



Cross-Cultural Marriage and Divorce:

A Comparison to US Divorces and Contributors to Cross-Cultural Divorce

By

Statistics Solutions, Inc.

[www.StatisticsSolutions.com](http://www.StatisticsSolutions.com)

(877) 437-8622

Issued: December 12, 2008

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Survey Objective</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Survey Methodology</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Survey Instrument</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Procedure</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Data Analysis Plan</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Survey Results</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Demographics</b>	<b>4</b>
Participants	4
Table 1. Frequency of Region by Gender	4
Table 2. Gender and Length of Courtship	5
Table 3. Gender and Reported Household Income Level	5
Table 4. Chi Square Analyses between Gender and Level of Education	6
<b>Research Findings</b>	<b>6</b>
Research Questions	6
Presentation of Findings	7
Comparison of Cross-cultural and US Divorce Rate	7
Length of Marriage of Cross-Cultural Marriages	7
One-Week Wonders (OWW)	7
Table 5. Frequency of Divorces by Elapsed Time between Meeting and Marriage	7
IMB Assisted One-Week Wonders (OWW)	8
Table 6. Frequency of Divorces by Elapsed Time between Meeting and Marriage, IMB-Assisted	8
Table 7. Courtship Length and Divorce Rate	8
Abuse and Divorce	9
Table 8. Logistic regression Findings with 12 potential contributors predicting Divorce (Yes vs. No)	9
Gender Differences in Contributors to Divorce	10
Table 9. T-tests on Contributors to Divorce by Gender	10
Summary of Results	11
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Reference</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>14</b>

## **Abstract**

This report addresses the Survey of Cross-Cultural Marriage and Divorce, sponsored by International Relations and GoodWife.com, an organization owning several popular websites for persons interested, or involved, in romantic relationships with partners from foreign countries. The survey addresses important statistics related to cross-cultural marriage and divorce, and provides insight into the marriage, and divorce, experiences of more than 1700 persons across the globe.

DO NOT COPY

## **Background**

Statistics Solutions, Inc. was contracted as an independent statistical consultant by International Relations in August 2008. Scope of the engagement was to; review the approach and methodology employed by International Relations in the initiation and conduct of data collection to-date with attendant improvement suggestions if any, review the completed data and validate the dataset, conduct a limited range of data analyses, and prepare a final report.

### **Survey Objective**

Objective of the survey was to gather data from a broad cross-section of persons who have been, or still are, in marriages with a cross-cultural spouse. Of particular interest were those marriages that later failed and resulted in divorce, and the major contributors cited as leading causes of those divorces.

### **Survey Methodology**

When Statistics Solutions, Inc. was engaged to perform this contract, data collection for the survey was underway having been initiated in July, 2008. It is understood that International Relations was assisted in construction of the survey questions and process by several researchers from U.S. universities. Statistics Solutions has reviewed the questions and responses used in the survey and finds them to be sufficient to achieve the desired results.

### **Survey Instrument**

The survey instrument was a 20-item survey that assessed the participants' gender, age, divorce status, income, educational attainment, home country, and potential contributors to divorce (see Appendix A).

### **Procedure**

Survey awareness was achieved through direct email to registrants of International Relations' websites, press releases to the media, announcements in several major metropolitan newspapers, and notification on various internet forums where cross-cultural relationships are known to be discussed regularly. The campaign encouraged participants to visit one of the International Relations' websites, GoodWife.com, where they were asked to fill out the survey. Participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. International Relations used a popular third-party program for data

capture, Lime Survey ([www.limesurvey.org](http://www.limesurvey.org)). Interested respondents not desiring to use the online survey were able to download a printable copy of the survey, complete it manually, and fax the completed survey for recording into the database. Data was gathered over a period of several months, and then was provided to Statistics Solutions for review and analysis.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Upon receipt of the data from International Relations in early October 2008, Statistics Solutions, Inc. performed an integrity check to insure the resultant data were valid for analyses. The raw data contained more than 2,300 individual responses. Following Statistics Solutions review of the raw data, nearly 600 responses were excluded from the dataset, resulting in a validated dataset of more than 1,700 survey responses. Descriptive statistics and both parametric and non-parametric statistics were conducted to examine the research questions posed by International Relations and described later in this report.

