

Hypotheses

1. Alumni will leave church, or move into more liberal denominations in college (Arnett & Jensen, 2002).
2. Undergraduates and alumni will move toward individualized religion and Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, a move which will increase with time out of college (Smith, 2005, 2009).
3. Men and Women will express different levels of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism and spiritual commitment as well.

Procedure

An email containing a link to our survey on Survey Monkey™ was sent to Gordon freshmen and seniors and to 2006, 2008, and 2010 Gordon and Wheaton alumni. One-on-one phone or face-to-face follow-up interviews, lasting approximately 30 minutes, were then conducted. At the beginning of every interview, informed consent was obtained and no names were used during the interviews. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed.

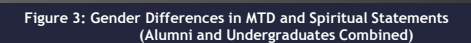
Participants

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 that alumni will move away from faith was not supported. There was no significant difference in years since graduation (figure 1). 40% of participants stayed with their same denomination and 84% stayed within the same denominational category.

Hypothesis 1

Figure 1: Number Who Stayed in Same Category and Same Denomination and Who Switched By Year



Conclusions

We did not find a shift toward Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, a parasitic and watered down form of religion, contrary to Smith (2005, 2009). Instead, participants were much more likely to describe faith in classic terms, and to describe their trust in God and ownership of their own faith.

Although MTD perceptions were not common, among the participants, a therapeutic perception was most common. Undergraduates expressed more classic statements about faith whereas alumni expressed more statements about ownership of faith and trust in God. There were no differences by gender.

References available on handout