

LOVE, VIOLENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM: THE UTILIZATION OF THE LOVE
FACTOR INVENTORY IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS

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Running Head: Love , Violence and Self-Esteem

Abstract

A newly-developed inventory exploring an individual's capacity to form loving relationships, named The Love Factor, was administered to a state prison population in California. Along with this inventory, the Bennett Self-Esteem Scale, a modified version of the Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI), developed by Coopersmith, was given to this population. Two hypotheses were presented: (1) inmates who committed more violent crimes would score significantly lower on most Love Factor scales and the Bennett Self-Esteem measure; and (2) Self-esteem ratings would correlate positively with most of The Love Factor Scales. Both hypotheses were supported. Six of the eleven scales of The Love Factor correlated positively with the Bennett-Coopersmith Scale including The Love Factor Self-Respect scale.

Institutional differences were obtained on the Bennett-Coopersmith Scale, Caucasians obtained higher self-esteem scores than Blacks and Hispanics, and Females scored higher on self-esteem than males. No differences were found regarding level of income or socioeconomic level.

The results of this study support the concern that lowered self-esteem may relate to increased violence and a limited capacity to engage in intimate loving relationships.

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As part of a national data collection process aimed at validating and establishing norms for a newly developed inventory named The Love Factor, six correctional facilities within California participated in this research. An affiliation with the California State Self-Esteem Task Force provided access to these settings. The California Task Force was very interested in the relationship between self-esteem, violence and love. Previous studies of Bennett (1971, 1974), led to the development of a self-esteem measure modified for a prison population. Therefore, the Bennett scale was used in this study.

The California State's Task Force interests in violence in relation to self-esteem prompted the inclusion of this variable into the present study. Studies related to self-esteem (Gilbond, 1979; Storr, 1983; Ryan, 1983; and Greenfield, 1987) generally held that individuals with a sense of self-worth and caring allowed for a greater responsiveness towards others. Self-esteem was hypothesized to positively relate to one's ability to love. i.e., the capacity to engage in successful interpersonal relationships.

Overviews of the literature regarding various concepts of love (e.g., Sternberg, 1986; Sternberg and Barnes, 1988; and Hendrick and Hendrick, 1989) examined topics of love related to romance, passion, commitment, and attachment. The Love Factor inventory was based upon the theoretical constructs that the ability to love requires an integration of numerous facets of psychological and spiritual dimensions including: Compassion, Friendship, Intimacy, Masculine/Feminine , Primitive Self, Psychological Adjustment, Romantic Love, Self-Respect, Sensitivity, Spirituality, and Trust. In addi-

tion, a Love Capacity scale was developed from the factor score of all scales. A full description of these scales, their method of construction, reliability, and validity data are provided elsewhere (Mann and Braun-Smith, 1990).

Hypotheses. It was hypothesized that those who committed more violent crimes would score significantly lower on the various Love Factor scales and the self-esteem measure. It was also hypothesized that self-esteem would correlate positively with the various Love Factor scales.

Method

Six state prison facilities administered both The Love Factor and the Bennett-Coopersmith Scale to inmates in each of their educational departments. The head of each department administered the measures to inmates in groups of twenty or less. All subjects volunteered to participate in this study, and represented a higher functioning group of inmates. Demographic information was requested for each participant which included sex, race, type of crime for which they were convicted, income, education, marital status, and age. The Love Factor test consisted of 124 statements which were rated on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The 50 item inventory of the Bennett-Coopersmith Scale was rated on a two point scale of LIKE ME or UNLIKE ME.

The rating scale for the level of violent crime was developed from the California crime index provided by the Division of Law Enforcement, Office of the Attorney General, Sacramento, California. Crimes were chosen and ranked by the authors according to their perceived level of violence. They are listed in Table 1 in the order of perceived violence.

Subjects

Of the total 862 prison inmates who responded to this study, 563 valid profiles were included in the analyses of the data (Males $N=316$, Females $N=226$). Those with a Love Factor Faking Good score of 90 percent and above were deleted as judged to be presenting an overly positive image and not honestly responding to the items. The prisons participating in the study were: Folsom ($N=41$), California Correctional Institute ($N=19$), Correctional Training Facility at Soledad ($N=150$), California Rehabilitation Center ($N=90$), San Quentin ($N=48$), and California Institution for Women ($N=215$). The frequency distribution for, type of crime, education, income, age, and marital status are listed in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and respectively.

