

*The Love Factor*

**An Inventory to Assess One's Capacity to Love**

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The mystery of love has long been sought and often discussed. Poets have tried to capture its sublime aspects in verse and lyric, singers of touched us with their heart rendering version of our soul's longing, and philosophers have attempted to explain this "mystery" in terms of the many kinds of love that exist. Perhaps the mystics have come closest to capturing the deeper aspects of love in their accounts of divine communion. All in all, the exploration of love has been more an interests to other disciplines than to psychology. Prior to the last two decades, it has often been suggested that love is not possible to study or define. It is an inexplicable mystery that is best left untouched for fear of losing some of its magical quality. Some suggest that to make love too cerebral would be to diminish and destroy its very nature. In the last twenty-five years has there been attempts to standardize measures in studying the concept of love. The present research reviews the works of authors employing some type of measurement in distinguishing certain facets of love, and offers a new scale that is more comprehensive in its approach to studying love.

With the breadth of meaning of love being so multi-faceted, researchers have generally chosen to narrow their focus in some fashion in order to develop comparative responses that could be statistically analyzed. Rubin (1970, 1978) devised scales regarding an interpersonal and social construct of romantic love. The results of his research indicated a discreet notion between love scale items and liking scale items. Couples categorized as strongly in love engaged in mutual eye gazing to a significantly greater degree than couples labeled as less in love. Components of romantic love were associated with three concepts: affiliative and dependent needs, a predisposition to help,

and an orientation of exclusiveness and absorption.

Roseman (1978) compared Rubin's romantic scales for loving and liking with Lasswell and Lasswell's (1973, 1976) six concepts which had been factor analyzed. The results reflected moderate correlations between Rubin's love scale and three of the concepts of love defined as giving, possessiveness, and friendship. No correlations were found between the remaining three concepts of pragmatism, game-playing and erotism. Correlations were higher for women suggesting that females may have been more clear about their ideas of love. Rubin's liking scale did not correlate high on any of the six love concepts implying different mechanisms were in operation in liking another and loving another.

Sternberg's essay (1986) of triangulating love consisted of three components: passion, intimacy and decision/commitment. Intimacy by itself was found to be associated with the act of liking; passion alone was associated with infatuation, and decision/commitment alone with empty love. Romantic love was considered related to two love components - intimacy and passion; companionate love was related to intimacy and decision/commitment, and fatuous love was linked together with passion and decision/commitment. All three components of love were associated with consummate love, considered a complete form of loving. These components were best viewed on a continuum of intensity, with different weights given to each component in a subjective manner at various times.

A thirty item scales was devised by Hatfield (1986) to assess passionate love as it related to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. These were comprised of the following: preoccupation with another, physiological arousal and seeking the pleasure of another. A short version was also derived with significant findings promoting further use of this scale.

In comparing five measurement scales of love, Hendrick and Hendrick (1989) found five distinct factors for all five scales studied. These factors were passionate love, closeness, ambivalence, secure attachment, and practicality. From these factors, the following scales were established: Love Attitude Scale, Triangular Theory of Love Scales,

Passionate Love Scale, Relationship Rating Form, and Measurement of Love and Attachment. *Note: Nothing about what keeps people together*

Pam et. al. (1975) developed a psychometric instrument to measure feelings and attitudes related with being in love. Five areas were assessed: respect, congeniality, altruism, physical attraction, and attachment. They found that attachment and physical attraction were most important to a love relationship. Steck, et.al. (1982) explored the dimensions of care and need as two critical components of love.

Other researchers have been interested in various types of love from addictive love (Hunter,1981), romantic love (Ogrady, 1981), to the styles of loving (Richardson, 1988). Certain studies have been concerned with the relationship between love and eroticism (Dermer, 1978) or romantic love and physical attraction (Benassi, 1985). Romantic Love has been found to correlate positively with lower rationality (Lester, 1984) and higher jealousy (Lester, 1985).

Kenrick et al. (1989) investigated the influence of erotica on sexual attraction ratings. They found that males who rated the playboy-type centerfolds more pleasant rated themselves as less in love with the wives. These results are in contrast with Dermer and Pyszczynski's (1978) study that used Rubin's scale and found that men are more likely when sexually aroused to express statements more similar to the love than to the liking items.

One investigator, Mathes (1982) explored the mysticism and romantic love and found them to be positively intercorrelated.

