

LOVE TYPES AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

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This cross-cultural research explored the relationship between Hatfield & Rapson's (1993) love types and subjective well-being. College students from an individualistic culture (USA) and a collectivist culture (Korea) completed the Passionate Love Scale (PLS; Hatfield & Rapson), the Companionate Love Scale (CLS; Sternberg, 1986), the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Pivot & Diener, 1993), and the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clarke, & Tellegen, 1988). It was found that two love types are related to subjective well-being in a different way: life satisfaction was more strongly predicted by companionate love than by passionate love, whereas positive and negative emotions were more accounted for by passionate love than by companionate love. No culture and gender difference was found in this overall relationship, but gender difference was found in the extent of the association between companionate love and satisfaction with life, and between passionate love and emotional experiences, respectively.

Among many typologies of love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1996; Lee, 1973; Sternberg, 1986), Hatfield and Rapson's (1993) love types – passionate love and companionate love – have been accepted as a valid conceptualization of love regardless of age, gender, and culture in a wide array of research (Hatfield, & Rapson, 1996; Wang, & Nguyen, 1995).

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In many studies it has been revealed that love is an important predictor of happiness, satisfaction, and positive emotions (Anderson, 1977; Diener & Lucas, 2000; Freeman, 1978; Myers, 1992). It is believed that various acts, such as kissing, sex, emotional contacts, and companionship exchanged in love relationships contribute to happiness (Glenn & Weaver, 1978; Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldesteen, 1990).

Despite wide use of Hatfield's concept of love types in psychological research, which type of love enhances happiness more effectively is not well known. The study reported here investigated the relationships between Hatfield's love types (passionate love and companionate love) and happiness through cross-cultural research conducted in the USA and Korea.

As a difficult concept to define, happiness has been conceptualized and measured in many different ways by different scholars (for review see Diener & Lucas, 2000) and subjective well-being has been the most popularly used concept to understand happiness in recent studies. Subjective well-being consists of two components: life satisfaction (a cognitive evaluation of one's overall life) and emotions (the presence of positive emotions, and the absence of negative emotions) (Diener & Rahtz, 2000). Thus in this study *happiness* was operationally defined as *subjective well-being*.

We predicted that passionate love and companionate love would be differently associated with satisfaction with life and with positive/negative emotions. Specifically, we predicted that companionate love would be more strongly associated with life satisfaction than would passionate love, whereas passionate love would be more strongly associated with the emotional aspect of subjective well-being; positive and negative affect.

Often labeled "obsessive love," "crush lovesickness," "infatuation," or "being-in-love," *passionate love* is a *hot intense emotion that is characterized as a state of intense longing for union with another* (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996). It is known that the reciprocation of passionate love is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy but unrequited passionate love is associated with emptiness, anxiety, or despair. Passionate love is a strong emotional state in which people experience continuous interplay between elation and despair, thrills and terror (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996). As a result, passionate love is not only positively related to positive emotions but also often related to emotional distress. Supporting this idea, it was reported that passionate love is neuroanatomically and chemically related with anxiety (Carlson & Hatfield, 1992; Freud, 1935; Kaplan, 1979; Liebowitz, 1983). One study showed that children and adolescents in a high state of anxiety received the highest scores on the Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield, Brinton, & Cornelius, 1989). These findings imply that although passionate love certainly brings people intense emotional experiences such as joy, ecstasy, and delight, it also activates strong despair and produces great emotional turmoil as

well (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996; Tennov, 1999). Thus, passionate love would be more strongly associated with the emotional component of subjective well-being.

In contrast, we predicted that companionate love would be more strongly and positively related to life satisfaction than would passionate love. Compared with passionate love, *companionate love* is less intense, but *is a warm feeling of affection and tenderness that people feel for those with whom their lives are deeply connected*. Thus, companionate love is often described as friendship love and involves shared values, deep attachment, long-term commitment, and intimacy (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1996; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988). People develop this type of love during a long time span and there is more emotional trust. Companionate love involves mild but comfortable emotional states between partners. Companionate love is typically more reciprocal liking and respect. Therefore, it is expected that in companionate love people feel more satisfaction than in passionate love when other variables are equal.

