as opposed to men. This is due the dominance of women on college campuses today. "College women and their parents today more often feel that women should be prepared to support themselves" (Glenn and Marquardt, 10). This dramatic change in the ratio of women enrolled in colleges comparative to men has "reduced the opportunities for women to find desirable husbands at college (Ibid, 10). Since there are fewer men enrolled in colleges today, the

expectations of women regarding dating on college campuses might have shifted over the years as the enrollment of men has decreased.

Following the sexual revolution, the mating behavior on college campuses shifted from a conservative dating culture to a more sexualized hookup culture. “Sexual relations between unmarried men and women became much more socially acceptable” (Ibid, 10). Along with the sexual revolution was “*loco parentis*, a policy through which colleges and universities assumed some of the responsibility for college students that parents could no longer directly exercise” (Ibid, 11). This policy enforced separate dorms for women and men, where the rules for women were far stricter (Ibid, 2001). During the demise of these policies, the interaction between men and women on college campuses changed dramatically with the influence of coed colleges and dormitories (Ibid, 2001).

Another prevalent change portraying women and dating on college campuses relates directly to the age of women marrying for the first time. Glen and Marquardt (2001) found that “the median age of women marrying for the first time had risen to 25.1 in 2000, up from less than 20.8 in 1970” (11). These statistics portrayed that college educated women married about a year later than other women (Ibid, 12). Shockingly, 63 percent of respondents to this study reported that they would like to meet their future husbands while enrolled in college; however, it is not realistic according to the statistics regarding marriage that that will be the outcome for all respondents. The expectations of dating and forming serious relationships today are different than they used to be according to women.

Donna Freitas (2008) examines the different expectations and values among men and women regarding sex. Findings suggested that students participate in the hookup culture because it plays out in the forms of campus gossip and conversation (Freitas, 14). Through qualitative

research, Freitas (2008) found that, “students define hooking up as anything from making out one night to having oral sex with someone random to having sexual intercourse with someone with whom you have hook up many times before” (14). Although students conform to this behavior in college, most students feel like it is not normal after a while (Ibid, 2008). Freitas’ (2008) study found that “‘girls are expected to not make the first move - the guys are expected to. But then the girls get frustrated with guys for not wanting to make the first move, so there’s that tension’” (115). The majority of women gave men the power to initiate a further relationship; however, men were afraid to initiate anything further because that would come off as them wanting a serious relationship (Ibid, 2008). By granting men the role of initiating the first move, women are portraying men as uninterested when essentially men are afraid.

Previous research indicates that males have significantly more casual sex than females (Buss, 1988; Hill, 2002 as seen in Grello et al, 2010). As for the emotional aspect of intimacy, females are more emotionally invested than males; women portray sexual intercourse as an emotional investment, satisfying the needs of the man (Hill, 2002). Conversely, males engage in casual sex for peer status or popularity (Impett & Peplau as seen in Grello et al, 2010). Grello, Welsh, and Harper (2010) analyzed depressive symptoms between genders regarding casual sex. Their findings suggested that males reported the fewest symptoms of depression after casual sex and females reported the most (Ibid, 255). These results can be interpreted in a way that suggests that females are overall more emotionally invested in casual sex and therefore expect more out of males following the encounter than males expect out of females. It seems as though males participate in the hookup culture to maintain their statuses on the college campus.

Glenn and Marquardt (2001) identify the expectations regarding relationships as a phenomenon known as “wanting more” (18). In the traditional days of dating, men were

expected to risk rejection by asking the women out; the woman had the option to either pursue the date or reject the man. Findings from the Glen and Marquardt (2001) study stated, “in contrast, women today who hook up speak of feeling confused after the hook up because they do not know whether the guy will want a relationship, and most often it appears that he does not” (18). Due to the hookup culture today, women might feel degraded by men; however, their expectations might be higher since they are constantly wondering if the man will pursue a serious relationship or not. On the other hand, these expectations might deteriorate when women are constantly put in the position of feeling unsure after a hookup.

Respondents from the Glenn and Marquardt (2001) study were also asked why they “hookup” with boys knowing that there are no feelings involved. Women stated that hooking up was a stress releaser; some women blamed it on their self-esteem issues or depression (Ibid, 2001). Another major theme some women identified was that “hooking up is a way to avoid the hurt and rejection that can come from talking openly about feelings” (Ibid, 20). These results portray various opinions relating to the hookup culture; however, the majority of women expressed their hopes for marrying in the near future as well as meeting a husband while in college (Ibid, 30). Although many women felt degraded by various aspects of the hookup culture, women are still engaging in these sexual encounters with men. In the Eshbaugh and Gute (2008) study, which analyzed hookups and sexual regret among college women found that engaging in sexual intercourse once with someone and hooking up with someone less than 24 hours of meeting them were the two best predictors of regret in women.

Since findings suggest that women in college hope to have a husband in the near future, there might be certain expectations that arise among women who participate in the hookup culture; they might expect a hookup to turn into a serious relationship. Conversely, women

participating in the hookup culture admitted that they want to see what they like and what they don't like, allowing for experimentation and ultimately preparing for marriage (Glenn and Marquardt, 2001).

II. CONTEMPORARY ONLINE DATING

In 2002, online dating was a relatively new but fast evolving phenomenon in society. Approximately 75 times per month, users from match.com were marrying, increasing their success stories and ultimately the online dating business (Sullivan, 2002).

Attitudes regarding online dating were not always favorable; online dating was depicted as something that was not socially normative (Anderson, 2005).

Some people appear to hold neutral views on online relationships, however, attitudes overall are not favorable, and range from those people who perceive online relationships as tenuous connections formed by desperate people embarking on their last attempt at a romantic interlude to those people who view online relationships as being associated with deviant behaviors and practices such as pornography and cybersex (p. 521).

Anderson's (2005) study focused on various perceptions regarding online dating, when online dating was a relatively new phenomenon. These perceptions are useful for understanding the expectations regarding relationships and dating (Anderson, 2005). Earlier theories regarding online communication indicated that computer-mediated communication was impersonal, lacking non-verbal and contextual cues (Ibid, 2005). According to Anderson's study, other theorists argued "online relationships are just as real as other relationships and do indeed develop from impersonal to interpersonal associations" (522). The results from Anderson's (2005) study indicated that affinity of the Internet and amount of time spent online increases the likelihood of favorable perceptions of online relationships (Anderson, 521). According to Internet live statistics, over three billion Internet users exist today (internetlivestats.com). Since the Internet

and social networking sites have progressed since this study was written, it makes sense that online dating and perceptions of online dating sites have increased due to the popularity of the Internet. Online communication and networking has become socially normative in our society, increasing positive perceptions of online dating today.

i. Online Social Networking

Online dating, a form of social networking, is a way for individuals to expose themselves online and select others whom they find attractive. Our generation today has become quite reliant on social networking in the forms of facebook, twitter, tumblr, etc. Stevens and Morris (2007) found that “the Internet has connected us in ways that we are only just beginning to understand; individuals who may be able to see each other face to face only a few times a year are now able to keep in close contact” (680). “Online Social Networking on Campus” explores this rapid change in communication and a constant need to text, blog, and post photos online (Martinez and Wartman, 2009). College students today have been exposed to social networking for many years prior to their college experiences (Ibid, 2009). Students experience college life on the campus as well as through their online experiences; students are able to connect and expose their interests online for the entire campus to see. “Students use these sites to interact and bond with other students, to share experiences, and to participate in the new online college “community” that is understood by students to be real” (Martinez and Wartman, 4). These new forms of interactions through technology have changed the way students portray dating, which might contribute to various expectations that students have today regarding dating and online dating.

ii. How it Works?

The norms of online dating have become more prevalent in the dating culture today. A month contributed to dating and romance was when PC Magazine featured an article regarding this online dating phenomenon. The article guides the reader through different online dating experiences while providing dating options specific to the daters needs. First the article dives into the free mainstream online dating sites, such as OkCupid and PlentyOfFish, which appeals to individuals who do not wish to commit to a paid online service (Popolo and Griffith, 2014). PlentyOfFish has about 40 million “fish” eager to find their true match through the free dating website (Ibid, 2014). For more serious online daters, eager to find a soul mate will typically pay a fee for these services in order to ensure its effectiveness (Ibid, 2014). With 96 million registered users, Match.com has become a known name within dating services and offers both a free option as well as a paid option, which has more perks (Ibid, 2014). Offering a variety of online features, Match.com also markets its single population through hosting single events (Ibid, 2014).

Conversely, eHarmony, another well-known site for dating markets towards more marriage geared daters (Ibid, 2014). “The questionnaire is designed to identify dimensions of compatibility- on eHarmony, you don’t find your match, they find one for you” (Ibid, 95). With a more expensive fee, eHarmony caters towards more serious individuals hoping to find their soul mate.