## Survey Results

### Demographics

#### Participants

The participants were 1,710 respondents across the globe. Of those respondents, 1,473 (86.14%) were male and 237 (13.86%) were female. The participants were not given any pay or incentives for participating in this study. The majority of respondents indicated that they were connected with their current/former spouse with the help of an International Marriage Broker (IMB) (942, 55.09%). Most of the respondents had a household income less than \$100,000 (n=1,193, 69.76%), while the majority of respondents had at least some college, with the largest percent reporting at least a Bachelor's degree (n=492, 28.77%). The large majority of respondents were from the United States (n=934, 54.65%). Most of the males were from North America, while most women were from Asia and Eastern Europe. Table 1 presents the participants' geographic region by gender. Of the participants, 42.5% (n=626) of the males and 59.3% (n=140) of the females used IMB services.

*Table 1. Frequency of Region by Gender*

Continent of Origin	Gender	
	Male	Female
North America	915	19
South American	20	5
East Europe	122	67
West Europe	225	2
Asia	36	142
Australia	111	0
Other	44	1

Table 2 presents the Length of Time between Meeting and Marrying (i.e., courtship) by Gender. Most of the men in this sample courted their spouse for 2 months or more.

*Table 2. Gender and Length of Courtship*

Length of Courtship	Male	Female
0-2 Weeks	50	9
2 to 4 Weeks	36	6
1 to 2 Months	81	17
2 to 4 Months	178	36
4 to 6 Months	244	47
6 to 9 Months	217	34
9 to 12 Months	205	29
1 to 2 years	357	47
Other	105	12

Table 3 presents the participants' level of income by gender, where reported household income was generally less than \$125,000 per year.

*Table 3. Gender and Reported Household Income Level*

Income Level	Gender	
	Male	Female
Less than \$50,000	347	94
\$50,000-\$75,000	374	58
\$75,000-\$100,000	287	33
\$100,000-\$125,000	164	22
\$125,000-\$150,000	86	7
\$150,000-\$175,000	59	5
\$175,000-\$200,000	37	2
More than \$200,000	90	7
Other	29	9

Table 4 presents participants' educational attainment by gender. Males tended to have some college or a Bachelors degree, while women tended to have Master's degrees.

*Table 4. Chi Square Analyses between Gender and Level of Education*

Education Level	Gender	
	Male	Female
High School	144	11
Some College	425	51
Bachelor's Degree	434	58
Master's Degree	315	103
Doctorate	120	9
Other	35	5

## Research Findings

### Research Questions

Statistics Solutions, Inc. was asked to perform statistical data analyses on 5 key questions from the survey. Those questions follow, along with descriptive analyses of findings from the survey:

1. What is the divorce rate amongst those in cross-cultural marriage and how does that rate compare to the US domestic (traditional) divorce rate?
2. Of those divorced, how long did they remain in the marriage?
3. Do “One-Week-Wonder” (OWW) marriages (courtship of 2 weeks or less) fail at a higher rate than those marriages that result from a longer courtship (courtship greater than 2 weeks)?
4. For those only using International Marriage Brokers (IMB), do “One-Week-Wonder” (OWW) marriages (courtship of 2 weeks or less) fail at a higher rate than those marriages that result from a longer courtship (courtship greater than 2 weeks)?
5. Is abuse (physical, verbal, or emotional) a significant contributor to divorce in cross-cultural marriage? Is there a gender difference on the contribution of abuse to divorce?

## Presentation of Findings

### *Comparison of Cross-cultural and US Divorce Rate*

The first research question examined of the divorce rate amongst those in cross-cultural marriage compared to the US domestic divorce rate. The divorce rate in the US for 2007 is 48.0% (CDC, 2008), while the divorce rate for cross-cultural spouses is 40.6%. A test of proportion was statistically significant,  $Z = 5.768$ ,  $p < .01$ . This indicates that the cross-cultural divorce rate is statistically lower than the US divorce rate.

