Egalitarian Attitudes, Gender Roles, and College Students’ Beliefs About Dating Behaviors
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Data were submitted to a multiple regression with gain/loss, traditionally masculine or feminine/gender neutral, gender, and egalitarianism as predictors of date success. The overall model was significant, $R^2 = .373$, $F(4, 155) = 4.129, p = .003$.

- Whether the scenario was traditionally masculine/feminine or gender neutral was not associated with perceptions of date success ($\beta = .094,$ ns).
- Whether the scenario depicted a potential gain or loss was not associated with perceptions of date success ($\beta = .016,$ ns).
- Participant gender was significantly associated with perceptions of date success ($\beta = .325, p = .001$). Male participants rated the date as more successful than female participants.
- Egalitarianism was unassociated with date success ($\beta = .086,$ ns).

A second regression model was tested that included gain/loss, traditionally masculine or feminine/gender neutral, gender, egalitarianism, and all possible two-way interactions as predictors of date success. Step 2: $R^2 = .104, F(6, 149) = 1.010, p = .384$. Model $R^2 = .161; R(10, 159) = 2.65, p = .003$.

- A significant interaction between gain/loss framing and egalitarianism emerged ($\beta = .317, p < .017$).
- Low egalitarian participants viewed the loss scenario as more successful than the gain scenario, whereas there was no difference for high egalitarian participants.

These findings show that it does not matter if one has high or low egalitarianism with respect to preferences for traditional vs. neutral dating behaviors (Hypothesis 1). This reflects Gansg and Coleman’s (1990) findings about dating behavior and egalitarianism, and is similar to Rose and Frieze’s (1993) findings about dating. The findings are significant because even though other gender roles have changed, gender roles in dating have not changed due to the fact that individuals want the date to go well.

Another finding within this study was that men tend to rate dates as more successful than women. However, men and women’s ratings of date success did not differ as a function of traditional/neutral behaviors (Hypothesis 1).

Hypothesis 3 was not supported, however partial support was found for Hypothesis 4. Although gain or loss framing did not directly affect perceptions of date success, it did interact with egalitarianism. Findings suggest that low egalitarian participants viewed the loss scenario as more successful than the gain scenario, whereas there was no difference for high egalitarian participants. The reason for this is that if a participant is low in egalitarianism, he or she will use gender roles to make sure the date runs smoothly, so he or she does not have anything to lose from this situation. It may also be the case that high egalitarians are less likely to deviate dating behaviors that deviate from traditional gender roles.

We had anticipated that participants would view the traditional scenario as more successful. We believe that the wording of neutral scenarios may have allowed participants to assume that traditional behaviors had been enacted. Furthermore, the scenarios did not convey behaviors that were explicitly non-traditional (e.g., the woman initiates a goodnight kiss).

Further research could be conducted to determine why men tend to evaluate hypothetical dates more favorably than women. This could help us in understanding why there are different perceptions of successful date behaviors between men and women. Further research could also examine why low egalitarian participants view the loss scenario as more successful and why neither situation has an impact on ratings of date success for individuals who are high in egalitarianism. Perhaps most important to our original hypotheses, future research should construct scenarios that clearly differentiate between traditional and neutral behaviors of the actors.

References & Acknowledgments


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