

# Styles of love in relationships of young adults



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Relationships are a very base of human existence. A lot of relationships last and a lot of them fail. In the past there have been a lot of researches that talk about the styles of love influencing the compatibility of a relationship. It is said that a relationship is comparatively more compatible if they have similar love styles. This study examines whether the duration of a relationship influences the styles of love of the partners. The longer the duration, the more similar is their style of love.

The variables studied here are the styles of love and the duration of the relationship. The duration of the relationship is the independent variable and the styles of love are the dependent variable. “ The duration of a relationship indicates the success of a relationship and it depends on the values of the partners involved”. Where as an interpersonal relationship is an association between two or more people that may range from fleeting to enduring. This association may be based on love and liking, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment. Interpersonal relationships take place in a great variety of contexts, such as family, friends, marriage, associates, work, clubs, neighborhoods, and churches. They may be regulated by law, custom, or mutual agreement, and are the basis of social groups and society as a whole. A relationship is normally viewed as a connection between two individuals, such as a romantic or intimate relationship, or a parent-child relationship. Definitions of a relationships vary, this research deals with romantic and intimate relationships.

The term “ romantic relationships,” as used, is difficult to define in its entirety. However, evidence of a romantic relationship may include but not be limited to the following behaviors: a pattern of exclusivity between the

couple; time spent together as a couple after work hours; physical touching that implies a romantic intention or desire; the sharing of personal information appropriate for a romantic relationship but beyond the boundaries of a professional workplace relationship; actual physical intimacy; written communications or other actions that imply or directly indicate romantic interest.

Intimate relationships were classified into two groups as long term relationships and short term relationships.

The styles of love are models of how people love, originally developed by John Lee (1973, 1988). He identified six basic love theories-also known as “colors” of love-that people use in their interpersonal relationships:

Eros – a passionate physical and emotional love based on aesthetic enjoyment; stereotype of romantic love

Ludus – a love that is played as a game or sport; conquest

Storge – an affectionate love that slowly develops from friendship, based on similarity

Pragma – love that is driven by the head, not the heart; undemonstrative

Mania – highly volatile love; obsession; fueled by low self-esteem

Agape – selfless altruistic love; spiritual; motherly love.

All couples share some of each of these forms of love. However, some individuals and thus, couples, focus more on certain types of love

styles. Researchers discovered that men tend to view love more in terms of the romantic, intense eros love, or the game-playing love of Ludus. Women often have a more logical outlook in the practical pragma love.

Texas Tech psychology professors Clyde Hendrick, PhD, and Susan Hendrick, PhD make the study of love and sexuality their life's work. They emphasize that a blend of love and sexual styles exist within each individual, and these love styles can change during a relationship. Their research also shows that lovers with similar love styles tend to stay together more often than those with differing love styles.

Research has shown that love comes in several different forms or styles (Lee and Regan). For the most part, people experience love as a blend of two or three of the styles listed below. Essentially, people have different notions of what it means to “ be in love.”

Styles of Love:

Eros – some people experience love with a lot of passion, intimacy and intensity. Love based on Eros has a strong sexual and emotional component. People who experience love this way want to be emotionally and physically close to their romantic partners and they tend to idealize love. Such love is marked by passion as well as compassion (kindness and consideration). Eros is best viewed as romantic, passionate love – the type of love that creates excitement at the beginning of a new relationship.

Ludus – some people experience love as a game to be played with other people's emotions. The goal or desire is to gain control over a partner

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through manipulation. People who experience love as Ludus like to have multiple love interests where they are in complete control. Lying, cheating and deception are common for people who experience love as Ludus – it's all part of the game. For people who experience love as Ludus, it is satisfying to outwit a partner and exploit his or her weak spots ( husband who is likely to cheat, lovefraud).

Storge – some people experience love as a gradual and slow process. When love is based on Storge, getting to know someone comes before having intense feelings for that person. Love based on Storge takes time, it requires genuine liking and understanding of a partner, and it develops slowly over time. Love based on Storge is often compared to the love that one has for a friend. In fact, people who experience love as Storge often fall in love with their friends.

Agape – some people experience love as caregiving. Love is the overwhelming desire to want to take care of a partner – a parental or nurturing type of love. Love based on Agape is attentive, caring, compassionate and kind – a more altruistic or selfless type of love.

