# Measuring the acceptance of evolutionary theory in Texas 2-Year Colleges

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**ABSTRACT**

Evolutionary theory is the central unifying theory of the life sciences. However, acceptance and understanding of the theory have been found to be lacking in the general public, high school, and university populations. Prior research has linked low acceptance of the theory to a poor knowledge base in evolution, to the nature of science, and to conflicts with certain religious beliefs. The purpose of the present study was to measure the acceptance rate of the theory of evolution among students enrolled in science major biology courses in Texas community colleges. Specifically, the study determined factors that influence high and low acceptance of the theory of evolution. This research sought to begin to fill a gap in the knowledge base concerning acceptance of the theory of evolution among community colleges. To achieve the goal, the researcher gave students at five community colleges located in Northeast Texas a combined survey consisting of; 20 Likert scale questions that measured the acceptance of evolutionary theory, 10 multiple choice questions that measured basic knowledge of the theory, and a series of demographic questions that assessed previous experience in high school with evolutionary theory and creationism. This article will focus on the findings from the MATE and KEE and their implications for science education at the K-12 and postsecondary levels. Data collected were statistically analyzed using SPSS version 22 to discover the relationships between the various independent variables and the dependent variable of the acceptance level of the theory of evolution.

Keywords: evolution, religiosity, creationism, intelligent design, acceptance