

HELLO DARLIN':
SCRIPTS, ROLES, AND EXPECTATIONS
ON FIRST DATES

by

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ABSTRACT

In the current study, Expectancy Violations Theory provides the framework for understanding and labeling violations of expectations for participants' first dates. Previous avenues of this research have focused on identifying dating scripts (the "blueprint" that prescribes daters' actions) by manipulating various factors of alcohol consumption, sex of the date initiator, and the date location. However, there is a missing connection to what makes up these dating scripts in relation to expectancy violations. In this study ($n = 256$), those previously considered factors are tested with a new variable in religiosity and manipulated to see if they have an impact on a person's sexual expectations for first dates. The findings support the proposed hypotheses that men expect more sexual behavior on female initiated dates $F(1, 121) = 0.264, p < .011$, that the context of a date influences expectancy violations $F(2, 247) = 3.03, p < .05$, and that religiosity plays a role on expectations that limits the amount of sexual behavior expected on first dates $r = .149, n = 248, p < .05$.

(Keywords: expectancy violations theory (EVT), intimacy, dating scripts, religion)

DEDICATION

I want to take this time to salute everyone who has had to live through one of those awkward, sometimes disturbing first dates. There are those of us who have been on first dates where anything and everything that could have gone wrong, did – and always does. For you, my brethren, this research is dedicated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to wish thanks to my committee, Dr. Jason Edward Black, Dr. Jennifer Greer, and my chairperson, and my friend, Dr. Carol Mills. All of you have helped me shape this research into what it has become today and I am forever indebted for your wisdom. I would also like to thank my family and friends for helping me navigate the rough terrain and keeping me on track to complete this project. Everyone in the Communication Studies Department at the University of Alabama who gave me advice or listened to my woes, thank you too. Also, a special word of thanks goes out to Dr. Jim Honeycutt at Louisiana State University for lending a hand during the final stages of this research.

“I thank you God for this most amazing day, for the leaping greenly spirits of trees, and for the blue dream of sky and for everything which is natural, which is infinite, which is yes.”

- e. e. Cummings

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

a Cronbach's index of internal consistency

ANOVA Analysis of variance

df Degree of freedom

f Frequency

H Hypothesis

m Mean (Arithmetic average)

n Number in a subsample

N Total number in a sample

p Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme as more extreme than the observed value

SD Standard deviation

r Pearson product –moment correlation

RQ Research question

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Hello darlin': scripts, roles, and expectations on first dates.

Scholars have conducted much research using Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT) to explicate the roles of sex of the date initiator, alcohol inclusion on dates, and sexual expectations of dating partners (Mongeau & Carey 1996; Morr & Mongeau 2004; Bevan 2003; Goldman & Roehrich 1991). Among other factors, scholars (e.g. Rose & Frieze, 1993) have found gender differences in dating expectations. For example, men usually expect more sexual activity on a first date encounter than do women (Bevan, 2003; Rose & Frieze, 1993; LaPlante et al., 1980; Morr & Mongeau, 2004), and men are typically seen as having sexually charged goals while women tend to have romance or building a relationship as their main focus during the date (Honeycutt & Bryan, 2011). The sex of the initiator of the date also greatly influences the expectation of sexual activity (Mongeau & Carey, 1996; Muehlenhard & Scardino, 1985). Traditionally, men are viewed as seeking out sexual activity while women curtail the amount of sexual intimacy (LaPlante et. al, 1980; Sherwin & Corbett, 1985).

In this study, Expectancy Violations Theory is put to use much the same way previous research has utilized it (Mongeau & Carey, 1996; Morr & Mongeau, 2004; Bevan, 2003) with the addition of a religiosity construct to further the understanding of contemporary expectations, roles, and scripts for first dates. It takes place at a university located in the center of the “Bible Belt” wherein college students are already believed to be more religious than those students outside of the region (Dennis et al., 2009). For this research a person’s religiosity is not defined by what religion he or she subscribes to but rather if they believe in spiritual teachings and practices. When researching these gender roles and expectations for dates, it is crucial to

consider other constructs such as context of the date, initiator of the date, alcohol consumption because all of these manipulate expectations for a first date (George & Norris, 1991; Brown et. al, 1980; Cochran et. al, 1991; Morr & Mongeau, 2004). The study at-hand utilizes EVT in conjunction with the aforementioned constraints and their impact on scripts, roles, and expectations to demonstrate current communication and behavior patterns present on first dates.

A review of Expectancy Violations Theory and its applicability in this research to first dates is elaborated on in the next chapter. Following the theoretical framework, each construct (e.g. sex of date initiator, religiosity) is expounded upon in detail to highlight its significance on first date encounters. Research questions and the proposed hypotheses linking the variables to EVT are then posited. In these hypotheses, the study seeks to spotlight specific relationships between religiosity, consuming alcohol, a female asking for a date, and the date taking place at a bar or church with expectancy violations. The hypotheses strive to single-out those different constructs to see each respective effect on expectancy violations. After a review of the methodology and procedural structure of this research is exhibited, the results of the statistical analyses are reported, and their significance is explained thereafter. Finally, the implications of this research is discussed as well as its ultimate finding that religious views significantly influence daters' expectations for first dates such that those who report stronger religious convictions have lower expectations for sexual behavior. The general question of this research asks: How much does a person's sex, religiosity, how sexually active he or she is, his or her history with female initiated dates, in accordance with where a date takes place, how a date is initiated, and whether or not sexual behavior is present on a date influence expectancy violations?

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT) is deconstructed as to better understand its applicability to intimacy and romance research. After getting a grasp on EVT, how it is typically used in this type of research is demonstrated and the associated constructs are discussed. The sex of who asks for a date has been studied to see the impact it has on expectations for dating. When a date is initiated by a female, men perceive this behavior as sexually motivated and have heightened expectations for sexual behavior, however, research shows that when a woman initiates a date she is aware of the male's heightened sexual expectations and subsequently limits her own sexual behavior (Mongeau & Carey, 1996). Also as part of the evolving research on dating expectations and scripts, studies using alcohol consumption on dates as a variable have yielded interesting findings. Goldman & Roehrich (1991) and George & Norris (1991) suggest that even though alcohol has physiological effects that constrain sexual performance, daters perceive its use to be a dis-inhibitor, leading to more expected sexual behavior. Even someone's religious identification can help predict his or her expectations for appropriate behavior in dating scenarios (Peterson et. al, 1997; Beck et. al, 1991; Earle, 2007; Cochran & Beeghley, 1991). Beck et. al (1991) found that it is possible to see that religious affiliation, despite church attendance, heavily influences premarital sexual expectations.

