

MEMO

Methodology

Harris Poll® fielded the study on behalf of the National Endowment for Financial Education from February 3-5, 2015, via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus service, interviewing 2,016 U.S. adults aged 18+ (among which 1,868 have ever been in a relationship). Data were weighted using propensity score weighting to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

Key Findings – Relationships

Among those who are not currently married/in a civil union, 68% are not in a committed relationship, while 26% are in a committed relationship and 6% are engaged.

Key Findings – Spending affected by relationship

Among those who have ever been in a relationship, 45% say they spend more on dating and/or romantic activities when in a relationship than when not – with men (49%) significantly more likely to say this than women (41%). 32% spend about the same as when single, and 23% spend less on dating and/or romantic activities when in a relationship than when not.

Key Findings – Relationship spending

Among those who have ever been in a relationship, 69% say they spend more while in a relationship on things like experiences for both of them (41%), on their significant other (35%), themselves (10%) and other things (16%). Nearly a quarter (23%) say their spending doesn't change when in a relationship, and 8% actually spend less when in a relationship.

Not surprisingly, men (78%) are more likely than women (62%) to spend more when in a relationship-specifically on experiences (47% vs. 35%) and things for their significant other (42% vs. 28%). Also not surprisingly, women (12%) are more likely to spend on themselves for things like personal care than men (7%) when in a relationship. Call them old fashioned, but twice as many women (10%) as men (5%) say they actually spend less when in a relationship.

Key Findings – Amount spent when in relationship

Among those who have ever been in a relationship, 89% say they spend monthly on things like dining out, entertainment, gifts, clothes, travel, and personal services because they are in a relationship. Nearly half (45%) spend \$100 or more a month on these things.

Men (57%) are more likely than women (35%) to spend \$100 or more a month on things like dining out, entertainment, gifts, clothes, travel, and personal services because of the fact that they are in a relationship.

Key Findings – Spending to look/feel better

Among those who have ever been in a relationship, 27% say they spend more money on products and services to make them look and/or feel better, such as gym memberships or cosmetics, when in a relationship than when they are single. Three in five (61%) say they do not spend any more or less on these things when in a relationship, and 12% spend less.

Key Findings – Gift spending

Among those who have ever been in a relationship, 92% say they buy gifts (including impulse purchases) for their significant other or partner when in a relationship. 28% buy gifts at least once per month, 30% do so several times a year, 12% do so a handful of times during the year, while 19% only do so for the usual gift-giving times such as an anniversary or Valentine's Day.

35% of men give gifts to their significant other once per month or more often when in a relationship, compared to only 21% of women.

Key Findings – Spending in pursuit of romance

Interestingly, only 36% of those not in a committed relationship/engaged/married or civil union spend anything monthly in the pursuit of a romantic relationship - 64% spend nothing!

Not surprisingly, men (42%) are more likely than women (31%) to say they spend monthly in pursuit of a romantic relationship.

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