CULTURE

Culture affects how people define love, how susceptible they are to love, with whom they tend to fall in love, and how their love relationships proceed (Braudel, 1984; Fehr, 1993; Hatfield & Rapson, 1996; Hong, 1986). Especially, individualistic and collectivistic cultures are contrasting in the importance people in each culture place on love. Whereas passionate love is highly emphasized in individualistic cultures, in the collectivist cultures, where strong kinship networks and extended-family ties exist, passionate relationships are often viewed as negative because they may disrupt the tradition of family-approved and arranged marriage choices (Goode, 1959; Nyrop, 1985; Skolnick, 1996). Shaver, Wu, and Schwartz (1992) found that the Chinese equated love with sadness, jealousy, and other dark views, whereas Americans equated love with happiness. This different view is also reflected in marriage practice. The majority of people in individualist cultures marry for love and tend to believe that love is the most important factor for marriage. In comparison, it is not unusual that people in collectivist cultures marry through arrangement by family, relatives, or friends based on similar socioeconomic background, which does not necessarily involve love. Where this tradition is found, it is believed that couples develop companionate love for one another although they do not marry for love (Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, & Verma, 1995). Behind the wide practice of marriage arrangement, there appears to be a belief that passionate love may decline faster but companionate love may endure and last longer and benefit couples in the long run. Therefore, it was predicted that the correlations between companionate love and life satisfaction would be stronger in a "collectivistic" Korean sample than in an "individualistic" U.S. sample. In contrast, it was predicted that the association

between passionate love and positive and negative affects would be stronger in the U.S. sample than in the Korean sample.

GENDER

Males love more passionately than do women, whereas females love more companionately than do males (Dion & Dion, 1993; Traupmann & Hatfield, 1981). One possible reason for this comes from evolutionary theory. Evolutionary theory theorizes that love is just one of the emotional experiences which have been selected during the evolution process since it has helped humans find mates for reproduction and that through this evolutionary process men and women have developed different perspectives in love (Buss, 1994; Buss & Barne, 1986). In mate selection males, who are most interested in distributing as many genes as possible, constantly look for different sex partners and tend to seek females who demonstrate characteristics suitable for that purpose: health and beauty. In comparison, females are more interested in keeping genes by rearing healthy children in a safe environment rather than distributing genes by having as many children as they can. In relationships, this tendency is presented in the way that females seek a safe and secure relationship in which they can expect stable resources to help them rear children. Thus, the result of this tendency is that females are less romantic and more realistic in finding males who will be resource providers.

This difference implies that males are more likely to be influenced by the strong emotional experience of passionate love that is usually believed to ignite chemistry between males and females in relationships. In comparison, companionate love is characterized by commitment and intimacy that help people to maintain the relationship. As a result, there is evidence that passionate love declines over time for females much more rapidly than for males, whereas companionate love does not decline for either male or female over time in long-term relationships (Grau & Kimpf, 1993; Sternberg, 1986). Therefore, it was expected that the association between companionate love and life satisfaction would be stronger in females than in males, whereas the association between passionate love and positive/negative affect would be stronger in males than in females.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Two hundred and seventeen American students (101 males and 116 females, mean age = 22.31) at the university of Hawaii and one hundred and eighty-two students (90 males and 93 females, mean age = 22.79) at Korea University participated in this study. Participants completed a questionnaire that included

measures to assess passionate love, companionate love, life satisfaction, and positive and negative emotions. All questionnaires were translated into Korean. Participants were asked if they were – or had been – in romantic relationships, and those who reported they were not in such relationships were excluded from analysis.

MEASURES

The Passionate Love Scale (PLS; Hatfield & Rapson, 1993) is a 15-item Likert scale. Participants were asked to think about the person they love most passionately and to indicate how they felt about that person by answering questions in the scale (e.g., "I would feel deep despair if ____ left me" for passionate love) on a 7-point scale. Cronbach's alpha for PLS was .91.

