

TALK

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ROMANTIC LOVE AND CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT: DATA FROM 61,065 INDIVIDUALS FROM 82 COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

Love accompanies humans from early childhood to late adulthood, permeating almost all aspects of human life. Love manifests in various forms and shades, including parental, sibling, friendship, and romantic love. The present project focused on the latter—romantic love, measured with the short version of the Triangular Love Scale (TLS-15). Our goal was to explore the potential influence of cultural and environmental factors operationalized through indexes of gender equality, individualism, and historical pathogen prevalence on experiences of romantic love. We relied on the Triangular Theory of Love, which posits that love comprises three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Drawing from a vast cross-cultural sample of 118,715 participants spanning 175 nations, among whom 61,065 individuals from 82 countries were in romantic relationships and were included in the analyses, our findings offer intriguing insights into the interplay between romantic love and cultural and environmental factors, both on a country- and individual-levels. For instance, we observed a nuanced relationship between individualism and commitment, with individuals from more individualistic countries reporting higher levels of commitment (country-level), yet paradoxically, individuals holding less individualistic viewpoints (individual-level) reported higher commitment. These findings highlight the importance of studying romantic love experiences within cultural and environmental contexts both at the country- and individual-levels. Also, while the foundations of love are commonly believed to be rooted in human physiology, cultural and environmental conditions might, to some extent, influence love's experiences.