For individuals who prefer to date in groups, grouper provides services to two groups of three. Since this dating service provides a group feel, there are no matches made previous to the meeting; it is the responsibility of the group to decide whether to continue or not (Ibid, 2014).

iii. Characteristics of Online Daters

In a study exploring the characteristics of individuals who visit online dating sites between the ages of 18 and 60 found that income and educational level were not predictors of

online daters. They found the most online daters to be between the ages of 30 and 50 (Valkenburg and Peter, 2007). Valkenburg and Peter (2007) stated, “a plausible explanation for this non-linear age effect is that it is relatively difficult for people of this age group to find a romantic partner via more traditional strategies” (851). From these single Internet users, 43% percent have visited a dating site before for the purpose of finding a romantic partner or dating (Ibid, 851) Divorcees, are the most active online daters comparative to all adult online daters. During the time that this study was published in 2007, the number of dating sites had increased by 17% across the world in two years (Ibid, 2007). Today, online dating is a lot more prevalent, transforming the online dating culture to applications on the iPhone such as Tinder, Hinge, and JDate. Mobile dating applications change the experience of online dating by allowing the participant to swipe through pictures of potential partners until they receive a compatible match that they find attractive. These applications are also free of charge and less invasive than an online dating website, which sometimes requires a monthly fee. Individuals will choose an online dating experience that is consistent with their own expectations or desires. Although online dating has become the popular form of dating today, traditional dating still exists (Thornton et al, 2007).

In the traditional sense of dating, men and women would meet in person and go out on a date. Thornton et al (2007) found that, early dating, going steady and sexual relations are correlated with higher rates of union formation (190). The study also found that young adults who have a past with non-marital sexual experiences, are more likely to transition into a cohabitating union and feel less inclined to marry in the future (Ibid, 186). “This strongly suggests that it is sex rather than going steady that leads to the choice of cohabitation over marriage” (Ibid, 193). Therefore, it is likely that college students who begin dating early for the

primary reason of hooking up or having sex, are more likely to prefer cohabitation over marriage in the future (Ibid, 2007). “Young adults with early and frequent sexual experience have clearly indicated an approval of non-marital sexual relationships, or, alternatively, their early and intense sexual relationships lead to more accepting attitudes” (Ibid, 208). Due to the lack of research regarding the expectations of college students and relationships, this study will help understand what students expect from their future relationships.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Since online dating is a relatively new phenomenon, it is crucial to identify the demographic characteristic of online daters. This information can give us a sociological perspective regarding online dating and can determine whether participants’ expectations are correlated with any of their demographic characteristics. This information will help explain the new dating culture today and how it has transformed from more traditional forms of dating and forming relationships on the larger scale. If we can explain individuals’ expectations regarding online dating and dating on college campuses through identifying correlated demographic factors, then we are closer to predicting the outcomes of these relationships.

i. Relationships of Children of Divorced Parents

Divorce rates today portray how prevalent divorce has become in our society. Clark-Stewart and Brentano (2006) explained, “today’s media coverage of divorce often gives the impression that divorce is a new and modern phenomenon. But this is not so. Divorce has been around as long as bad marriages” (1). Glen and Marquardt’s (2001) study analyzed women on college campuses with divorced parents and compared rates of divorce in 2001 to women half a century ago. Only seven percent of women had divorced parents by the time they were 16 during

the 1930s. Conversely, women examined for this study in 2001, found that 25 percent of women had divorced or separated parents (Glenn and Marquardt, 2001). The findings of Glen and Marquardt's (2001) study suggest that, "these changes have meant that college women today are less willing to rely on marriage for economic security, and have affected their attitudes about marriage and relationships in other ways as well" (10). Therefore, as divorce rates increase it is likely that the expectations to marry will decrease, as the likelihood of divorce is so high.

The increase in divorce rates correlates means that there is a rise in the number of children with divorced parents (Glick, 1979). Early studies regarding success rates of children of divorces parents found these children to have a lower academic achievement, conduct, physiological adjustment, self-concept, and social competence (Amato, 2000, 1277). Factors such as depression and anti-social personality traits were found among various children of divorced parents (Ibid, 2000). Amato (2000) "indicated that divorced custodial parents, compared with married parents, invest less time, are less supportive, have fewer rules, dispense harsher discipline, provide less supervision, and engage in more conflict with their children" (1279). Through research it is evident that the success rates of children of divorces parents depends on a variety of factors, making it impossible to predict the expectations of children of divorced parents. The results of this study will help to predict the outcomes and expectations regarding dating of children with divorced parents.

It is important to study the expectations of college students as they relate to their parents values and marital statuses. The influences of parents or primary caregivers might contribute to the expectations of young adults pertaining to the dating world. As seen in Thornton et al (2007). "positive attitudes toward marriage or cohabitation, coupled with social pressure or social support, increase the likelihood of marrying or cohabiting" (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Liefbroer

and de Jong Gierveld 1993; Vinokur-Kaplan 1978 as seen in Thornton et al, 12). Therefore, expectations regarding dating might be correlated with parents' attitudes and values. It does not only depend on the marital statuses of parents, but furthermore the values or religious beliefs that parents assert onto their offspring.

ii. Relationships and Religious Affiliation

Religious affiliations ought to be a significant factor pertaining to many relationships existing today. According to Lehrer (2004), this demographic factor portrays trends regarding the “effects on the economic and demographic behavior of individuals and families in the United States” (p. 707). Religion may affect an individual's choice of marital partner, divorce, and involvement in cohabitation or marriage (Lehrer, 2004). Previous research depicted the impact of religion on behavior, while Lehrer (2004) focused on the effect of religious affiliation. Becker (1981, as seen in Lehrer, 2004), analyzed factors that would make individuals more likely to engage in intermarriage relationships.

The most plausible explanation is that persons enter mixed marriages even though they anticipate a higher probability of divorce because they do not expect to do better by further search and waiting. Perhaps they were unlucky in their search and became pregnant, or have aged and fear a diminishing market.... Some persons enter mixed marriages not because they are unlucky but because they are inefficient at discovering suitable prospects or have other characteristics that lower their expected gains from marriage (p. 232).

Therefore, religious affiliation as a factor pertaining to marriage might also depend on the age of the individual seeking a partner and their expectations of their future relationships.

Religious affiliation is prevalent among marriage statistics assuming that many individuals choose significant others based on his/her religious beliefs similar to their own. The 1987-88 National Survey of Families and Households found that unstable intermarriages

included spouses with two very different religions (Lehrer, 2004). In order to gain a better understanding as to why college students choose or decide not to choose to be in relationships based on religious affiliations, knowing the impact of parents and family values might determine this correlation (Thornton et al, 2007). Thornton et al (2007) analyzed this relationship and stated, “historically, the family has been involved in almost all activities of human life, including, but not limited to production, consumption, reproduction, parenting, social relations, governance, religion, and leisure” (Thornton et al, 3). Due to the impact of the family on values and decisions, it seems likely that the religious affiliations of parents are closely correlated with their children’s’ religious choices later in life.

As seen in Lehrer (2004), religious affiliation is correlated with an individuals’ decision to enter into marriage or cohabitation. Protestant and Mormon women have a higher desire to enter marriage early due to their high fertility rates and work in the home (Lehrer, 2004). Conversely, Jewish women are less likely to enter marriage early due to their low levels of fertility and higher levels of educational achievement (Lehrer, 2004). Mormons were found to be less likely to engage in cohabitation than individuals with no religious affiliation, consistent with the idea that religion influences behaviors (Lehrer, 2004).

It might be true that young adults feel pressure to please their parents and therefore follow their religious beliefs and values and assert them onto their relationships in the future (Thornton et al, 2007). Results of the Thornton et al study indicate that the religiosity of the paternal and maternal figures have similar effects on the children’s rates of union formation (Thornton et al, 222). “Young people with strong connections and commitments to religious institutions enter marriage and cohabitations differently than those with weak connections and commitments” (Thornton et al, 223). These results suggest that young people who are highly

religious are more likely to choose marriage over cohabitation in the future, which applies to both genders across all major religious denominations (Thornton et al, 223). Findings also indicate that religiosity is weakest when a couple is already engaged or married and strongest when a couple has not yet made plans (Thornton et al, 2007). Therefore, if young adults have a strong religious upbringing and commitments, it is likely that they will assert those religious traditions onto their families.

Depending on the religiosity of previous generations of families can help predict the religiosity of the present generation of children. “It is this transmission of religiosity across generations and its persistence across time within generations that makes grandparents and parents religiosity such important influences on children’s union-formation experiences” (Thornton et al, 223). Therefore, it is common that grandchildren are less religious than their grandparents (Thornton et al, 2007).

According to national statistics on marriage and cohabitation in recent decades, religion decreased in importance during the 1960s and 1970s (Thornton et al, 2007). “At the same time, cohabitation emerged as a new coresidential choice and the marriage rate fell substantially” (Thornton et al, 224). Highly religious young adults are more likely to be married while non-religious young adults have higher rates of cohabitation. Religion therefore plays an important role in predicting the future relationship statuses of young adults.