A prominent resource regarding love research was the edited book titled *The Psychology of Love* by Sternberg and Barnes (1988). Theories of love, including research approaches were included providing an overview of important yet diverse opinions and historical positions reflecting the state of the art of love research. To date, no single definition of love has emerged. It seems generally agreed upon, however, that any approach to understanding love must be multidimensional in nature.

Over the last two decades, love research has reflected our modern day preoccupation

with pleasure-seeking activities and sexual gratification. Research has strongly focused upon those constructs which tend to draw couples together in some form of bonded, romantic relationship. There appears to be a gap, however, in the proper investigation of those qualities that serve to sustain intimate relationships over an extended period of time. Studies ( ) have documented the alarming divorce rate in the United States. More than one out of every two marriages ends in divorce. It seems obvious that our attempts to define and discuss love in the limited terms of romance, passion, attraction, and commitment are not helping us to learn how to stay together in bonded relationships which sustains communities in loving and peaceful ways. Additional studies (Walsh et al. 1987; Bergeret & Bergeret, 1984; Eisen, 1977; Havens, 1972) have suggested the relationship between the lack of love in child development and the increase in violence. It seems important to pursue the thoughtful investigation of the life-sustaining psychological element of our species: love! (Harlow, Bolby, Spitz, Freud). It is imperative that different perspectives need to be brought to the investigation of love. The results of such research may yield recommendations for psychological or educational interventions aimed at ameliorating those problems by enhancing people's capacity to love.

Prominent clinical tools (i.e., MMPI, Rorschach, 16PF, Millon, etc.) have been developed to assess the psychopathological aspects of human functioning. The present authors created a clinical tool based upon constructs related to positive, healthy, and mature aspects of human development. The possibility of such an investigation would be to provide a meaningful context to explore and explain healthy functioning which serve the development of deepening and sustaining close interpersonal relationships.

The present research sought to explore one's ability to love from a multi-dimensional frame of reference. Twelve areas were hypothesized as being relevant for the ability to develop and sustain loving relationships. The questionnaire developed for this purpose was named *The Love Factor*.

#### Choice of Constructs

The approach to choosing constructs to assess love was built upon observations in clinical practice as well as the consideration of a variety of theories about love. What



qualities do the great traditions in psychology and spirituality address? What aspects have been suggested that an individual must contain in order to have an integrated personality yielding an open heart? What qualities appear to be essential for an individual to behave in a consistent, balanced, loving fashion with those closest to him or her?

The following areas were chosen to be represented by the scales of *The Love Factor*: 1. Compassion: One's ability to empathize with another person's situation based upon a fuller understanding of that person's reality; 2. Friendship: One's capacity to develop mature, meaningful, long-standing, and dependable relationships; 3. Intimacy: One's ability to sustain close interpersonal contact; 4. Masculine/Feminine: One's style of expression between the masculine and feminine aspects of the self; 5. Primitive Self: One's ability to perceive and accept the darker, more primitive parts of the self; 6. Psychological Adjustment: One's level of freedom from debilitating psychological conflicts; 7. Romantic Love: The degree to which one believes in romantic love and "true love;" 8. Self-Respect: One's level of respect for oneself and for others; 9. Sensitivity: One's sensitivity to others and the ability to grasp subtle changes in another person's moods; 10. Spirituality: One's experience of relationship with the Divine and one's sense of unity with all creation; 11. Trust: One's level of trust and faith in life as a positive, purposive experience;

This set of scales reflects several traditions in the study and understanding of human relationships including object relations theory of Guntrip, Fairbairn, and Winnicott, the self-psychology of Kohut, the concepts of the shadow and the Animus/Anima from Jung's work, and spiritual dimension emphasized in the teachings of Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

## METHOD

*Scale Construction*: An initial pool of 248 items was devised, with 18 to 22 items assigned rationally to each scale. Three clinical psychologists with at least five years post-doctoral experience reviewed each scale to determine the clinical relevance of each item in its scale. The clinicians supported the placement of the various items in the corresponding scales.

In *The Love Factor* questionnaire booklet, a five point response scale was used (1=absolutely disagree; 2=moderately disagree; 3=neutral(neither agree nor disagree); 4=moderately agree; 5=absolutely agree). Upon completion of the data collection a decision was made to reverse the scale in the opposite direction so that respondents would answer from agree to disagree because subjects reported too much confusion understanding the scale when left in the initial direction. Approximately one-half of the items were phrased in the negative sense in order to reduce problems of response set; ratings on these items were reversed (by subtracting the response from 6) for the computation of scale scores. The score for each scale was computed as the sum of ratings on its constituent items.