Inset Tables 1-5 about here

Results & Discussion

Bennett-Coopersmith scale. A one-way analysis of variance was performed to compare the prison group means along the self-esteem variable. The inmates at the Correctional Training Facility at Soledad scored significantly lower on self-esteem than all other prison respondents. It is difficult to explain these differences since there were no typical unusual demographic characteristics for the CTF group. These results are presented in Table 6.

Insert Table 6 about here

Racial differences. Using an Analysis of Variance to study race, significant differences were found. Caucasian inmates scored significantly higher on the self-esteem measure than either Blacks or Hispanics. This difference in self-esteem by race does not appear to reflect a differing cultural milieu in the prison system. The state facilities work very hard to avoid any racist tendencies. These findings appear to reflect long standing cultural biases spanning decades (McDonald, 1970; Parson, 1951; Watson, 1973; Argyle, 1967; Asher & Allen, 1969). The results are presented in Table 7.

Insert Table 7 about here

Demographic features and self-esteem. An Analysis of Variance was performed to study the relationship of self-esteem ratings to various demographic characteristics. No significant differences were found between groups on the self-esteem measure on the basis of violent crime, income, age, socioeconomic level, or marital status. It is interesting to note that the mean score of the Bennett Scale obtained in this study was lower than that reported by Bennett (1971 and 1974). In discussing these results with Bennett, he suggested that the differences in mean scores may be the result of the time of duration in prison. He suggested that inmates adjusted to prison life, following the initial six months, by creating an inflated sense of self-worth. This study did not assess the duration of incarceration and perhaps this variable might account for the difference.

Demographic differences on The Love Factor scales. No significant differences were found along the various Love Factor scales with regards to level of violent crime, income, education, race, marital status, or age through the use of an Analysis of Variance.

The small number of cases in the various categories for level of violent crime may account for the lack of significant differences.

Correlation of violent crime with Love Factor scales and self-esteem. Since the level of violent crime variable did not differ among the various Love Factor scales or the Bennett Self-Esteem measure through a comparison of means, a Spearman Rank Order Correlation was performed for the Level of Violent Crime and both The Love Factor Scales and the Bennett Self-Esteem scale. Significant positive correlations were found with four of The Love Factor scales: Friendship ($r=.10$, $p<.02$), Masculine/Feminine ($r=.10$, $p<.03$), Sensitivity ($r=.11$, $p<.02$), and Trust ($r=.09$, $p<.04$), and the Bennett Self-Esteem scale ($r=.23$, $p<.00001$). It is important to note that the Love Factor correlation coefficients are rather low and the statistically significant levels may be due to the large sample size. Violence and self-esteem do have a slightly higher significance of correlation. It is most interesting to see that the scales that related to feelings, sensitivity, and personal involvement with others were the Love Factor scales to obtain some level of significance. One could speculate that when an individual with a lower degree of psychological adjustment and self-esteem has his/her feelings hurt and his/her sense of trust betrayed, he/she are more prone to violent action.

Correlation between The Love Factor and The Bennett Self-Esteem Scale. Significant positive correlations were found between self-esteem and the following seven scales of The Love Factor: Friendship ($r=.24$, $p<.001$), Intimacy ($r=.22$, $p<.001$), Masculine/Feminine ($r=.25$, $p<.001$), Psychological Adjustment ($r=.15$, $p<.01$), Self-Respect ($r=.21$, $p<.001$), Sensitivity ($r=.18$, $p<.001$), Trust ($r=.18$, $p<.001$), and Love Capacity ($r=.22$, $p<.001$). These findings are actually quite consistent with the conceptual defini-

tions of each scale (Please refer to The General Introduction to The Love Factor by Ronald L. Mann, Ph.D., 1990). The Love Factor scales which did not achieve significant correlations were Compassion, Primitive-Self, Romantic Love, and Spirituality. It has been argued that a difficult life with some degree of suffering may bring may bear the fruit of greater compassion. Such a life may not enhance sense of mastery and one's self-esteem. A stronger connection to the more primitive aspects of the self may bring greater self-awareness, but may not necessarily enhance one's feeling about the self if the deeper material has not been fully accepted and integrated. A high score on Romantic Love which suggests that an individual identifies with the collective myth of romance and passion as the pathway to "true love" does not really relate to a positive sense of self. And finally, it is possible that those who have turned to Spirituality may have done so because the normal, worldly, materialistic striving have left them unfulfilled and lacking, which might account for a lower sense of self-worth.