Expectancy Violations Theory

Expectancy Violations Theory is used in social scientific research to explain how ambiguous communication behaviors can be understood as positive or negative actions (Burgoon & Hale, 1993). The model is useful in taking specific situations and explaining how the people involved evaluate and ultimately pattern their behavior based on the actions in question. First

dates are generally situations in which the participants engage in couple (dyadic) activities with each other in order to reduce uncertainty about each other and the relationship, in hopes of learning more about each other, and potentially becoming romantically involved (Mongeau et. al, 2007). Reducing the uncertainty can be a difficult task – especially when each individual participant’s expectations for what a first date should yield can be completely different. People seek out information about others whom they know less about in an attempt to reduce uncertainty. In accordance with this, participants have predicted outcomes for what they perceive to be appropriate actions and reactions to the other (Madlock & Horan, 2009). While pursuing an individual about whom one does not know much, people still expect certain behavior and have their own patterned responses for specific encounters. When an action satisfies a predicted outcome then the response is typically positive, while an action that produces more uncertainty and does not meet the predicted outcome has negative effects (Berger et. al, 1986; Sunnafrank, 1986). If a person has an expectation for a predicted outcome, and during his or her encounter this expectation is fulfilled, then the typical response is for the action in question to be labeled positive, if it was previously thought of as a positive action, and negative, if it was not. Also, if that expectation is not met, but a new action replaced the former expected action and it is perceived as positive, then it too will be labeled as positive.

All of the aforementioned factors that influence uncertainty and expectations can be understood by examining specific scenarios of uncertainty. EVT has been implemented in similar studies (Bevan, 2003; Mongeau & Johnson, 1996; Morr & Mongeau, 2004) and will be utilized in this one to explain the uncertainty and expectations inherently present on first dates. The model was originally intended to function as a tool that explains personal space violations during conversational interactions, but has been adapted to explain more diverse interpersonal

exchanges (Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1988). The modified theory states that, “Violations of these expectations are posited to trigger a change in arousal, which heightens the salience of cognitions about the communicator and behavior, and evaluations of the act combine to determine whether a violation is positive or negative” (Burgoon & Hale, 1988, p. 59). In a nutshell, when a behavior has violated a preconceived expectancy, it arouses in the respondent a new feeling about the behavior and the enactor – which could be positive or negative. For instance, when a person has an expectation violated on a date and he or she evaluates it as positive, then the view of the violator is positive. Expectancies on dates can range from appropriate distance to whether or not a good night kiss is acceptable.

Expectancies.

The most basic element of the model is the expectancies. Expectancies in interpersonal relationships develop from observations of, and assumptions about, communicative behaviors that are displayed by others in interpersonal interactions. Expectancies about appropriate behavior in interpersonal interactions stem from societal norms and known idiosyncrasies of the other (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Often during first date encounters, very little is known about the other. Therefore, the largest influence on appropriate behavior for the situation is dictated by the societal norms (Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1988). As Burgoon & Hale (1988) point out, expectations are not exact parameters for behavior. Rather, they function as boundaries for the expected appropriate behavior instead of one action or behavior being defined by the parameters.

Arousal and violations.

As part of the interpretation of an expectation violation, the judgment of the violation can have a positive or negative valence (Burgoon, 1993; Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Houser, 2006). Arousal occurs when a person experiences the violation or notices a new behavior and does not

know what to make of it initially (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Valence refers to how an expectation violation is labeled positive or negative. If during a date one of the participants experiences a violation that they perceive as positive, then the violation has a positive valence. The same holds true for the reverse; if a violation is experienced and noted as negative it has a negative valence (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). For example, if a date begins with a kiss from the male and the female experiences this as a violation, she is aroused to a new attitude and may choose to see the behavior as something she enjoys and label it positively valenced. The behavior or action seen as positively or negatively valenced is then patterned into an individual's expectations for future encounters with similar behaviors. When behaviors violate a person's expectations and the person does not know how to perceive or label the action, he or she shifts focus from the behavior ultimately to the violator to make sense of the encounter (Burgoon, 1993). Burgoon and Hale (1988) clarify this idea of arousal:

It [EVT] proposes that the attentional shift to the relational level makes communicator and message/behavior characteristics more salient, causing the violatee to engage in a two-stage interpretation and evaluation process that results in the violation act being defined as either a positive or negative violation of expectations. (p. 62)

Labeling a violation as positively or negatively valenced is dependent on communicator reward valence when an action is ambiguous (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Communicator reward valence is witnessed through the actual interactions in interpersonal communication encounters. The idea is that a person will label the encounter as positive or negative based on the profit he or she receives from the encounter (Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1988). If the good outweighs the bad, then the encounter has a positive valence and if the encounter offers no meaningful gains then it is most likely negatively valenced.

Men rather than women tend to have heightened expectations for sexual activity as a goal on first dates (Mongeau et al., 2007; LaPlante et al., 1980; Sherwin & Corbett, 1985).

Specifically, men have heightened expectations for sexual activity on dates initiated by women.

Mongeau and Carey (1996) found that even when women were initiating the dates, there was less intimacy found than those dates initiated by men. This would be a negative violation of men's expectancies and would be labeled as negatively valenced (Mongeau & Carey, 1996). The result of the first date experience varies by each couple and their expectancies for appropriate behavior and anticipated intimacy. The current study examines the relationship between expectancies for sexual behavior and the dating participants' evaluation of the other, proposing:

H1: When sexual activity does not occur between the actors on female initiated dates, male respondents will have a higher expectancy violation than females.

Behavior interpretation and evaluation.

A person's intended behavior in an interpersonal encounter can carry multiple meanings. The other person involved in a dyadic encounter – a first date – has to interpret these meanings based on socially acceptable behaviors (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). According to Burgoon & Hale (1988) the interpretation of an encounter as positive or negative is based on widely held social norms; however, when multiple meanings can be drawn from an action, more positive valence is assigned to high reward communicators, and more negative valence is assigned to low reward communicators. A person seen as a high reward communicator will influence the evaluation of the violation to have a more positive valence.

Expectancy violations theory posits that the reward level of the communicator can have significant influence on whether or not a behavior is labeled as positive or negative. Burgoon & Hale (1988) describe the relationship between reward and evaluation, "Although there are some

nonverbal behaviors that may produce uniformly negative or positive evaluations regardless of who commits them, the affective reaction to many behaviors depends on their source” (p. 63). Regardless of a behavior being labeled positive or negative, Burgoon and Hale (1988) suggest that “an extreme violation, if committed by a high reward communicator, can be positively valenced, producing reciprocal communication patterns and positive outcomes such as higher credibility and attraction” (p. 63).

Dating Scripts/Roles

When using EVT to examine college-aged daters, it is imperative to get an idea of currently held expectations or dating scripts. Fehr and Fischbacher (2004) describe social norms as, “standards of behavior that are based on widely shared beliefs how individual group members ought to behave in a given situation” (p. 185). Norms are each person’s set of rules for their ideal communicative encounter. Dating scripts are the norms and beliefs that prescribe relationship roles and are surprisingly routine and shared extensively among people involved in dating (Honeycutt & Bryan; 2011). They are predicted scenarios for how intimate interpersonal encounters should play out and function as a source of control over the situation (Bartoli & Clark, 2006, Rose & Frieze, 1993). The foundation for sexual scripts can be traced to early childhood when humans begin learning designated gender roles (Rose & Frieze, 1993). Scripts are the set of behaviors and roles that map out dating encounters. Each individual has his or her own idea about what to expect and how to act based on these scripts.