### *Length of Marriage of Cross-Cultural Marriages*

The second research question examined, of those divorced, how long did they remain in the cross-cultural marriage. The average length of marriage was 5.44 (SD=3.69, n=492) years, with a minimum of 1 year and maximum of 17 years.

### *One-Week Wonders (OWW)*

The third research question examined, for the entire sample, whether “One-Week-Wonder” (OWW) marriages (courtship of 2 weeks or less) failed at a higher rate than those marriages that result from a longer courtship (courtship greater than 2 weeks). Table 5 presents the frequencies of Divorce by Length of courtship (Table 5). A chi-square was not statistically significant,  $X^2(1) = 3.253$ ,  $p = .071$ , indicating that no significant relationship exists between these two variables.

Table 5. Frequency of Divorces by Elapsed Time between Meeting and Marriage

Elapsed time between Meeting and Marriage	Divorced		
	No	Yes	Total
2 weeks or less	244	195	439
Over 2 weeks	767	501	1268
Total	1011	696	1707

*IMB Assisted One-Week Wonders (OWW)*

The fourth research question examined, for the IMB assistance only participants, whether “One-Week-Wonder” (OWW) marriages (courtship of 2 weeks or less) fail at a higher rate than those marriages that result from a longer courtship (courtship greater than 2 weeks). Table 6 presents the frequencies of Divorce by Length of courtship for IMB-assisted marriages (Table 6). A chi-square was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.647, p = .421$ , indicating that no significant relationship exists between these two variables.

*Table 6. Frequency of Divorces by Elapsed Time between Meeting and Marriage, IMB-Assisted*

Elapsed time between Meeting and Marriage	Divorced		
	No	Yes	Total
2 weeks or less	17	10	27
Over 2 weeks	518	220	739
Total	535	230	766

One additional question was whether or not the OWW (or equivalent) would have a higher divorce rate. Table 7 shows that for those with 4 or less months of courtship, the divorce rate was 45.0%-58.7%, compared to those with courtship with 4 or more months, where the divorce rate was between 35.8%-41.3%. It appears that the OWW is not at the 2 week courtship timeframe, but rather at the 4 month timeframe.

*Table 7. Courtship Length and Divorce Rate*

Courtship Length	Divorce Rate
0 - 2 Weeks	45.00%
2 - 4 Weeks	58.70%
1 - 2 Months	48.39%
2 - 4 Months	48.18%
4 - 6 Months	39.43%
6 - 9 Months	41.26%
9 - 12 Months	38.89%
1 - 2 Years	39.34%

Other	35.84%
-------	--------

### *Abuse and Divorce*

Research question 5a examined whether abuse (physical, verbal, or emotional) and other potential contributors to divorce were significant when predicting divorce in cross-cultural marriages. A logistic regression was conducted with 12 predictors of Divorce (Yes vs. No; see Table 8). The regression was not statistically significant,  $X^2(12) = 16.52, p = .169$ , indicating that as a whole, the 12 predictors did not do a good job of predicting divorce. Further, Table 8 presents the significance levels for the potential contributors, where none of the 12 contributors were statistically significant.

*Table 8. Logistic regression Findings with 12 potential contributors predicting Divorce (Yes vs. No).*

Contributors	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Financial	-.613	1.310	.219	1	.640	0.542
Sex	.590	1.081	.298	1	.585	1.804
Abuse	-2.356	2.221	1.125	1	.289	0.095
Infidelity	.701	.849	.681	1	.409	2.015
Children	14.663	943.4	.001	1	.988	2.33x10 <sup>6</sup>
Family	11.408	821.3	.001	1	.989	9.01x10 <sup>4</sup>
Stress	-.292	1.132	.066	1	.797	0.747
Language	-1.481	1.768	.702	1	.402	0.227
Cultural	-.766	1.286	.355	1	.551	0.465
Communication	.352	1.118	.099	1	.753	1.421
Commitment	-1.169	1.215	.927	1	.336	0.311
Family goals	1.718	1.667	1.062	1	.303	5.572