Sex differences. When comparing the prison inmates according to sex, a t-test revealed significant differences on four Love Factor scales: Friendship ($t=-3.44$, $p<.001$), Primitive Self ($t=2.20$, $p<.05$), Psychological Adjustment ($t=2.93$, $p<.001$), and Spirituality ($t=-3.50$, $p<.001$). Male inmates scored significantly higher on the Primitive Self scale, Self-Respect scale, and the Psychological Adjustment scale than did female inmates. Female inmates scored higher on the Friendship and Spirituality scales than the male prisoners. These two dimensions appear to be more highly valued by females. Females also scored significantly higher on the Bennett Self-Esteem scale ($t=-3.13$, $p<.002$).

Conclusions

The Bennett-Coopersmith Scale and The Love Factor correlated positively on many scales supporting the notion that one's self-esteem and ability to love are related.

The hypothesis that those who had committed a more severe level of violent crime would perform less well on both The Love Factor scales and the Bennett self-esteem measure received mild support. The importance of these findings appears to be in perceiving the relationship between self-esteem and one's ability to love and the possible relationship between violence, love and self-esteem. This study provides data to support the rationale that programs aimed at improving self-esteem may be focusing in the right direction as a means to prevent future behavior and adjustment problems. Likewise, programs that focus upon enhancing one's ability to love and engage in intimate personal relationships may be focusing upon important areas that can aid in preventing the onset of violent and anti-social behavior.

It is important to note that the sample from each prison facility was limited to those participating in their respective educational departments. This sample was representative of a higher functioning group within the prison population and does not represent a random sample. A larger sample from the general prison population probably would have reflected different and perhaps more striking results.

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Table 1
Rank Order of Crimes and
Frequency Distribution of Crimes Committed

Willful Homicide	56
Forcible Rape	7
Kidnapping	15
Aggravated Assault	29
Robbery with Dangerous Weapon	28
Robbery without Dangerous Weapon	17
Manslaughter with Vehicle	4
Manslaughter without Vehicle	15
Lewd and Lascivious Acts	4
Dangerous Drug Violation	93
Burglary	45
Motor Vehicle Theft	4
Theft	20
Other	105

Note. N=442.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Education
(N=563)

Elementary School	176
High School	278
Two year College Degree	39
Four Year College Degree	16
Masters Degree	4
Ph.D. or M.D.	10
Missing	40

Table 3

Frequency Distribution of Income
(N=563)

Up to 10,000	256
11,000 to 19,999	56
20,000 to 29,999	33
30,000 to 39,999	19
40,000 to 49,999	12
50,000 to 59,999	7
60,000 and Above	42
Missing Cases	138

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Age
(N=563)

14-19	7
20-29	269
30-39	198
40-49	45
50-59	8
60-69	1
70-79	3
Missing Cases	30

Table 5

Frequency Distribution of Marital Status
(N=569)

Married	124
Single (Never Married)	259
Loving with Lover	61
Divorced	90
Missing Cases	29

Table 6
Comparison of Bennett Self-Esteem Scores by Prison Group

<u>Prison Groups</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Folsom Prison	27.12 _a	5.64
California Correctional Institute	25.95 _a	8.90
Correctional Trainging Facility at Soledad	16.92 _a	12.28
California Rehabilitation Center	22.91 _a	10.42
San Quentin Prison	25.56 _a	7.33
California Institute for Women	24.21 _a	8.53
<u>F</u>	14.46*	

Note. Prison Groups sharing a subscript do not differ by the Scheffe test.
N=563. *p<.00001

Table 7
Analysis of Variance of Bennett Self-Esteem Scale by Race

<u>Race</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Asian (N=10)	17.60	10.89
Black (N=176)	21.37	11.02
Caucasian (N=158)	25.38	8.14
Hispanic (N=148)	20.83	10.80
Native American (N=18)	25.00	3.99
<u>F</u>	4.58*	

Prison Groups sharing a subscript do not differ by the Scheffe test.

Note. * $p < .0001$

Author Notes

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