The preliminary version of *The Love Factor* was administered to 100 individuals, 50 from a Brugh Joy conference at Asilomar and the remaining were from a Unitarian Church in Southern California. An item analysis was performed on each scale and those items with low item-to-total correlations were dropped. The final questionnaire consists of 124 items, and takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The following procedures were used to assess its psychometric properties.

#### SUBJECTS:

A total of 688 respondents were recruited from the following sources:

Department of Social Services offices in several midwestern states with the cooperation of the Director of each office. Questionnaires were completed by staff ( $N=138$ ) and clients ( $N=18$ ).

College undergraduate and graduate students ( $N=276$ ). These respondents were drawn from the Education department at Central Michigan University and a sorority at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Yoga students ( $N=83$ ) from a spiritual community in northern California and a teaching network in Vancouver, Canada. A donation of five dollars per respondent was offered to the community in northern California and a Canadian yoga teachers network

recruited volunteers from their students.

Mental Health Outpatients ( $N=35$ ). These respondents were recruited from private practice in California and a public mental health clinic in Michigan.

High School Teachers in Virginia ( $N=27$ ) attending a conference on nurturing.

Professional Mental Health workers in Wisconsin ( $N=82$ ).

Individual Adults known to the researchers within California ( $N=16$ ). These respondents knew of the research and expressed a desire to be a part of the sample.

A self-help Church Group ( $N=13$ ) in Utah led by a licensed clinical social worker.

For purposes of comparison, the entire sample was grouped according to the following criteria: Staff ( $N=262$ ), Yogis ( $N=83$ ), Students ( $N=276$ ), and Patients ( $N=66$ ).

The mean age for the total sample was 31.5 years ( $SD=11.9$ ). Twenty-one percent were male and seventy-nine percent were female.

Additional Measures *Life Satisfaction Rating:* Several self-report measures were obtained. Subjects were asked to indicate their satisfaction (1=yes, 2=no) in the following categories: Friendships, Love Relationship, Work Relationship, Job, Self-Esteem and Ability to Love. A count was made of the "yes" responses to these categories and the sum became the Life Satisfaction Rating.

*Validity Scale:* This scale was created in order to assess if a respondent was attempting to present a socially desirable profile. Items such as "I am always honest with those I love" and "I always function at my best" were used.

*Demographic Data:* Information was requested about each respondent in the following areas: Age, Sex, Race, Religion, Income, and Marital Status.

*Personal Development:* Respondents were asked to indicate what types of growth



experiences in which they have participated. Their choices were: 1. Individual Psychotherapy; 2. Group Psychotherapy; 3. Spiritual Meditation Retreat; 4. Two or more of the above; 5. None of the above.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

*Reliability* The twelve scales' alpha coefficients ranged from .73 to .86 (Table 1). The highest value was found for the Validity Scale and the lowest for the Spirituality Scale. These alpha levels suggest satisfactory internal consistency.

*Scale Intercorrelations* The correlation matrix of Love Factor scales (Table 2) reveals a high degree of correlation among the scales (range of correlations = .01 to .80, mean correlation = ). The correlations for men and women are presented separately.

*Factor Analysis* Due to the high degree of correlation among the scales a factor analysis was performed (Table 3). One factor was found to account for 48.8% of the total variance. The Principal Axis Factoring Method was used. This factor score then became the Love Capacity Scale.

*Concurrent Validity* The correlation of *The Love Factor* scales with the Life Satisfaction Rating (LSAT) is presented in Table 4. Every Love Factor scales obtained a significant correlation at the .001 level. The Spearman Rank Order was used (CSS, 1989).

*Correlations* The correlation of *The Love Factor* scales with Income and Education are presented in Table 4. Income was significantly correlated (.001) with the following scales: Primitive-Self, Psychological Adjustment, and Trust. A significant correlation (.01) was obtained with the Self-Respect Scale. The Spearman Rank Order was used. Education was significantly correlated (.001) with the following scales: Intimacy, Masculine/Feminine, Primitive-Self, Psychological Adjustment, Self-Respect, Sensitivity, and Trust. A significant correlation (.01) was obtained with the Friendship Scale, Romantic Love Scale, and Spirituality Scale.

*Comparison of Males and Females* A T-Test revealed (Table 5) significant differences at



the .0001 level between men and women with women scoring higher on the following Love Factor Scales: Compassion, Friendship, Intimacy, Masculine/Feminine, Sensitivity, and Spirituality. Significant differences at the .01 level were found with the Self-Respect Scale, and significant differences were found at the .05 level with the Trust Scale. As with other research (Rosennan) women may have a more suscinct concept of various aspects of love .