IV. THIS STUDY

Although traditional dating still exists, online dating has become extremely prevalent and has opened the doors towards a new type of dating experience. We have knowledge regarding the roles that religious affiliation and parental divorce play in decisions to date, hook-up, form long-term relationships, and marry. Previous research lacks information pertaining to the role

that religion and parental divorce might play in influencing the online dating experience, decisions to participate in the hook-up culture, and expectations of online dating. Moreover, studies of traditional dating and the hook-up culture in general have found that men and women have different experiences and offer different reasons and rationale for dating and hooking up. However, we know less about how one's gender influences decisions to date online, their rationale to do so, and ultimately the experience they have when dating through these new mediums. Therefore, this study focuses on whether gender, religious affiliation, and parental divorce mediate perceptions of online dating experiences among young adult users today.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the rates and rationale for online dating among American college students between the ages of 18 and 22. Students were asked what they expect from online dating, and what the experiences have been like for those who have engaged in online dating. Do these relationships become serious or do they remain casual for participants and what factors (gender, age, race, parental divorce, religion) may influence or predict one's choice to venture online to date for the reasons that they do? Many students have become reliant on online dating applications and websites to meet others. Exploring this platform by which people meet will provide insight into the dating culture today on college campuses and the rationale for venturing online to meet others.

An online survey was created using Google forms. Participants were given an informed consent page before completing the survey. The Collegiate Humans Subject Board approved both the survey and the consent form. These documents can be accessed in the attached appendix. The online survey was emailed to a random sample of 500 students, granted by the Office of the Registrar. Students were e-mailed an invitation to participate in the survey along with a link to the survey site. A week later another email was sent to the same sample requesting participation in the study. Since I wanted more responses, the Office of the Registrar granted me another random sample of 500 students. Since the Registrar could not guarantee that there would not be duplicates from the first list on the second list, I went through the second list to delete any duplicates, which left me with a sample of 418 students. I sent an email to the second sample twice within a two-week span. With a sample size of 918, I had more respondents and data to

analyze. Participation in the survey was anonymous. Email addresses were not recorded or linked to survey responses via the survey site.

I. INFORMED CONSENT

On the first page of the online survey, respondents were asked to click continue only if they agreed to the informed consent portion. Participants were told that the survey would take approximately ten minutes to complete and would be anonymous so that their names would not be linked to their emails. They were told the types of questions that they would be asked and that they would not have to answer any questions that they felt uncomfortable answering. The form also stated that they were allowed to opt out of the survey at any point.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of the questions asked was to gain exploratory information from the respondents and to analyze them as a descriptive study. The first part of the survey asked questions about demographic information, such as: gender, sexuality, race, age, and religious affiliations. The second page asked whether or not the participant had ever used an online dating website or application before. If the participant selected yes, then the participant was asked numerous questions regarding their experience/s using such sites and their expectations for venturing online. If participants said that they had never online dated, then they were asked questions about the dating culture here on campus. Participants who had ventured online were also asked questions about campus dating and relationships. Both of these pages provided opportunities to elaborate on certain experiences.

After participants were asked questions about online dating or dating on campus, they were asked several questions about their family and their background, including: parental

relationship statuses, religious beliefs of parents, and whether participants had siblings. If the participant stated that their parents were separated or divorced, then they were brought to a page, which asked questions about the divorce (how old they were, whether their parents got remarried, if they had stepbrothers or stepsisters, and their relationships with their parents or stepparents).

Following the questions regarding their family and background, participants were asked questions about their expectations for future relationships (do they expect to be married in the future or marry someone with the same religious beliefs).

Google Forms collected the anonymous data into an Excel spreadsheet within Google Drive, which also provided a statistical analysis per question. Data was then divided into two spreadsheets, which contained online daters and non-online daters. This organized the analysis in a systematic way.

III. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 918 students who received the survey, 156 responded. There was a 16.9% response rate. Sixty-percent of respondents were female and forty-percent of respondents were male. Only four-percent of respondents classified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. The majority of respondents were white (eighty-four percent) followed by non-white (twelve percent). Four percent of respondents left this question blank.

Ninety-three percent of participants were heterosexual followed by six percent who were bisexual. Only two students identified themselves as gay or lesbian. According to class year, fifty-eight percent were seniors, twenty-four percent were juniors, eleven percent were freshman, and seven percent were sophomores. The ages of respondents ranged from eighteen to twenty-three years old. The majority of respondents (forty-nine percent) were born in 1993 (twenty-two

years old). As for religious affiliations, the majority of respondents identified themselves as Christian (forty-six percent), followed by Jewish (twenty-three percent), and twenty-seven percent were in the “other” category. Four percent of respondents left this question blank. The distributions for gender, race, ethnicity, class year, sexuality, age, religion and parents’ marital statuses can be found in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Variables such as: race/ethnicity, religious affiliation, and parents’ marital statuses were regrouped because there were too many categories containing too few respondents. Respondents who identified themselves as Indian, Hawaiian, Asian, or Black were re-grouped as non-whites since their pool of respondents were extremely low. With regard to religious affiliation, participants who classified themselves as Catholic, Christian, Quaker, or Unitarian Universalist were regrouped under the Christian category. “Others” included anyone who responded Agnostic, Atheist, Hindu, Muslim, or none. According to parents’ marital/relationship statuses, eighty-one percent of parents were married, seventeen percent were divorced or separated and three percent were deceased. Respondents who said their parents’ marital status were complicated or in a long-term relationship were regrouped as “married”.

TABLE 1: GENDER OF RESPONDENT

Count of Are you male or female?	
Row Labels	Total
Female	59.62%
Male	40.38%
Grand Total	100.00%

TABLE 2: RACE/ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENT

Hispanic or Latino	
Row Labels	Total
No	95.51%
Yes	4.49%
Grand Total	100.00%

TABLE 3: RACE/ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENT

Hispanic or Latino	
Row Labels	Total
No	95.51%
Yes	4.49%
Grand Total	100.00%

TABLE 4: CLASS YEAR OF RESPONDENT

School Grade	
Row Labels	Total
Freshman	10.90%
Junior	23.72%
Senior	58.33%
Sophomore	7.05%
Grand Total	100.00%

TABLE 5: SEXUALITY OF RESPONDENT

Sexuality	
Row Labels	Total
Bisexual	5.77%
Gay	0.64%
Lesbian	0.64%
Straight	92.95%
Grand Total	100.00%

TABLE 6: AGE OF RESPONDENT

Year Born	
Row Labels	Total
1991	0.64%
1992	14.10%
1993	48.72%
1994	17.95%
1995	8.33%
1996	7.69%
1997	0.64%
Blank	1.92%
Grand Total	100.00%

TABLE 7: RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF RESPONDENT

Religion	
Row Labels	Total
Blank	3.85%
Christian	46.15%
Jewish	23.08%
Other	26.92%
Grand Total	100.00%

TABLE 8: PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS'

Count of Marital Status	
Row Labels	Total
Deceased	2.56%
Divorced/Separated	16.67%
Married	80.77%
Grand Total	100.00%

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

I. GENDER: ONLINE DATING AND CAMPUS DATING

Respondents were asked whether they have ever used an online dating website or application before. Out of 156 respondents, only thirty seven percent claimed that they had used an online dating website or application before. With these statistics we can see that online dating is not extremely prevalent among students on campus; however, we can still analyze those respondents who have ventured online.

TABLE 9: GENDER AND RATES OF ONLINE DATING

Gender	Online Daters		Grand Total
	No	Yes	
Female	68.82%	31.18%	100.00%
Male	53.97%	46.03%	100.00%
Grand Total	62.82%	37.18%	100.00%

The majority of both males and females have not used online dating applications or websites before. We can see that more males have ventured online than females by fifteen percent. This might tell us that males are more eager to meet a significant other than females. As we will see in the following tables and results, more males seem to venture online, but ultimately when men and women do go online they use it for the same reasons.

i. Gender and Reasons for Online Dating

Respondents, who had stated that they had online dated before, were asked a series of questions regarding their experiences with these sites. Below are tables, which provide information regarding the reasons why people venture online. They were asked to rank reasons

for online dating such as: for dating, for hooking up, for exploring, and for “other” reasons.

Rankings ranged from 1 being the more important through 4 being the least important reason.

Tables 10, 11, 12, and 13 analyze gender differences among the reasons for why people choose the online date.

TABLE 10: GENDER AND ONLINE DATING FOR THE PURPOSE OF DATING

Count of Are you male or female?	Dating					Grand
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Total
Female	20.69%	13.79%	37.93%	24.14%	3.45%	100.00%
Male	24.14%	13.79%	17.24%	41.38%	3.45%	100.00%
Grand Total	22.41%	13.79%	27.59%	32.76%	3.45%	100.00%

The majority of males and females ranked reasons for online dating for the purpose of dating as less important than other options. More males than females ranked dating as an important reason to venture online.

TABLE 11: GENDER AND ONLINE DATING FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOOKING UP

Count of Are you male or female?	Hooking Up					Grand
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Total
Female	24.14%	17.24%	24.14%	31.03%	3.45%	100.00%
Male	20.69%	27.59%	27.59%	24.14%	0.00%	100.00%
Grand Total	22.41%	22.41%	25.86%	27.59%	1.72%	100.00%

Males ranked hooking up as the reason to online date as higher than females. Overall, the majority of genders ranked hooking up as a less important reason to online date.