The traditional view of the sexual script places an emphasis on initiating sex as a masculine behavior and avoiding sex as a feminine behavior (Bartoli & Clark, 2006; Rose & Frieze, 1993; Honeycutt & Bryan, 2011; LaPlante et al., 1980). LaPlante et al. (1980) describe the traditional sexual script as being, “the norm which prescribes that the man should be the

active initiator of sexual intercourse while the woman is the ‘limit setter’ who either passively goes along with her partner’s sexual advances or actively prevents him from having access to her body” (p. 339). This script is based on norms that people have constructed as part of their dating expectations.

Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol consumption is another factor that can have an effect on the outcome of the date. The role of alcohol consumption as a mitigating factor on first date encounters has been researched by many scholars (Morr & Mongeau, 2004; Leigh, 1990; George & Norris, 1991; Brown et. al, 1980; Goldman, 1991). In relation to expectancies, Mongeau and Johnson (2005) found alcohol to be the strongest predictor of sexual activity and expectations. Furthermore, they found that when alcohol was consumed on dates more sexual activity was present than those dates without alcohol, and dates where at least ten drinks were shared yielded “significantly more intimate sexual involvement” (p. 309).

Heterosexual dating participants’ expectations for dates are rooted in a socially constructed perception of appropriate roles for men and women on dates (Leigh, 1990).

Consistent with this research, George and Norris (1991) found that:

Men have learned to view men and women drinking together as a potential sexual situation in which men have an exploitable advantage...they [women] have learned to view men and women drinking together as a potentially disadvantageous situation, that is, as a possible prelude to undesired sexual advances. (p.134)

Men and women have different views on the relationship between alcohol consumption on dates and sexual expectations. Both males and females are aware of the role alcohol can play in first

date encounters and will possibly have different expectations for sexual activity following the first date scenarios, ultimately leading to a difference in valence labeling:

H2: When sexual activity does not occur following bar activity, male participants will experience a higher expectancy violation than will female participants.

Many women actually adapt their behavior while drinking to communicate less intimacy because of their heightened awareness of alcohol's effects (Morr & Mongeau, 2004). In these cases, women are aware that they may be losing inhibitions with alcohol consumption and do not want to receive negative evaluation so they disclose less information. In conjunction with this, is the idea that some people use alcohol consumption as an excuse for sexual behavior. Leigh (1990) found that those daters with a higher level of sex guilt and nervousness consumed the most alcohol. These respondents used alcohol for its dis-inhibiting qualities to allow for their heightened sexual activities without having to take the brunt of the responsibility.

As evidenced above, the consumption of alcohol on dates can be said to increase the sexual expectations that daters' have for an encounter. First date encounters typically involve two people who are not that familiar with one another, so the dis-inhibiting qualities of alcohol could lead to the "hookup." Paul et al. (2000) describe the hookup as "A sexual encounter, usually lasting only one night, between two people who are strangers or brief acquaintances. Some physical sexual interaction is typical, but it may or may not include sexual intercourse" (p. 76). Hookups are seen as a form of casual sex where the participants will most likely not continue the relationship past the encounter, resembling a one-night-stand. "Hooking up" on a first date encounter could prove costly to expectations for how the relationship might evolve. As LaPlante (1980) suggests, men tend to pursue more sexual activity than women during first dates. Men and women who are "hooking up" already have some idea that the relationship is

purely physical, an idea that is not consistent with the traditional sexual script. Furthermore, Paul et al. (2000) found that “the overwhelming majority of hookup experiences included alcohol use by both partners” (p. 85). Alcohol plays a role in first date encounters that for the most part encourages casual sex and causes daters to lose their inhibitions. Its role on first dates is being examined via a bar or church setting. These locations were chosen so that the bar could represent an alcohol friendly setting and the church to be much the opposite. Specifically, this study is investigating the amount of sexual behavior expected and actualized, and how people will view the dating participants when alcohol is consumed:

H3: When sex occurs following a date at the bar setting, participants will experience lower expectancy violations and when sex occurs following a date at the church setting participants will experience higher expectancy violations.

Religiosity

This study takes place in the center of what Tweedie (1978) named the “Bible Belt,” where religiosity is presumed to have a heavy influence on the actions and beliefs of the population because students have been shown to be more spiritual in these states (Dennis et al., 2009). Dennis et al. (2009) define religiosity as “organizational or institutional beliefs and practices, such as church membership, church attendance, and commitment to the belief system of a church or organized religion” (p. 97). Religiosity has also been shown to be key factor in many peoples’ attitudes about pre-marital sex (Earle et al., 2007). Scholars have found that beliefs about pre-marital sex are influenced by religion and that differences in religion and denomination lead to stricter or more lenient prescriptions about pre-marital sex (Cochran & Beeghley, 1991; Peterson et al., 1997). According to Beck et al. (1991), attitudes are not the only thing affected by religious prescriptions “religious affiliation, in addition to predicting attitudes

regarding premarital sex, is also importantly related to premarital sexual behavior” (p.179).

Religion not only prescribes how to think about pre-marital sex, but these attitudes, in turn, shape the actual behaviors of the individual and this will be examined through the following hypothesis:

H4: Respondents who identify as having stronger religious convictions will have lower expectations for sexual intimacy following any date in any scenario.

Religion dictates expectancies for first date encounters because most peoples’ religious affiliation influences them to believe that sex before marriage is morally wrong (Barkan, 2006). Most individuals who have religious affiliation see the act of premarital sex as being detrimental to their practicing of the religion. Much research has been done on how religion influences beliefs and attitudes about premarital sex among practitioners of religion (Barkan, 2006; Earle et al., 2007; Peterson et al., 1997), but far less can be found on how religious contexts shape behavior. Adamczyk and Felson (2006) show that the more time spent in religious settings, the more prone individuals are to hearing messages of religious guidance about premarital sex.

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

To test the proposed hypotheses the researcher used quasi-experimental methods consisting of collected data from an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed from previously used measures (Cochran & Bailey, 1991; McCabe & Collins, 1984, Muehlenhard & Scardino, 1985; Afifi & Metts, 1998) aimed at measuring participants' responses to the constructs of this research.

Design

This research consisted of a 2 (initiation type: male asks vs. female asks) \times 2 (date context: bar setting vs. church setting) \times 2 (date intimacy outcome: none vs. sexual intercourse) factorial design as shown in **FIGURE 1**. The initiation type was varied with the possible scenarios. Each scenario depicted a male and a female having their first social encounter in which one of them asked the other out. In one scenario the male asks the female to an upcoming concert, and in the other the female asks the male to the show. The context of the date in the scenario could have been at a church picnic or a bar setting. Finally, the first date scenario had three possible outcomes for intimacy: the actors share a small kiss or they engage in sexual intercourse.

