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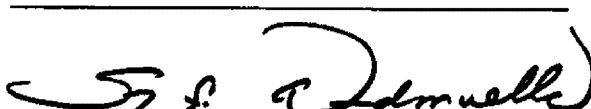
SCHOOL OF JEWISH COMMUNAL SERVICE

JDATE: BEHIND THE MAGIC
A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF JDATE USERS

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JDATE: BEHIND THE MAGIC
A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF JDATE USERS

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	2
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	5
Jewish Identity and Dating/Marriage Patterns.....	5
Trends in Marriage.....	7
Intermarriage in the Jewish Community.....	9
Jewish Matchmaking – an Ancient Tradition.....	12
Modern Jewish Matchmaking: The Internet and Beyond.....	14
The Rise of JDate.....	16
The Internet's Influence on the Stigma of Dating.....	19
Online Dating and the Convenience Factor.....	20
Role of Stereotypes in Jewish Dating.....	21
Dating Expectations – Maybe it's a Learning Curve.....	22
Gaps in the Literature.....	24
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	25
Development of Survey Instrument.....	25
Sample Selection.....	28
Respondents' Reaction to the Survey.....	29
Chapter 4: Results.....	31
Religious Identity and Background.....	34
Participant Jewish Identity and Expression.....	38
Ritual and Religious Participation.....	42
Motivations for Using JDate.....	43
JDate Success Rates.....	44
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	47
Analysis of Demographic Results.....	47
Effect of Jewish Education on Attitudes Toward Dating Jews.....	50
JDate Success Rates.....	55
Effect of Motivation on Success Rates.....	57
Chapter 6: Implications and Limitations.....	60
Bibliography.....	63
Appendix A.....	65
JDate Survey.....	65

JDate: Behind the Magic A Quantitative Analysis of JDate Users

Abstract

This thesis explores the growing use of JDate as a way for Jewish singles to meet one another through a quantitative analysis. Its research focuses on the typical characteristics of JDate users, such as their Jewish background, ritual and religious practices, and degree of involvement in the Jewish community. The study examines the motivations of JDate users in an attempt to understand their rationale for using a site geared towards Jewish matchmaking. Additionally, the study explores the success rates on JDate via the frequency of marriages, engagements and long-term relationships that have developed between individuals who met on the site.

Findings reveal that JDate has a 19.1% success rate for marriages and engagements, and a 38% success rate for long-term relationships. Results in the area of religious and ritual practices illustrate that JDate users are active in ritual and religious practices such as synagogue attendance and observance of holiday rituals, and also identify highly with cultural realms of Jewish identification, such as following the news about Israel or attending movies, arts activities, or theatre with Jewish content. The study finds that JDaters are motivated to use the site primarily because they are only interested in dating Jews, yet the features of ease and convenience of Internet dating, as well as the curiosity factor, also highly motivate individuals to use the site.

Chapter 1: Introduction

A typical walk through Times Square in New York City showcases Broadway plays and giant advertisements for the latest clothing line or beauty product. But lately, it also includes a three-story billboard of Valerie and Jeff, JDate's newest Times Square couple. Their billboard includes the following words: "Mazel Tov! Valerie & Jeff. First Date: March 15, 2002. Married: September 5, 2005." This clever advertisement for JDate, the world's largest Jewish dating site on the Internet, is viewed by thousands of people every day. JDate is advertising in Times Square? There must be something to this, I thought!

JDate has over 600,000 members at the date of publication of this thesis in April, 2006 (Carpenter, 2006). JDate's popularity is evident in many Jewish social circles; conversations among friends often include anecdotes from someone's latest JDate horror story or talk about the couple down the street that met on JDate and just got engaged. Internet dating has reached great heights and thousands of singles young and old are using the Internet as their primary way to meet one another.

Yet, little is known about the users of JDate. Why are they using the site? Have they found true love and happiness? How many people actually get married to someone they met on the site? Are JDate users just curious, or are they really committed to meeting and marrying other Jews?

While JDate does significant market research, many of the Jewish attributes and practices of JDate users go overlooked by JDate and its commercial ventures. Users' Jewish education and backgrounds go unanswered in typical profiles, reports of Jewish affiliations and involvement stop at typical denominational association, and JDate itself does not ask about users' attitudes towards dating Jews or stereotypes surrounding Jewish dating.

Conversations about JDate success stories are everywhere. Anecdotal literature abounds on the subject. Everyone seems to know someone who has met her husband or his wife on JDate. JDate advertisements, like the one in Times Square, have sprung up in large cities across the U.S., and it seems that almost everyone in the 20s-30s range has at least tried the site – either as a paying member or for free.

I tried JDate for two months and had some interesting and fun experiences. The first lesson I learned: JDate is a full time job! Not to mention its addiction factor, actually meeting “the one” on JDate involves quite a lot of work. Countless emails and phone calls are typical before a couple actually meets, and even then, JDate is often simply another “coffee service.” The two parties finally meet at Starbucks or the local coffee shop and by the time the coffee is even poured, both people already know whether there is a spark or not. Getting past the coffee takes a lot of effort – and perhaps a little luck! But is it luck at all? I was curious to figure out the ingredients necessary for success on JDate beyond my own personal experience.

Some JDaters bemoan and complain: “no one looks like their picture;” or “they sound so good on paper, but it’s just a façade.” Yet, it’s the buzz that keeps JDaters going – that possibility that the next date will be better, the knowledge that their best friend married someone he or she met on JDate. And so they continue to play the game – and drink *a lot* of coffee.

This study was undertaken in an effort to explore the growing usage of JDate as a way for Jewish singles to meet one another. Its research questions focus on the typical characteristics of JDate users, such as their Jewish background, current religious practices, and degree of involvement in the Jewish community. The study explores the success rates on

JDate: the frequency of marriages and engagements, the percentages of long-term relationships, and the outcomes that JDate users expect from the site. Through a qualitative study, information was gathered about JDaters' Jewish practices, their success or frustration on JDate, and their attitudes and feelings toward Jewish dating and online dating in general. The data was recorded and analyzed, and though the results are limited according to the limitations of both the sample and the study itself, the findings prove insightful to understand the motivations of Jewish singles, to view a composite sketch of the characteristics of those who use the site, and to define the degree of success encountered through JDate. Through the findings emerge specific challenges for JDate itself to address.

Matching Jewish singles with Jewish mates remains one of the challenges to Jewish continuity. Throughout history, Jews have developed ways to ensure that Jewish men and women had the opportunity to meet and marry. The popularity of sites like JDate, which cater to Jews meeting one another for the purposes of dating and marriage show that much has changed, and not changed, for today's generation of Jews: these young Jews are more likely to seek out new, convenient ways of meeting one another, yet they are still bound toward tradition and do, in fact, seek out Jewish mates with which to raise Jewish families.

The implications for the Jewish community are great: Jewish organizations have a tremendous lesson to learn from JDate. Jewish organizations must learn from the success of entrepreneurial adventures such as JDate and have an opportunity to invent creative, convenient ways for Jews – singles and other target populations alike – to access and use Jewish community services, as well as to effectively employ online resources.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review was conducted as a way to gain knowledge and information on the various factors that have set the stage for the emergence of Jewish dating sites, specifically, JDate. While very little literature was found to address the sociological realm of Internet dating, other literature was located to inform the various research questions addressed by this study.

This study examines the degree to which Jewish identity is part of JDate users, both through their rituals, religious and cultural practices. It examines how cultural and religious Jewish identity informs one's attitude towards dating and marrying other Jews and the link between Jewish identity and the avenues one uses (such as JDate) in order to meet other Jews for dating purposes. The literature review begins with an exploration of the academic findings on Jewish identity development, as this study is centered on an exploration of JDate users and the ways in which they express their Jewish identity.

Jewish Identity and Dating/Marriage Patterns

The large body of literature on identity development, particularly Jewish identity, has found that Jews with a high level of Jewish identity are more likely to date and marry other Jews. According to Rocke and Satkin, "the ease with which singles guide themselves through [dating] stereotypes, role confusion, and gender gap often depends on their sense of Jewish identity" (Rocke & Satkin, 1984). The struggle to define what it means to be a Jew and apply such a definition to the context of one's life is central to any examination of Jewish identity, particularly when addressing Jewish identity in singles.

According to author Mortimer Blumenthal, identity formation begins when a child enters puberty. The child maintains a set of cultural values and attitudes, which he or she

obtains during past experiences at home and school. During adolescence, the normal process of separating himself or herself from his or her family and acquiring autonomy occurs. This molds the adolescent's identity through an internal maturation process, which is largely affected by the living environment – family, neighborhood, school, and college – to which the adolescent is exposed. During this period, the teen's attitude stabilizes and his adult identity emerges, including his attitude toward marriage and parenthood, which is key to the transmission of the Jewish culture to its next generation (Blumenthal, 1974).

Jewish identity research contemplates the question, "what is involved in being Jewish?" (Blumenthal, 1974). Jewish affiliation affects both a person's self-image and their relation to the various social groups they are a part of. Author Mortimer Ostow suggests that to be a Jew is different from being a Catholic or a Protestant in America: even non-religious Jews are as "Jewish" as observant Jews, in terms of the influence their "Jewishness" has on their behavior. Three aspects of Jewish experience affect a Jew's view of his relation to the world: the Diaspora experience of being a "guest" in another's land, the confidence of a homeland through the rebirth of Israel, and the guilt associated with surviving the Holocaust. "All religious, doctrinal and social influences aside, these three elements (Diaspora living, the State of Israel, and guilt), play important parts in determining the Jewish adolescent's view of himself," says Ostow (1974).

Due to these three shaping influences, the Jewish community possesses certain properties, which emerge through the behavior and attitudes of Jewish individuals. Jews feel a sense of an extended family, including a sense of solidarity with other Jews, feelings of mutual responsibility toward other Jews despite differences and a readiness to recognize other Jews even in strange surroundings. These feelings can be described as "clannishness"

or "group loyalty" (Ostow, 1974). Other identifying characteristics of a Jewish community include its autonomy without a central religious authority, isolation from the general (non-Jewish) community, elitism as a highly successful, wealthy, and politically powerful community, and finally, a masochistic strain in the Jewish community that stems from association of being Jewish and persecuted (Ostow, 1974). These characteristics shape Jewish identity, as the degree to which they are prevalent in one's personality is an indication of Jewish identity.

Trends in Marriage

Understanding the link between Jewish identity and likelihood towards marrying other Jews is also very important. Marriage has long been a part of history; statistics show that approximately 90% of Americans will get married at some point during their life (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003). However, recent decades show drastic changes in the sociological practice of marriage. While alternative forms of coupling, cohabitation, single parenting, and divorce are all changing the realities of the institution of marriage, coupling arguably remains an important aspect of human nature (Carstensen & Yalom, 2002). Data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2003) shows that in the past four decades, divorce has skyrocketed, and marriage rates have shown a decrease: roughly 40 percent of women aged twenty-five to twenty-nine are today unmarried. In 1960, the average age of first marriages was twenty (20) for women and twenty-three (23) for men. In 2003, the average age for first marriages was twenty-five (25.3) for women and twenty-seven (27) for men (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003).

Kotler-Berkowitz and Cohen (2003) assert in *2000-2001 National Jewish Population Study (NJPS)*, however, that Jews marry later than the average American. "American Jews,

both men and women, tend to marry later than Americans generally. In every age group under 65, proportionally fewer Jews than all Americans have ever married, with the largest gap being among those ages 25-34. Only among those 65 and over do more or equal proportions of Jews report having been married than the general U.S. population" (Kotler-Berkowitz & Cohen, 2003).