TABLE 12: GENDER AND ONLINE DATING FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPLORING/CURIOSITY

Count of Are you male or female?	Exploring/Curiosity					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Total
Female	34.48%	31.03%	13.79%	20.69%	0.00%	100.00%
Male	24.14%	34.48%	20.69%	17.24%	3.45%	100.00%
Grand Total	29.31%	32.76%	17.24%	18.97%	1.72%	100.00%

There were no prevalent gender differences for the reasons of exploring and curiosity.

Both males and females ranked this as an important reason for venturing online. Females ranked this as an important reason slightly higher than males.

TABLE 13: GENDER AND ONLINE DATING FOR THE PURPOSE OF “OTHER”

Count of Are you male or female?	Other					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Total
Female	17.24%	27.59%	20.69%	17.24%	17.24%	100.00%
Male	24.14%	20.69%	31.03%	13.79%	10.34%	100.00%
Grand Total	20.69%	24.14%	25.86%	15.52%	13.79%	100.00%

Both genders selected “other” as an important reason for online dating. Respondents were able to elaborate on these “other” reasons for online dating in the following question on the survey. Some males and females stated that they ventured online because they were bored, for entertainment or because they thought it was funny. Some respondents (male and female) also stated that they were curious about what these websites and applications involved. One respondent said, “I used tinder to explore the interface of the application and to understand what makes it so appealing”. One male and one female said that they online dated because it was a fun drinking game.

The opportunity for respondents to express their own reasons for online dating provided some insight about gender differences. Males typically stated that they thought online dating was funny, entertaining, and could lead to casual sexual relationships. Females also said that it was entertaining and funny; however, some said that they wanted to find a relationship or that they were frustrated with the guys that they knew. One female stated, “I felt like the guys around me weren’t what I was looking for in a potential partner. Frustration I guess?” Another female said, “I had just broken up with a long term boyfriend and wanted a distraction”. Females seemed to be more attracted to the idea of forming relationships via online dating than males.

ii. Gender and Expectations for Online Dating

The next few questions in the survey asked respondents what their expectations with online dating were. They were again asked to rank different expectations such as: a serious relationship, casual dating, hooking up, and “other”. Tables, 14, 15, 16, and 17 portray the relationship between gender and expectations for online dating.

TABLE 14: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS FOR A SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP

Count of Are you male or female?	Serious Relationship					Grand Total
	1	2	3	4	(blank)	
Female	10.34%	24.14%	10.34%	48.28%	6.90%	100.00%
Male	27.59%	10.34%	17.24%	37.93%	6.90%	100.00%
Grand Total	18.97%	17.24%	13.79%	43.10%	6.90%	100.00%

Both males and females ranked expectations to form a serious relationship as a lower expectation for online dating. There were no prevalent gender differences under this category.

TABLE 15: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS FOR CASUAL DATING

Count of Are you male or female?	Casual Dating
----------------------------------	---------------

Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Grand Total
Female	17.24%	34.48%	31.03%	10.34%	6.90%	100.00%
Male	0.00%	55.17%	37.93%	3.45%	3.45%	100.00%
Grand Total	8.62%	44.83%	34.48%	6.90%	5.17%	100.00%

We can see in this table that there were no gender differences under this category. Both males and females had higher expectations to engage in casual dating over other expectations.

TABLE 16: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS FOR HOOKING UP

Count of Are you male or female?	Hooking Up					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Total
Female	20.69%	20.69%	41.38%	10.34%	6.90%	100.00%
Male	31.03%	20.69%	17.24%	31.03%	0.00%	100.00%
Grand Total	25.86%	20.69%	29.31%	20.69%	3.45%	100.00%

Regarding online dating and expectations to hook up, males ranked this expectation higher than females. If males are venturing online for the purpose of engaging in casual sexual relationships, then it might be true that males expect the hook up via these online dating experiences.

TABLE 17: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS FOR “OTHER”

Count of Are you male or female?	Other					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Total
Female	41.38%	10.34%	3.45%	13.79%	31.03%	100.00%
Male	27.59%	6.90%	20.69%	20.69%	24.14%	100.00%
Grand Total	34.48%	8.62%	12.07%	17.24%	27.59%	100.00%

Females ranked higher “other” as expectations than males. When respondents were asked to elaborate on their “other” reasons there were gender similarities and differences. Many males

and females said that they expected nothing out of online dating while others expected interesting conversations. A female said, “I didn’t really want anything out of it. I did end up dating someone I reconnected with on Tinder, but I already knew him in high school”. One male said that online dating for him was an “ego boost”. Some females said that they expected to make friendships, flirt, and have fun.

iii. Experiences with Meeting People Through Online Dating

Students were asked to describe their experiences with online dating. If they met someone online for the purpose of a serious relationship, casual dating or for the purpose of hooking up they were asked to elaborate on those interactions. From these open-ended responses, we gained more insight into determining the kinds of experiences people have with online dating.

iv. Meet Online for the Purpose of a Serious Relationship

Students who met online for the purpose of a serious relationship were asked to describe their experiences. A few students stated that they had been texting the person that they matched with prior to dating them. This gave them the opportunity to get to know them before engaging in anything further. One student said that she, “met for coffee or dinner, really nice, conversation, but this was generally expected based on our conversations via text before I met them”. A male student described his experience as, “initially it was awkward, but soon, since we had been chatting online for a while before meeting in person, it became fairly normal and we just chatted like we were on a normal date”. It seems as though texting through online dating applications previous to dating gives online daters an opportunity to get to know their match. Below is a description of a females experience with online dating.

Initially, it is about ensuring that the person you are meeting is trustworthy. You attempt to decide if you are comfortable with the other person and feel as though you have enough in common and enough interest to continue seeing/talking with them. My first experience was positive; I had a great time talking with the other person. We met in a public place and I felt pretty comfortable overall.

Given the opportunity to text a potential partner before dating makes online daters feel more comfortable following through with their matches. A male respondent who ventured online for the purpose of a serious relationship said, “one of them turned into just a hook up, but the other they not only met but exceeded expectations. In fact I plan on getting engaged to her this coming summer”. Seemingly, experiences from online dating will not necessarily match to previous expectations regarding the outcomes of these experiences. A female respondent also expressed how the outcome of her experience exceeded her expectations. She stated,

I had a really nice time. We went on a date to Whole Foods and then for a walk in the woods. I was surprised how well I got along with the person I met up with and it made me realize that dating sites really aren't that bad.

Conversely, other respondents said that their dating experience did not go well or that the attractiveness of their match in person was not what they had expected from their profile pictures. With a variety of responses, we can understand that online daters have both good and bad experiences.

v. Meet for the Purpose of Casual Dating

When respondents were asked to elaborate on their experiences from online dating for the purpose of casual dating, responses contained various stories and personal experiences. Two respondents suggested that their date was boring and not what they had expected from the online dating experience. Another respondent who was impressed with her experience said, “they did

meet my expectation it was causal as I wanted it to be and I was happily surprised they wanted what I wanted”. This respondent evidently had a good experience because her match was on the same page as she was and expected a casual dating experience.

Respondents who suggested that their experiences did not match their expectations for casual dating were not impressed by the online dating services. A male respondent said, “I expected more out of them, they never met expectations in this front, always was a one time thing”. In this situation, the dater was expecting casual dating to be more than just a one-time hook up. It might be possible that they had not discussed their expectations previous to their date. A female stated, “the initial date went well but I found later on that my date was very clingy in a way that made me very uncomfortable. This experience really turned me off to online dating”. Conversely, this individual wanted less out of her experience while her match expected a more serious relationship.

vi. Meet for the Purpose of Hooking Up

Respondents who ventured online for the purpose of hooking up were asked to describe their experiences with online dating. Both males and females provided a variety of stories, which gave more insight into understanding people’s experiences using online dating applications and websites. In both instances, males and females suggested that the experience was awkward at first until the physical encounter took place. One male stated that the experience was “at first slightly uncomfortable but grew more casual until we eventually hooked up”. Another male said it was “fine maybe initially a little awkward but you get over that quickly”. A female said that it met her expectations but it was also awkward. A male respondent said, “it was always mutually agreed upon beforehand. Rarely was there much conversation (mostly superficial small talk) and

then would hook up, and then part ways”. Evidently, these individuals ventured online for the sole purpose to hook up with no strings attached.

For others, the experience did not meet their intended expectations, which was for the sole purpose of hooking up. A male respondent said,

In both instances meeting up for the sole purpose of hooking up did not seem plausible as neither of the two girls seemed interesting in a relationship that was solely hooking up. They made that clear, whether it be through what they said or indirect body language or behavior.

This individual was rejected because the females he met up with were not interested in only a physical encounter. When a female respondent was asked to describe her experience venturing online for the purpose of hooking up, she responded by saying, “if someone online immediately began talking to me for the purpose of hooking up I would block them”. The idea of meeting for the sole purpose of hooking up might repel individuals and make the online dating experience less appealing. Consistent with the idea that online daters might face uncomfortable experiences, a male respondent said that his experience was “terrifying; disbelief that I had stooped to the level of using an app to hook up with someone. Upset with myself. They often did not meet expectations”. Again, this information verifies the notion that gender stereotypes are contradicted throughout these results. Males might in fact be uncomfortable with engaging in physical encounters without emotionally connecting to their partner.

vii. Gender and Religiously Affiliated Sites and Expectations

Students were asked whether they have ever used religiously affiliated sites or applications before and what their expectations were regarding meeting someone with the same religious beliefs. Tables 18 and 219 look at gender and religion as it relates to these questions.