*Gender Differences in Contributors to Divorce*

The fifth research question examined whether there was a gender difference in the contributors of divorce? To examine this question, a t-test was conducted for each of the 12 contributors by gender (Table 9). Two t-tests were statistically significant: Abuse and Commitment. Females tended to rate Abuse “moderately” (M=3.21, SD=1.70) compared to males (M=1.97, SD=1.37) who rated Abuse as “somewhat” of a contributor of divorce. Males tended to rate Commitment “moderately” (M=3.25, SD=1.50) compared to females (M=2.54, SD=1.41) who rated Commitment as “somewhat-moderate” as a contributor of divorce.

*Table 9. T-tests on Contributors to Divorce by Gender*

Contributor	t	Sig.	Male		Female	
			M	SD	M	SD
Financial	-0.817	0.41	2.45	1.50	2.62	1.66
Sex	-0.209	0.84	2.61	1.54	2.66	1.56
Abuse	-6.203	0.01	1.97	1.37	3.21	1.70
Infidelity	1.231	0.22	2.55	1.73	2.25	1.49
Children	-0.667	0.51	1.61	1.22	1.73	1.27
Family	-0.276	0.78	2.04	1.44	2.10	1.50
Stress	-1.743	0.08	2.39	1.36	2.73	1.56
Language	0.282	0.78	1.62	1.09	1.58	0.92
Cultural	-1.770	0.08	2.11	1.29	2.44	1.39
Communication	0.384	0.70	2.83	1.44	2.75	1.37
Commitment	3.280	0.01	3.25	1.50	2.54	1.41
Family goals	0.230	0.82	3.03	1.51	2.98	1.48

*Note.* df=696.

### Summary of Results

Several questions were examined in this study. First, the divorce rate for the US is statistically higher than for cross-cultural marriages. Second, on average, cross-cultural marriages that end in divorce, fail at about 5-1/2 years of marriage. Third, there was no statistical relationship between OWW (2 weeks or less of courtship) and divorce. Fourth, when OWW's and divorce were examined for those with IMB assistance, there was no statistical relationship. As a caveat, the OWW is more of a "4-month wonder" rather than the one-week-wonder. Fifth, abuse, as well as the other potential contributors to divorce, were not statistically significant predictors of divorce. However, females did rate Abuse higher, and Commitment lower, as significant contributors to divorce than did males.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This survey research presents a snapshot of cross-cultural marriages. Most of the male participants were from North America, and most of the females from Asia and Eastern Europe. Therefore, these findings should be generalized only to these regions. Further, these findings should only be generalized to those with household incomes of \$125,000 or less.

While the OWW and divorce relationship was not supported, future research could qualitatively examine what kept the OWW's together. Evaluation of the myth of OWW could also be investigated.

The belief that abuse is a predictor of divorce was not supported. While women rated abuse higher than males as a contributor of divorce, women endorsed abuse as a contributor at a moderate level. Future research could examine whether differences between different divorces contributors do exist; for example, statistical analyses could examine whether women rated abuse significantly higher than family goals.

The data collected by International Relations provides opportunities for numerous additional statistical studies. Statistics Solutions, Inc. has provided analyses on only a few of the myriad studies that might be performed with the survey data. Statistics Solutions, Inc. finds the methodology employed by International Relations to have met professional standards and providing valid results. Further use of the survey data for providing additional insight into cross-cultural marriage and divorce is encouraged.

## Reference

[http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr54/nvsr54\\_20.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr54/nvsr54_20.pdf)

DO NOT COPY

## Appendix A

A copy of the survey questions and possible responses may be viewed and downloaded from this link:

[http://www.goodwife.com/survey/Survey\\_Form.pdf](http://www.goodwife.com/survey/Survey_Form.pdf)

DO NOT COPY