Mania – some people experience love as being out of control. Love is an overwhelming experience; it turns one's life upside down and it results in a complete loss of one's identity. Love based on Mania is crazy, impulsive and needy. People who experience love as Mania fall in love quickly, but their love tends to consume them. Love experienced as Mania also tends to burnout before it gets the chance to mature. Such love is often marked by extreme delusions, feelings of being out of control, rash decisions, and

vulnerability. People who experience love as Mania are easily taken advantage of by people who experience love as Ludus.

Pragma – some people take a practical approach to love. Love is not crazy, intense, or out of control. Love is based on common sense and reason. People who experience love as Pragma tend to pick a suitable mate the way most other people make serious life decisions: picking a partner is based on careful consideration and reason. Practical concerns underlie this type of love.

The love styles listed above have also been linked to one's style of attachment (Levy and Davis).

Eros and Agape are linked to Secure Attachment

Mania is linked to Anxious Attachment

Ludus is linked to Dismissing Attachment

Different types of relationships (example, long-term marriage, short-term romance, healthy friendship, etc) involve different styles of love. Being aware of these styles of love can also help to build a healthy romantic relationship

Clyde Hendrick and Susan Hendrick of Texas Tech University expanded on this theory in the mid-1980s with their extensive research on what they called “love styles”. They have found that men tend to be more ludic, whereas women tend to be storgic and pragmatic. Mania is often the first love style teenagers display. Relationships based on similar love styles were

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found to last longer. People often look for people with the same love style as themselves for a relationship.

There have been researches in the past that say that in a relationship, the member influence one another. “ People in a relationship tend to influence each other, share their thoughts and feelings, and engage in activities together. Because of this interdependence, most things that change or impact one member of the relationship will have some level of impact on the other member” (Berscheid, E., & Peplau, L. A. (1983). *The emerging science of relationships*. In H. H. Kelley, et al. (Eds.), *Close relationships*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company).

This study is conducted to see if the duration of a relationship has a connection with the style of love of the two partners involved. After staying in a relationship for a period of time, the partners start influencing each others love styles, the longer the relationship, the more the influence.

The researcher wants to see if there is an influence of the love styles on the in relationships. Past Researches have demonstrated that dating partners are homogenous in their ways of loving; they are attracted to persons similar to themselves in love styles (Hahn & Blass, 1997). Not the same as being “ in” love, the preferred love style of an individual is an attitudinal construct that describes how one perceives love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988). Lee (1973) studied the existing love definitions and through extensive interviews, developed a theory of love that he called the six colors of love-love styles (Levy & Davis, 1988). This theory of love styles was later refined and an

instrument called Love Attitude Scale was developed to assess the strength of each style (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986).

A recent study by Bryant and Conger (2002) suggests an intergenerational model of how individuals develop their romantic relationships. They argue that characteristics within the family of origin likely impact children's skills and success in their early romantic relationships (Bryant and Conger, 2002). Therefore, social learning theory seems a viable theoretical framework for understanding the relationships and differences between college-aged student's love styles and their own parents love styles. Finally, preference for love style may be learned via participants' observations of similar love styles among their family networks.

Love styles that occur within the context of college students' family systems may function to inhibit or perhaps, disinherit similar love styles by these individuals in the context of their dating relationships. Various studies show aspects of sexual attitudes, love styles, and attraction to be related to gender. Hendrick and Hendrick (1995) found men to be more sexually permissive than women. Further, men reported endorsing a ludus love style more than did women, and women endorsed storge more than did men. According to Longmore (1998), "The male peer group helps to elaborate a system of norms that devalue love and long-term commitment but encourage a kind of game mentality—males attempt to 'get over' not only on the females involved but in a social competition with other males" (Michael et al. 1994) found that men ages 18 to 24 were more likely to fall into the recreational group than were those in the other age groups.



The purpose of this study is to see the influence of the duration in a relationship on the various love styles in couples who share a romantic, intimate relationship. The expectations of this study is to prove that there is a significant change in the love styles in the samples that are to be studied in two groups. This study compares different couples who are involved in a relationship based on their relationship duration.

This study is conducted to see if the duration of an intimate relationship has an influence on the styles of love in a relationship during young adulthood.

## HYPOTHESIS

The duration of an intimate relationship influences the style of love during young adulthood.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Young adults between the age of 18 - 24 years , who have been in a romantic/close relationship for a period of/over 1 - 5 years were surveyed via paper to pencil questionnaires.