The Companionate Love Scale (CLS; Sternberg, 1986) consists of two parts: intimacy and commitment. Respondents were asked to answer five questions to measure commitment (e.g., "I am committed to maintaining my relationship with ____") and five questions to measure intimacy (e.g., "I have a warm and comfortable relationship with ____"), respectively on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely true*). Cronbach's alpha for CLS was .87 for commitment and .89 for intimacy.

Subjective well-being was measured by the Satisfaction with Life scale (SWLS; Pivott & Diener, 1993) and the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). SWLS was used to measure the participants' cognitive evaluation of overall life. Participants were asked to give responses to questions (e.g., "____ I am satisfied with my life.") on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha for SWLS was .79.

PANAS included seven positive emotions (happy, joyful, pleased, having enjoyment/fun, glad, delighted, and contented) and seven negative emotions (angry, fearful/anxious, frustrated, depressed, annoyed, sad, and gloomy). Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they had experienced each of the moods on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely much*). Cronbach's alpha for PANAS was .89 (scores on negative affect were reversed and added to the scores of positive affect).

RESULTS

To examine the first hypothesis, two regression analyses were run: one with SWLS as the dependent variable and the other one with PANAS as the dependent variable while age, gender, and culture variables (coded as nations) were controlled. The results are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR PREDICTING THE SATISFACTION WITH LIFE AND
POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE AFFECT ($N = 317$)

| Variables | SWLS | PANAS |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | β | β |
| Age | -.05 | -.01 |
| Culture (1 = US, 2 = Korea) | -.08 | -.12 |
| Gender (1 = Males, 2 = Females) | -.10 | -.13 |
| Companionate love | .36** | .12** |
| Passionate love | -.09 | .21* |
| R^2 | .27 | .08 |

Note: 1. PLS: Passionate Love, CLS: Companionate Love, SWLS: Satisfaction with Life Scale, PANAS: Positive and Negative Affect Scale
2. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$

First, with the SWLS as the dependent variable, CLS significantly predicts the SWLS ($\beta = .34, p < .01$), but PLS was not a significant predictor of the SWLS ($\beta = -.09, p = n.s.$). When PANAS was used as the dependent variable, both PLS and CLS predicted the dependent variable significantly but more variances in PANAS were accounted for by PLS ($\beta = .21, p < .05$) than by CLS ($\beta = .12, p < .01$). The first hypothesis was supported.

The next analysis tested if the U.S. sample and the Korean sample differed in the extent of the association between CLS and SWLS and also in the association between PLS and PANAS. The correlation between CLS and SWLS in the US sample ($r = .17, p < .01$, for males; $r = .40, p < .01$ for females) was slightly higher than the correlation between two variables in the Korean sample ($r = .14$ for males; $r = .37$ for females). Fisher's Z-test was run to test whether or not the difference between these correlation coefficients was statistically significant, but the results were not significant ($z = 1.30, ns$ for male sample; $z = 1.21, ns$ for female sample). The association between PLS and PANAS was not different across the two samples, either. Thus, the second hypothesis was not supported.

The final analysis examined whether or not male and female participants differed in the extent of the association between CLS and SWLS and also in the association between PLS and PANAS. The hypothesis was that the correlation between PLS and PANAS would be higher in males than in females, whereas the correlation between CLS and SWLS would show an opposite pattern. This hypothesis was supported. In the Korean sample, the correlation between CLS and SWLS in females ($r = .37, p < .01$) was higher than that in males ($r = .14, p < .01$) and the difference between the two correlations was significant ($z = 2.20, p < 0.01$). A consistent result was found in the U.S. sample (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
CORRELATIONS AMONG LOVE TYPES, SATISFACTION WITH LIFE, AND POSITIVE AND
NEGATIVE AFFECTS ($N = 317$)

| | | PLS | CLS | SWLS | PANAS |
|-------|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| PLS | male | | .63** | .13 | .24** |
| | female | | .42* | .11 | .15 |
| CLS | male | .62** | | .14** | .16 |
| | female | .31** | | .37** | .13 |
| SWLS | male | .29** | .17* | | .32 |
| | female | .02 | .40** | | .29 |
| PANAS | male | .27** | .13 | .30 | |
| | female | .17 | .14 | .32 | |

