

## Relationship Between Love, Affect and Wellbeing

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### ABSTRACT

Love is patient, love is kind. It is the supreme positive emotion and as such it obeys the laws of positive emotions. Love is a brief momentary connection which can happen between any two people – even strangers. Love protects, preserves and hopes for the positive aspect of life. Also love and positive affect is related to wellbeing. If the person is happy then he is likely to be psychologically and emotionally healthy. The current study aimed at understanding the relationship between love, affect and wellbeing among young females aged 20-25 years and investigating the correlation between love, affect and wellbeing. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between love, positive affect, negative affect and wellbeing. The study reported a significant relationship between love and positive affect with the significant correlation of 0.29 at 0.05 levels ( $p < 0.01$ ). This means that people in love experience positive emotions and healthy wellbeing. The correlation between love and negative affect came out to be insignificant. The correlation turned out to be -0.13. This means that people in love do not experience negative emotions.

**Keywords:** *Love, Romantic Relationships, Positive Affect, Negative Affect, Wellbeing*

Love is an emotion of a strong affection and personal attachment. Love is also said to be a virtue representing all of human kindness, compassion, and affection —"the unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another. Love may describe compassionate and affectionate actions towards other humans, oneself, or animal.

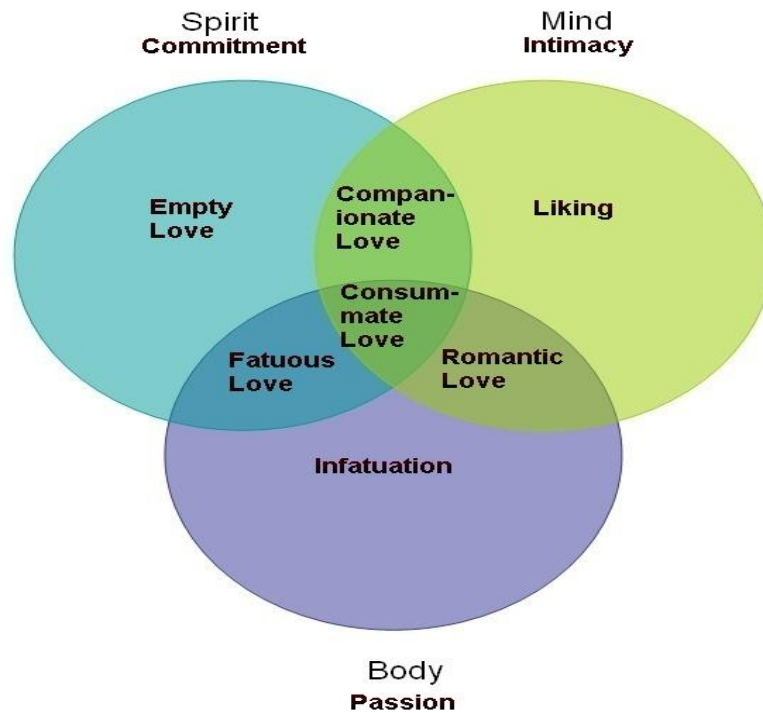
Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Love and the Intrapyschic Taxonomy characterized in terms of three elements, which are passion, intimacy and commitment. These may be visualized, according to Sternberg, as three sides of a triangle. Passion is positioned at the base, while intimacy is to the right and commitment is to the left. Sternberg then states that the three aspects can combine to characterize seven conceptualizations of love relationships. These map precisely onto the Intrapyschic taxonomy, where body is on the bottom, mind is on the right, and spirit is on the left. These two sets of concepts were independently mapped yet converge remarkably well.

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Received: June 18, 2021; Revision Received: September 10, 2021; Accepted: September 22, 2021

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### Using set theory, Sternberg posits eight types of love.

1. Where neither passion, intimacy nor commitment is present, there is non-liking.
2. Where only passion is present, there is infatuation.
3. Where only intimacy is present, there is liking.
4. Where only commitment is present, there is empty love.
5. Where both passion and intimacy are present, there is romantic love.
6. Where both passion and commitment are present, there is fatuous love.
7. Where both intimacy and commitment are present, there is companionate love.
8. Where passion, intimacy, and commitment are present, there is consummate love.

Sternberg proposes that love can be conceptualized as consisting of three primary components: passion, intimacy, and commitment. These can be conceptualized as a `love triangle` with the three components forming the vertices.

Sternberg notes that the relative emphasis of each component changes over time as an adult romantic relationship develops.

**Passion**      Passionate arousal tends to occur at the beginning of relationships, peaks relatively quickly and then reduce to a stable level as a result of habituation. Following relationship termination, an individual's capacity for passion appears to go negative for a period of time, as the individual overcomes feelings of loss.

**Intimacy**      Intimacy tends to peak slower than passion and then gradually reduces to a relatively low level of manifest intimacy as interpersonal bonding increases. Changes in circumstances, however, tend to activate latent intimacy, which can cause the manifest level of intimacy to return or exceed its earlier peak.

**Commitment**      In successful relationships, the level of commitment rises relatively slowly at first, speeds up, and then gradually level off. Where relationships fail, the

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level of commitment usually decreases gradually and descends back towards the baseline.