### Materials

The love attitude scale(LAS) was used in both the groups. Love styles are models of how people love, originally developed by John Lee (1973, 1988).

### Design

A sample of two groups consisting of Thirty couples ( 30 males and 30 females) each was taken. The study is conducted in two groups, Group A has 30 couples who have been in a relationship for a short duration that is 1 – 2. 5 years. Group B has 30 couples who have been in a close relationship for 3 years and over. Their love styles are calculated and compared later.

### Procedure

Samples were taken from different educational institutions and work institutes. The samples are couples who have been in a relationship for over 1 year. The couples were given the love attitude scale individually and were asked to answer all the questions according to their current relationship situation. They were also told that there are no right or wrong questions in the questionnaire and the answers should be chosen as per one's current feelings and mindset. All the 30 couples who have been in a relationship for over 1 – 2. 5 years were classified into Group A. The 30 couples who have been in a relationship for a longer duration that is over 3 years were classified into group B. Then their outcomes were calculated and tabulated. The results were then interpreted.

### RESULTS

The following tables show the two groups of 60 couples in total. Group A consisted of couples who have been in a relationship for a duration of a year to two and a half years. Group B consists of couples who have been in a relationship for a comparatively longer duration, about three years and above.

Table 1 showing the Eros love style in Group A and Group B

MEAN

S. D

T-RATIO

P. VALUE

GROUP A

BOYS

13.26

1.98

0.66

0.51

GIRLS

13.56

1.50

GROUP B

BOYS

14.23

0. 97

0. 94

0. 34

GIRLS

14. 26

1. 22

Table 2 showing the Ludus love style in Group A and Group B

MEAN

S. D

T-RATIO

P. VALUE

GROUP A

BOYS

3. 43

1. 01

0. 54

0. 58

GIRLS

3. 3

0. 88

GROUP B

BOYS

3. 23

0. 90

0. 12

0. 89

GIRLS

3. 2

1. 10

Table 3 showing the Storge love style in Group A and Group B

MEAN

S. D

T-RATIO

P. VALUE

GROUP A

BOYS

10. 66

3. 06

0. 69

0. 49

GIRLS

10. 03

3. 96

GROUP B

BOYS

12. 86

1. 80

1. 44

0. 15

GIRLS

13. 46

1. 72

Table 4 showing the Pragma love style in Group A and Group B

MEAN

S. D

T-RATIO

P. VALUE

GROUP A

BOYS

12. 53

1. 76

1. 64

0. 10

GIRLS

11. 66

2. 29

GROUP B

BOYS

12. 76

1. 68

0. 15

0. 88

GIRLS

12. 7

1. 74

Table 5 showing the Mania love style in Group A and Group B

MEAN

S. D

T-RATIO

P. VALUE

GROUP A

BOYS

7. 46

2. 43

1. 34



0.18

GIRLS

6.6

2.57

GROUP B

BOYS

3.53

1.50

0.36

0.71

GIRLS

3.7

2.0

Table 6 showing the Agape love style in Group A and Group B

MEAN

S. D

T-RATIO

P. VALUE

GROUP A

BOYS

10.56

1.99

2.02

0.04

GIRLS

11.93

3.11

GROUP B

BOYS

10.5

2.15

1.46

0.14

GIRLS

11. 36

2. 41

In table 1, we can observe group A results of boys ( $M= 13. 26$ ,  $SD= 1. 98$ ) and girls ( $M= 13. 56$ ,  $SD= 1. 50$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 36. In group B the results of boys ( $M= 14. 23$ ,  $SD= 0. 97$ ) and girls ( $M= 14. 26$ ,  $SD= 1. 22$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 03.

In table 2, we can see the scores of boys ( $M= 3. 43$ ,  $SD= 1. 01$ ) and girls ( $M= 3. 3$ ,  $SD= 0. 88$ ) in group A showing a mean difference of 0. 13. The scores in group B of the boys ( $M= 3. 23$ ,  $SD= 0. 90$ ) and girls ( $M= 3. 2$ ,  $SD= 1. 10$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 20.

In table 3, we can observe group A results of boys ( $M= 10. 66$ ,  $SD= 3. 06$ ) and girls ( $M= 10. 03$ ,  $SD= 3. 96$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 63. In group B the results of boys ( $M= 12. 86$ ,  $SD= 1. 80$ ) and girls ( $M= 13. 46$ ,  $SD= 1. 72$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 60.