TABLE 18: GENDER AND EXPLORING RELIGIOUS AFFILIATED SITES

Count of Are you male or female?	Religious Sites			
Row Labels	No	Yes	(blank)	Grand Total
Female	86.21%	13.79%	0.00%	100.00%
Male	86.21%	10.34%	3.45%	100.00%
Grand Total	86.21%	12.07%	1.72%	100.00%

Evidently, when males and females were asked if they have ever used religiously affiliated dating sites, responses suggested that religion was not a significant factor when venturing online.

TABLE 19: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS TO MEET SOMEONE WITH THE SAME RELIGION

Count of Are you male or female?	Religious Affiliation			
Row Labels	No	Yes	(blank)	Grand Total
Female	89.66%	10.34%	0.00%	100.00%
Male	86.21%	10.34%	3.45%	100.00%
Grand Total	87.93%	10.34%	1.72%	100.00%

When students were asked whether they expected to meet someone with the same religious affiliation, responses were consistent with the notion that religion was not an important factor. Only about ten percent of both males and females said that they expected to meet someone with the same religious affiliation.

Regardless of whether students had ventured online for the purpose of dating, all respondents were asked a variety of questions pertaining to campus dating and relationships. Tables 20, 21, 22, and 23 look at the relationship between gender and expectations for campus dating.

viii. Gender and Expectations for Campus Dating

TABLE 20: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS TO FORM A SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP

Count of Are you male or female?	Serious Relationship					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Total
Female	36.56%	12.90%	22.58%	27.96%	0.00%	100.00%
Male	28.57%	31.75%	23.81%	9.52%	6.35%	100.00%
Grand Total	33.33%	20.51%	23.08%	20.51%	2.56%	100.00%

More males than females ranked expectations to form a serious relationship as 1 or 2 as an important expectation for campus dating. This is inconsistent with gender stereotypes suggesting that females are more interested in serious relationships because they are more emotional than males.

TABLE: 21: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS FOR CASUAL DATING

Count of Are you male or female?	Casual Dating					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Total
Female	15.05%	45.16%	22.58%	13.98%	3.23%	100.00%
Male	7.94%	39.68%	31.75%	15.87%	4.76%	100.00%
Grand Total	12.18%	42.95%	26.28%	14.74%	3.85%	100.00%

More females than males ranked expectations for casual dating on campus as 1 or 2. Again, this is inconsistent with gender stereotypes regarding relationships and expectations. This suggests that women are more interested in forming casual relationships during their college careers than males.

TABLE 22: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS TO HOOK UP

Count of Are	Hooking Up
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you male or female?						
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	Grand Total
Female	21.51%	23.66%	30.11%	20.43%	4.30%	100.00%
Male	19.05%	17.46%	33.33%	26.98%	3.17%	100.00%
Grand Total	20.51%	21.15%	31.41%	23.08%	3.85%	100.00%

Overall, both males and females ranked expectations to hook up as a low expectation. However, more females suggested hooking up as a more important expectation than males. Stereotypes suggest that males are more interested in hooking up than females; these results would therefore contradict that myth.

When students were asked to elaborate on their reasons for “other” there were no prevalent gender differences. Females suggested that they expected to campus date for the reasons of free food, friendship, networking, and as something to do with someone other than their friends. Males said that they expected to better their friendships and have fun. In a more elaborate response one male stated,

“In most cases it seems like the best course of action is to keep relationships casual. Going on fun or interesting dates with people you meet on campus keeps life somewhat easy-going and light, as college can be stressful and relationships can easily get convoluted. This is why hooking up is close behind. Hooking up seems to have a bad connotation with it, but I believe that is because some people are too immature, and the opposing party doesn't realize that going into the situation. I have observed many of my friends being straight-forward and effectively communicating with people who they are hooking up with. If people are mature, I feel like hooking up can be a good way to (possibly) satisfy two parties, relieve stress or tension, and to keep the "relationship" light and undemanding of serious romantic involvement, as some people may be too involved with other things and can't deal with those types of emotions”.

This particular male suggested that hooking up is ideal for students who do not have the time for any type of emotionally involved relationship. He also says that it might be true that students

participate in the hookup culture because they are too immature when they enter any form of a relationship. College students might be too stressed to engage in a serious relationship because it might require too much time.

TABLE 23: GENDER AND EXPECTATIONS TO MEET SOMEONE WITH THE SAME RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Gender	Religion			
Row Labels	No	Yes	(blank)	Grand Total
Female	84.95%	15.05%	0.00%	100.00%
Male	82.54%	12.70%	4.76%	100.00%
Grand Total	83.97%	14.10%	1.92%	100.00%

Overall, both males and females did not expect to meet someone on campus with the same religious beliefs. Religion was not an important factor for meeting people on campus.

II. RELIGION: ONLINE DATING AND CAMPUS DATING

Below, are tables, which look at online dating and religion and a factor contributing to these rates of using religiously affiliated apps or expectations to meet someone with the same religious affiliation.

i. Religion and Expectations for Online Dating

TABLE 24: RELIGION AND RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED SITES

Count of What is your religion?	Religiously Affiliates Apps			
Row Labels	No	Yes	(blank)	Grand Total
Blank	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Christian	88.00%	8.00%	4.00%	100.00%
Jewish	61.54%	38.46%	0.00%	100.00%
Other	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Grand Total	86.21%	12.07%	1.72%	100.00%

When looking at how religion affects the rates of students who venture online to religious affiliated sites, religion was not a significant factor. Interestingly, more Jewish students (thirty-eight percent) said that they have used religious affiliated online dating sites before. This might suggest that religion is more important to Jewish students than students who identified themselves under the Christian or “other” categories.

TABLE 25: RELIGION AND EXPECTATIONS TO MEET SOMEONE WITH THE SAME RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Count of What is your religion? Row Labels	Religious Beliefs			
	No	Yes	(blank)	Grand Total
Blank	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Christian	84.00%	12.00%	4.00%	100.00%
Jewish	84.62%	15.38%	0.00%	100.00%
Other	94.74%	5.26%	0.00%	100.00%
Grand Total	87.93%	10.34%	1.72%	100.00%

When students were asked whether they expected to meet someone with the same religious beliefs, religion as a factor was consistent with the notion that these expectations were low. Students who identified as Jewish had the highest percentage (fifteen percent) of religions that expected to meet someone with the same religious beliefs. Therefore, Jewish students remain the highest percentage for venturing online to religiously affiliated sites and for expectations to meet someone with the same religious beliefs. For Jewish daters, online platforms may appeal to a more general desire to meet others of the same religion.

TABLE 26: RELIGION AND EXPECTATIONS TO MEET OTHERS WITH THE SAME RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ON CAMPUS

Count of What is your religion? Row Labels	Religion on Campus			Grand Total
	No	Yes	(blank)	

Blank	83.33%	0.00%	16.67%	100.00%
Christian	76.39%	20.83%	2.78%	100.00%
Jewish	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	100.00%
Other	97.62%	2.38%	0.00%	100.00%
Grand Total	83.97%	14.10%	1.92%	100.00%

This table suggests that religion was not an important factor when meeting people on campus. About twenty percent of Christians and seventeen percent of Jewish students said that they did expect to meet someone with the same religious beliefs on campus; however, these percentages were not numerous.

III. PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS: ONLINE DATING AND CAMPUS DATING

All students were asked to select the relationship status of their parents. The Tables below analyze whether there is a relationship between students' parents' marital status and students' expectations regarding online dating. These tables will also look at the possibility of whether parents' marital status correlates with students' expectations for the future.

i. Parents' Marital Status and Expectations for Online Dating

TABLE 27: MARITAL STATUS AND EXPECTATIONS TO FORM A SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP

Count of Marital Status	Serious Relationship					Grand Total
	1	2	3	4	(blank)	
Deceased	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	30.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Married	19.15%	17.02%	12.77%	44.68%	6.38%	100.00%
Grand Total	18.97%	17.24%	13.79%	43.10%	6.90%	100.00%

When divorce was analyzed as a factor pertaining to expectations to form a serious relationship via online dating, students with divorced and married parents ranked a serious relationship as a lower expectation.

TABLE 28: MARITAL STATUS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR CASUAL DATING

Count of Marital Status	Casual Dating					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	
Deceased	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	20.00%	40.00%	10.00%	20.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Married	6.38%	44.68%	40.43%	4.26%	4.26%	100.00%
Grand Total	8.62%	44.83%	34.48%	6.90%	5.17%	100.00%

When parents' marital statuses were grouped with expectations for casual dating via online dating, students with both divorced and married parents ranked casual dating as a higher expectation for online dating.

