Contemporary Perspectives of Gender Roles in First Date Scripts
Kayley Leurquin & Jessica Cameron

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
1. Are men still expected to perform traditional behaviors on a first date?
2. Are women still expected to perform traditional behaviors on a first date?
3. 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= 9.9.4, SE= .56) than women (M= 5.51, 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

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

- 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.

Questions or Comments? Contact lurquik@myumanitoba.ca

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