In table 4, we can observe group A results of boys ( $M= 12. 53$ ,  $SD= 1. 76$ ) and girls ( $M= 11. 66$ ,  $SD= 2. 29$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 87. In group B the results of boys ( $M= 12. 76$ ,  $SD= 1. 68$ ) and girls ( $M= 12. 7$ ,  $SD= 1. 74$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 06.

In table 5, we can observe group A results of boys ( $M= 7. 46$ ,  $SD= 2. 43$ ) and girls ( $M= 6. 6$ ,  $SD= 2. 57$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 86. In group B the results of boys ( $M= 3. 53$ ,  $SD= 1. 50$ ) and girls ( $M= 3. 7$ ,  $SD= 2. 0$ ) showing a mean difference of 0. 17.

In table 6, we can observe group A results of boys ( $M= 10.56$ ,  $SD= 1.99$ ) and girls ( $M= 11.93$ ,  $SD= 3.11$ ) showing a mean difference of 1.37. In group B the results of boys ( $M= 10.5$ ,  $SD= 2.15$ ) and girls ( $M= 11.36$ ,  $SD= 2.41$ ) showing a mean difference of 0.86.

## DISCUSSION

As we can see in Table 1, the mean of group A is 13.26 for girls and 13.56 for boys. It shows a mean difference of 0.30. The boys and girls of group A have similar means in the Eros love style. With a difference of only 0.30, it shows that couples have an Eros love style. Whereas in group B the mean of the girls is 14.23 and boys having the mean of 14.26. It has a difference of 0.03. The Eros love style is more dominant in Group B with a mean difference of only 0.03, which has the relationships for a longer duration when compared to group A. This shows that the relationships that have been for a longer duration, has less difference in the Eros love style when compared to the relationships which have been for a shorter duration. We can also see the standard deviation of the boys being 1.98 and the girls being 1.50 shows that the girls have a less deviation when compared to the boys by 0.48. Whereas in group B, the standard deviation of boys is 0.97 and the girls being 1.22, having a difference of 0.25, shows that the difference is less in group B when compared to group A. In group B, the boys have a low deviation when compared to the girls unlike group A. We can also say that Eros love style is one of the most common love style, with an average of 0.30 to 0.03, we can also say that the duration affects this love style to a small extent.

In table 2, the Ludus love style is showed in the two groups. The mean of boys in group A is 3.43, indicating a low score. Similarly the girls in group A have scored a low score of 3.3, showing a difference of 0.13. The standard deviation of the boys in this group is 1.01, indicating less deviation, whereas for girls, it is 0.88. With a difference of 0.13, the girls have less deviation when compared to the boys. When we look at group B, we see that the mean of boys is 3.23 and the mean of girls is 3.2, with a very less difference of 0.03, we can see that the difference is very less when compared to group A which is 0.13. The standard deviation of boys is 0.90 and the girls having the deviation of 1.10, shows a difference of 0.20 indicating less deviation from the boys. We can also note that this love style is the least common love style as the mean holds a low value of 3.2 to 3.43 in both the groups. We can also say that the Ludus style of love is significantly less affected by the duration of a relationship.

Table 3 showing the Storge love style indicating the results of the love style that is friendship based love. In group A the boys scoring a mean of 10.66 and the girls scoring a mean of 10.03, illustrating a mean difference of 0.63, shows that there is very little difference in the mean of the boys and the girls in group A. However, the standard deviation is 3.06 in case of the boys and 3.96 for the girls. It shows a larger deviation when compared to the other group and the other styles of love. In group B, the boys having a mean of 12.86 and the girls having a mean of 13.46, showing a mean difference of 0.60 indicates a low difference in this love style. However, the standard deviation is 1.80 for boys and 1.72 for girls. This shows that the deviation in group B is very less when compared to group A. Group B deviates less when

compared to group A. With a mean difference from 0.60 to 0.63, we can observe that the duration of a relationship affects this love style to a very small extent.

Table 4 showing the result of the Pragma love style for the two groups.

Pragma love style describes logical love. In group A, the mean for boys is 12.53 and the mean for girls is 11.66, showing a difference of 0.86, indicating a mean difference between the boys and the girls. However the standard deviation of 1.76 in boys and 2.29 in girls, it shows the score of boys is deviating less when compared to the score of girls. In group B the mean of boys is 12.76 and the mean of girls being 12.70 illustrating a mean difference of 0.06, shows that this love style is significantly influenced by the duration of the relationship. The standard deviation being 1.68 in boys and 1.74 in girls, shows that the score of boys deviates less in this love style when compared to the girls. With a mean difference of 0.86 to 0.06, we can say that the duration has influenced the relationships for the Pragma love style.