TABLE 29: MARITAL STATUS AND EXPECTATIONS TO HOOK UP

Count of Marital Status	Hooking Up					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	
Deceased	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	20.00%	20.00%	40.00%	10.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Married	27.66%	21.28%	25.53%	23.40%	2.13%	100.00%
Grand Total	25.86%	20.69%	29.31%	20.69%	3.45%	100.00%

Students with divorced parents rated expectations to hook up lower than students with married parents. Students with married parents rated expectations to hook up equally as high and low.

ii. Parents' Marital Status and Expectations to Meet Someone with the same Religion Online

TABLE 30: PARENTAL MARITAL STATUS AND RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED DATING SITES

Count of Marital Status	Religiously Affiliates Sites			Grand Total
	No	Yes	(blank)	
Deceased	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	90.00%	10.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Married	85.11%	12.77%	2.13%	100.00%
Grand Total	86.21%	12.07%	1.72%	100.00%

Parental statuses did not seem to make an impact on whether students would venture online to a religious affiliated dating application. Religion overall did not play an important role for all students.

TABLE 31: PARENTAL STATUS AND MEETING SOMEONE WITH THE SAME RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Count of Marital Status	Religiously Affiliated			Grand Total
	No	Yes	(blank)	
Deceased	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Married	85.11%	12.77%	2.13%	100.00%
Grand Total	87.93%	10.34%	1.72%	100.00%

Divorce was not a prevalent factor regarding the expectations to meet someone with the same religion. Thirteen percent of students with married parents had stated that religion was an important expectation for online dating.

iii. Marital Status and Expectations for the Future

TABLE 32: PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS AND EXPECTATIONS TO BE MARRIED IN THE FUTURE

Count of Marital Status	Marriage
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Row Labels	No	Yes	Grand Total
Deceased	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	7.69%	92.31%	100.00%
Married	1.59%	98.41%	100.00%
Grand Total	2.56%	97.44%	100.00%

When students were asked if they expected to be married in the future, the majority of students said yes. Only eight percent of respondents with divorced parents said that they did not expect to marry in the future.

TABLE 33: PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS AND EXPECTATIONS TO MARRY SOMEONE WITH THE SAME RELIGION IN THE FUTURE

Count of Marital Status	Marriage and Religion			Grand Total
Row Labels	No	Yes	(blank)	Grand Total
Deceased	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	73.08%	23.08%	3.85%	100.00%
Married	54.76%	44.44%	0.79%	100.00%
Grand Total	58.97%	39.74%	1.28%	100.00%

The majority of students who had divorced parents and married parents stated that they did not expect to marry someone with the same religion. However, twenty three percent of students with divorced/separated parents and forty percent of students with married parents said that religion was an important factor for their future relationships.

Below are tables, which represent the relationship between students' expectations for online dating and their parents' marital statuses. Parents' marital statuses were grouped into married, separated/divorced, and deceased.

TABLE 34: PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS AND RATES OF CAMPUS DATING

Count of Marital Status	Campus Dating			Grand Total
Row Labels	No	Yes	(blank)	Grand Total

	Total			
Deceased	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	42.31%	53.85%	3.85%	100.00%
Married	42.86%	57.14%	0.00%	100.00%
Grand Total	43.59%	55.77%	0.64%	100.00%

This table portrays the rates of campus dating and whether the marital statuses of students' parents influence these rates. Students with divorced/separated parents and married parents had the highest rated of campus dating compared to students with deceased parents.

TABLE 35: PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS AND EXPECTATION TO FORM A SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP

Count of Marital Status	Serious Relationship					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	
Deceased	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	23.08%	11.54%	19.23%	42.31%	3.85%	100.00%
Married	35.71%	21.43%	23.81%	16.67%	2.38%	100.00%
Grand Total	33.33%	20.51%	23.08%	20.51%	2.56%	100.00%

The majority of students with deceased parents ranked expectations for a serious relationship as either a 1 or 2, followed by students with married parents. Students with divorced parents ranked this expectation as lower than other expectations.

TABLE 36: PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR CASUAL DATING

Count of Marital Status	Casual Dating					Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	(blank)	
Deceased	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	15.38%	34.62%	26.92%	19.23%	3.85%	100.00%
Married	10.32%	45.24%	26.19%	14.29%	3.97%	100.00%
Grand Total	12.18%	42.95%	26.28%	14.74%	3.85%	100.00%

According to this table, the majority of students with deceased parents rated expectations for casual dating the highest. Students with married parents also ranked expectations for casual dating higher than students with divorced or separated parents. Interestingly, students with divorced or separated parents ranked expectations for a serious relationship or casual dating as lower than students with married or deceased parents.

TABLE 37: PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR HOOKING UP

Count of Marital Status	Hooking Up					Grand Total
	1	2	3	4	(blank)	
Deceased	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Divorced/Separated	26.92%	26.92%	26.92%	15.38%	3.85%	100.00%
Married	19.05%	19.84%	32.54%	24.60%	3.97%	100.00%
Grand Total	20.51%	21.15%	31.41%	23.08%	3.85%	100.00%

Conversely, according to this table, students with divorced or separated parents ranked expectations to hook up as higher than students with deceased or married parents.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

Due to the recent popularity with online dating, this study focused on this new phenomenon and student's experiences with online dating on a college campus. In addition to analyzing the fascination with online dating, students were asked a variety of questions regarding their experiences with dating on campus. Both of these platforms provided information regarding students' expectations with online dating and/or campus dating. Although previous research has analyzed campus hookup cultures and experiences there has been no focus on the expectations regarding these experiences. These expectations were analyzed in context to students' demographic characteristics in order to differentiate between online dating and campus dating as two related sociological phenomena.

I. Summary of Findings

Findings suggest that males and females venture online for the similar reasons. Exploring and curiosity were ranked highly between both genders as the most significant reasons for online dating. Although more males than females seemed to venture online, ultimately, when men and women do go online they use it for the same reasons. Reasons for "other" were also ranked as important reasons for online dating across genders. When students were asked to elaborate on these reasons some gender differences were identified. Both males and females typically stated that online dating was funny and entertaining. Males however, said that online dating could lead to casual sexual relationships while females said that they wanted to form relationships. Some females suggested that they were frustrated with the guys that they were surrounded by and were looking for potential partners via online dating platforms.

When respondents were asked to rank their expectations for online dating both genders seemed to agree that expectations for hooking up and casual dating were higher than reasons for

forming serious relationships and reasons for “other”. More males ranked expectations for hooking up as a more significant expectation than females, which supports the qualitative results founded among the reasons for “other” analyzed above. Males might be more interested in venturing online solely for the purpose of engaging in casual physical relationships. When students elaborated on their expectations for “other”, males and females depicted a variety of expectations. One male said that online dating acted as an “ego boost”. Females said that they expected to form friendships, flirt, and have fun. These findings suggest that males and females are engaging in online dating for some of the same reasons. Although there were some discrepancies, the majority of males and females agreed that online dating was used for exploring and curiosity and for the expectations of hooking up and/or casually dating.

Yet, when gender was analyzed through a variety of questions regarding experiences with dating on campus, there were gender differences between men and women. Females ranked expectations to casually date and hook up as more important than expectations to form serious relationships. Males ranked expectations to form serious relationships as more important than casually dating and hooking up. These results contradict myths, which past studies of gender and relationships have found; this will be discussed later on in this discussion.

When students were asked to elaborate on their expectations for “other” there were many similarities across gender. Males and females suggested that this platform provided an opportunity to form friendships, to network, and ultimately was another way to have fun. Again, we see a variety of expectations for campus dating among males and females.

When students were asked if they had ever used religiously affiliated online dating sites or expected to meet someone with the same religion, the majority of both genders agreed that

religion was not an important factor. Also, religion did not play an important role when students were asked if they expected to meet someone with the same religious beliefs on campus.

Aside from gender, religion was another significant demographic factor that was analyzed alongside questions regarding online dating and campus dating. Religion was not an important factor among respondents when asked if they had ventured onto religiously affiliated sites or applications. Interestingly, numerous Jewish students compared to other religious affiliations said that they had used religiously affiliated online dating sites before (thirty-eight percent). Consequently, when students were asked if they expected to meet someone with the same religious beliefs through online dating, Jewish students had the highest expectations for meeting other Jewish students (fifteen percent). Religion did not play an important role in determining whether students expected to meet someone with the same religious beliefs on campus. Christians were the highest percentage (twenty-one percent) of those expecting to meet someone with the same religious beliefs on campus followed by Jewish students (seventeen percent) Overall, religion was not a prevalent factor except for the instances where Jewish students expected to meet other Jewish students via the online dating platform and had ventured on religiously affiliated sites or applications.

Student's parents' marital status was another prevalent factor. With regard to expectations for online dating, students with divorced/separated and married parents typically ranked expectations to form a serious relationship as lower than other expectations for casual dating or hooking up. Casual dating was ranked as a higher expectation for online dating among students with married and divorced/separated parents. Expectations to hook up were relatively scattered among rankings between students with divorced/separated and married parents. Expectations to meet someone with the same religion online were relatively low among all

parents' marital statuses. However, numerous students with married parents compared to students who had divorced or separated parents expected to meet someone with the same religion online.