An analysis of trends in Jewish marriage can only be informed by history. In 1970, Manheim Shapiro chronicled the demography of American Judaism. He found that Jews were more likely to marry than Americans in general. In many cities where Jews were surveyed, as high as 98% of the adult Jewish population had been married at least once (Shapiro, 1970). However, he found another phenomenon within the 20-30 age group:

... in most cities surveyed, in the 20-30 age group, there is a significant excess of married women over married men. In one survey [in Detroit, Michigan]...60 percent of the women between the ages of 20-29 were married, as compared to 34 percent of the men in this age category. A number of inferences may be drawn: that women marry earlier, that they marry older men, and that men are more likely to defer marriage, probably while acquiring education, training, or occupational stability. (Shapiro, 1970).

Thus, there is a major discrepancy between the realities of today, which shows that fewer Jews than Americans are getting married, versus the 1970s, when more Jews than Americans were married. According to the *NJPS*, "high educational levels and concentration in high status jobs among Jews provide a partial explanation for their delayed marriage and family formation" (Kotler-Berkowitz & Cohen, 2003).

Intermarriage in the Jewish Community

Increasing attention has been given to the problem of intermarriage over the last decades. A careful discussion of the social and psychological causes of intermarriage, as well as its consequences and effects on Jewish survival, is important in order to provide a basis for understanding the importance of promoting intrafaith dating.

The 2000-2001 *National Jewish Population Study* provides marital statistics for all adult respondents in the Jewish population of 5.2 million people. The report defined intermarriage as "the marriage of someone who is Jewish to someone who is non-Jewish at the time of the survey" and this definition was applied to both the respondent and spouse (Kotler-Berkowitz & Cohen, 2003).

The *NJPS* (Kotler-Berkowitz & Cohen, 2003) found that intermarriage rates have increased drastically since the 1970s:

The intermarriage rate for Jews who married before 1970 stands at 13%, rises to 28% for those whose marriages started in the 1970s, and then increases again to 38% for Jews married in the first half of the 1980s. Since 1985, the rate of increase in intermarriages has slowed as intermarriage levels have stabilized in the mid-40% range. Among Jews whose marriages started in 1985-90, the intermarriage rate is 43%. The intermarriage rate is also 43% for Jews whose marriages began in 1991-95. Jews who have married since 1996 have an intermarriage rate of 47%.

While some have suggested that intermarriage can be a source of recruitment to Judaism through the conversion process, studies show that intermarried couples are less likely to raise their children in the Jewish religion (Lehrman, 1974). Historian Jonathan Sarna argued that even when intermarried couples embrace Jewish traditions and pass them on to their children, such commitment is unlikely to last more than one generation in a mixed-religion family (Richards, 2004).

Nathaniel Lehrman (1974) traces the social causes of intermarriage in his article "Intermarriage: Its Social and Psychological Roots and Consequences and Its Effect on Jewish Survival." At that point, he identified that intermarriage was due to psychological and ideological elements. A fraction of Jews intermarried due to psychological factors such as personal neurosis: they sought spouses different from their mothers, whom they viewed as "nervous, possessive, overprotective and controlling" and sought to escape this through a mate with different qualities. Additionally, such individuals tended to be inhibited in their sexual fantasies about Jewish women, which led to sexual involvement with non-Jewish women (Lehrman, 1974).

In an examination of the ideological elements underlying non-neurotic intermarriage of the 1970s, Lehrman identified that the reduction of racial and religious prejudice in America, coupled with the rise of secularism and the decline of religious power and authority, greatly influenced intermarriage rates. The gentile view towards Jews became more favorable, as shown by the rising number of Christians converting to Judaism after marrying a Jew. Secondly, Jews became "culture heroes, in literature, in art, in science and elsewhere," says Lehrman. The growing acceptance of Jews in American society led to a greater acceptance – by the general community – of intermarriages between Jews and non-Jews (Lehrman, 1974).

The 1970s showed that social factors of the time affected intermarriage. Israel Ellman conducted a study examining Jewish intermarriage in Washington, D.C. He found that density of Jewish population largely affects the intermarriage rate, as intermarriage was more common in smaller Jewish communities. Similarly, sex differentials as well as occupation/type of employment affect intermarriage: men are more likely to intermarry than

women, and individuals in the workplace (versus self-employment) are more likely to intermarry (Ellman, 1974). In a commentary on Ellman's work, Lehrman predicts that as the gender gap decreases and as discriminatory barriers against Jews in employment decreases, these factors are less likely to be social causes of intermarriage. He stated, "more mixing [between Jews and non-Jews] will tend to lead to more intermarriage" (Lehrman, 1974).

Formal Jewish education and Jewish background seems to have an inhibiting effect on intermarriage. Ellman's Washington, D.C. study found that 30% of second generation Jews without religious education were intermarried, as opposed to 16% among those who had some educational background. However, Ellman points out, "the whole question of the influence of Jewish education on the future of Jewish identity and consciousness of the adult has been severely neglected... in view of the enormous weakening of ethnic ties in the third generation, the religious bond alone holds the members of the group together and thus religious education helps to reduce intermarriage" (Ellman, 1974).

Attitudes of youth toward intermarriage in the 1970s reflected the fact that romantic love was seen as the most important factor in determining marriages, which led to an increased acceptance of intermarriage. Lehrman (1974) states, "even though 80% of Reform background teenagers in New Orleans saw intermarriage as likely to lead to intra-familial problems, 70% said a person should marry whom he loves without regard to religion. Only 35% of the non-Reform Jewish youngsters agreed with this. The results elsewhere [in other cities] are similar..." Lehrman, commenting upon Ellman (1974), drew three trends from those teenagers studied in Ellman and others' surveys on attitudes towards marriage. First, a large majority of teens reject intermarriage but feel that romantic love in most cases overrides religion. Second, girls are more hesitant towards intermarriage in both attitudes and

behaviors. Finally, parental disapproval is an inhibiting factor, yet does not yield enough weight to prevent teens from marrying a non-Jew (Lehrman, 1974).

Jewish Matchmaking – an Ancient Tradition

Knowing the importance of creating Jewish marriages for continuity purposes, Jews have placed an emphasis on creating relationships for centuries. Jewish marriage has always been recognized as holy. Matchmaking is an old, traditionally blessed Jewish occupation. The *Talmud* attributes God's primary preoccupation to making matches between men and women (Wein, 1995). The first example of matchmaking in Jewish history is recorded in the *Torah* in Genesis (24:1 – 67) with the story of Abraham sending his servant, Eliezer, to find a suitable match for his son Isaac. Eliezer arranged a match between Isaac and Rebecca, thus beginning the history of matchmaking as an honorable profession (Lamm, 2002).

Jewish relationships of the Middle Ages were brokered by the rabbi or learned men of the town or *shtetl*. Not just anyone could become a matchmaker: the right person had to possess personal integrity and balanced judgment to be entrusted with the vital task of arranging holy unions. From the days of the *Talmud* and for centuries thereafter, it was the headmasters of the *Torah* Academies and *Yeshivot* who were customarily asked to recommend eligible students for marriage. These rabbis not only had the necessary moral qualifications to perform the task of matchmaking, but were also intimately acquainted both with the elite young scholars who were considered the prize grooms and the leading families of the community who supported the communal institutions (Lamm, 2002).

The period of Jewish exile in Europe, particularly during the crusades of the 13th and 14th century, brought the institution of Jewish matchmaking to its height. According to Rabbi Maurice Lamm (2002):

The role of the *shadchan* reached its height in the darkest days of oppression and dispersion of the long Jewish exile in Europe. At a time when the survival of the people was in danger, and high standards of personal morality seemed threatened with extinction, this institution provided a stabilizing, fortifying and encouraging influence. This was especially true during the 13th and 14th centuries, after the Crusades had ravaged the Jewish people and scattered them over the entire continent. Communities had been splintered and isolated, and there was little communication between one group of Jews and another.

With the difficulty in communication and the sense of isolation, Jewish matchmakers became central to the continuity of Jewish communities through the creation of marriages, which would link Jewish communities that may not have communicated otherwise.

During this same historical period, the Age of Enlightenment, the concept of romantic love gained popularity throughout Europe. This posed a great threat to the rabbis, who distrusted the idea of romantic love as the basis for Jewish marriages. They felt that the concept of matchmaking would lessen the chances of young Jews having romantic encounters with a variety of people, and therefore increased the prevalence and status of matchmakers in the community. By the end of the Middle Ages, the more modern invention of the *shadchan* (matchmaker) arose as a paid professional. This was likely due to the community's increasing distress at the potential damage caused by the increasing acceptance of romantic love (Lamm, 2002).

The importance of the *shadchan* in Jewish history must be noted, for it is through the efforts of *shadchanim* that Jewish communities remained linked throughout the Middle Ages, when isolation could have been the demise of Jewish continuity. According to Rabbi Maurice Lamm (2002):

The *shadchan* traveled from city to city in an intricate network of cross-pollination, telling the father of a young man that a perfectly-suited young lady had been discovered 200 miles away. Considering that highway robbers made the medieval roads notoriously dangerous to travel without armed escort, and difficult as well as time consuming to navigate even at the best of

times, there was virtually no way such families would have met without the *shadchan's* unique combination of courage, psychological acuity and brokerage talents. At the same time, he performed an important subsidiary function by carrying news of Jewish affairs to widely separated Jewish communities. Although to us marriage and news-bringing may be ordinary events, in those days they served a vital function of encouraging small pockets of Jews not to despair: they were not alone, but part of the larger world of Jews, related to the big cities, the great scholars, and to Jerusalem itself.

Thus, the historical relevance of the *shadchan* was much more than simply making Jewish marriages: to a greater extent, the *shadchan* represented hope, unity, and a sense of extended community.

As communities became more stable and travel and communication became easier, the demand for *shadchanim* declined. These elements of the Age of Enlightenment in Europe, coupled with the increasing notion of romantic love, brought about the eventual demise of the matchmaking tradition (Rossi, 1999). "By the end of the 16th century, his activities were closely watched, and many commentaries and ethical tracts scorned his techniques. In 500 years, the *shadchan* declined from an exalted position to an object mockery and social anathema" (Lamm, 2002).

Modern Jewish Matchmaking: The Internet and Beyond

In recent times, however, modern *shadchanim* emerge as centerpieces in the Orthodox and Ultra-orthodox communities, where children marry very young and the use of a paid professional is often seen as one way to ensure a suitable match. In American Orthodoxy, in particular, the *shadchan* has reemerged "dressed in the new garb of the university and the computer matching service" as the Orthodox communities find their contemporary environments increasingly morally deficient. Many such modern marriage brokers, private entrepreneurs in New York, demonstrate none of the ridiculed qualities of

their predecessors, and operate discreet services through personal recommendations (Lamm, 2002).

With such a historic emphasis on matchmaking in the Jewish community, where are the modern Jewish *shadchanim* in the non-Orthodox communities? The Internet currently occupies many of those same roles, with JDate leading the way. "Modern Jewish men and women—Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike—are taking paths similar to those of their forbears in their quest to find the perfect Jewish mate," says author Julie Rossi (1999). The Internet, with its plethora of dating sites and services as well as advertisements for professional matchmakers, is a haven for singles – Jewish and non-Jewish alike – who are looking to meet a mate. According to Rebecca Metzger, "the Jewish community certainly has not lagged in its invention of modern methods to match Jewish singles...The *yenta* may be dying out, but one need only skim Jewish papers around the nation to find the *yenta*'s substitute: singles events with names like Matchmaking Marathon, *Matzah Ball* and Utopia Jewish Singles Events" (Metzger, 2001). Such events make apparent their purpose, costing up to \$125 or more to attend; however, attendees say that such events remove the questions of whether someone is single or coupled, Jewish or non-Jewish, gay or straight. In addition, such singles events attempt to remove the awkwardness of approach (Metzger, 2001).