Sternberg goes on to compare his theory with existing research and to consider a how partners love triangles could be compared, that an individual may have both ideal and real triangles, self and other triangles and interactions between all these.

This model of love is primarily of interest here as it was used by Levy and Davis (1988) when investigating adult romantic attachments.

Love is known to bring about many positive emotions. Laughter is one of those emotions. Laughter is known to be healing to the soul and good for your mental well-being. As they say, "*laughter is the best medicine.*"

Love is basically a matter of caring about someone else's well-being as much or more than you care about your own. If they feel pain or sadness, you suffer with them. If they find happiness, you feel happy for them. Strong love even involves sacrificing your own happiness -- and even sometimes your own life -- for the other person.

Love is patient, love is kind. It has no envy, nor it boasts itself and it is never proud. It rejoices over the evil and is the truth seeker. Love protects; preserves and hopes for the positive aspect of life.

### ***Affect Theory***

The word *affect*, specifically refers to the "biological portion of emotion," that is, to "hard-wired, preprogrammed, genetically transmitted mechanisms that exist in each of us" which, when triggered, precipitates a "known pattern of biological events," although it is also acknowledged that, in adults, the affective experience is a result of both the innate mechanism and a "complex matrix of nested and interacting ideo-affective formations."

These are the nine affects, listed with a low/high intensity label for each affect and accompanied by its biological expression.

#### **Positive:**

- Enjoyment/Joy - smiling, lips wide and out
- Interest/Excitement - eyebrows down, eyes tracking, eyes looking, closer listening

#### **Neutral:**

- Surprise/Startle - eyebrows up, eyes blinking

#### **Negative:**

- Anger/Rage - frowning, a clenched jaw, a red face
- Disgust - the lower lip raised and protruded, head forward and down.
- Dis-smell (reaction to bad smell) - upper lip raised, head pulled back.
- Distress/Anguish - crying, rhythmic sobbing, arched eyebrows, mouth lowered.
- Fear/Terror - a frozen stare, a pale face, coldness, sweat, erect hair.
- Shame/Humiliation - eyes lowered, the head down and averted, blushing.

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The conceptualization of affect initially defined as “an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation as well as the passage of forces or intensities” has traveled through scholar’s research as if it were on a roller coaster (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Emotion builds the concrete identities that individuals observe and experience.

Positive and Negative Affect are two independent dimensions. Positive Affect refers to the extent to which an individual experiences positive emotional states such as joy, interest, confidence and alertness. Negative Affect refers to the extent to which an individual experiences negative emotional states such as fear, sadness, anger, guilt, contempt and disgust (Snyder & Lopez, 2002)

Watson and Tellegen (1985) have summarized the relevant evidence and presented a basic, consensual two-factor model. whereas some investigators work with the unrotated dimensions (typically labeled pleasantness-unpleasantness and arousal), the varimax-rotated factors—usually called positive affect and negative affect—have been used more extensively in the self-report mood literature; they are the focus of this article. Although the terms positive affect and negative affect might suggest that these two mood factors are opposites (that is, strongly negatively correlated), they have in fact emerged as highly distinctive dimensions that can be meaningfully represented as orthogonal dimensions in factor analytic studies of affect.

Briefly, positive affect (pa) reflects the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active, and alert. High PA is a state of high energy, full concentration, and pleasurable engagement, whereas low PA is characterized by sadness and lethargy. in contrast, negative affect (NA) is a general dimension of subjective distress and un-pleasurable engagement that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states, including anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness, with low NA being a state of calmness and serenity. These two factors represent affective state dimensions, but Tellegen (1985; see also Watson & Clark, 1984) has demonstrated that they are related to corresponding affective trait dimensions of positive and negative emotionality (individual differences in positive and negative emotional reactivity). Trait PA and NA roughly correspond to the dominant personality factors of extraversion and anxiety/neuroticism, respectively (Tellegen, 1985; Watson & Clark, 1984). Drawing on these and other findings, Tellegen has linked trait NA and PA, respectively, to psychobiological and psychodynamic constructs of sensitivity to signals of reward and punishment. He has also suggested that low PA and high NA (both state and trait) are major distinguishing features of depression and anxiety, respectively (Tellegen, 1985 ;).

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

The literature on psychological well-being has progressed rapidly since the emergence of the field over five decades ago. As recent surveys show psychologists and other social scientists have taken huge steps in their understanding of the factors influencing psychological/subjective well-being.

Psychological well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives. According to Diener (1997), these evaluations may be in the form of cognitions or in the form of affect. The cognitive part is an information-based appraisal of one’s life that is when a person gives conscious evaluative judgments about one’s satisfaction with life. The affective part is a hedonic evaluation guided by emotions and feelings such as frequency with which people experience pleasant/unpleasant moods in reaction to their lives. The assumption behind this

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is that most people evaluate their life as either good or bad, so they are normally able to offer judgments. Further, people invariably experience moods and emotions, which have a positive effect or a negative effect. Thus, people have a level of subjective well-being even if they do not often consciously think about it, and the psychological system offers virtually a constant evaluation of what is happening to the person.

Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as ‘a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life’ (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002.). The cognitive element refers to what one thinks about his or her life satisfaction in global terms (life as a whole) and in domain terms (in specific areas of life such as work, relationships, etc.) The affective element refers to emotions, moods and feelings. Affect is considered positive when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are pleasant (e.g., joy, elation, affection etc.) Affect is deemed negative, though, when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are unpleasant (e.g., guilt, anger, shame etc.)

A person who has a high level of satisfaction with their life, and who experiences a greater positive affect and little or less negative affect, would be deemed to have a high level of SWB [or in simpler terms, be incredibly happy]. The concept of SWB falls within the ‘hedonic’ perspective that defines well-being or happiness as being fundamentally about maximizing pleasure and avoiding or minimizing pain. This differs from the ‘eudemonic’ perspective which, as Waterman (1993) stated, is where one lives in accordance with one’s diamond, or ‘true self’. This perspective places focus on meaning in life and self-realization, and the extent to which a person fully integrates this into his or her life.

Another theory discussed here is the Orientations to Happiness Model. This theory presumes different ways to be happy (Guignon 1999; Peterson 2006; Russell 1930; Seligman 2006; Peterson et al. 2005). Seligman (2006) defined three roads to happiness, which included positive emotions and pleasure (the pleasant life), engagement (the engaged life), and meaning (the meaningful life). Peterson et al. (2005b) discovered that people choose different paths and that the most satisfied individuals are the ones who choose all three with an emphasis on engagement and meaning.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Sample*

The sample was collected from various parts of Delhi and was conducted on females. The sample size was 60 with the age group ranging from 21-25years. The samples were postgraduates and belonged to middle class family.

### *Instruments*

The following scales and questionnaires were used for the purpose of data collection:

S.no	Tools name	Developed by	Year	items
1	Rubin’s measurement of love and like scale	Rubin, Zick	1970	13
2	PANAS	Watson et al	1988	20
3	Ryffs wellbeing scale	Dr. Carol Ryff	1995	89

### *Procedure*

After conducting the research, the data was calculated. In the first step, Mean and Standard Deviation was calculated followed by the correlation of the variables.

## RESULTS

*Table 1: Showing mean and standard deviation of love, affect and wellbeing*

S.NO	VARIABLES	MEAN	STD.DEV
1.	Love	82.45	24.74
2.	Positive Affect	37.06	4.94
3.	Negative Affect	15.11	2.12
4.	Wellbeing	307.06	15.55

*Table 2: Showing Product Movement Coefficient of correlation between variables.*

S.NO	VARIABLES	CORRELATION	SIGNIFICANCE
1	Love and positive affect	0.29	P<0.05
2	Love and negative affect	-0.13	Insignificant
3	Love and wellbeing	0.58	P< 0.01

*\*p is the probability of the error.*

## DISCUSSION

From table 1 it can be said that the mean and standard deviation on love came out to be 82.45 and 24.74. The mean and standard deviation on positive affect was 37.06 and 4.94. The mean and standard deviation on negative affect was 15.11 and 2.12. The mean and standard deviation on wellbeing was 307.06 and 15.55.

After the analysis the co-relation between love and positive affect came out to be positively significant. The correlation was 0.29. It was significant at 0.05 levels. This means that people in love show more positive feeling in their daily lives. They feel secured and are happy in their relationship. They feel content and satisfy with their partners and have a positive feeling about their lives. The feeling of love leads to an incredibly positive affect. As a result, they unconsciously spread positive energy in their environment by smiling, by showing their kindness and affection to strangers and to people around them. They behave compassionately and affectionately towards other humans, oneself, or animal. Individual in love is often preoccupied with the thoughts of their loved ones. They take interest in their partners and try to be more creative in making them happy and maintain the spark in their relationship. According to Freeman, 1978; Myers, 1992 love is the main cause of positive emotions. 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).

The correlation between love and negative affect was -0.13. Hence this means that people in love do not experience many negative thoughts or feelings. People try to ignore the negative aspects of life and begin to focus upon the bright side of the life. They are less scared and confident for trying out new things. They feel less hostile about their surrounding and feel confident about their ventures. They do not get upset about things and help them get determined towards other aspects of life. According to Traupman (1978) there is no evidence of negative feelings or emotions like sadness, depression in a romantic relationship unless the couples are no more together. However, the degree of correlation is significant. This might be due to small size of sample.

Psychological well-being, broadly defined as happiness, life satisfaction, and self-growth, represents one of the most important aspects of efficient psychological functioning. The correlation between love and wellbeing is 0.58 which is significant at 0.01 levels. This

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means that people who are in love experiences psychological wellbeing. Love and wellbeing are interconnected, if people are in love, they are mentally happy and satisfied and hence it affects their overall and psychological wellbeing.

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### *Acknowledgement*

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### *Conflict of Interest*

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Sachdev N. (2021). Relationship Between Love, Affect and Wellbeing. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(3), 1710-1716. DIP:18.01.162.20210903, DOI:10.25215/0903.162