When student's parents' marital status was analyzed alongside questions regarding campus dating, there were some discrepancies. Students with divorced/separated parents and married parents had the highest rates of campus dating compared to students with deceased parents. Students with divorced parents ranked expectations to form a serious relationship as lower than students with married or deceased parents. Students with divorced or separated parents ranked expectations to form a serious relationship or expectations to casually date as lower than students with married or deceased parents. Students with divorced or separated parents ranked expectations to hook up as higher than students with deceased or married parents.

The majority of respondents said that they expected to be married in the future regardless of demographic factors such as gender, religion or parents' marital status. When students were asked if they expected to marry someone with the same religious beliefs, more students with married parents said yes than students with divorced/separated or deceased parents.

As described above, the results of this study analyzed gender, religion, and parents' marital statuses with regard to students' experiences and expectations towards online dating and campus dating. This study looks at online dating as a new phenomenon on college campuses and focuses on the experiences that students have with this new dating platform.

II. Significance of Findings

Past studies have found that gender plays a role with campus dating and relationship experiences. Bogle (2008) found that students on college campuses more recently engage in what is known as the "hookup culture". This new form of interacting is often channeled through online

dating applications as well. This new culture, marked by the practice of hooking up, without commitment to date, has changed the way students form relationships and engage in online dating.

In this present study, many respondents admitted to using online dating for the purpose of hooking up. For example, a male student suggested that hooking up was ideal for students who did not have the time for any type of emotionally involved relationship. College, a time where students are constantly under stress from their workload might not have the time to engage in such serious relationships. Although hooking up was a popular reason for students to venture online, the majority of males and females who completed this study stated that they used online dating for the purposes of exploring or because they were curious about the experience.

When analyzing gender as a factor contributing to online dating and the various expectations that students had, there were no prevalent gender differences among the respondents. Although the results from this study cannot be generalized the U.S. population or campus communities in general, we are able to gain a better understanding of why people online date and what their expectations might be. We can see that students are online dating for various reasons and that gender is an unlikely predictor of reasons and expectations for online dating. Both males and females suggested that they online dated for the reasons of exploring and expected to form serious relationships, casually date, and hook up. Therefore, regardless of the gender, students seemed to online date for a variety of reasons.

When students were asked to elaborate on their “other” reasons for online dating there were some interesting gender differences among these open-ended responses. Some males and females agreed that online dating was funny and entertaining. Glenn and Marquardt (2001) found that men were more interested in hooking up with no strings attached according their study,

which analyzed women's experiences with campus dating life. The women in this study stated that they felt undermined by the hookup culture and by the power that they felt the men had in deciding whether a hookup would turn into something more serious (Glenn and Marquardt, 2001). Hill (2002) also found that women are more emotionally invested in intimacy than males who are more physically interested. In the present study, females seemed to be more attracted to the idea of forming relationships via online dating than males who were more interested in casual sexual encounters. This was also common theme among the qualitative responses, which looked at the expectations for online dating. One male elaborated on his experience with meeting someone through online dating for the purpose of hooking up,

In both instances meeting up for the sole purpose of hooking up did not seem plausible as neither of the two girls seemed interesting in a relationship that was solely hooking up. They made that clear, whether it be through what they said or indirect body language or behavior.

This male was evidently only interested in hooking up while the females were interested in something more serious confirming the stereotypes regarding gender roles and relationships. However, conversely, another male said, "I expected more out of them, they never met expectations in this front, always was a one time thing". A female respondent said, "they did meet my expectation it was causal as I wanted it to be and I was happily surprised they wanted what I wanted". These two responses contradict the gender stereotypes that were once found among college students on campuses. The qualitative responses portrayed that males and females are online dating for some of the same reasons and for more than just for the reasons of exploring or curiosity.

As for gender and expectations towards campus dating, there were some interesting findings. Common gender stereotypes suggest that males will be more interested in hooking up

while females are more interested in forming serious relationships (see above and see also Glenn and Marquardt, 2001). This study also found that women engage in the hook up culture because they believe that it might turn into something more serious later on (Ibid, 2001). This suggests that women ultimately want to form serious relationships while men are only interested in the physical aspect of these encounters. Previous research indicates that males have significantly more casual sex than females (Buss, 1988; Hill, 2002 as seen in Grello et al, 2010).

Contradictory to these gender stereotypes, the results of this study portray females who ranked hooking up as the highest expectation for campus relationships. More males than females expected to form serious relationships through campus dating. These results might indicate that gender roles are changing and that these traditional gender preferences may not be as true today. Females are taking on the roles that the males once did and vice versa. Moreover, Glen and Marquardt (2001) found that college educated women are marrying later than other women. It might be true that women are expecting to hook up and not form serious relationships while in college because they are striving to gain a higher education and degrees; this is something that women in the past were unable to achieve. Therefore, the results of this study indicate that males and females are venturing online for many of the same reasons and more females are interested in hooking up on campus than males who are more interested in forming serious relationships. While this may not indicate a gender role reversal on campus, these findings do suggest that women may be thinking differently about relationship outcomes and may have different expectations of relationships, as they presently move into what have been traditional male occupational roles. On the other hand, expectations of “campus dating” by men may be rooted in traditional notions of dating, at least when it comes to these “traditional” modes of dating.

Religion was also analyzed as a factor contributing to the expectations for online dating and campus dating. Overall religion was not a prevalent predictor of whether students ventured on religiously affiliated applications or expected to meet someone online with the same religious beliefs. However, thirty-eight percent of Jewish students had ventured on religiously affiliated application compared to religion categories under Christian or “other”. Compared to other affiliations fifteen percent of Jewish students expected to meet someone else who was Jewish through online dating. For Jewish daters, online platforms may appeal to a more general desire to meet others of the same religion. This might be due to lower proportions of same religion peers on campus. According to Lehrer (2004), religion may affect an individuals’ choice of marital partner, divorce, and involvement in cohabitation or marriage. Thornton (2007) states that young adults who had strong religious upbringing and commitments were more likely to assert those religious traditions onto their families. Therefore, it might be true that Jewish students were more committed to their religion than Christians or “others”. The values of these religions may differ in their traditions and commitments. If it is true that religion might predict the values that individuals will instill in their families in the future, then young Jewish adults today might be searching for partners earlier through this new dating platform.

Results also indicated that religion was not a prevalent factor for determining whether students expected to meet someone with the same religious affiliation on campus. Therefore, Jewish students were identified as the most interested in meeting someone else who was Jewish through online dating applications. Thornton et al (2007) found that grandchildren are less religious than their grandparents. Since religion overall was not significant to respondents, it might be true that the generation of college students today are less religious than previous generations.

Parents' marital status was also analyzed as another factor which may determine reasons and expectations for online and campus dating. Students with married and divorced/separated parents ranked casual dating and hooking up higher than expectations to form serious relationships through online dating. This might suggest that students are engaging more in the hookup culture and casual dating via online dating and that the marital status of their parents are not a predictor of these encounters. Thornton et al (2007) stated that the influences of parents contribute to the likelihood that children will marry or divorce later. The values that parents assert onto their children regarding dating and marriage might suggest that parents today are allowing their children to engage in the hookup culture and casually date. By sending their children to colleges away from home, it is likely that students will experience a variety of relationships.

Overall, expectations to meet someone online with the same religious beliefs online were low among respondents; however, numerous students with married parents compared to students with divorced/separated parents expected to meet someone with the same religion. These results can relate to the findings of Thornton et al (2007), which found that family values impact a child's decisions regarding their relationships. "Young people with strong connections and commitments to religious institutions enter marriage and cohabitations differently than those with weak connections and commitments" (Thornton et al, 223). Therefore, it might be true that if parents are asserting their religious beliefs and commitments onto their children, then the children might search for that same relationship when they enter a marriage of their own.

When parents' marital status was analyzed alongside expectations for campus dating, results indicated that students with married or deceased parents had higher expectations to form a serious relationship on campus than students with divorced or separated parents. Students with

divorced parents ranked expectations to hook up as the highest. The majority of students expected to be married in the future and students with married parents expected to marry someone with the same religious beliefs. These results might suggest that students are more likely to engage in serious relationship if they have happily married parents. Divorced children might participate more in the hookup culture and be hesitant to form anything more serious than that. Also, students might search for a partner with the same religious beliefs if they were brought up in a household, which valued marriage and religion.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to examine the rates and rationale for online dating among American college students between the ages of 18 and 22. Students were asked what they expect from online dating, and what the experiences have been like for those who have engaged in online dating. Do these relationships become serious or do they remain casual for participants and what factors (gender, age, race, parental divorce, religion) may influence or predict one's choice to venture online to date for the reasons that they do? Many students have become reliant on online dating applications and websites to meet others. Exploring this platform by which people meet will provide insight into the dating culture today on college campuses and the rationale for venturing online to meet others.

Overall, findings suggested that males and females seem to venture online for the same reasons. Exploring and curiosity were ranked highly between both genders as the most significant reasons for online dating. Both males and females typically stated that online dating was funny and entertaining. Males however, said that online dating could lead to casual sexual relationships while females said that they wanted to form relationships, supporting past studies regarding gender stereotypes. More males ranked expectations for hooking up as a more significant expectation than females. Although there were some discrepancies, the majority of males and females agreed that online dating was used for exploring and curiosity and for the expectations of hooking up or casually dating.