Metzger also points out that for those intimidated or turned-off by the "singles scene," Jewish organizations have developed interest-based programs that, while not particularly targeted towards making matches, indeed facilitate singles meeting one another. Metzger states "For those like me... who say we would never set foot in an event labeled 'singles'" there are activities planned by Jewish community and cultural centers, synagogues, 'young leaders' divisions of Jewish philanthropies and arts organizations" (Metzger, 2001).

However, singles events – either interest-based or matchmaking-based – garner mixed results from singles themselves, who complain of the “meat market” feel, an inability to connect with someone on more than a superficial level, and the sense of competition and desperation that airs in such events (Metzger, 2001). The Los Angeles Jewish Federation’s Jewish Singles Task Force (1999) studied singles aged mid-twenties to early forties, who wished to meet and marry. Focus group research from this study found that there was no one formula for singles to find a significant other and no uniform preference by singles for meeting each other. Similarly, there was no consensus about how to market programs for singles, as a gap existed between what singles said they wanted, such as small, casual events planned around a common interest, and the events they actually attended, such as large dances and events marketed as “singles events” (LA Jewish Singles Task Force, 1999).

The Rise of JDate

The company JDate was created in 1997 as the brainchild of founders Joe Shapira and Alon Carmel, two Israeli-born men living in California (Wenig, 2004). In 1995, Shapira co-founded NetCorp, the original developer and owner of JDate, after developing a concept for dating over the Internet. He oversaw the software development, design and implementation of the business model of JDate.com (http://www.spark.net/mgmt_shapira.htm). Since then, the parent companies of JDate have changed and JDate is now owned by Spark Networks, a network of “niche dating sites which.... has led to a number of other aggregate niche dating portals that cater to every niche imaginable from bodybuilders to smokers” (Carpenter, 2006).

JDate's mission statement, according to their website, is:

to strengthen the Jewish community and ensure that Jewish traditions are sustained for generations to come. To accomplish this we provide a global network where Jewish singles find friendship, romance and life-long partners within their faith. While deeply committed to Israel and Jewish cultural programs, we provide support for numerous non-profit organizations of all faiths. These efforts honor our proud Jewish tradition and values. (www.jdate.com)

While membership numbers vary, a recent *Los Angeles Times* article states "the largest dating portal for Jewish singles, JDate currently claims 600,000 members...[approximately] 1 in 10 Jewish singles has a profile on the site (Carpenter, 2006).

JDate touts itself as "the modern alternative to traditional Jewish matchmaking," (www.jdate.com). According to the website, JDate is used by Jewish men and women looking to find "friends, dates, and even soul mates, all within the faith" (www.jdate.com).

JDate markets itself as a convenient way to date other Jews. In only a few minutes, a JDate user can create a profile, press send, and instantly be connected with thousands of other JDaters in his or her own neighborhood and around the world. But, convenience comes with a price: JDate charges a standard membership fee of \$34.95/month (www.jdate.com).

Not much academic information is known about the members of JDate and their characteristics. However, according to one article, JDate attracts many secular Jews who are looking to meet other Jewish people to date due to tradition:

In fact, the majority of JDate members are secular Jews who prefer to date within the Jewish faith. "It's a sense of where you come from, your history," explains Alissa, another JDate member who withheld her last name. Alissa, a secular Jew, dates only Jewish men. "If I ever get married and have kids, I want to raise them Jewish," she says. "It's how I was raised." Alissa, 30, scans the largely male crowd from a secluded table with friends Stacey Lefkowitz and Jamie Sechmuer. All three women hope to meet Jewish men. Sechmuer, a 30-year-old from Brooklyn, joined JDate several months ago after she broke up with her boyfriend. In the first week, she received about 150 e-mail messages from JDate members, she says. But a few months later, Sechmuer is not the new girl anymore. Now she gets about two a week. Like Alissa, Sechmuer, a secular Jew, dates only Jewish men. "It's about tradition," she says. "I just feel more comfortable." Across the room, Adam, 26, jockeys for a drink at the bar. He joined JDate six months ago and has gone on one date so far. Adam says that religious differences ended his last relationship. "We got involved and it became an issue," he says. "That's why we broke up." (Sadler, 2002)

Yet, JDate itself is not exclusive as to the type of Jew it attracts: the site is open to anyone and members are invited to state specifics about themselves in their profiles. JDate suggests members post information about their *Kashrut* observance, synagogue attendance, and ethnicity (Sephardic or Ashkenazi). Dating Site Reviews, an independent website which reviews online dating sites, represents JDate as a diverse site:

JDate is a diverse community of Jewish singles with many religious streams, including Orthodox, Conservative, Hassidic, Modern Orthodox, Secular and Reform, and a variety of ethnicities, such as Ashkenazi and Sephardic. While some JDate members keep Kosher and regularly attend Temple, others do not. Members share common religious backgrounds, traditions and culture. All have come to JDate to make new friends, form romantic relationships or find their *Beshert*. (<http://www.datingsitesreviews.com>)

With all the missing information about JDate users and their characteristics, academic study of this population is timely and important.

The Internet's Influence on the Stigma of Dating

Many assert that online dating has contributed to the diminishing stigmas surrounding being single and the dating scene. Metzger (1999) writes, "What's amazing is that the shame and fear that used to exist around placing personal ads, attending singles parties, and meeting people on the Internet have faded over the years." Furthermore, Angele Zebley, who works at Utopia Events, a singles service for New York Jews, states "more people are willing these days to go to singles gatherings...Online dating services have taken away the stigma from the dating scene" (Metzger, 1999). Nate Elliott, an online dating analyst for Jupiter Research, a consumer technologies analysis firm in New York, says, "there's still a leap of faith involved for a lot of people when they go into online dating. Although the stigma has mostly gone away, they're still doing something that might feel a little bit uncomfortable, and to be able to take that step within a predefined community can improve the comfort level for certain users" (Carpenter, 2006). According to Elliott, niche-communities such as the one available on JDate, may be more appealing to people who have never before used the Internet for dating purposes.

While it's unclear how many couples have met and married via the Internet, experts agree that a boom in websites catering to Jewish singles has broadened the relatively narrow opportunities open to them, especially to those in small communities (Gross, 1997). Gross (1997) attributes the expansion of the singles market to the "explosion of cyberspace dating," which has encouraged singles to try some newfangled versions of matchmaking, including personalized *shadkhanim* on the Internet or Internet dating websites. With more opportunities, more and more singles are logging-on and trying online dating in its many forms, without feeling desperate or chastised: "there appears to be a renewed yearning

among Jewish singles to date and mate, a fact reflected in the outbreak of new dating rituals” (Gross, 1997).

Online Dating and the Convenience Factor

Many first-person articles written by those who have pursued Internet dating reflect the fact that online dating has brought a heightened level of convenience to the dating scene.

As Julie and Jason Rossi write:

Amidst the hectic pace and hyper-accelerated atmosphere of most professions today, opportunities for socializing are few and far between. To get ahead, you burn the midnight oil and forego the luxury of setups with friends for dinner, or visits to Friday night services in hopes of making Jewish connections. As a young, urban professional, Jason felt he could not count on meeting Jewish women the old-fashioned way. The people that might have arranged a meeting were too busy. (Rossi, 1999)

Rebecca Metzger (2001), chronicling the life of single Jewish females, writes, “One of the biggest present-day obstacles facing singles is lack of time. And that’s exactly why online dating sites are so popular, says Fran Greene, Director of Flirting and Dating for Match.com. ‘You can log on in sweatpants and fuzzy slippers at 11 p.m.’” (Metzger, 2001).

Internet dating and online matchmakers have become one convenience that many modern Jewish men and women say they can’t afford *not* to try. Netty Gross’s article *Sick of Being Single* (1997) cites Richard, a 40-year-old divorced NY investment banker who hired a private high-level matchmaker after repeated failure at singles events. In the article, Richard said, “‘I have a personal trainer, a personal accountant, lawyer, masseur and so forth... Now I have a personal *shadkhan*. I simply don’t have the time to wade through zillions of on-line bios or go to parties. My *shadkhan* knows what I want’” (Gross, 1997).

Role of Stereotypes in Jewish Dating

Jewish singles appear to agree on one fact: the singles scene is hellish. According to Gross (1997):

Countless men and women interviewed...describe [the singles scene] as alternately 'sad,' 'insane,' 'depressing,' and 'awful.' And stereotypes fly thick and fast exacerbating an already bad situation. Sociologists say Jewish singles tend to accept those negative stereotypes of each other – with men's picture of women particularly bad. Jewish women polled insist that Jewish single men today are 'not normal,' 'don't know what they want'; men, on the other hand, repeatedly accuse Jewish women of being 'psycho.'

Stereotyping in the Jewish dating scene seems to run rampant, with particular stereotypes recurring frequently. According to Brandeis Jewish culture professor Sylvia Barack Fishman, "the current image of the single Jewish woman is that of a hard, aggressive loudmouth.... someone greedy and now a careerist. The Jewish male, on the other hand, is seen as a neurotic darling. Jewish men are looking for girls from Baywatch. They consider Jewish females thoroughly unappealing" (Gross, 1997).

One interesting trend that has developed perhaps due to Jewish stereotypes in the dating scene is the increasing use of JDate by non-Jews. A recent *New York Times* article entitled "You Don't Have to be Jewish to Love JDate" (Richards, 2004) interviewed two men and two women who are non-Jews using JDate to meet a Jewish partner. The article found that non-Jews seek Jewish mates for various reasons, but generally seem to want Jewish mates because of the stereotypical idea of the "nice Jewish boy or girl," (Richards, 2004). Thus, non-Jewish men and women seem to place positive stereotypes on Jews, for example, that they bring strong values to a relationship and are more highly educated than non-Jews (Richards, 2004).

Despite their eagerness to meet and date Jewish people through JDate, the article reveals that non-Jewish JDaters generally do not advertise their religious affiliations, though individuals interviewed all specified that they do tell potential dates that they are not Jewish after the initial contact is made (Richards, 2004). However, Jewish stereotypes come into play for these non-Jews, who may feel as if they are “trying to become a member of a club that does not want [them]” (Richards, 2004). Thus, even non-Jews attempting to date Jews may experience a degree of stereotyping which supports the notion that Jews are ethnically and culturally linked together, while non-Jews will never be able to achieve those linkages. JDate founder and chief executive of JDate’s Los Angeles-based parent company MatchNet, David Siminoff, defends the site’s unrestrictive policy: “ ‘I’m not going to tell someone who wants to be part of Jewish culture you can’t come online,’ he said, although he added that JDate is clearly oriented toward Jews.” (Richards, 2004). Recently, the company added a “willing to convert” option in the religion category due to so many non-Jews utilizing the service.

Dating Expectations – Maybe it’s a Learning Curve

Rosalie Eisen, founder of *Besherte*, an Amherst, Michigan- based Jewish nonprofit organization, knows that single men and women “spend hours mingling at bars, reading online dating sites, and attending quick-dating events in hopes they will meet that lifelong partner,” yet she believes that those dating methods do not work. Eisen, a life coach in Amherst, believes that “like minded people attract... People are longing for a sense of community, not a quick fix.” Eisen and her husband founded *Basherte* (Hebrew for “fate”), an organization that sponsors relationship workshops for singles. The impetus for this initiative, says Eisen, is that “pop psychology is bombarding people with the notion that

dating is a game...[but] human relationships are not games. We are all real people with real emotions," she said (Ritchie, 2005).

