A survey has found that Singapore women expect their dates to pay for meals, see them home and carry their handbags.

Women lazy or what?

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"If those are the most important items on people's date checklists, then the human race is doomed," he says, adding that the results seem to reflect the traditional image of women as fragile creatures who need to have everything done for them.

"This is not just a matter of getting rid of that image, but also of understanding what it means to be a real woman," he says. "It means not being afraid to ask for what you want, not being afraid to say no, and not being afraid to be yourself.

On the other hand, marketing consultant Ma Lu, whose husband is Australian, says that while they were dating as students in Melbourne, she insisted on going Dutch, although he did pay for dinner sometimes.

"Both of us were equally in love and wanted to spend time to get to know each other, so I thought it was unfair that he footed all bills," she says.

Still, whether a woman is all for Dutch treaties or else like the survey singletons and prefers date treaties, some women LifeStyle spoke to mixed the idea of tote-toting guys.

Ms Sue Yee, the 33-year-old owner of dating agency Drinks At Eight, says: "Not only do the men look ridiculous, I absolutely do not see how doing this proves an act of love and concern. If women are too lazy to take care of themselves, don't carry a bag."

Meanwhile, Ms Mei Li Fujii, 41, managing director of an advertising firm here, does not understand all the fuss.

"In Japan, many women of my generation don't expect men to do anything special for them. It's nice if he opens the door for me, but I'm physically capable of opening them myself. If he's very rich, he can settle the bill, but I will be equally fine with going Dutch."

"In fact, I wouldn't allow a man to send me home unless I already know him very well. What if he turns out to be a pervert?" she says.

Great expectations

RESULTS of the Social Development Service survey on dating traits:

- 83 percent of women expect their boyfriends to pay on dates and 92 percent of men will do so.
- 50 percent of women expect their boyfriends to dress up specially on special occasions such as Valentine's Day and birthdays while 78 percent of men will do so.
- 50 percent of women expect their boyfriends to carry their handbags and 70 percent of men will do so.

What people say

"As a man, you know you are expected to do certain things such as opening doors and paying on dates. It's a social norm and you make a conscious effort to do these things to impress the woman you like. Women have a right to expect to be treated differently or they might as well be men."

- 98.7FM deejay Justin Ang, 26

"I don't get a kick out of having a man pay for my meal or dressing up for me on a special occasion. I want a guy who can just be himself and who is secure about who he is. If he thinks he can impress me simply by sending me home but has nothing interesting to say during the date, then, sorry!"

- Actress Tan Kheng Hua, 45

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- Dr Ilya Farber, assistant professor of social science and philosophy, on the survey findings

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