Conversely, gender differences appeared among expectations for campus relationship. Females ranked expectations to casually date and hook up as more important than expectations to form serious relationships. Males ranked expectations to form serious relationships as more

important than casually dating and hooking up. These results contradict the stereotypes, which past studies have found among gender roles and relationships.

When students were asked to elaborate on their expectations for “other” there were many similarities across genders. Males and females suggested that this platform provided an opportunity to form friendships, to network, and ultimately was another way to have fun. Again, there were a variety of expectations for campus dating among males and females.

When students were asked if they had ever used religiously affiliated online dating sites or expected to meet someone with the same religion, the majority of both genders agreed that religion was not an important factor. Also, religion did not play an important role when students were asked if they expected to meet someone with the same religious beliefs on campus.

Religion was not an important factor among respondents when asked if they had ventured on religiously affiliated sites or applications. Interestingly numerous Jewish students compared to other religious affiliations said that they have used religiously affiliated online dating sites before. Consequently, when students were asked if they expected to meet someone with the same religious beliefs through online dating, Jewish students had the highest expectations for meeting other Jewish students. Religion did not play an important role in determining whether students expected to meet someone with the same religious beliefs on campus. Christians had the highest percentage for expecting to meet someone with the same religious beliefs on campus followed by Jewish students. Overall, religion was not a prevalent factor except for the instances where Jewish students expected to meet other Jewish students via the online dating platform and had ventured on religiously affiliated sites or applications.

Student’s parents’ marital status was another prevalent factor that was analyzed through these results. Students with divorced/separated and married parents typically ranked expectations

to form a serious relationship as lower than other expectations for casual dating or hooking up. Casual dating was ranked as a higher expectation for online dating among students with married and divorced/separated parents. Students with married parents compared to students who had divorced or separated parents expected to meet someone with the same religion online. Students with divorced or separated parents ranked expectations to hook up as higher than students with deceased or married parents for questions regarding campus dating and relationships.

The majority of respondents said that they expected to be married in the future regardless of demographic factors such as gender, religion or parents' marital status. When students were asked if they expected to marry someone with the same religious beliefs, more students with married parents said yes than students with divorced/separated or deceased parents. Therefore, the influence of religion and parental status seemed to influence students' expectations for their future relationships.

II. LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. The sample population was restricted to a sample of 918 students out of about 2,200 students at a small liberal arts college. This small sample restricted this study from making generalizations about a larger community or the U.S. Population. Demographically, the majority of students were Caucasian, and typically well-off financially.

When the study was first sent out to a random sample of 500 students, the response rate was quite low. Therefore another sample of emails was retrieved in order to gain respondents. At first, this study was meant to use a quantitative approach to explore the experiences students have when using the variety of dating platforms at their disposal. This, however, proved

beneficial as it allowed me to explore the nuance of online and campus dating among different kinds of students.

As a cross-sectional study, the results were limited to analyzing a group of students during one moment in time. A longitudinal study would have gained better insight into whether the expectations of students for the future were accurate. Also, since this study only focused on college-aged students, the rates of online dating were lower than rates of campus dating. If this study had focused on young adults out of college, these rates and responses might have been higher.

III. FUTURE RESEARCH

While previous research has gained information regarding the hookup culture on college campuses, this study focused on the expectations of online dating and campus dating. It would be interesting to cross-examine other schools and compare these expectations. With regard to religion, it might be interesting to explore religiously affiliated schools compared to non-religious schools and look at students' expectations. Overall, if this study were analyzed over a longer period of time and consisted of a larger sample size then we would gain more information regarding this new dating platform.

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APPENDIX

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Thesis Survey

My name is Carla Gottlich, and I am a student at Union College in Schenectady, NY. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. A description of the study is written below.

I am interested in learning about the rates of online dating, your experience with online dating, and why you choose or choose not to do so. You will be asked to answer the following survey questions, which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Except of the time that it takes you to complete the survey, there is minimal risk to participating in this study. You will be asked questions about your family background, the reason you have or have not chosen to date online, and your experiences. You do not have answer any questions that you do not want to for any reason. If you no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study, without penalty, at any time.

Your responses will be anonymous, such that it would be impossible to link your name with any of your responses.

By clicking continue below, you indicate that you understand the information above, and that you wish to participate in this research study.

Add item



After page 1

Continue to next page

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Demographic/background information

Are you male or female?

☐ Male

☐ Female

What school grade are you currently enrolled in or entering [if summer]?

- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior

What is your religious affiliation?



- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Other:

Add item ▼

After page 2 Continue to next page ⇅

How would you identify your sexuality?

- ☐ Straight
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Lesbian

What year were you born?

Are you Hispanic or Latino? (a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Select the racial category or categories with which you most closely identify: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and/or White?

What school grade are you currently enrolled in or entering [if summer]?



- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior

What is your religious affiliation?

- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Other:

Add item ▼

After page 2 Continue to next page ⇅

Dating

Have you used online dating applications or websites such as: tinder, hinge, jswipe, match.com, etc.?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Add Item ▼

After page 3 Continue to next page ↕

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Online Dating

When did you start online dating?

- ☐ 15 years old or younger
☐ 16-18 years old
☐ 19-21 years old
☐ 22-24 years old

For what reason(s) did you start going to online dating sites? Please rate the following from 1 thru 4 (1 being the most important reason and 4 being the least important reason)

	1	2	3	4
For dating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For hooking up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For exploring/curiosity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you chose other as an important reason for online dating, please elaborate below



What outcome do you expect from online dating? Please rate the following 1-4 (1 being the most important and 4 being the least important)

	1	2	3	4
A serious relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Casual dating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hooking up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you chose other as an important expectation from online dating, please elaborate below

What is the number of times you have met people from online dating sites in person?

How many of these times did you meet someone in person for the purpose of forming a serious relationship?

How many times was the sole intention of meeting in person to just hook-up?

Regardless of the initial intention of the meeting, how many times did the in-person meeting result in hooking-up during that meeting?

If you met someone online for the purpose of a serious relationship can you describe what that experience was like? In your response, please describe your experience(s) and whether or not it (they) met your intended expectations?



If you met someone online for the purpose of casually dating can you describe what that experience(s) was like (in your response, please describe your experience(s) and whether or not it (they) met your intended expectations?

If you met someone online for the purpose of hooking up can you describe what that experience(s) was like (in your response, please describe your experience(s) – the experience of meeting in person, not the details of any subsequent sexual encounter) and whether or not it (they) met your intended expectations?

Do you use any online dating sites that are specifically designed to introduce you to people of the same religion, such as Jswipe?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

When meeting people online, do you expect to meet someone who has the same religious affiliation as you?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No



Add item ▼

After page 4 Continue to next page ⇅

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Now I would like to ask questions about dating here on campus

Have you ever dated others who live on campus or go to this college?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

What outcome do you expect from campus dating? Please rate the following 1-4 (1 being the most important, 4 being the least)



	1	2	3	4
A serious relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Casual dating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hooking up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you chose other as an important expectation from campus dating, please elaborate below

When meeting and dating people on campus, do you expect to date someone who has the same religious beliefs as you?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Add item ▼

After page 5 Continue to next page ⇅

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Now I would like to ask a few questions about your family/background

Do (did) your biological parents share the same religion?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you have siblings from your biological parents?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

What is the current marital status of your biological parents?

- ☐ Married
☐ Divorced/separated
☐ Deceased
☐ Other:

Add item ▼

After page 6 Continue to next page ⇅

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Biological Parents

How long have your biological parents been married?

Add item ▼

After page 7 Go to page 9 (In the future..) ⇅

Separated Parents

How long were your parents married before they separated?

How old were you when they separated?



Did either of your parents get remarried?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

How old were you when your parents got remarried?

Do you have stepbrothers or stepsisters?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you currently have a close relationship with your mother (or female primary caregiver)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Mother deceased



Do you currently have a close relationship with your step-mother?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not have a stepmother

Do you currently have a close relationship with your Father (or male primary caregiver)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Father deceased

Do you currently have a close relationship with your Step-Father?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not have a stepfather

Add item ▼

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After page 8

Continue to next page ⇅



In the future..

Do you expect to be married in the future?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you expect to marry someone with the same religious beliefs?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Add item ▼

After page 9

Continue to next page ⇅

Untitled Page

Thank you so much for participating in my senior thesis study. Your participation has helped make it possible to understand the dating culture here at union.

Through your responses I will be able to identify the rates of online dating and the dating culture on campus. I am interested to see whether students' expectations regarding dating are correlated with the marital statuses of their parents or caregivers. Other demographic information that you provided will also be analyzed to see whether other factors contribute to dating expectations.

If any of the questions in this survey have made you feel uncomfortable in anyway or if they made you recount negative experiences you have had with dating or hooking up in the past, please contact the Union college Counseling Center, a strictly confidential resource for Union college students located in Sillman Hall, at 518-388-6161.

If you have any other questions or concerns please feel free to contact me via email: gottlicc@union.edu.

Thank you so much!

Add item ▼