

Evaluation of Women and Men
Professors:
How Gender Scripts Affect
Students' Assessments

Elizabeth A. Hoffmann
Sociology Department
Purdue University

Gender Scripts

- Socially constructed.
- One “performs” a particular script in reaction to the expectation of one’s social situation.
- Performance of gender scripts may include vocal tone, posture, and facial expressions, as well as actions and words.
- Includes the display of specific emotions in reaction to certain situations.

Emotional Labor

- Emotional labor: when the performance of certain emotions is part of one's job
- Occupations that have traditionally been held by women (e.g., nurses), often require stereotypic “feminine emotional displays” (e.g., nurturing, soothing)
- Emotional labor is as essential to job as mental or physical labor.

Emotional Labor and College Teaching

- This study found that college students place substantial demands for emotional labor on women professors.
- But not on men professors.

The Data

- Part of a larger study examining student evaluation at a large Midwestern public university
 - This portion of the study draws on 178,313 evaluations
 - from 2008 and 2011
 - completed on-line at the end of each semester.
- Today: patterns and direct quotations

Findings

Student wrote positive and negative reviews for women professors



and men professors.

Findings cont'd

However, women professors received far more evaluations about their emotional labor than male colleagues.



Both men and women professors:

Comments about the course

- “The in-class writing assignments based on the readings help my writing ability.”
- “Exams should all be worth the same amount of points.”
- “Altogether I felt like I learned a lot from this class. Certain sections were better but all together it was a good class.”



Both men and women professors: Comments about the person

- “Answers emails quickly.”
- “I learned a lot from him.”
- “The professor was available frequently and stressed the importance of grammar. [sic]”



Women Professors: Emotional Labor

- In addition to what students wanted from men professors, students wanted women professors to perform on-going emotional labor.
 - Friendly and likeable
 - Encourages and enables students
 - Understanding, caring, and kind

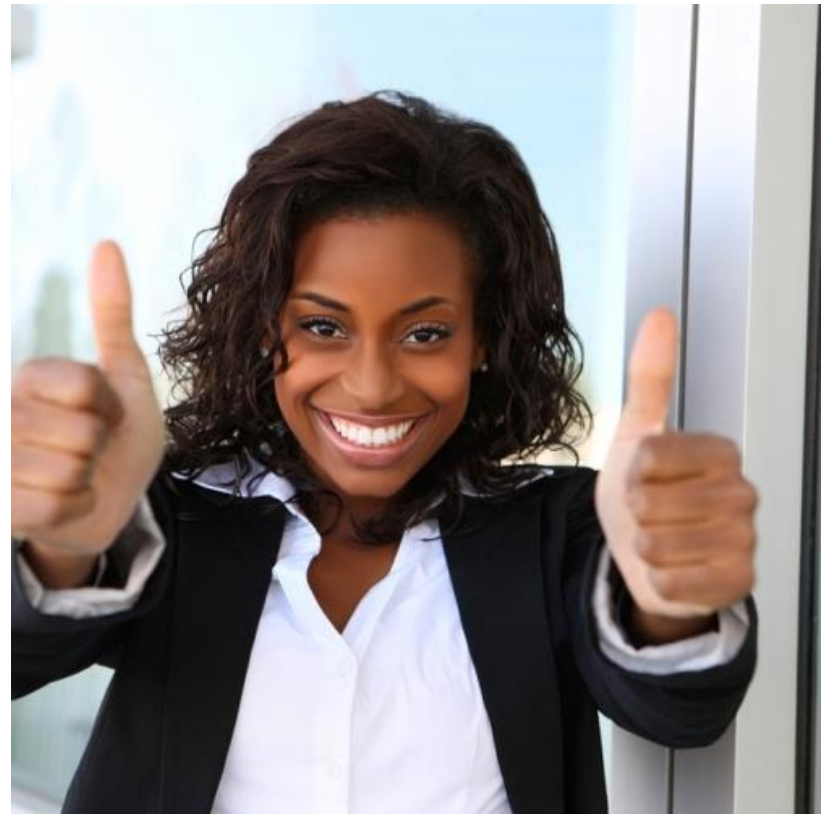
Friendly and Likeable



- “She provides useful feedback and is very nice and easy to talk to.”
- “Always nice, friendly, accessible, and always laughing which helps relax classroom.”

Encouraging and enabling students

- “She is very prepared and I like how encouraging she is.”
- “Being understanding like she was, was very helpful. It helped me to openly ask questions and not be embarrassed.”



Understanding, caring, and kind



- “She cared about each one of her students, in class and out.”
- “She makes everyone feel like their opinion is valued.”
- “Very polite and understanding. EverReady to answer all types of questions.”

Must be pretty (only from male students)

- “Be less beautiful so I can focus.”
- “She is beautiful and she is very kind to everybody in our class. She smiles all the time.”
- “You are a beautiful woman and I can see that you get flustered in class. If nothing else, I loved having you lecture the class and would enjoy being a personal friend of yours outside the class.”



“She’s hot!”

Criticism

- “Be outgoing and happy, I think it makes the class fun and people want to learn more and worker harder when someone is fun to be with.”
- “I think it would have killed her to smile just once.”
- “Try to be attractive.”

- These are not necessarily bad attributes.
- But student expectations of women professors' emotional labor constitute an additional demand about which men professors need not worry.
- Could impact promotion.



Acknowledgements

- ADVANCE-Purdue grant
- Center for Faculty Success