Based on the premise that singles need to be taught how to listen, communicate, and reflect, *Besherte*, offers weekend affairs that provide an atmosphere where singles can focus on self-awareness, and the role that Judaism plays in relationships. According to an article about the group:

A typical *Basherte* weekend begins with men and women in separate rooms. While her husband deals with the men, Eisen teaches the women. "We begin teaching about listening. We set up topics of discussion to build trust so that everyone feels secure and relaxed in a non-threatening environment," she said.... "We teach skills for building a community. That's what people are craving" (Ritchie, 2005)

Through these weekend-attempts, *Basherete* is one organization that addresses the expectations of singles in the dating scene.

Author Hershel Shanks discusses the dating expectations of Jewish singles, which he states may be unrealistic. Shanks asserts that dating, specifically internet dating, encourages singles to maintain the mentality that there is always someone who is more "perfect" out there in cyberspace. While Jewish singles used to blame their inability to find a partner on the lack of access to enough people to choose from, the Internet has opened up wide communication avenues between thousands of singles. Shanks states, "In theory, [Internet dating] should be a panacea. You have literally hundreds of opportunities to meet just the right person made especially for you, someone who meets your requirements precisely. But it doesn't work out that way. They're all bad or, for some reason, unacceptable" (Shanks, 2003).

Shanks writes that Internet dating has led to unrealistic expectations and shattered the old-fashioned concept of "developing into love," which follows the old ways when Jews

arranged marriages for their children (Shanks, 2003). Previously, the assumption was that as two individuals got to know each other through shared experiences, they would develop into a relationship we call love. While chemistry is important, Shanks states that singles need to be more realistic and realize that rather than "falling into love," they should be open to "developing into love" (Shanks, 2003).

According to Esther Jungreis, a *Rebbetzin* interviewed for Gross's 1997 article, societal cues have disrupted the parental duty of making sure children get married:

Jewish parents used to view marrying off children as part of their job. But today everyone takes their cue from modern society, which advocates emotional and financial independence first. The result is that a lot of people are very self-absorbed, well-off and lonely. They need help and guidance from traditional sources. (Gross, 1997)

Furthermore, Gross's article states that "Jewish singles, many of whom are professionals and highly successful, have become alienated and picky. On the one hand their attitude is 'I know who I am and what I want. I have a good life and I'm not making major compromises.' On the other hand, they're alone" (Gross, 1997).

Gaps in the Literature

The quest to find information on the success rates of Internet dating, the motivations of those using such sites, and the sociological context of Internet dating communities leaves much to be desired. Very few academic articles exist on the subject, which leaves much room for current and future research. This study attempts to fill a small piece of the void by producing a quantitative study of JDate users which provides insight into their Jewish identities, their motivations for using the site, and the degree of success they encounter through their experiences on the Internet.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Dating and marriage practices have long been a significant concern in the Jewish community. As intermarriage rates have steadily increased, more attention has been paid to the plight of Jewish singles. Simultaneously, the popularity and acceptance of Internet dating has increased drastically. Many Jewish singles report trying sites including JDate, yet little is known about this population of singles.

In general, there exists a sizable gap in the academic literature surrounding Internet dating. To date, there are no sociological studies available to the public that focus on the motivations of Internet daters, nor on the success or failure rates of Internet dating. This study attempts to fill this void by providing a quantitative analysis of Internet dating within the Jewish community, primarily through the lens of JDate, the most mainstream Jewish dating site available.

Development of Survey Instrument

The lack of any previous studies on this topic required developing initial study methodology from which to begin a demographic study of JDate users. The initial stages of this study began with many candid conversations between the researcher and her contacts that had used JDate. These informal conversations usually took the form of questions and answers regarding the JDaters' experience when accessing the site, why they had chosen JDate in particular, what specific outcome they wished to gain from their participation on the site, and the degree to which they felt their experience met their expectations. As these informal conversations grew, the researcher found that JDate represented a shared experience for many Jewish singles. As a result many individuals began to seek her out to talk about

their personal experiences. This led the researcher to an appreciation that this was a topic that people wanted to address and one that warranted serious, academic research.

These conversations formed the study's basic research question: "Why is JDate an appealing method for Jews to meet other Jews for dating purposes?" As JDate represents the primary service-provider for Jewish Internet dating, the study was indeed geared toward JDate users while not being exclusive to users of this particular website.

The next stage in the development of this study involved the creation of several specific questions the researcher wished to examine based on anecdotal evidence presented in the press and offered by the researcher's personal contacts related to their JDate experiences.

As a result, the research focus centered on the following questions:

- What is the religious and ritual practice of JDate users?
- What is the success rate of JDate, including the percentage of engagements and marriages that result from the site?
- What are the motivations for using JDate?

Particular hypotheses developed by the study author based on anecdotal evidence included:

- JDate users choose the site because they date only Jews
- JDate users find it easier to meet strangers through JDate due to commonalities
- The Jewish background and identities of JDate users are high
- The Jewish ritual and religious practices of JDate users are quite secular

With such research questions and hypotheses in mind, the next step in this study was the development of an appropriate survey instrument in order to gather data. With no previous questionnaire to employ as a model, this survey was designed as an initial attempt to secure basic data from JDate users. The survey was broken into different categories including:

screener question (previous or current use of JDate); demographic data (age, gender, location, education, etc); measures of Jewish identity; measures of ritual and religious practices; Jewish background and experiences; relationship status; general dating practices; use of JDate (length and frequency of usage, motivation for usage); success rates of JDate; stereotypes regarding JDate; and comparison of satisfaction between JDate and other Internet dating sites. Included in the survey were ten questions taken directly from the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) in order to provide a comparison basis between survey respondents and the NJPS findings regarding ritual and religious practices.

Upon completion of a preliminary draft, the survey was piloted with a group of 10 individuals. These individuals were personal friends of the researcher or students from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion’s School of Jewish Communal Service and the University of Southern California.

The pilot test of the survey allowed the researcher to perfect the survey’s readability, answerability and general “user-friendliness.” Information gathered through the pilot test of the survey revealed that the instrument would provide data that could be analyzed in a scientific and statistical manner. As this was a survey designed “from scratch” with the goal of eliciting basic profile information of JDate users, the pilot test served primarily to increase the effectiveness of survey wording and the choices of answers. Small changes were also introduced, including the addition of more optional terms, such as “life partner” to many of the questions regarding relationship status or dating practices as to include homosexual as well as heterosexual respondents.

This information was used to develop the final survey, which was distributed using www.Surveymonkey.com, an Internet-based company that allows a survey to be written and distributed through an online link that feeds directly to the survey.

Sample Selection

Random sampling is the ideal method of obtaining a representative sample of a population. This form of sampling allows for the most unbiased cross-section responses. Spark Networks, parent company of www.JDate.com was approached to be a partner in this study, which would have provided access to a randomized sample. However, without their participation, the logistical limitations of this study ruled out such a randomized sample. Consequently, the sample obtained in this study can be described as a self-selected sample; in other words, those who elected to answer the survey indeed did so. This means that survey respondents may have been more extreme in their opinions, as they self-elected to take the survey after having received it.

Conscious attempts were made to disseminate the survey to diverse groups of respondents. The survey was publicized through email promotions by Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (sent to current students and alumni), the Los Angeles Jewish Federation’s Real Estate Division, and Los Angeles *Atid* Young Professionals Group. The researcher additionally attended an event of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation’s Young Leadership Division in order to publicize the survey. From these email and event publications, 51 people reported receiving the survey from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion student list, 36 people from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion alumni list, 23 people from the Jewish Federation’s Young Leadership Division, 3

people from the Real Estate & Construction Division email list, and 10 people from *Atid* Young Professionals Group.

405 out of 611 survey respondents reported that they accessed the survey as a result of a friend who forwarded the questionnaire. However, the bulk of respondents came from individuals who may have received the survey from a friend or relative, or who saw the survey posted on an Internet Blog (diary-like website). The realities of Internet-based surveys such as this one mean that it is virtually impossible to track the respondents. The researcher was informed that some recipients of the survey forwarded it to additional list-serves, including: the Wexner Fellows, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College students and alumni, and University of Judaism students, among others. There was no way for the researcher to track these different points of access.

The survey sample consisted of 611 respondents who viewed and responded to the survey from a period of January 18, 2006 to February 12, 2006. Within this sample, a total of 546 people had tried JDate, whereas 65 people had not ever used that particular site. This group of 65 people however, may or may not have tried Internet dating in the past. There were 170 males and 439 females in the sample. This gender discrepancy represents one of the limitations of the study, as females were consistently over represented in the sample population.

Respondents' Reaction to the Survey

The researcher did not have much direct contact with individuals selected in the sample because the questionnaire was Internet-based; however, in the case of the Jewish Federation's Young Leadership Division, the researcher was required to attend an event in which she publicized the survey in order to discuss possible questions or concerns from

potential respondents. Reactions to the survey fell in two opposite camps: extreme positive interest or extreme negative reactions. The first reaction was generally from individuals who were very interested in the findings and in the "behind-the-scenes" profile of JDate users. Many of these respondents felt positively towards JDate and Internet dating in general.

The second type of reaction was obtained primarily from individuals who had a profoundly negative experience on JDate, perhaps because their experience did not meet their expectations or because they faced frustration with the lack of quality individuals they met on the site. These respondents tended to reveal their distaste for JDate when approached to take the survey, although many of them agreed to take the survey anyway in an effort to help improve the site and add their story about why they chose online dating to the research being conducted.

Overall, the study garnered positive reactions from individuals who were solicited to take the questionnaire. The researcher received over 10 emails from individuals who emailed that they had met their partner on JDate and offered to be interviewed. In addition, the fact that so many people forwarded the survey to their friends and family revealed distinct interest in and support of the study.

Such polarized and intense reactions illustrate the interest in this topic, yet also reveal the sensitivity surrounding the theme of online dating. This underlies the importance of gaining an understanding of the motivations of JDate users and the success rates surrounding the site. Additionally, the interest and "buzz" created by the study reveals the timeliness of this study and shows that the organized Jewish community has much to learn from the multiple profiles and experiences of those involved in this study.

Chapter 4: Results

This study represents an effort to gain insight into the overall demographic characteristics of JDate users. It then seeks to understand the religious identities and practices of JDate users, as well as the rate of success JDate users have had, both measured by marriages and engagements, as well as long-term relationships. An analysis of the data gathered in this study allows for a basic composite sketch of the demographic profile of JDate users. Data additionally provides a revealing look into the religious identity and practices of JDate users, and finally, the success rates among users who have had long-term relationships or engagement and marriage via their involvement with the site.

The survey utilized in this study began with basic demographic information, such as gender, age, and highest level of education. These findings are presented in Table 1 and discussed below.

Demographic Characteristics of JDate Users

Table 1 - *Participants Demographics*

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	169	27.7
Female	439	71.8
Age		
18-21	16	2.6
22-28	295	48.4
29-32	126	20.7
33-38	78	12.8
39+	93	15.3
Highest Level of Education		
High School Diploma	2	3.0
Some College	35	5.7
College Graduate	168	27.5
Some Graduate Work	127	20.8
Masters Degree	202	33.1
Jd/Ph.D/Postdoctoral	72	11.8

Table 1 demonstrates the demographic characteristics of JDate users in this study, which represented 611 total survey participants. A total of 149 study participants were male (27.7%), while 439 were female (71.8%). Immediately, this shows a ratio of almost 1:4 where women are overrepresented. JDate itself claims to have approximately a 1:1 ratio of women to men (www.jdate.com); however, this study found that women are the predominant users of JDate.

Another question of key importance to this study was an assessment of the ages of typical JDate users. In order to provide anonymity, this study asked participant ages in an age-range format. Table 1 reveals that the almost half of the study participants fell between the age range of 22-28. This age range represented 295 people or 48.4% of the sample. 126 people or 20.7% fell into the age range of 29-32. These age ranges represent the group of individuals who are typically post-college new professionals. One general characteristic of this group is transience, which suggests that individuals may be less rooted to their communities and thus more apt to need programs and services to aid in meeting new friends and dating partners. A total of 93 individuals (15.3%) who took part in this study were above the age of 39, which suggests that JDate hosts a significant population of older adults. This group provides an interesting category of individuals to study in future research to determine their success with online dating and their motivations for using JDate in particular.

Finally, the education level of participants was particularly important to this study. Table 1 illustrates that this sample of JDate users is very highly educated. The largest percentage of the sample (33.1%) or 202 people, had "Masters Degrees." In addition, 127 or 20.8% had completed some level of graduate work. Seventy-two individuals or 11.8% had completed a Ph.D, J.D. or other postdoctoral degree. Thus, a total of 65.7% of this sample

have pursued advanced degrees.

The basic demographic data compiled as part of this study reveals striking findings: 1) JDate users are particularly well-educated; 2) women dominate the scene; and 3) although the majority is in the post-college/young professional age range, a significant percentage is middle aged, above age 39.

Religious Identity and Background

A second key exploration of this study focuses on gaining insight into JDate users' religious identities and backgrounds. JDate itself allows participants to describe certain elements of their religious lives in their profiles, such as their denominational affiliation, *kashrut* observance, and if they attend synagogue or not (www.jdate.com). However, this information is quite limited, and does not provide an extensive picture of the ritual and religious practices of JDate users. This study attempted to gain more information about participants' religious attitudes, identities, and practices, which are highlighted below in Table 2.

Table 2 - Participant Religious Identity and Background

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Religion		
Jewish	593	97.1
Not Jewish	2	0.3
Half-Jewish	0	0.0
Sort-of Jewish	11	1.8
Other	5	0.8
Jewish Denominational Affiliation*		
Reform	269	44
Conservative	221	36.2
Orthodox	24	3.9
Reconstructionist	33	5.4
Just Jewish	37	6.1
Culturally Jewish	68	11.1
Non-Practicing Jew	14	2.3

**Note.* Religious affiliation percentages will not add up to 100 because survey participants were allowed to answer up to two religious affiliations that they identified with. This reflects the cross-affiliations that some Jewish young adults may feel.

Table 2 revealed that, in fact, the overwhelming majority of JDate users do identify themselves as "Jews." 593 people or 97.1% of this study self-identified as Jewish. Two (2) individuals did not consider themselves Jewish, yet had both tried JDate as a way to meet other singles. One was male, and the other was female. In describing themselves, the male non-Jewish JDate user described himself as "born Jewish, atheist, do not consider myself

Jewish,” while the female respondent simply stated she was “not Jewish.” Zero respondents answered that they were half-Jewish, which shows that the individuals represented in this study primarily considered themselves as having a single religious affiliation, rather than a shared religious identity between two different faith traditions. Eleven (11) survey respondents considered themselves “sort-of Jewish,” which was developed as a category in order to reflect changing and open religious identities. Participants were asked how they had heard about the study. Of the 11 “sort-of Jewish” respondents, five of them found the survey through a posting on a website called *livejournal.com*, which caters to those individuals with alternative-Jewish identities. Finally, a total of 5 individuals (0.8%) marked “other” for the question “do you consider yourself Jewish.” These five individuals wrote the following descriptions of their religious identity:

- a. “used to be [Jewish]”
- b. “Only Jewish father, religiously completely Jewish but not halachic”
- c. “Shiksa goddess with lots of Jewish friends”
- d. “In the process of conversion”
- e. “Culturally Jewish without religious affiliation”

Participants were asked to choose up to two denominational affiliations which reflect their current affiliations. The decision to allow participants to choose two answers again reflects changing and cross-denominational identities among young Jews. Table 2 additionally illustrates the denominational affiliations of survey participants. 249 people, or 44%, considered themselves “Reform.” 221 people, or 34.2%, affiliated as “Conservative.” The next most popular response represented 68 people, or 11.1%, who identified as “Culturally Jewish.” 37 people or 6.1% saw themselves as “Just Jewish,” while 33 people

(5.4%) considered themselves “Reconstructionist.” Only 24 individuals or 3.9% considered themselves “Orthodox.” Conversely, 14 people, or 2.3% self-affiliated as a “Non-Practicing Jew.” A total of 17.2% of survey respondents considered themselves either “Just Jewish” or “Culturally Jewish” which reveals that a significant number of JDate users may be less-inclined to affiliate with a movement but instead see themselves through post-denominational or alternative religious lenses.

Table 3 –Jewish Educational Background, Formal and Informal

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Formal Jewish Educational Background (Grades 1-7)**		
One day per week program Such as Sunday School	267	43.7
Part-time school more than once a week such as Hebrew School	274	44.8
Jewish Day School/ <i>Yeshiva</i>	119	19.5
<i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Tutoring	359	58.8
None	38	6.2
Informal Jewish Educational Background		
Attended Jewish Summer Camp	406	64.4
Participated in Jewish Youth Group	355	58.1

****Note.** Formal Jewish Educational background percentages will not add up to 100 because survey respondents checked all that applied.

Table 3 showcases JDate users’ Jewish educational backgrounds. Participants were requested to check all options that applied to them in their formal Jewish education during grades 1-7. The majority of study participants – 359 people, or 58.8% - had experienced *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Tutoring. 274 people or 44.8% had attended a part-time Jewish school that

met more than once a week, such as Hebrew school, *Talmud Torah*, or *Heder*. A similar number of individuals – 267 people, or 43.7% - had participated in a one day per week Jewish education program, such as Sunday School. 119 individuals or 19.5% had attended a full-time Jewish Day School or *Yeshivah*. Only 38 people, or 6.2%, reported having no formal Jewish education.

The data presented in Table 3 on participants' Jewish education shows that the Jewish educational background of the majority of JDate users is quite significant. Many academic studies have linked Jewish educational experiences as a child as a predictor of Jewish involvement as an adult (Bock, 1971); this data suggests that the majority of JDate users had at least some formal Jewish education, which has influenced their desire to date and marry Jews.

Table 3 also illustrates the high attendance in informal Jewish educational activities such as Jewish summer camp or Jewish youth group. 66.4% of survey respondents reported that they "attended or worked at a summer sleep away camp that had Jewish religious services or other Jewish content." 60.1% said they "regularly participated in an organized Jewish youth group during high school." Thus, over half of the sample had attended informal Jewish education.

Participant Jewish Identity and Expression

A third area of this study inquired about the way JDate users express their Jewish identities. Cultural measures of Jewish identity were utilized for measurement. An additional question asked participants to describe how important religion is in their life, while another line of questioning assessed how JDate users express their Jewish identity.

Table 3 -Respondent Jewish Identity and Expression

Cultural Identity Measures								
	Strongly Agree		Somewhat Agree		Somewhat Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Jews in the US and Jews in Israel share a common destiny	149	24.4	326	53.4	105	17.2	16	2.6
I feel like an outsider in American society because I am a Jew	12	2.0	110	18.0	225	36.8	250	40.9
When people are in distress, American Jews have a greater responsibility to rescue Jews than non-Jews	12	2.0	110	18.0	225	36.8	250	40.9
Jewish Expression								
Degree of Importance that Religion plays	<i>n</i>				%			
Very Important	266				43.5			
Somewhat Important	243				39.8			
Not Very Important	69				11.3			
Not At All Important	15				2.5			
Not Sure/Don't Know	4				0.7			
Participants chosen Activities to Express Jewish Identity*								
Synagogue attendance	381				62.4			
Participate in a Jewish organization	409				66.9			
Attend classes on Jewish topics	240				39.3			
Attend movies, art events, or cultural events on Jewish topics	392				64.2			
Follow news about Israel	411				67.3			
Participate in social-justice events	248				40.6			
**Note. Percentages will not add up to 100 because survey respondents checked all that applied.								

Findings in the area of cultural Jewish identity show that, in general, JDate users report a high level of association with notions of Jewish people-hood, yet a low level of collective responsibility towards other Jews in need versus all people in need. As shown in Table 3, participants were asked to respond to the following statements: "Jews in the US and Jews in Israel share a common destiny;" "I feel like an outsider in American society because I am a Jew;" and "When people are in distress, American Jews have a greater responsibility to rescue Jews than non-Jews." A total of 77.8%, or 475 people, answered that they "Strongly Agreed" or "Somewhat Agreed" that "Jews in the US and Jews in Israel share a common destiny." However, the majority of participants – 475 people, or 77.7% – stated that they "Somewhat or Strongly Disagreed" to the statement "I feel like an outsider in American society because I am a Jew." This suggests that JDate users feel extremely integrated into American society and represents a significant finding. JDaters do not view themselves as only having the option to date Jews. Because they feel so integrated into American society, they do not feel shut-out from dating individuals of other religions. Instead, they are dating Jews based on other factors, which this study attempts to uncover. Finally, a total of 77.7%, or 475 people, stated that they somewhat or strongly disagreed that "American Jews have a greater responsibility to rescue Jews than non-Jews in distress." This suggests that this population has a decreasing sense of separation between Jews and non-Jews, and therefore does not view Jewish religion as an attribute or characteristic that separates Jews from non-Jews. This similarly supports the finding above that JDate users are dating Jews for reasons other than the fact that they feel that society places Jews in a separate "category," and that Jews must stick together.

Table 3 continues with the findings regarding JDaters perceptions of religion's importance in their life. Findings here show that many JDaters consider religion quite important in their life. In fact, 266 people (43.5%) highlighted religion as "very important" in their life, while an almost equal number, 243 people (39.8%) found religion "somewhat important." Only a total of 15 people, or 2.5% cited religion as "not at all important." This perception reveals that JDate participants in fact hold religion to be quite paramount in their life. With religion holding such a high degree of importance, it makes sense that many JDate users wish to meet other Jews through Internet dating.

The question of how JDaters choose to express their Jewish identity was of key importance in understanding the Jewish activities of this population. Survey respondents were asked to check all the ways they express their Jewish identity. Results show that following the news about Israel is the most popular way that JDaters express their Jewish identity: 67.3% or 411 people reported that particular expression of their Jewish identity. Close in importance was participation in a Jewish organization (409 people, or 66.9%), and attendance at movies, arts events, or cultural events on Jewish topics (392 people, or 64.2%). A surprisingly high percentage (62.4%, or 381 people) cited that they express their Jewish identity through synagogue attendance; however table 4 (below) shows that in practice, JDaters actual synagogue attendance is unlikely to be more than a few times per year. This discrepancy reveals that JDate users perceive that synagogue attendance is one important way they express their Jewish identity; however, their frequency of attendance shows a different reality in behavior. Participation in classes on Jewish topics and in social-justice events were both less popular ways to express Jewish identity.

Ritual and Religious Participation

The fourth area the study addressed was the religious and ritual behaviors of JDate users. Survey respondents were asked about their attendance at synagogue and various other ways they participated in ritual Judaism. Table 4 illustrates the results of this area.

Table 4 – *Ritual and Religious Participation*

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Synagogue Attendance in the Past Year		
Only for weddings/Bar Mitzvahs	36	5.9
On High Holidays	86	14.1
A Few times (3-9)	212	34.7
Once a month	72	11.8
2 or 3 times a month	53	8.7
Once a week	69	11.3
Several times a week	36	5.9
Every day	5	0.8
<i>Yizkor</i> only	1	0.2
Never	15	2.5
Held or Attended a Passover Seder last year	572	93.6
Lit Hanukkah candles <u>all</u> or <u>most</u> nights	410	68.7
Fasted <u>all</u> or <u>part</u> of the day last Yom Kippur	400	78.7

Synagogue attendance results varied tremendously. Approximately one third (212 people, or 34.7%) of study respondents said they attended synagogue approximately 3-9

times during the past year. 14.1% or 86 people only went to synagogue for High Holidays, while 11.8% reported going to synagogue once a month. These mixed results show that there is wide variance among JDaters in terms of synagogue participation. However, it is clear that JDaters are heavily involved in Jewish holiday practices and ritual observance. 572 people, an overwhelming 93.6%, held or attended a Passover *seder*, while 78.7% fasted all or part of the day on *Yom Kippur*. Finally 68.7% (410 people) lit Hanukkah candles all or most nights. Clearly, Jewish holidays are very important to the average JDater, while synagogue attendance seems to be more of an individual choice.

Motivations for Using JDate

One hypothesis of this study was that JDate users chose the site because they are only interested in dating Jews. To examine this hypothesis, questions were asked to JDate users about their motivation to use the site. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 -Participant Motivations to Use JDate

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Motivations for Using JDate</i>		
I want to meet a Jewish partner for dating purposes	477	78
I thought JDate would be an easy way to meet people	283	46.3
I was just curious	253	41.4
I know someone who met their significant other on JDate	226	36.9
My friends had positive experiences on JDate	217	35.5
I thought Internet dating would save me time	152	24.8
I was pressured by friends or family to meet someone Jewish for relationship purposes	76	12.4

The above results show that the hypothesis stands as correct: an overwhelming percentage (78%) of individuals stated that at least one of the reasons they chose to use

JDate is because they want to meet a Jewish partner for dating purposes. The interesting results here, however, fall under the question of convenience as a motivational factor for JDate usage: 46.3% of survey respondents chose JDate because they thought it would be an easy way to meet people. However, only 24.8% chose JDate because they thought it would save time. Thus, JDate users are interested in the convenience factor of *ease*: they choose JDate because it is a simplistic and easily accessible way to meet people. Yet, only 24.8% felt that JDate would save time. Thus, JDate may be perceived as an *easy* way to meet people, but it takes time to sift-through the plethora of entries online. Finally, curiosity seems to reign among JDate users: 41.4% stated that they chose JDate because they were “just curious.” This curiosity element, coupled with the ease and convenience factor of JDate, may be reasons for JDate’s popularity.

JDate Success Rates

The final area addressed in this study examines the success rates of those individuals that use the JDate service. Though “success rates” can be defined differently, for the purpose of this study “success” is considered as someone who used JDate and met their husband or wife, fiancé or life-partner. The study additionally examines the total number of dates and second dates that JDate users have gone on, as well as traced the number of individuals who experienced long-term relationships (3 months or longer) through their participation on JDate. The results are illustrated below in Table 5.

Table 5 -Participant Success Rates on JDate

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Met Spouse, Fiancé, or Partner on JDate	117	19.1
Experienced a long-term relationship (3 months+) as a result of JDate	195	31.9
Number of total dates as a result of JDate		
0-5	224	36.7
6-10	125	20.5
11-19	81	13.3
20-30	41	6.7
More than 30	37	6.1
Number of total <u>second</u> dates as a result of JDate		
0-5	381	62.4
6-10	84	13.7
11-19	28	4.6
More than 20	15	2.5

One of the important basic findings of this study is the number of people who reported finding their husband or wife, fiancé, or life-partner on JDate. **117 people, or 19.1% of survey respondents, reported that a marriage, engagement, or life-partnership resulted from their experience on JDate.** In addition, 195 people, or 31.9% of survey respondents, experienced a three-month or longer relationship with someone they met on JDate. **These percentages show that almost 1 in 5 people experienced a marriage, engagement, or life-partnership with someone they met on JDate, whereas almost 1 in 3 people met someone on JDate that they dated for an extensive period of time.**

The number of total dates and total second dates that individuals went on with other JDaters additionally reveals the internal success of JDate. The highest percentage of survey respondents, 34.7%, reported that they went on 0-5 dates total. 20.5% reported they went on 6-10 dates, while 13.3% reported attending between 11-19 dates. Only a total of 78 people, or 12.8%, reported going on more than 20 dates. The numbers for second dates were predictably lower, with 62.4% of survey respondents stating that they went on between 0 and 5 second dates. Only a total of 20.8% reported having more than 6 second dates. Thus, it is clear that JDate produces a lot more first-dates than second dates, and perhaps that reflects the fact that Internet dating lacks a personal element until the two parties actually meet.

The results presented in this chapter have answered all three research questions examined in this study and have addressed many of the hypotheses upon which the study was based. Results regarding JDate users' motivation to join the site confirmed the hypothesis that JDaters choose the site because they are interested in meeting Jews for dating purposes. Information on the marriage and engagement results of JDate yielded a JDate "success rate" of 1 in 5 people who met on JDate and got married or engaged, and 1 in 3 who maintained a long-term relationship with someone they met on the site. Results additionally gathered data on the religious and ritual behaviors of JDaters and subsequently disproved the hypothesis that JDate users have primarily secular identities, as illustrated by JDate users overwhelming participation in Jewish holiday rituals and their positive attitudes towards religion's importance in their lives. Results did not address the hypothesis that JDate users find it easier to meet strangers on JDate due to commonalities, as data from this survey question were inconclusive.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 4 presented basic results of the survey undertaken as a part of this study. This section analyzes these results through correlations and cross-tabulations in an attempt to link findings together and extracts a clearer understanding of the general profile of JDate users.

This study began with three specific research questions, which are revisited below:

- What is the religious and ritual practice of JDate users?
- What is the success rate of JDate, including the percentage of engagements and marriages that result from the site?
- What are the motivations for using JDate?

Additionally, this section provides a commentary and analysis on the findings of the previous chapter in an attempt to gain nuanced insight into the general demographic profile and characteristics of JDate users.

Analysis of Demographic Results

The demographic findings of Chapter 4 illustrated that many more women than men reported using JDate. Results showed that of 611 respondents, 71.8% were women. An analysis of the discrepancy of female versus male JDate users likely suggests a few factors. First, women may be more likely to complete surveys than men. The high percentage of women represented in this study may suggest that women are more likely to feel comfortable disclosing information regarding their dating habits, particularly Internet dating. Through this pattern, the researcher infers that women may be more comfortable discussing their usage of JDate in a public (yet anonymous) arena. More research in the differences between men's and women's usage of JDate is certainly necessary at a future date. Additionally,

chapter 4 reported on men's and women's education levels. Table 7 reveals an analysis of these results.

Table 7 – Cross-Tabulation of Highest Level of Education by Gender

Highest Level of Education	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
High School Graduate	n=1	n=1	n=2
	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
			(100%)
Some College	n=25	n=10	n=35
	4.1%	1.6%	5.8%
			(100%)
College Graduate	n=117	n=51	n=168
	19.3%	8.4%	27.7%
			(100%)
Some Graduate Work	n=91	n=36	N=25
	15%	5.9%	20.9%
			(100%)
Masters Degree	n=162	n=40	n=202
	26.7%	6.6%	33.3%
			(100%)
JD/Ph.D./Post-Doctoral	n=42	N=30	n=72
	6.9%	4.9%	11.9%
			(100%)
Total	n=438	n=168	n=606
X^2	16.984		

**** $P < .01$. Results are statistically significant.**

As the above table illustrates, there is a large discrepancy between the education levels of men and the education levels of women. The difference in education level begins with college graduates, where 19.3% of female JDate users report having a college degree, while only 8.4% of male users have the comparable level of education. The trend continues, where 15% of women report some graduate work, while only 5.9% of men were found to be in the same category. The largest discrepancy occurs in the category of "Masters Degree,"

where 26.7% of female respondents had a masters degree, yet only 6.6% of male respondents had the corresponding level of education.

These findings represent a specific problem area within the JDate population. General dating stereotypes often focus on the male having attained a higher level of education, yet these survey results reveal a population of women and men that are inherently mismatched when using education as a measure. More research is certainly necessary to better understand this phenomenon. Are men comfortable with dating women that are higher educated than themselves? Do women with such high levels of educational achievement find appropriate matches with men who possess lower levels of education?

In addition to results on education levels, chapter 4 results yielded information on the age ranges using JDate and found that 48.4% of the sample was in the age range of 22-28, while an additional 20.7% fell between the ages of 29-32. Table 8 shows a correlation between ages and the use of JDate.

Table 8 - Correlation Matrix Age and JDate Use

Correlation Variables	Age	JDate use as a paying or free member
Age	1.0000	-.108**
JDate use as a paying or free member	-.108**	1.0000

** Correlation is significant at the P<.01 level (2-tailed).

This correlation matrix confirms that age is negatively correlated with JDate usage at a significant level. Age was listed in increasing increments, so the correlation shows that as age increases, usage of JDate decreases. This finding is reflective of the fact that younger people are perhaps more computer-savvy and more likely to try less-traditional avenues for meeting potential relationship partners; older individuals may be more likely to use other

avenues to meet a mate. Additionally, this finding indicates a need for matchmaking among younger adults in the Jewish community.

Effect of Jewish Education on Attitudes Toward Dating Jews

Results showed that an overwhelming percentage of JDate users reported past Jewish education: only 6.2% of the sample reported having absolutely no formal Jewish education during grades 1-7. Jewish formal and informal educational experiences are often used as predictors to Jewish involvement in adulthood (Bock, 1971). However, does formal Jewish education as a child impact one's attitude towards dating other Jews in adulthood? With this study's emphasis on JDate users' motivations, it was important to understand what experiences or actions (past or present) effected JDate users' attitude towards dating Jews and their general motivation to use the site. A cross-tabulation of formal Jewish education and attitudes toward dating Jews is examined below in Table 9.

Table 9 - Cross-Tabulation of Jewish Education and Attitudes Toward Dating Jews

Jewish Educational experiences (grades 1-7)	Attitudes Toward Dating Only Jews				Total
	It is important to me to date only Jews	It is somewhat important to me to date only Jews	It is not important to me to date only Jews	I don't know/not sure if it is important to me to date only Jews	
1 Day/week program such as Sunday School	n=161	n=58	n=18	n=3	n=240
	67.1%	24.2%	7.5%	1.25%	100%
					(39.3%)
Part-time Jewish school such as Hebrew School/Talmud Torah or Heder	n=180	n=45	n=18	-	n=243
	74.1%	18.5%	7.4%	-	100%
					(39.8%)
Full-time Jewish Day School/Yeshivah	n=80	n=19	n=2	-	n=103
	77.7%	18.4%	1.9%	-	100%
					(16.9%)
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tutoring	n=229	n=64	n=25	n=3	n=321
	71.3%	19.9%	7.8%	0.9%	100%
					(52.5%)
None	n=12	n=8	n=1	n=1	N=22
	54.5%	36.4%	4.5%	4.5%	100%
					(3.6%)
Total	n=662	n=194	n=64	n=7	n=929
					100%
					(100%)
χ^2	18.06				

P<0.20. Results are not statistically significant.

Note. A symbol of "-" indicates that there were no results in the category.

As illustrated above in Table 9, feeling that it is important to date only Jews is positively correlated to time-intensive Jewish education. 77.7% of Jewish day school

attendees reported that they believe it is important to only date only Jews, and only 1.9% of Jewish Day School attendees said it is not important to date Jews. The likelihood of individuals thinking it is important to date only Jews continually increases according to the time-intensity of formal Jewish educational experiences. 74.1% of part-time Hebrew school attendees (two or three days per week) and 67.1% of one-day per week Jewish educational programs reported that it is important to date only Jews.

Thus, past formal Jewish education is an important predictor of positive attitudes towards dating other Jews. The more time-intensive the educational experience is (with Jewish Day School leading the way), the more likely one is to only date Jews. This finding supports the previously known fact that Jewish education as a child is a predictor of Jewish identity and involvement as an adult (Bock, 1971).

It is also noted that Jewish informal experiences, such as attendance or employment at Jewish summer-camp or participating in a Jewish youth group are significant predictors of involvement in Jewish activities as an adult (Bock, 1971). Table 10 below shows a cross-tabulation between those who attended or worked at Jewish summer camp and attitudes towards dating Jews.

Table 10 – Cross-Tabulation of Attendance/Employment at Jewish Summer Camp and Attitude Towards Dating Jews

Attendance or employment at a summer sleep-away camp with Jewish religious services or Jewish content (before age 25)	Attitudes Toward Dating Only Jews				Total
	It is important to me to date only Jews	It is somewhat important to me to date only Jews	It is not important to me to date only Jews	I don't know/not sure if it is important to me to date only Jews	
Attended or Worked at Jewish summer camp	<i>n</i> =267	<i>n</i> =68	<i>n</i> =16	<i>n</i> =4	<i>n</i> =355
	75.2%	19.2%	4.5%	1.1%	100%
					(70.2%)
Never attended or worked at Jewish summer camp	<i>n</i> =93	<i>n</i> =33	<i>n</i> =22	<i>n</i> =2	<i>n</i> =150
	62%	22%	14.7%	1.3%	100%
					(29.6%)
Don't Remember/Don't Know	-	-	<i>n</i> =1	-	<i>n</i> =1
	0%	0%	100%	-	100%
					(0.2%)
Total	<i>n</i> =360	<i>n</i> =101	<i>n</i> =39	<i>n</i> =6	<i>n</i> =506
					100%
					(100%)
χ^2	21.50				

P<0.01. Results are statistically significant.

Note. A symbol of “-” indicates that there were no results in the category.

Table 10 illustrates that attendance or employment at Jewish summer camp also represents a significant factor in predicting one's attitude towards dating Jews. 75.2% of those who attended or worked at Jewish summer camp reported that it is “important to date only Jews.” Only 4.5% of these individuals who attended summer camp said that it is “not important to date only Jews. To contrast, those who did not attend or work at a Jewish summer camp were more likely to feel indifferent about dating only Jews: 22% reported that

it is "somewhat important to date only Jews" and 14.7% stated that it is "not important at all to date only Jews."

Table 11 – Cross-Tabulation of Participation in Jewish Youth Group and Attitude Towards Dating Jews

Participation in Jewish Youth Group during High School	Attitudes Toward Dating Only Jews				Total
	It is important to me to date only Jews	It is somewhat important to me to date only Jews	It is not important to me to date only Jews	I don't know/not sure if it is important to me to date only Jews	
Participated in Jewish Youth Group	n=226	n=61	n=15	n=4	n=306
	73.9%	19.9%	4.9%	1.3%	100%
					(70.2%)
Did not participate in Jewish Youth Group	n=131	n=41	n=23	n=2	n=197
	66.5%	20.8%	11.7%	1%	100%
					(29.6%)
Don't Remember/Don't Know	n=3	n=1	-	-	n=4
	75%	25%	0%	0%	100%
					(0.2%)
Total	n=360	n=103	n=38	n=6	n=507
					100%
					(100%)
χ^2	29.83				

P<0.001. Results are statistically significant.

Note. A symbol of "-" indicates that there were no results in the category.

Table 11 illustrates that participation in youth group activities during high school is also positively correlated with attitude towards dating Jews. 73.9% of those who participated in Jewish youth group reported that it is important to date only Jews. Only 4.9% of those who did attend youth group stated that it is "not important to me to date only Jews."

Contrastingly, 11.7% of those who did not participate in Jewish youth group stated that it is “not important to me to date only Jews.”

The analysis of attitudes toward dating only Jews cross tabulated with informal Jewish educational experiences such as summer camp and Jewish youth group show that participation in informal Jewish educational experiences has a significant effect on adults’ attitude towards intra-dating. **Individuals who had informal Jewish educational experiences are much more likely to date only Jews. The strong correlations between past formal and informal Jewish education shows that participants’ Jewish educational backgrounds largely effect their motivation to date Jews later in life.**

JDate Success Rates

A general precursor to this study was an avid interest in the success rates of JDate, and particularly, in the “ingredients” necessary for achieving success on JDate. Can JDaters successfully meet their match while using the free service, or do they increase their chances of meeting their match if they pay? How long should they pay in order to maximize their chance of meeting “the one”? How many first dates – and second dates – can the average JDate user expect to go on? The ability to correlate and crosstabulate data from this survey shed some light on many of these questions, which are presented in the tables below.

Table 12 – Correlation Matrix Between Length of Time the Service is Paid For and Success

Variables	Length of time paid for JDate service (increasing increments)	If you are married, engaged, or partnered, did you meet your partner on JDate?
Length of time paid for JDate service (increasing increments)	1.000	-.089**
If you are married, engaged, or partnered, did you meet your partner on JDate?	-.089**	1.000

**** Correlation is significant at the $P < .05$ level (2-tailed).**

Table 13 – Correlation Matrix Length of Time Service is Used for Free by Success

Variables	If you are married, engaged, or partnered, did you meet your partner on JDate?	For how long have you currently or ever had a free profile on JDate?
If you are married, engaged, or partnered, did you meet your partner on JDate?	1.000	.127**
For how long have you currently or ever had a free profile on JDate?	.127**	1.000

**** Correlation is significant at the $P < .01$ level (2-tailed).**

Tables 12 and 13 correlate success rates of JDate with the length of time the service was used. Table 12 represents JDate members who paid for the service, while table 13 shows those who accessed the service for free.¹ Table 12 illustrates a negative correlation: the more

¹ Answers about time spent using JDate were listed in increasing increments while the question about "success rates" was listed in decreasing order. Positive and negative correlations must be viewed in light of the way these answer choices were structured. Please see Appendix A, questions 24, 28, 29 for more details on the exact wording of the questions.

time one pays for a JDate member, the more likely one is to have success on the site. Success is defined as meeting one's spouse, fiancé, or life-partner. On the other hand, Table 13 - a correlation between those that used JDate's free service and their success rate - showed a positive correlation: as time spent using JDate for free increases, the likelihood of meeting one's spouse, fiancé, or life-partner *decreases*.

These correlations represent an important finding: **paying for JDate offers a greater degree of success due to the increased services that members are allowed to access.** Use of the free services (very limited services) for a lengthy period of time in fact lessens one's chance of meeting the right person. Thus, as a basic rule, those truly looking for a permanent relationship should make a monetary investment to increase their chances of success.

Effect of Motivation on Success Rates

Table 14 – Correlation Matrix Motivation by Success

Variables	Is it important to you to date only Jews?	If you are married, engaged, or partnered, did you meet your partner on JDate?
Is it important to you to date only Jews?	1.000	.203**
If you are married, engaged, or partnered, did you meet your partner on JDate?	.203**	1.000

**** Correlation is significant at the $P < .01$ level (2-tailed).**

Results in chapter 4 showed that the 78% of individuals surveyed stated that their primary motivational reason for using JDate was "I want to meet a Jewish partner for dating purposes." From this statistic, it was inferred that attitude towards dating Jews was an important motivational factor that influenced users to try the site. Table 14 illustrates that this

type of motivation is also a strong predictor of success rates. Success on JDate (defined by marriages, engagements, or life-partnerships) is positively correlated with attitude towards dating only Jews. **This means that the more important it was to a JDate user to date only Jews, the more likely that person was to find success on the site.** Table 15 below represents a cross-tabulation of ideal outcomes from JDate and success rates.

Table 15 – Cross-Tabulation of Ideal Outcome from JDate and Success Rates

If you are married or engaged, did you meet your partner on JDate	Ideal Outcome from JDate				<u>Total</u>
	Casual Dates	Long-term Relationship	Marriage	Life Partner	
Yes	<i>n</i> =2	<i>n</i> =16	<i>n</i> =72	<i>n</i> =4	<i>n</i> =94
	2.1%	17%	76.6%	4.3%	100%
					(52.8%)
No	<i>n</i> =11	<i>n</i> =27	<i>n</i> =34	<i>n</i> =4	<i>n</i> =76
	14.5%	35.5%	44.7%	5.3%	100%
					(42.7%)
Total	<i>n</i> =13	<i>n</i> =43	<i>n</i> =106	<i>n</i> =16	<i>n</i> =178
					100%
					(100%)
χ^2	20.996				

P<0.001 Results are statistically significant.

Table 15 additionally shows that motivation is strongly linked to success on JDate. One measure of motivation is the outcome that JDate users would like to gain from their experience on the site. When correlated with actual success rates, it is clear that **those who wish to become married as their outcome on the site are more likely to gain such an outcome in the end.** 72 people, or 76.6% reported that they both anticipated marriage as their outcome from JDate and actually did become engaged, married or life-partnered with someone they met on JDate. 34 people, or 44.7% stated that their ideal outcome from JDate was “marriage,” yet they had not met their spouse or partner on JDate.

Only 2 individuals, or 2.1% hoped for “casual dates” as the outcome of their JDate experience, and ended up married from the site. Thus, motivation to find marriage as an outcome from one’s experience on JDate is a key factor in the actual success encountered on JDate.

Chapter 6: Implications and Limitations

This study represents one of the first academic efforts to understand the general characteristics of JDate users including demographic traits, information on ritual and religious practices of users, and findings surrounding the common motivations for using the site. Through the findings, a more complete picture emerged of JDate users and also of JDate's role in the Jewish singles scene.

An important implication of this study for the Jewish community is that JDate has taken the role of the modern Jewish matchmaker and is successful in such a role. Throughout history, the Jewish community has developed ways to help link Jewish singles together in an effort to create marriages. Today, JDate serves that important role and seems to be the main player in the role of matchmaking. JDate offers an individualized approach where Jewish singles can meet one another without facing the stigmas of showing up at singles parties or dances. The Jewish community must acknowledge this important role that JDate is filling and encourage and embrace its continued presence as the modern matchmaker.

Second, the organized Jewish community should realize that JDate represents an emerging entrepreneurial model of providing services that is appealing to young adult Jews. JDate is a convenient, accessible and simple way for busy Jewish singles to meet one another. Unlike traditional models of Jewish organizations which are based on volunteer commitment, JDate does not require long-term commitments; instead, members can choose to "join" by paying the membership fees or not, and are then free to try JDate for any amount of time they desire. Additionally, JDate represents entrepreneurialism that is appealing to younger Jews: JDate is a for-profit enterprise, which means that members expect superior

customer service and are subsequently given such service. Marketing is also of key importance, and JDate target-markets to its audience of young-adults through online advertising and billboards in locations frequented by Jewish young adults.

