

Contemporary Perspectives of Gender Roles in First Date Scripts

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Introduction

First date scripts provide a guideline for how people think they should behave on a first date

- Men are expected to be more active and directive on a first date (Laner & Ventrone, 2000)
- Women are expected to be more passive and reactive (Laner & Ventrone, 2000)
- From 2000 to 2015, first date scripts have become more egalitarian but many gender roles persist (Cameron & Curry, 2020)

Research Questions

- Are men still expected to perform traditional behaviors on a first date?
- Are women still expected to perform traditional behaviors on a first date?
- When we look at specific behaviors, exactly what are men expected to do and what are women expected to do?

Methods

- 128 participants (64 women; 62 men; 2 non-binary)
- 98% American, 81% in a relationship; 60% White/European
- Completed a survey of 67 first-date behaviors, listed in temporal order
- Indicated the role that best suited each behavior

Example item:

“Ask for the date”

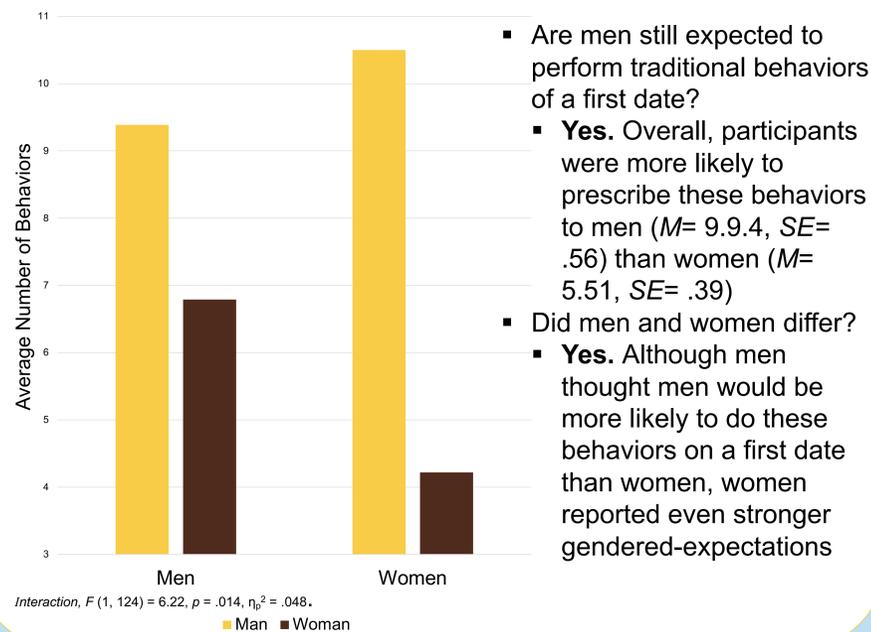
- Man
- Woman
- Either/Both
- Neither



Summary

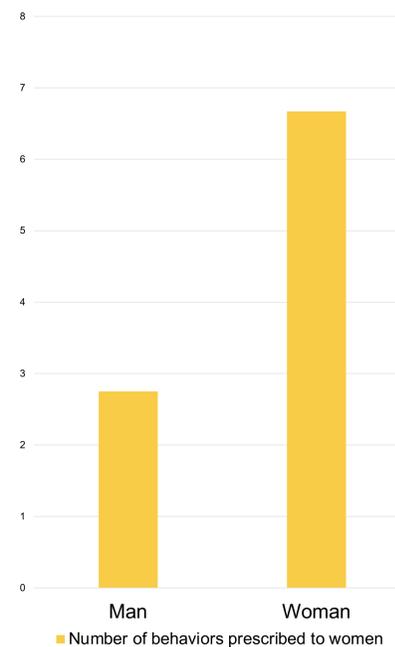
- The greater part of First Date Script behaviors are not assigned to one particular role by the overall majority of participants
- Although, when we isolate the behaviors that have traditionally been expected men or women in prior studies, these expectations are still consistent
 - Women were more likely to have gendered-expectations than men for behaviors traditionally assigned to men.
- Therefore, we continue to see that despite the overall script having no significant role preference, certain gender roles continue to persist within First Dates in 2020

Behaviors Traditionally Prescribed to Men



- Are men still expected to perform traditional behaviors of a first date?
 - Yes.** Overall, participants were more likely to prescribe these behaviors to men ($M = 9.4, SE = .56$) than women ($M = 5.5, SE = .39$)
- Did men and women differ?
 - Yes.** Although men thought men would be more likely to do these behaviors on a first date than women, women reported even stronger gendered-expectations

Behaviors Traditionally Prescribed to Women



- Are women still expected to perform traditional behaviors on a first date?
 - Yes.** Overall, participants were more likely to prescribe these behaviors to women ($SE = .33$) than men ($SE = .26$)
- Did men and women differ?
 - No.** Unlike with behaviors traditionally prescribed to men, men and women were equally like to prescribe these behaviors to women

First Date Script Behaviors

Relationship Initiation Behavior	Man	Woman	Either/Both
Discuss plans with date partner	20%	17%	50%
Meet date partner at agreed upon location (i.e., did not get picked up by date partner)	16%	19%	55%
Greet/introduce partner to friends	14%	28%	50%
Have a meal with partner (e.g., went to dinner)	13%	23%	59%
Go somewhere else (e.g. movie)	22%	21%	52%
Go somewhere else (e.g. drinks, dancing)	21%	18%	54%
Have a deeper conversation	18%	23%	52%
Kiss goodnight	21%	20%	53%
Hug good-bye	16%	27%	53%
Pay the whole bill (e.g., for dinner)	55%	17%	26%
Open doors for date	55%	18%	23%
Pay the whole bill (e.g. for drinks)	56%	13%	27%
Take extra time to prepare	15%	58%	23%
Get picked up by date partner (e.g., with car, to take the bus, with parents)	18%	50%	23%
Go to bathroom to check and/or adjust appearance	7%	54%	29%

- We explored the frequency by which participants indicated that the man, woman or both should enact each behavior.
- There was no clear majority response for most of the first date script behaviors
- The chart displays the only 15 of the 67 temporal first date behaviors which had one group that over 50% of participants had assigned to.