



PERGAMON

International Journal of Intercultural Relations
25 (2001) 329–342

International Journal of
INTERCULTURAL
RELATIONS

www.elsevier.com/locate/ijintrel

Intimacy, passion, and commitment in Chinese and US American romantic relationships

Ge Gao*

Department of Communication Studies, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192-0112, USA

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the triangular theory of love in China and the United States. It was predicted that intimacy, passion, and commitment would increase in both cultures as the relationship becomes more serious. It was also predicted that intimacy and passion would be higher in romantic relationships in the US than in China, and that commitment would be higher in China than in the US. Data were collected from 90 Chinese romantic couples in China and 77 American romantic couples in the United States. Multivariate analysis of variance using summation scores revealed that commitment, passion, and intimacy increased as a romantic relationship became more serious. Passion was significantly higher in US American couples than in Chinese couples, but the amount of intimacy and commitment did not vary cross-culturally (using both summation and dispersion scores). © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Love; Chinese and US American romantic relationships; Triangular theory of love

1. Introduction

Love characterizes romantic relationships across social, cultural, and national boundaries despite the fact that its meaning and function may vary from one relationship to another and from one culture to another. One theory of love that is sufficiently general and may be applicable across cultures is Sternberg's (1986, 1988) triangular theory of love. This theory is viewed as "a significant advancement in the scientific study of love" (Tzeng & Gomez, 1992, p. 169).

*Tel.: +1-408-924-5383; fax: +1-408-924-5396.

E-mail address: ggao@email.sjsu.edu (G. Gao).

In the triangular theory of love, love consists of intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment components, and these components vary from one stage of relationship development to another (Sternberg, 1986, 1988). Sternberg's theory is of interest to the present study because it not only provides a developmental approach to the study of love, but it also appears to delineate persons' experiences of love that are applicable across cultures. Some of the theoretical assumptions outlined in the triangular theory of love have been tested in a study in the United States (Acker & Davis, 1992). Thus far, the triangular theory of love has not been tested in a cross-cultural context.

The triangular theory of love predicts changes in the degree of felt love over the course of a relationship development. One specific aim of this study is to test this prediction in different stages of romantic relationship development within both the Chinese and US American samples. Specifically, the relation between stage of romantic relationship (casual, serious, and engaged) and the three components of love (intimacy, passion, and commitment) was examined. Another specific aim of this study involves an investigation of the effect of culture (China and the United States) on the three components of love.

2. Intimacy, passion, and commitment

In his triangular theory of love, Sternberg (1986, 1988) proposes that love contains three components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. The intimacy component involves the emotional investment partners have in a relationship. Intimacy may include such qualities as experienced happiness with the loved one, mutual understanding, intimate communication, and emotional support (Sternberg, 1986). The second component, passion, refers to internal forces that lead to romance, physical attraction, and sexual satisfaction. The cognitive decision/commitment component is defined as a short-term decision to love someone and a long-term commitment to a loving relationship.

The triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986) predicts changes in intimacy, passion, and commitment over the course of a relationship. The level of intimacy is assumed to decline as a relationship develops over time. Intimacy is also assumed to take manifest or latent forms. Sternberg (1988) argues that in a successful relationship latent or hidden intimacy continues to grow, even though overt or manifest intimacy declines. An initial high level of passion often ends with habituation. Sternberg (1986) predicts that commitment increases gradually, accelerates as the relationship strengthens, and eventually levels off.

Empirical testing of the triangular love scale supports the validity of the intimacy, passion, and commitment components. Tzeng (1993) has reported that the three components of love are highly interrelated with correlations ranging from 0.56 to 0.76. Intimacy, passion, and commitment are also highly correlated with love constructs from other scales. Furthermore, Tzeng's (1993) factor analysis has revealed a three-factor solution, and a good match between the empirical factors and the theoretical constructs of intimacy, passion, and commitment.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات