

Collegian Offers Mini-Research

Comparison of Young and Experienced

This column inaugurates an attempt to make known to the population at Behrend College and Behrend Collegian readers elsewhere, results of mini-research projects done primarily by students in sociology courses. In our role as sociology professors we have encouraged talented students whose interests are in the social and behavioral sciences to delve into the lesser known frontiers of human behavior - at least to the students themselves. Student curiosity sometimes leads to manifest training in scientific inquiry while students are in the process of investigating common 'beliefs' and 'hearsays' that remain to be proven objectively.

The college professor who assigns term papers may have observed that the topics dealt with in student research papers are quite often monotonously popular. But some of these familiar topics sometimes emerge interestingly extraordinary, depending upon what angle they are viewed by the students. What might appear as an accepted fact usually turns out to be a fallacy when tested through scientific methods of social research.

The first student researches that will be presented here are those prepared for a course in Methodology of Sociology (Soc.7) we taught (Soc. Dept) last fall term. The object is not so much to repeat what the students wrote in their papers but to extract the most interesting, and hopefully relevant, findings that the students discovered. The statistical treatment here may not even be recognized by the student authors because we aim to translate the findings into journalistic language and communicate those results to the average newspaper reader.

One of the best papers in the course was presented by Diane Harris (4th term, Sociology), R.D. 7, Depot Road, Erie, Pa. Her research objective was to measure attitudes of people toward couples living together without the benefit of a marriage ceremony. She hypothesized that the less mature individuals would tend toward liberalism, that is, they would approve of couples living together without legal ties, and that the more mature individuals would tend to be conservative, i.e. they would favor the traditional legal marriage.

It may be quite upsetting to the student reader that she equated the less mature with full-time students who are 'young and inexperienced' and the more mature with employed workers who are 'self-supporting and experienced'. She therefore interviewed a nonprobability sample of 50 Behrend students and 50 workers employed at a hospital equipment manufacturing corporation and at an insurance company. Conservatism and liberalism scores were obtained from weighted responses to fourteen questions pertaining to such issues as the purpose of marriage, marriage ceremonies, abandonment, trial marriage, coed dorms with open visitations, unmarried college students of the opposite sex living together off-campus, unmarried pregnant women, divorcée women living with their boyfriends, political candidates with common-law wives, illegitimacy, etc.

In general, 56 per cent of her respondents approved of couples living together. However, when

students and workers were separated and compared, 70 per cent of the students approved of couples living together and only 42 per cent of the workers approved of the arrangement. (Table 1).

	Total
Students	70 per cent (50)
Workers	42 per cent (50)

Male	Female
68 per cent (25)	72 per cent (25)
36 per cent (25)	48 per cent (25)

Numbers in parentheses are totals on which percentages were based. Through chi-square analysis, this difference between the two groups turned out to be statistically significant at the probability level of .01. This means that less than one time in a hundred could she have drawn a sample in a population of 100 cases and obtained a chi square value derived from the difference if there was no relationship between maturity and attitude towards couples living together without legal marriage. In other words, students tend to be liberal with regards to this matter and workers tend to be conservative. Or, expressed in another way, students tend to be more liberal than workers who are already regularly employed in the labor market.

But perhaps other factors are involved in the relationship between maturity and attitude towards couples living together. Thus, sex was utilized as a control variable, and when stratified into male and female, the relationship remained, that is, more students than workers approved of couples living together without legal marriage. While the differences between the males and females in both groups were not statistically significant, it might be of interest to the readers that female respondents were generally more favorable to the arrangement that the males, indicating perhaps a slightly more liberal attitude among women than men, what with women's liberation and all that!! There were three times as many women workers than men workers who were in favor of unmarried couples living together. These findings could have been pursued further by controlling for marital status, because particularly among workers, there is a possibility that there were more single women than single men in the study sample.

However, saying that it is quite all right for unmarried couples to live together is different from doing it for oneself. Table 2 indicates that while 70 per cent of the students approved of couples living together, only 40 per cent of them would do it themselves. Similarly, only 22 per cent of the workers would do it themselves when 42 per cent of them approved of the arrangement.

	For Others
Students	70 per cent (50)
Workers	42 per cent (50)

	For Self
Students	40 per cent (50)
Workers	22 per cent (50)

Numbers in parentheses are totals on which percentages were based.