Manipulated Variables

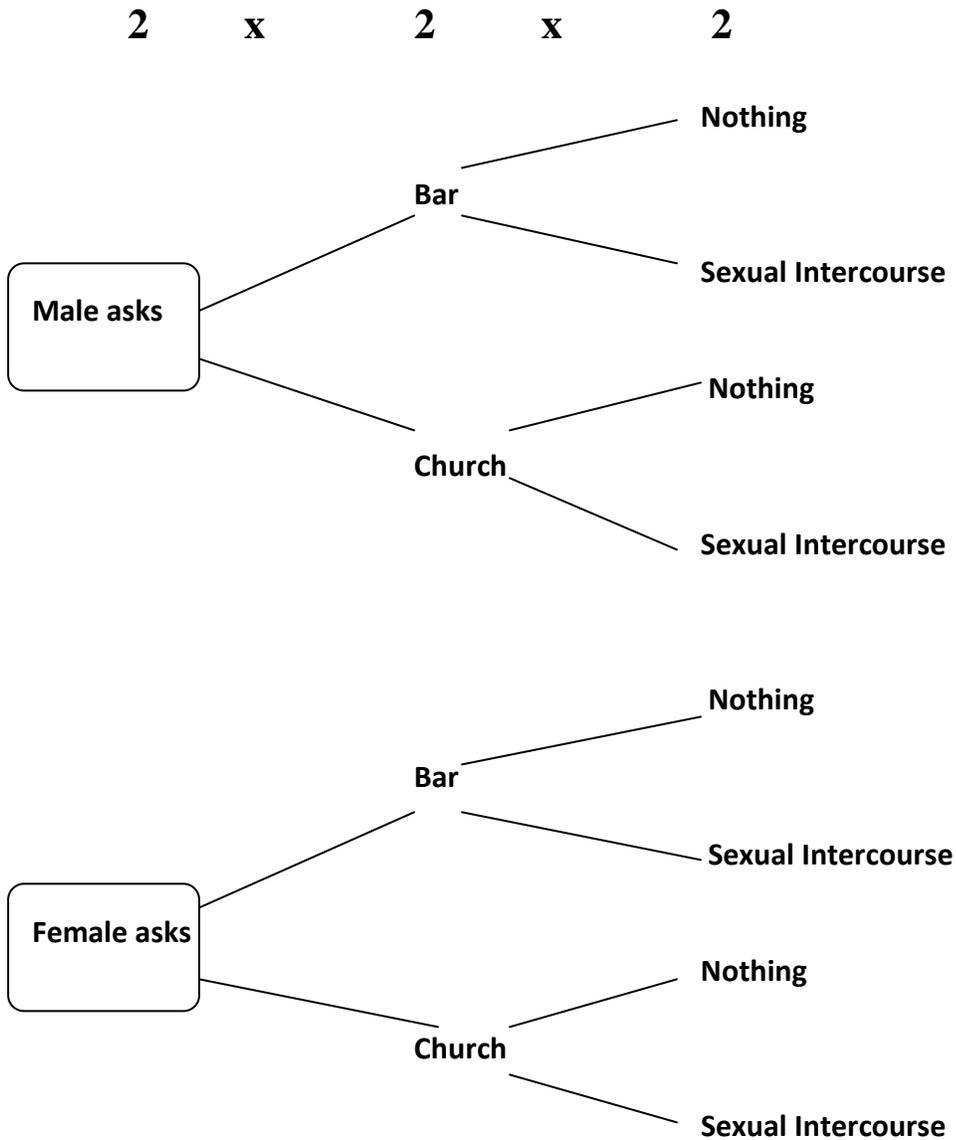
There are three variables manipulated in this study: 1) Sexual activity experienced after date, 2) Setting of date, and 3) Sex of date initiator.

Sexual activity experienced after date.

The variable determines what kind of sexual behavior the actors will engage in based on the randomization of the participants' vignette. This variable has two possible outcomes, nothing and sexual intercourse. These three were chosen so that they may represent the approximate

levels of sexual behavior. The actors in the scenarios (Jack and Mary Ann) will exhibit one of those possible behaviors following their date. It is thought that by manipulating this variable in conjunction with the other independent variables (setting of date and sex of date initiator) that respondents will be presented with appropriate constructs to test their expectations of first dates.

FIGURE 1
FACTORIAL DESIGN



Setting of date.

This variable prescribes where the setting of the date in the vignette takes place. The possible settings are an unidentified denomination/religion church picnic and a typical bar concert. The two settings represent two date settings that are on completely opposite ends of the spectrum and were chosen so that the bar could represent a setting wherein alcohol consumption is prevalent and the church setting to represent a religious venue. In conjunction with the other independent variables, this variable can have much influence on how participants' expectations are met or violated.

Sex of date initiator.

This variable is manipulated by having a female (Mary Ann) or male (Jack) initiate the date in the vignette. This variable is vital to the present study so that non-sexual attitudes about the female can be measured based upon whether or not she initiates the date. The variable was manipulated in order to show difference in evaluations of females who initiate and females who do not.

Independent Variables

Sex of participant.

The sex of the participants is measured to chart any significant differences that may arise from men to women in responses.

Religiosity.

The current study posits that the religiosity of the participants will play an important role on how they rate their expectations and impressions following the date vignette. The religiosity variable is measured using one Likert scaled item asking for strength of religious convictions (1 – low, 7 – high).

Independent Covariates

Experienced sexual activity.

Three “yes or no” questions were asked dealing with how sexually active the participants’ claim to be: 1) Are you or have you ever been sexually active? 2) Have you ever had sexual intercourse? and 3) Do you consider yourself a virgin? The sexually active variable is measured in order to find a relationship between how sexually active the participants are compared to how they rate their expectations of the date and impressions of the female actor. It is thought that those who report being more sexually active will not rate the vignette negatively if more sexual behavior is exhibited.

Date initiation history.

The date initiation history of each participant (*males; been asked out by a female – 1, never been asked out by a female - 0, *females; asked out a male – 1, never asked out a male – 0) was measured to control for the effect that it may have on his or her expectations for initiating dates.

Dependent Variable

Behavior exhibited expected or not.

This variable is based on expectancy violation theory and asks the participants to rate whether the behavior exhibited on the randomized vignette they read is expected or not, among other similar items.

Participants

Participants for this study were chosen from entry-level communication classes from a large southern university. A total of 262 students participated, but the final sample size was 256 students. The current study was only concerned with heterosexual dating scripts and expectations, and approximately 95% of the respondents identified this as their sexuality.

Therefore, the other 5% of respondents were not in the intended population so their data was not included in the analysis. Approximately 85% (n = 216) of the sample reported their ethnicity as White, 12% (n = 30) reported as being Black, and the other 3% (n = 9) made up the Hispanic and Other categories. The majority of the respondents (64%, n = 164) were female. The average age of the sample was 21, with the oldest participant reporting to be 40 and the youngest 19. Sophomores were most represented as 39% (n = 99) of the sample. Nearly 78% (n = 199) of participants answered that they have been sexually active, while 74% (n = 189) reported as having engaged in sexual intercourse.

Procedures

Participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire at their convenience for extra credit in an undergraduate course. After giving their consent, the participants completed a 15-20 minute questionnaire including scales for religiosity, experienced sexual activity, expectation violation measures, demographic questions, and a randomized dating scenario. They first answered the demographic questions about themselves. After that, they were presented with a randomly selected dating scenario (12 total possible scenarios) where a couple goes for a date and engages in some sort of sexual behavior following the date. The 12 different scenarios were generated based on the participants' birth month. Finally after reading the vignette, the respondents were then asked to rate their expectancies for the date with a 12 item scale. Upon completion of the survey, the participants viewed a debriefing screen and were invited to ask questions or give comments via the researcher's email address.