Note. 1. PLS: Passionate Love, CLS: Companionate Love, SWLS: Satisfaction with Life Scale, PANAS: Positive and Negative Affect Scale

2. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$

3. Bold figures: Gender difference, Fisher-Z test, $p < .05$.

In the association between PLS and PANAS, gender difference was opposite. The correlation between the two measures in males was larger than those in females both in the Korean and in the U.S. sample ($r = .24$, $p < .01$ for Korean males, $r = .15$, *ns* for Korean females; $z = 1.90$, $p < .03$; $r = .27$, $p < .01$, U.S. males; $r = .17$, *ns* for U.S. females; $z = 2.10$, $p < .02$). Thus, the third hypothesis was supported.

DISCUSSION

This research investigated the relationship between subjective well-being and love types (passionate love vs. companionate love) proposed by Hatfield and Rapson (1993). Analysis of data from a survey conducted in Korea and in USA showed that companionate love was the strongest predictor of life satisfaction whereas passionate love was the strongest predictor of positive emotions.

These results suggest that the relationship between love and happiness is not linear but multidimensional. As love is not a single form so the relationship of love with other emotions takes more than one form. This is also true for happiness. As happiness is a complex emotional experience, an individual's happiness must be understood by looking at different aspects of its components (e.g., a person may be very satisfied with his/her life overall but live every day with little excitement). Yet, previous studies often focused on a linear relationship between the two emotions by defining love and happiness as a unidimensional concept, (see for example, Hendrick & Hendrick, 1996). Thus, the value of the present study lies in that it empirically demonstrates the importance of the recognition of the multidimensional relationship between love and happiness.

No influence of culture was found in this study. Multiple regression analyses showed that culture did not make any difference in that different love types predict satisfaction with life and positive/negative emotions. There are two possible explanations for this. First, although robust cultural variations are reported in both love (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993) and subjective well-being research (Diener & Lucas, 2000), how these two emotions are related with each other may be universal rather than culture-specific. The second explanation may stem from westernization in Korean culture in people's experience of love due to recent social change in Korea. Korea has experienced very rapid social change in the last decade as have other collectivist cultures. People in Korea have experienced a broad and rapid "Westernization" in thinking and behavior. This is especially true in their western and liberal attitude to sexuality. The divorce rate is rising, a sharply increasing number of people are practicing premarital sex, and traditional arranged marriage is disappearing. Although Korea is reported as a very collectivistic culture in much psychological research the current rapid social change in this country seems to have led to its people embracing western culture to a great extent. Also, considering that the participants in this study are college students who are a relatively individualistic age group in society, the results in this study seem to be due to similarities among Koreans and Americans.

Gender's influence was twofold. Gender did not affect the overall relationship pattern between love types and subjective well-being. Yet, differences were found between male and female samples both in the degree to which passionate love was related with emotions and in the degree to which companionate love was related with life satisfaction. That is, companionate love and satisfaction were more strongly correlated in females than in males in both the U.S. sample and the Korean sample. In contrast, passionate love was more strongly correlated with positive and negative emotions in males than in females. These results indicate that males and females have different preferences in mate selection and their different attitudes in love are also expressed through emotional experience and thus the evolutionary theory in explaining love and mate selection is supported.

In sum, this study has only begun to scratch the surface of this fascinating topic, but it provides the first empirical exploration of the relationship between love types and psychological well-being. In numerous novels, poems, and films people are portrayed as ardently seeking a thrilling, exciting, and heart-pumping passionate love (sometimes at any cost). Regardless of such an enormous obsession with love, people also ironically agree that love does not simply bring happiness and that love is one of the most mysterious and complex aspects of human life. The results of this study seem to reconfirm this interesting human mystery.

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