Table 5 shows the Mania love style. Mania refers to as possessive love. In group A the mean score of boys is 7.46 and the score of girls is 6.6 resulting in a mean difference of 0.86, it shows a little difference in the mean. The standard deviation is 2.43 for boys and 2.29 for girls showing a very less deviation difference between the boys and the girls of group A. Whereas in group B, the mean score for boys is 3.53 and 3.7 for girls. This indicates a very low mean when compared to group A. The mean difference in group B is 0.17, which is very low when compared to group A. The standard deviation is 1.50 for boys and 2.00 for girls. The standard deviation for boys is less

when compared to the girls. The result of this love style shows that the duration of a relationship influences this love style to a large extent. The duration of the relationship decreases the love style. It has decreased from an average of 7.46 – 6.6 to 3.53 – 3.7. The results show a significant influence in the love style by the duration of the relationship.

Table 6 shows the Agape love style. Agape love style is also described as selfless love. The boys have a mean score of 10.56 and the girls having a mean score 11.93. The mean difference between the boys and the girls was noted as 1.37. The standard deviation between the boys and the girls is 1.99 and 3.11 respectively. The boys have a less deviation when compared to the girls. In group B the boys have a mean of 10.5 and the girls have a mean of 11.36. the mean difference is 0.86. this shows that the mean difference is less in group B when compared to group B. the standard deviation in group B is 2.15 for boys and 2.41 for girls. This indicates that the girls are deviating more when compared to the boys. The results of this love style however show that the Agape love style is influenced by the duration of a relationship to an extent.

Thus this research had showed that the love styles namely Eros, Pragma and Storge are influenced by the love styles to a small extent. However, the love styles like Mania and Agape have been influenced by the duration of the relationship, and the love style Ludus has been affected to a very small extent by the duration of the relationship. The most common love style in both the groups was the Eros love style. Eros is considered to be the common romantic love. It includes a relationship with a lot of passion, intimacy and intensity. Love based on Eros normally has a strong sexual and

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emotional component. People who experience love this way want to be emotionally and physically close to their romantic partners and they tend to idealize love. Such love is marked by passion as well as compassion (kindness and consideration) and it is seen that most of the couples have Eros as their dominant love style. The least common love style in both the groups was the Ludus love style. In this love style, the main goal or desire is to gain control over a partner through manipulation. People who experience love as Ludus like to have multiple love interests where they are in complete control. Lying, cheating and deception are common for people who experience love as Ludus – it's all part of the game. We have seen that the people in serious relationships have a very low score in the Ludus love style. This style is observed to be the least dominant style. The Pragma love style had average scores in both the groups showing that logical love is influenced to a small extent among all those in relationships. In Pragma, love is not crazy, intense, or out of control. Love is based on common sense and reason. People who experience love as Pragma tend to pick a suitable mate the way most other people make serious life decisions: picking a partner is based on careful consideration and reason. Practical concerns underlie this type of love. We have observed that the Pragma love style is influenced to a very small extent by the duration of the relationship. However the love style Mania showed high scores in group A but low scores in group B showing that it has significantly decreased in group B. Here we can see that the love style is influenced by the duration of the relationship. In this love style, people experience love as being out of control. Love is an overwhelming experience; it turns one's life upside down and it results in a complete loss of one's identity. Love based on Mania is crazy, impulsive and needy. People who

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experience love as Mania fall in love quickly, but their love tends to consume them. Love experienced as Mania also tends to burnout before it gets the chance to mature. Such love is often marked by extreme delusions, feelings of being out of control, rash decisions, and vulnerability. But we can observe that the relationships in group B have a very low score of this love style when compared to group A. We can also say that this love style has been significantly influenced by the duration of the relationship. Thus we can say that the hypothesis has been proved to a certain extent in the case of Eros, Storge and Agape showing the duration of a relationship influencing the styles of love to a certain extent only. In the case of love styles like Ludus and Pragma, we can observe that the love style has been influenced by the duration to a very small extent. Whereas, in case of mania, we can say that this love style has been influenced to a large extent by the duration of the relationship.