Measures

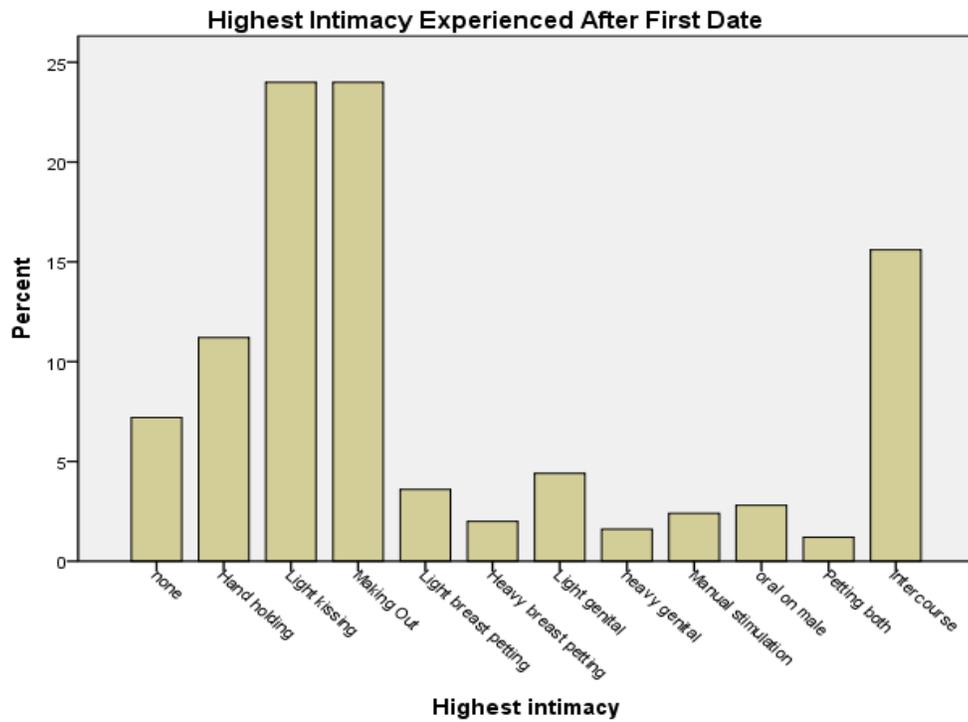
This study utilizes three different measures dealing with religiosity, sexual activity, and expectancy violations. Expectancy violations were measured based on the dimensions posited in

Afifi and Metts (1998). Their 7 point Likert scaled measure was based on expectancy violations for personal relationships and thus was semantically changed to reflect the hypothetical relationship in the scenarios. For example, ‘This behavior, event, or message was completely/not at all due to the situation’ was changed to ‘Jack and Mary Ann’s behavior following the date was influenced by the setting.’ A reliability analysis indicated that the scale was in fact reliable with $\alpha = .89$. Also further supporting the reliability of the scale, by examining the α for each item deleted it was found that no item could be deleted to improve its reliability – each item is meaningful to the scale. Religiosity was measured with one item asking for participants to rate their strength of religious identification (0 – *not very strong* to 7 – *very strong*).

The sexual activity scale is borrowed from McCabe and Collins (1984) and lists 12 different possibilities for the depth of sexual involvement. As shown in **FIGURE 2**, the 12 items range from *handholding* to *intercourse*, but an extra dimension entitled '*none*' was added by the researcher to represent those people who do not think sexual activity should be present on first dates. The item is used in this study to observe the highest level of sexual activity participants believe is appropriate for a first date. Close to 85% (n = 217) of the participants feel that intercourse should not be experienced after a first date, which should play a role in whether or not expectancy violations are experienced. Another measure, asking respondents to identify the appropriate level of seriousness for an intimate relationship to take on sex was also used. **FIGURE 3** shows that a vast majority of the participants feel that premarital sex is never acceptable or only in the confines of a committed, serious relationship. These figures are used to gauge the attitudes that influence participants’ responses to the questionnaire.

FIGURE 2

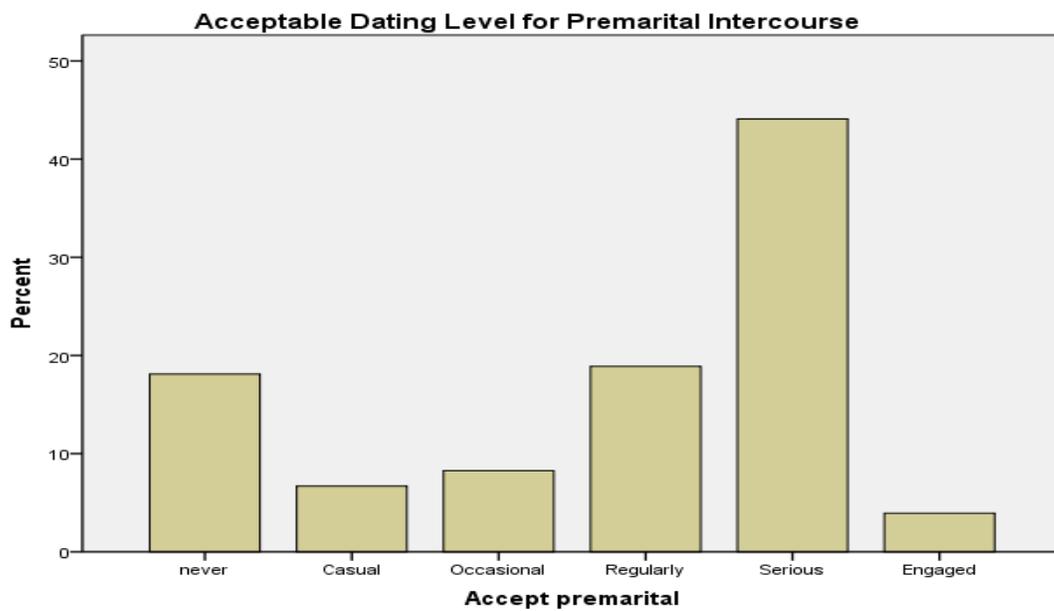
N = 256



FIGURE

3

N = 256



CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

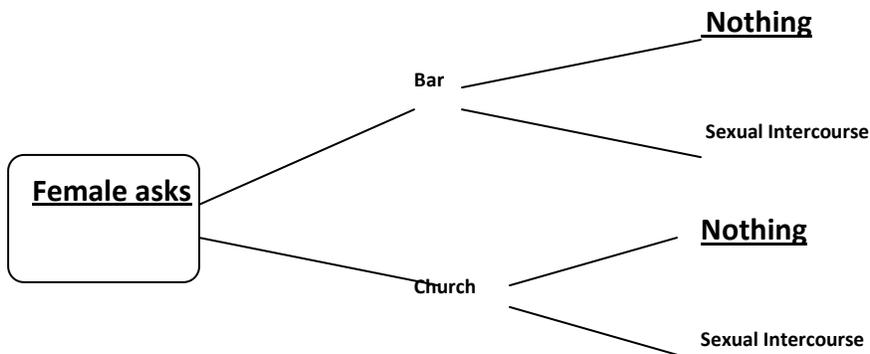
A hierarchical multiple regression is the statistical method of inquiry chosen for the initial research question. The dependent variable, expectancy violations (low violation – 1, high violation – 7), is thought to be a function of three manipulated independent variables: 1) date location (bar, church), 2) date outcome (sex – 1, no sex – 0), and 3) date initiator (female – 0, male – 1), and four measured independent variables: 1) sex of participant (male – 1, female – 2), 2) participants' sexual activity (active – 1, not active – 0), 3) date initiation history of participant (*males; been asked out by a female – 1, never been asked out by a female - 0, *females; asked out a male – 1, never asked out a male – 0), and 4) participants' religious convictions (weak convictions – 1, strong convictions – 7). The first block of the model includes the measured demographic variables to see how reliably they predict expectancy violations without the constructs that are manipulated. Then in the second block the manipulated variables are added in to see how all of the independent variables predict expectancy violations.