Finally, the Jewish community should invest in partnerships with JDate. With over 600,000 members, JDate commands an audience of Jews who are committed to meeting other Jews, which means they have a sense of Jewish identity and involvement. This is a key audience for the organized Jewish community. While such younger individuals are generally hard to identify, JDate offers a captive audience of eager individuals. Jewish community organizations should do anything they can to build relationships with JDate in an effort to engage young Jews in a variety of categories from Israel-programs to social-action activities to philanthropic giving.

Future research should engage in finding more in-depth conclusions about the role of Internet Dating in the Jewish community. Any future studies should be broader in scope to develop a better understanding of success rates, motivations for pursuing Internet dating, as well as ritual practices of Internet daters. Additionally, future research may wish to compare results within the Jewish community to the community of Internet daters using sites other than JDate.

This study was limited by the wording of the questions and by the survey dissemination itself. Different types of questions would be need to be designed to gain more nuanced understandings of religious practices and JDaters sense of success or failure on the site. Questions could focus more on users' personal experiences on the site. Additionally, this study was limited by the sample itself: women were largely over represented, and the sample was composed of Jews who received the survey through their various affiliations or

membership with established Jewish organizations. Thus, a future study should pursue a larger sample of Internet daters and, if possible, identify these users through cooperation with the Internet dating site itself in order to provide a more randomized sample.

Despite the limitations of the study itself, the findings clearly show that JDate is leading the way matching Jewish singles with one another. Almost 1 in 10 Jewish singles has a profile on the site (Carpenter, 2006) and according to study results, approximately 1 in 5 JDate users met their spouse or fiancé through the site. JDate surely has become the quintessential matchmaker of the Jewish community. Moreover, study findings show that the majority of Jews using the site are invested in developing and expressing their Jewish identities: their desire to date and marry a Jew is one concrete expression of the significant role Judaism plays in their lives.

With JDate leading the way in engineering Jewish marriages, now more than ever, the Jewish community must learn from this important venture. For-profit entrepreneurial models such as JDate are delivering services in a unique and non-traditional manner and are achieving success both in appealing to younger Jews and in filling specific needs of the Jewish community. Intermarriage is a serious threat to Jewish continuity, and new models such as JDate exist to combat this threat. The organized Jewish community should welcome JDate as influential player in the mosaic of Jewish organizations that are working to ensure the vitality of Jewish religion and culture, now and always.

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Appendix A

JDate Survey

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The researcher, Miriam Pullman, wishes to learn about the reasons why JDate is an appealing way to meet Jewish people for relationship purposes. This study is part of a Masters Thesis at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion and the University of Southern California.

Your identity will remain confidential – no names or other identifying information will be disclosed.

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT: Miriam Pullman, miriampu@usc.edu, masters candidate in Jewish Communal Service and Public Administration at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion and The University of Southern California.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: The survey may involve 10-15 minutes of your time.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS: Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously if you wish – Steven Windmueller, Director of the HUC-JIR School of Jewish Communal Service: swindmueller@huc.edu, 3077 University Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90007, or toll-free at 800-899-0925. If you are interested in finding out the results of the study, please contact Hebrew Union College, School of Jewish Communal Service in May, 2006 at 800-899-0925.

By completing this survey, you give permission for your responses to be included in the study and any published results.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Are you currently, or have you ever, used JDate as a paying member or for free?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. Do you consider yourself Jewish?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Half-Jewish
☐ Sort-Of
☐ Not sure/Don't know
☐ Other (please specify) _____

3. Where do you currently live? Please list city and state (and county, if other than United States)

4. How did you obtain the link to this survey? I received an email from...

- ☐ Atid/Friday Night Live
☐ Hillel
☐ Jewish Federation Young Leadership Division
☐ Hebrew Union College Student List
☐ Hebrew Union College Alumni List
☐ An email or IM through JDate
☐ A friend who forwarded the survey
☐ Other (please specify) _____

5. Gender

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

6. Age

- ☐ 18-21 ☐ 22-28 ☐ 29-32 ☐ 33-38 ☐ 39 or Older

7. Highest Level of Education

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Some College | <input type="checkbox"/> College Graduate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some Graduate work | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate degree |

8. Do you consider yourself to be...?

(check no more than two boxes)

- ☐ Reform
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Orthodox
- ☐ Reconstructionist
- ☐ Just Jewish
- ☐ Culturally Jewish
- ☐ Non-practicing Jew
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

9. Please select "Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree" for following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Jews in the United States and Jews in Israel share a common destiny.				
b. I feel like an outsider in American society because I am a Jew				
c. Israel is the spiritual center of the Jewish people.				
d. Jews in the United States and Jews elsewhere around the world share a common destiny.				
e. When people are in distress American Jews have a greater responsibility to rescue Jews than non-Jews				
f. Israel still needs the financial support of American Jews.				

10. How important is religion in your life today?

- ☐ Very
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not very
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't know

11. About how often, if at all, did you go to any Jewish services in the past year?

- ☐ Only for weddings and Bar Mitzvahs
- ☐ Only on the High Holidays
- ☐ A few times (3-9)
- ☐ About once a month
- ☐ 2 or 3 times a month
- ☐ About once a week
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Every day
- ☐ *Yizkor* only
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Don't know/don't remember
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

12. How often, if at all, does anyone in your household light Sabbath candles on Friday night?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Don't know

13. Last Passover, did you hold or attend a *Seder*?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't remember

14. Last Hanukkah, how many nights, if any, did you participate in the lighting of Hanukkah candles, either in or out of your home?

- ☐ All eight nights
- ☐ Most nights
- ☐ Some nights
- ☐ None of the nights
- ☐ Don't remember

15. During the last *Yom Kippur*, did you personally fast?

- ☐ All day
- ☐ Part of the day
- ☐ I did not fast
- ☐ I could not fast due to health problems, age, pregnancy or nursing
- ☐ Don't know/not sure

16. How do you currently express your Jewish identity? Check all that apply

- ☐ Synagogue attendance
- ☐ Participation in a Jewish organization or agency
- ☐ Participation in classes on Jewish-related topics
- ☐ Attendance at movies, arts events, or other cultural events that address Jewish-related topics
- ☐ Follow news about Israel
- ☐ Participation in social-justice events
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

17. Which of the following types of Jewish education, if any, did you receive in grades 1 to 7? (Check all that apply)

One-day-a-week Jewish educational program, such as Sunday school

- ☐ A part-time Jewish school that met more than once a week, such as an afternoon Hebrew School, *Talmud Torah*, or *Heder*
- ☐ Jewish day school or *Yeshiva* (full time)
- ☐ *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Lessons/Tutoring
- ☐ Some other type of schooling (specify) _____
- ☐ Don't know/Don't remember
- ☐ I did not attend any type of Jewish education
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

18. Did you have a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/Don't remember

19. Did you attend or work at a summer sleep away camp that had Jewish religious services or other Jewish content before you were 25 years old?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/Don't remember

20. During High school did you ...

- ☐ Date only Jews
- ☐ Date mostly Jews
- ☐ Date both Jews and non-Jews
- ☐ Date mostly non-Jews
- ☐ Date only non-Jews
- ☐ Did not date
- ☐ Don't remember/Don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

21. Did you regularly participate in an organized Jewish youth group during high school?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/Don't remember

22. While in college, in which of the following, if any, did you participate?

- ☐ Hillel
- ☐ Jewish fraternity or sorority
- ☐ Some other Jewish group or activity
- ☐ Jewish Studies Course/Course in Jewish -related subjects
- ☐ Did not participate in Jewish groups at all
- ☐ Don't know/Don't remember
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

23. What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Engaged
- ☐ Life-partner
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

24. If you are married, engaged, or partnered, did you meet your partner on JDate?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A - I'm not married, engaged, or partnered

25. If you are currently single, do you...

- ☐ Date only Jews
- ☐ Date mostly Jews
- ☐ Date both Jews and non-Jews
- ☐ Date only non-Jews
- ☐ Date mostly non-Jews
- ☐ N/A - I'm not currently single
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) _____

26. Have you ever used JDate, either as a paying member or for free?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

27. Are you currently, or have you ever been, a paying member of JDate?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

28. For how long have you/did you pay for the JDate service?

- ☐ One month
- ☐ Less than three months
- ☐ Three – Six months
- ☐ Six months - One year
- ☐ Over one year
- Over two years
- ☐ N/A – I never paid for the service

Other (please specify) _____

29. For how long have you currently or ever had a free profile on JDate?

- ☐ One month
- ☐ Less than three months
- ☐ Three – Six months
- ☐ Six months – One year
- ☐ Over one year
- Over two years
- N/A – I never had a free profile
- ☐ Other (please specify)

30. About how often do you/did you log on to the JDate site?...

- ☐ Whenever I am sitting at my computer
- ☐ More than once a day
- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Less than once a week

Other (please specify) _____

31. Why did you choose to use J-Date? (check all that apply)

- ☐ I wanted to meet a Jewish partner for dating purposes
- ☐ I was pressured by friends or family to use the site
- ☐ I was pressured by friends or family to meet someone Jewish for relationship purposes
- ☐ I was just curious
- ☐ My friends had positive experiences on the site
- ☐ I thought it would be an easy way to meet people
- ☐ I thought Internet dating would save me time in meeting people
- ☐ Other (specify)

32. Why did you choose JDate versus other dating sites? (check all that apply)

- ☐ I feel more comfortable meeting Jewish strangers
- ☐ I've heard a lot of success stories from JDate
- ☐ JDate was more affordable
- ☐ I am only interested in meeting Jewish people to date
- ☐ Other (specify)

33. Do you feel that meeting strangers on JDate is easier than meeting strangers on another site?

- ☐ No
☐ Not sure/Don't Know
☐ Yes (why? Please tell us) _____

34. What outcome would you like to gain from JDate?

- ☐ Casual dates
☐ Long-term relationship
☐ Marriage
☐ Life partner
☐ New friends
☐ Other (please specify) _____

35. Is it important to you to date only Jews?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Somewhat ☐ Don't know/Not sure

36. If it is important, or somewhat important, for you to date only Jews, why? Check all that apply.

- ☐ My parents pressure me to marry/end up with someone Jewish
☐ I want to raise a Jewish family
☐ Judaism is an important value in my life
☐ I feel more connected to Jews

N/A – It's not important to me to date only Jews

Other (please specify) _____

37. Did your experience on JDate meet your expectations?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know/Not sure
☐ Other (please specify) _____

38. About how many dates have you had as a result of JDate?

- ☐ 0-5
☐ 6-10
☐ 11-19
☐ 20-30

More than 30

39. How many second dates have you had as a result of JDate?

- ☐ 0-5
☐ 6-10
☐ 11-20
☐ More than 20

40. Have you been in a long-term relationship (3 months+) as a result of JDate?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

41. What age range do you contact on JDate? In other words, when JDate asks, "I'm looking to meet someone between the ages of..." what do you put?

42. What age range have you had the most success with on JDate?

43. "What stereotypes come to mind when you think of dating Jewish men or women?"

Positive Stereotypes

Negative Stereotypes

44. In your personal experience, do you/did you find that Jewish stereotypes came into play on JDate? Please share your experience.

45. Do you have a profile on any other dating websites?

☐ No

☐ Yes (please tell us which one) _____

46. From your experience, which dating site are you more satisfied with and why?

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