Thus, while people are liberal in a general way, Diane Harris concluded, they are more conservative in personal matters. Translated in the words of a layman, this may sound like this: "If unmarried couples want to live together-let them. It might be good for them, but not for me." Diane also deduced from her data that people are not rigid in their attitudes towards the actions of others. Viewed in terms of American society, this freedom of action may parallel the common expression, "Mind your own business." However, for those who still value marriage and other traditional and well-accepted norms and morals, results of this research will indicate that familial relationships among individuals will continue to be strong in their personal decisions, regardless of what 'most people' say. In other words, the family will probably persist as a social institution, in spite of some authorities warnings that the family might become extinct due to the many alternatives to marriage available in contemporary society.

Scholarship Being Offered

The Erie Engineering Societies Council will again, this year, award a scholarship of approximately \$500 to an outstanding student of one of the Erie area colleges.

The following general criteria will be considered in awarding the scholarship:

1. Academic standing as well as personal financial need;
2. Students studying engineering, physics, math, or chemistry preferred, although those pursuing other scientific curricular would be considered;
3. Candidates should preferably be in the final two years of their undergraduate programs.

If you know of any student who qualifies, will you please notify the student and tell him or her to obtain an application from the Office of Student Affairs. Completed applications must be returned to the Office of Student Affairs by December 17.

Students Take Note

Each term, scores of Behrend students experience problems with their academic record. These problems could easily be avoided by the students filing the proper form before the stated deadlines.

Some of the most usual problems encountered by Behrend students are discussed below.

REQUESTING A COURSE TO REMOVE A "D" OR "F" GRADE

From your cumulative average (M-36 rule) this can be done by completing a course Repeat Request form before the end of the 21 day drop period. A \$3 fee is charged.

IF YOU CANNOT COMPLETE THE TERM

Contact the Office of Student Affairs in the Main Building to process any official withdrawal form. Failure to do this will result in your receiving 'F' grades in all subjects and cause problems with your later re-admission or transfer to another school. Also, up until the 8th week of the term, you are entitled to a REFUND of a portion of your tuition if you withdraw from classes.

IF YOU CANNOT COMPLETE A COURSE.

You should process a Change of Schedule (drop-add) form. You have 21 calendar days (not class meetings) from the start of the term to do this. Failure to process the official form will result in an 'F' grade for the course and a loss of any tuition refund.

After the deadline, the revised J-2 rule applies. In accordance with the rule, drops will not be processed after the deadline. Students may petition in writing to the Senate Committee on academic standards to drop a course after the deadline.

IF YOU SHOULD BE TRANSFERRING TO UNIVERSITY PARK NEXT TERM

You should check with your advisor to learn when students in your particular major may transfer (usually after your 6th term). During the first 10 days of the term

preceding the one in which you wish to transfer, you should process a Change of Assignment Request Form.

If you will need housing in the residence halls, secure the housing application at this time. A pre-registration form should be completed with your advisor's assistance by the 21st day of the term.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A new procedure permits a student to request a leave of absence for 1-4 terms. At the specified time, the student may return to his program of study without going through re-admission procedure. There is a special form for requesting a leave of absence. This may be processed any time during the last term being completed before the leave of absence commences.

IF YOU TAKE A COURSE ON A PASS-FAIL BASIS

You should process a Pass-Fail form by the end of the 21st day of the term. It is important to be aware that once the form is processed, it cannot be cancelled or changed to permit a letter grade to be assigned. Sometimes students take a course on Pass-Fail basis only to find they would be earning an 'A' or 'B' grade, it then must stand as Pass-Fail.

IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE YOUR MAJOR

You should see the Dean's Representative for the college of the new major you desire. Take along a copy of your academic record to assist the Dean's Representative in counseling you. A copy of your record may be obtained in the Academic Affairs Office. (Main Building).

DEADLINES

December 17—Monday. Last day to register late. Last day to add a course. Last day to change campus assignment.

January 11—Friday. Last day to drop a course. Last day to file courses repeat form. Last day to file Pass-Fail form. Last day to pre-register for University Park.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

No. of People _____



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proximately 8:30 p.m. There will be time after the performance to enjoy dinner in Cleveland. A ticket and round-trip transportation costs \$5.50 per person, if we fill a bus with 41 people.

Everyone is welcome. If you would like to see "Look Back in Anger" on January 20, complete the form below and place it in the Studio mailbox. Please respond soon so that definite arrangements can be made.

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