The first three hypotheses are all closely related and tested with similar ANOVAs. For hypothesis 1, when sexual activity does not occur between the actors on female initiated dates, male respondents will have a higher expectancy violation than females, ANOVA was used. For hypothesis 2, when sexual activity does not occur following bar activity, male respondents will experience a higher expectancy violation, also was done with an ANOVA. Hypothesis 3 seeks to remove religiosity statistically in this particular case to look for the actual violation of the relationship between context and sexual activity – it too was tested with an ANOVA. The final hypothesis states that respondents who identify as having stronger religious convictions will have

lower expectations for sexual intimacy following the date. To test this hypothesis a Pearson product –moment correlation was run.

The purpose of the current study was to reveal connections linking religiosity, sex of the initiator of a date, and alcohol inclusion on dates, to peoples' expectations for and perceptions of first dates. It also examined the differences in responses for perceptions and expectations between the sexes. The results from the hierarchical regression model indicated that the best fit model includes demographic variables of religious convictions, sexual activity, whether or not he or she has asked out a male or been asked out by female, sex and the manipulated variable whether or not sex was had after the date. **Table 1** shows the set of predicting variables in model 2 reliably forecasted expectancy violations ($F(7, 229) = 18.85, p = .000$). The model indicated a reasonably strong relationship between prediction and grouping with an adjusted $R^2 = .346$. The variables of whether sex occurred on the date (sex or not) was the most powerful predictor of expectancy violations ($\beta = .58$) followed by religious convictions (strong convictions) ($\beta = .12$). From this model it is possible to determine that when sex followed a date or religious convictions were higher, the expectancy violation was greater.

The first hypothesis suggested that when sexual activity does not occur between the actors on female initiated dates that males will experience a higher expectancy violation than females. In other words, looking only at the scenarios where the female asked for the date and sexual activity does not occur, differences between men and women on expectancy violations will yield higher violations for males rather than females.



To test this, an ANOVA was run that revealed significant effects for sex by initiator by sex or not; that is, the respondents' sex along with who initiated the date and whether or not they had sex did affect whether or not respondents experienced an expectancy violation. Thus, the hypothesis was supported $F(1, 121) = 0.264, p < .011$.

Table 1

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Expectancy Violations

Variable	β	Std. Error	t	P> t	[95% C.I.]
Sex	-.008	.162	-.144	.886	-.343 .296
Asked Out	.000	.156	.005	.996	-.306 .307
Sexually Active	.022	.189	.385	.701	-.300 .445
Strong Convictions	.123	.037	2.138	.034	.006 .151
Sex or Not	.578	.155	10.778	.000	1.365 1.976

*Number of Observations = 237

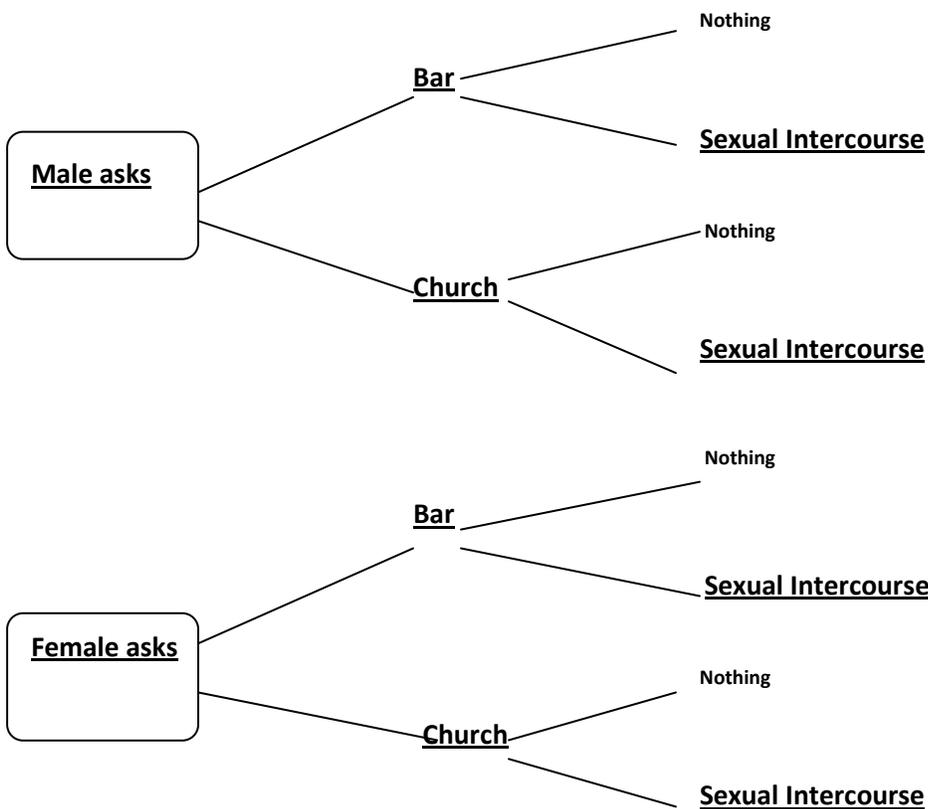
* $F(7, 229) = 18.85$

*Prob > F = .000

*Adjusted $R^2 = .346$

The second hypothesis suggested when sexual activity follows a date in a bar, men will experience less of an expectancy violation than women; in other words, men will not be surprised when sex follows a date at a bar, whereas women will be. This hypothesis was not able to be run because of the small amount of men who took the survey in general (n = 85). There were not enough men in this scenario (bar – sexual intercourse) to be able to test the significance of women versus men. Men having more heightened expectations than women for sexual activity following dates where alcohol consumption is associated has been supported by past research, but was not able to be tested in this study without collecting more data.

Hypothesis three proposed that when sex occurs following a date at a bar, the expectancy violation will be less than when sex occurs following a date at church. This hypothesis is set up to test all scenarios where sexual intercourse is the outcome and compares the differences in expectancy violations between the setting of a bar and a church.



With an ANOVA, this hypothesis was supported, $F(2, 247) = 3.03, p < .05$. Meaning that men and women together do find having sex after a church event more shocking than having sex following a date at a bar.