Discriminative Validity Groups: It was hypothesized that a patient population would be more psychologically distressed and therefore score lower on *The Love Factor* scales. An analysis of variance (SPSS, 1990) was performed comparing Groups along *The Love Factor* scales (Table 6). The results are consistent with the hypothesis. Patients significantly (.001) differed from Staff, Yogis, and Students on the following scales: Compassion, Friendship, Intimacy, Masculine/Feminine, Primitive Self, Self-Respect, Sensitivity, Spirituality, Trust, and Love Capacity. Patients significantly differed (.001) from Staff and Students on the Psychological Adjustment Scale, and Staff and Yogis differed significantly (.001) on the Psychological Adjustment scale. Patients significantly differed from Students (.05) on the Romantic Love Scale. These results indicated that patients were significantly low in trusting others often considered a primary requirement of any relationship (Erikson, 1944). Self-respect was also low for this population, supporting the notion of the importance of positive self-regard as a prerequisite in establishing healthy interpersonal contact (Coopersmith, 1977). A low psychological adjustment score may have reflected problems in intimacy, friendship, and sensitivity, also low for this sample. Lower scores produced on the Masculine/Feminine Scale by patients suggested traditional sex-role attitudes with regards to the expression of feelings.

Yogis significantly differed (.001) from Students and Staff on the Self-Respect Scale. Students significantly differed (.001) from Staff on the Trust Scale indicated that staff members were more mature in this area. Yogis significantly differed (.001) from staff on the Love Capacity Scale suggesting a greater degree of overall difficulty in relating to others.

Personal Development: An Analysis of Variance was performed on *The Love Factor* Scales with the Personal Development rating (Table 7) resulting in significant differences

between "None" and "Two or More" on the following scales: Compassion (.001), Primitive Self (.01), Sensitivity (.01), and Spirituality (.001). These findings suggest that those persons who have been involved in some personal therapeutic process have developed greater compassion and awareness of their spiritual self, along with a sensitivity towards others and the world around. These individuals were also more aware and accepting of their unconscious, primitive material. These findings supported the discriminative validity of *The Love Factor* by differentiating those participants who engaged in some form of psychological growth experience from those who reported no experience.

*Religion:* An Analysis of Variance was performed on *The Love Factor* Scales with Religion (Table 8). The Atheist/Agnostic group significantly differed (.05) from the Mormon group on the Spirituality Scale. No other significant difference were found. While the results only indicated a significant difference between the Atheist/Agnostic group, the results noted a positive direction differing the Atheist/Agnostic group from all other religions as was hypothesized. Since all religions were based upon the teachings of Universal love, one would not expect to find significant differences between groups along the other Love Factor Scales.

*Age:* An Analysis of Variance was performed on *The Love Factor* Scales with Age (Table 9). The results were as follows: Friendship Scale significantly differed (.05) between 20-29 and 30-39; Intimacy Scale significantly differed (.001) between 20-29 and 30-39; Primitive Self Scale significantly differed (.0001) between 14-19 and 40-49; Sensitivity Scale significantly differed (.01) between 40-49 and 50-59; Trust Scale significantly differed (.0001) between 14-19 and 40-49. These results suggested that individuals in their thirties have a greater capacity for friendship and intimacy than those in their twenties. It seemed probable that the thirties are an important developmental time in which to develop significant bonds and intimate relationships. The difference between the 14-19 year old group and the 40-49 year old group on the Primitive Self Scale scores and the Trust Scale scores suggests that more mature individuals have a greater realization of their unconscious material and a greater trust in the life as a positive experience. The difference between respondents on the Sensitivity Scale may have reflected the increased awareness and sensitivity of those individuals who experienced the phenomena of the 1960's.

## CONCLUSION

The findings on the scales of *The Love Factor* inventory manifested acceptable internal consistency, reasonable content validity, and discriminative validity. Researchers and clinicians may find *The Love Factor* useful in assessing an individual's capacity to love across a variety of relevant dimensions. This inventory further expanded a multi-faceted model of understanding one's capacity to establish and sustain loving relationships.

Additional data is currently being collected regarding national norms and the discriminant validity of *The Love Factor* Scales. These findings will be presented in the near future.

Further research is recommended in establishing the predictability of *The Love Factor*. Areas such as marital success, parenting competency, foster-care, pre-marital screening, positive performance in health care related jobs, and global peace concerns would be most appropriate.