The final hypothesis, H4, stated that respondents who identify as having stronger religious convictions will have greater expectancy violations when sexual intimacy follows the date. Data revealed support for this hypothesis as a Pearson product-moment correlation revealed, $r = .149, n = 248, p < .05$, confirming that respondents' religiosity is related to their expectancy violations for first dates such that stronger religious convictions lead to higher expectancy violations when sexual intercourse follows a date.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Similar research on first dates (Mongeau & Johnson 2005; Morr & Mongeau 2004; Bevan 2003; Goldman & Roehrich 1991) has utilized Expectancy Violations Theory (Burgoon 1993) to help explain how people pattern their behavior for first dates, their expectations for sexual intimacy on these dates, and the role alcohol consumption plays. In addition to observing these interesting factors, the study at hand also sought to test the significance that religion has on first date expectations. The following research question and hypotheses were conceived to test and then manipulate the aforementioned factors.

RQ: How much does a person's sex, religiosity, how sexually active he or she is, his or her history with female initiated dates, in accordance with where a date takes place, how a date is initiated, and whether or not sexual behavior is present on a date influence expectancy violations?

H1: When sexual activity does not occur between the actors on female initiated dates, male respondents will have a higher expectancy violation than females.

H2: When sexual activity does not occur following bar activity, male participants will experience a higher expectancy violation than will female participants.

H3: When sex occurs following a date at the bar setting, respondents will experience lower expectancy violations, and when sex occurs following a date at the church setting participants will experience higher expectancy violations.

H4: Respondents who identify as having stronger religious convictions will have lower expectations for sexual intimacy following the date.

Female Initiated Dates

A woman asking a man out on a date directly conflicts with the traditional sexual script, where the norm is for the man proactively to make the first move when initiating dates and sexual advances. The female is the “limit setter” who ultimately determines how much sexual activity is experienced. Prior research (Mongeau & Carey, 1996; Honeycutt & Bryan, 2011; Bartoli & Clark, 2006; LaPlante et al., 1980; Morr & Mongeau, 2004) has shown that the traditional sexual script is typically reinforced and still in practice among today’s college daters. The current study sought to test the gender roles aspect of the script by using a scenario in which a female asks a male on a date. Clearly, the norm is for the male to ask the female out so switching the roles in this construct allowed for us to test that in coordination with the expectancy violations of the participants when there was sex present on the date.

It was suggested that males would expect that a female asking for the date would be more inclined to engage in heightened levels of sexual behavior. The hypothesis was that more male participants would experience an expectancy violation when no sex occurred on female initiated dates than would female participants. The results of this analysis showed that there was a difference when it came to sex and expectancy violations. Men in comparison to women, generally expect an aggressive woman initiating a date to be more sexual than the average female dater. This is consistent with previous research because initiating a date is typically a male behavior in the sense of the traditional script. When a woman takes on this role men identify their own expectations with her actions and assume that more sexual behavior will be present on the date.

Bar Dates

The second and third hypotheses dealt with dates taking place in a bar setting and the effects associated with consumption of alcohol. Hypothesis two stated that men would have a heightened expectancy violation in comparison to women when sex did not occur following a bar date. This hypothesis was not confirmed or even tested because of the limitations of the current data. More data would need to be collected in order to test such a specific hypothesis. Other research shows that men think when alcohol is introduced into the encounter that they have a good chance of engaging in heightened levels of sexual behavior, so when that is not actualized they would label the action negatively valenced. As part of that, women know that men feel like they have a better chance if alcohol is consumed so they further limit the amount of intimate behavior in which they will participate. The vignettes were arranged so that in one scenario a date would consist of Jack and Mary Ann going to a concert and the other had them attending a church concert. There was no statistically significant evidence to link respondents' sex to their expectancy violation for sex following a bar date.

Church Dates

The third hypothesis involves both bar dates and church dates in an effort to understand the role religion plays on first date expectations and scripts. This hypothesis was confirmed and supports the claim that when sex occurs following the date at the bar, the expectancy violation experienced will be less than when the female has sex following the date at the church concert. Existing research shows that when alcohol is consumed on dates, men's expectations for sex increase dramatically. People did have a greater expectancy violation when the female coming home from the church concert engaged in sexual behavior compared to the bar concert. Research has shown the limiting role religion plays on scripts for first dates (Barkan, 2006; Earle et al.,

2007; Peterson et al., 1997), and that was echoed in this study. Religion can mandate everything from courtship rules and ceremonial procedures to the acceptability of premarital sex. It shapes peoples' belief and value systems, so it is thought to have some impact on the scripts and expectations for first dates. Even though the results proved to be significant when comparing church dates to bar dates, interestingly, respondents generally experienced a negative expectancy violation when sexual activity followed either date. There still exists a traditional stance on the amount of sexual behavior actualized on a date.

Religiosity

The final hypothesis dealt with the strength of respondents' religious convictions and their expectations for intimate behavior on first dates. It suggested that the stronger one's religious convictions, the lower his or her expectation is for sexual behavior. A noteworthy 76 percent of participants in this study identified as being a member of a religious group; this shows just how prominent religion is among college students in the South who are dating. This was the only hypothesis that was supported in this research, which is ironic because it was the only previously untested and supported construct in this study. This hypothesis was not based in the dating scenarios; it was rooted in a few survey items in the beginning gauging the strength of one's religious convictions. The problems that the vignettes have presented in previous hypotheses are not present in this case, and possibly one cause that the results were significant and the others were not.

A big reason that religion impacts relational scripts and expectations is because many religious teachings advise that pre-marital sex is morally wrong. Pre-marital sex being taught by religion as being morally wrong directly influences whether or not a religious person believes it is right or wrong to engage in such behavior. His or her moral stance on the position works as

part of his or her script, assumed roles, and expectations to limit intimate, sexual relationships. Previous research has shown this, but now in conjunction with EVT, religion has been shown in this research to play a part in expectations for first dates and premarital sex. This is closely related to previous research on dating scripts, in that scripts are said to be based in social norms and beliefs held by and shared among daters. The study at hand showed that over 75% of respondents identified as being affiliated with a religion – a belief shared among daters. A person's religiosity fits into his or her relational scripts; there may even be specific religious scripts to investigate in terms of first dates.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The present study sought to explain and test current scripts and expectations for first dates, while manipulating the sex of the date initiator, alcohol consumption, context of date, and daters' religiosity. It was suggested that the gender roles in the traditional script seem to have been blurred a bit in more modern times, but no statistical support exists in this study to show that. Women have been traditionally seen as the "limit setters" who dictate how much sexual behavior is actualized on a date, while men are the "pursuers" who will pursue until stopped. This traditional script is seemingly still in place among college daters, and this research supports that there is not much movement toward change.

Although not all hypotheses were confirmed, there were significant effects resulting from the analysis showing that respondents experienced a higher violation when sex was experienced on church dates compared to bar dates and also when sex followed a first date regardless of the other factors. People largely do not expect daters on first dates to engage in heightened levels of sexual activity. Being that this was a highly religious sample (76%), religiosity most likely dictated much of the results of expectation for other constructs. Religion has been shown to play a role in scripts and expectations that restricts sexual behavior among daters who had strong religious convictions. A reason that fewer differences might have been seen between the sexes in regards to expectations could also be attributed to religion. Speaking to the Christian faith, there is less delineation between the sexes in regards to what is appropriate behavior for premarital relations. The teachings primarily deal with what is right and wrong for premarital relations in general rather than what is acceptable for males versus females.

Even though there is a great breadth and depth of research on close relationships and first dates, there are practical and theoretical gains established by the present study. The traditional sexual script (LaPlante et al., 1980) has been reaffirmed but should be challenged in future research to highlight changes in gender roles, aggressive women having similar scripts and expectations as men. As time moves on, women are continually making headway on being treated as equals in the workplace and in society. More research needs to be done on female equality in the sphere of romance. Also, religion has been proven to be influential on dating scripts and expectations (Barkan, 2006; Peterson et al., 1997; Beck et al., 1991; Earle, 2007; Cochran & Beeghley, 1991), but now in conjunction with religious views, religious contexts can be seen as prescribing and actually limiting behavior for first dates in terms of Expectancy Violations Theory. The context of an interaction helps shape the appropriate behavior and communication for that interaction (Honeycutt & Bryan, 2011). In the current study, a religious context was seen as limiting the expectations for sexual behavior following the date when compared to a bar context. Whether a person has strong convictions or he or she is in a religious setting, religion plays a role that for the most part, restricts sexual behavior and the expectation of it.

The traditional sexual script has been challenged but remains, and future research should focus on a new less gender specific dating script. A script wherein men and women alike pursue sexual activity, and the limits are mutually accepted. Admittedly, one of the major limitations of this study was that it excluded anyone who was not at some point involved in a heterosexual dating encounter. Future research on the contemporary script should also include other intimate relationships beyond heterosexual relations. It should also find a way to incorporate more sexual orientations so that heterosexual relationships are not prescribed as the norm because of their

significance in such research. Other limitations were present in the format of the survey. To make sure that there was a clear delineation between a religious setting and a setting conducive to alcohol consumption, a church and a bar were chosen as locations for the dating scenarios to take place. A date at a bar makes practical sense, but having a date at a church concert is not a very widespread practice. Also the respondents read vignettes and then answered follow-up questions regarding the characters mentioned in the short story. Future attempts at this type of research should include live actors or recorded scenarios so that nonverbal communication could be manipulated as well. There are many aspects of EVT that were mentioned in this research, and one particular avenue for future studies should involve investigating the intricacies of communicator reward valence.

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APPENDIX

Full Online Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Hello Darlin': Scripts, Roles, and Expectations on First Dates

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is called “The Dating Game: Scripts, Roles, and Expectations of First Date Encounters”.

The study is being done by Graham Carpenter, a graduate student in the Department of Communication Studies, Dr. Carol B. Mills, an assistant professor in Communication Studies.

This study is being done to determine how first date encounters are evaluated according to people's expectations for dates, as well as how evaluations are affected by gender and context.

This knowledge is important because as scholars interested in interpersonal communication, we would like to better understand how people make sense of dating encounters.

You have been asked to be in this study because as undergraduates, you are at the center of dating activity and your views will help us understand how dating practices are perceived and evaluated.

About 250 other people will participate in this study and all of the respondents' answers will be combined together for any reporting purpose. No individual information, or identifying information that could trace your answers back to you, will ever be reported.

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey that asks you to read a hypothetical scenario and respond to it, as well as provide some demographic information about you.

Completing this survey should take no more than 15 minutes. You will not be paid for being in this study and there is no cost to participate in this study. Although benefits cannot be promised in research, it is possible/likely that you will find a few moments to reflect on the common or uncommon dating practices among your peers, and may provide you an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses in your own communicative interactions.

As researchers, we do not foresee any risks, though some of the questions may make you uncomfortable. Remember, though, it is perfectly within your rights to stop taking the survey if you do not feel comfortable with the content.

Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Only the three researchers have access to the data collected from this research. The surveys themselves do not ask for your name or any clearly

identifiable information. Data such as age, sex, and race are used only to provide general descriptions of the data and never to provide the answers of any particular participant.

Taking part in this study is voluntary—it is your free choice. You may choose not to take part at all. If you start the survey, you can stop at any time. Failing to complete or return the survey to us will not result in any penalty or loss of any benefits you would otherwise receive.

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (IRB) is the committee that protects the rights of people in research studies. The IRB may review study records from time to time to be sure that people in research studies are being treated fairly and that the study is being carried out as planned.

If you have questions regarding this study, please call the investigator Mr. Graham Carpenter at (205)3488079 or email him at jgcarpenter@crimson.ua.edu. You may also contact Dr. Carol B. Mills at 2053466165 or email her at cbmills@bama.ua.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a person taking part in a research study, you may call the Research Compliance Officer at UA at (205)3485152.

Please verify your understanding and desire to participate below.

1. Please provide us with some background information to help us understand the population responding to this survey.

1. What is your sex?

2. How old are you?

3. What is your current grade classification?

4. What is your race?

5. If you are female, have you ever asked a male out? OR, If you are male, has a female ever asked you out?

6. Are you or have you been sexually active?

7. What is your sexuality?

8. Have you ever had sexual intercourse?

9. Which relationship do you consider acceptable concerning premarital sexual intercourse?

never/casual occasionally date/regularly date/seriously involved/ engaged

10. Do you consider yourself a virgin?

11. What geographic region were you raised in?

12. Which of the following represents the HIGHEST level of intimacy that you have experienced following a FIRST DATE.

none hand/holding/light kissing/making out/light breast petting/ light genital petting/heavy genital petting/manual stimulation/ oral on male/oral on both/sexual intercourse

13. How strong are your religious convictions?

0 Not Very Strong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Strong

14. In what month were you born?

Jack and Mary Ann are sitting beside each other waiting for class to begin. They have spoken to each other before, but nothing more than casual small talk. Today they have time to chat because they have arrived to class early. Jack and Mary Ann engage in their normal casual small talk and then move on to each other's interests. While discussing the topic of favorite music they find that they both enjoy the same artists. After discussing a particular band for a few moments Jack says, "They are playing a concert at my church in town next weekend. If you don't already have plans, would you like to go see their show with me?" After the concert Jack and Mary Ann went back to Mary Ann's apartment. Both of them thoroughly enjoyed the concert and each other's company. Upon arriving at Mary Ann's place, they talked for a while, shared a small kiss, and she walked him out.

1. To continue check YES.

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1. To continue check YES.

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Please rate how you feel about Jack and Mary Ann's behavior following the date.

1. Jack and Mary Ann's behavior following the date was...

Expected 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Surprising 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

An important relational event 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

A positive behavior 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influenced by the setting of the date 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Unexpected 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Something I'd like to see more of 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influenced by their religious views 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Something I approve of 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influenced by who initiated the date 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Think back to the scenario you read earlier. Who was the person that suggested the date? Jack Mary Ann

3. Think back to the scenario you read earlier. Where did the date take place?

Bar Church

4. Think back to the scenario you read earlier. What happened at the end of the date?

Small Kiss Made Out Sexual Intercourse

Thank you very much for your time. After completing this survey, is there anything you'd like to tell us about the questions we have asked or the topics we have covered? Please feel free to write anything that comes to mind below.

Also, if you are interested in talking directly to one of the researchers, please feel free to write your contact information here or email us at jgcarpenter@crimson.ua.edu or cbmills@ua.edu.

For EXTRA CREDIT fill your name in for the appropriate class.