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Exploring love attitude of young adults: Does culture, gender and age affect it?

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Abstract

Forming a romantic relationship (love) or emotional intimacy is one of the most primal needs of the human being. But how they perceive this relationship or their attitude towards love is totally depend upon their own life experiences. The present study explored differences in the love attitude of young adults of G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, and Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab. The sample comprised a total of 400 young adults (200 from G.B. Pant University and 200 from P.A.U who were currently in a romantic relationship) drawn through using the snowball sampling technique. The love attitude Scale (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986) [8] was applied to explore the differences in the love attitude of young adults. Findings reveal that culture plays a significant role in the love attitude of young adults. Boys showed higher Ludus and maniac attitudes whereas girls showed higher pragmatic, eros, agape, and storge type of love attitude in their relationship. The research also revealed that maturity and education help to change the outlook of young adults towards romantic relationships.

Keywords: love attitude, young adults, culture, gender, age

Introduction

India is a nation of cultural diversification. With its remarkable composition of tradition and the vast heritage of ancient culture, it provides an interesting background to study romantic relationships. Indian literature and mythologies depict their liberal, lenient and dispassionate views on human sexuality, love, and individual freedom as well. Contrary to this, the romantic relationship before marriage is taboo in India. Indian society holds tightly to their reservations. Indian culture is based on values that play a significant role in our lives and were formulated by our ancestors to maintain societal norms to guide human lives. It affects every facet of our life which is being guided or absorbed by it. But these cultural values are also diluted by time. These changes are the result of people who were blinded by their need, suitability, and convenience. The concept of a romantic relationship is usually perceived to be associated with western culture whereas; arranged marriages, with Indian culture. But in the 21st century, India seems to have a slightly positive attitude towards love, especially in urban societies. Today the romantic relationship is affected by various factors such as prosperity, education, gender equality, and technological advancement. These factors are providing new life to young adulthood and have also made it possible for them to pursue relationships based on egalitarian values.

Development of Romantic Relationship and Love Attitude

Several important theoretical schemas have emerged to help make sense of how adolescent romantic relationships fit into the existing social relationship order and how they develop over time. While these schemas are relatively new, they have roots in earlier theories of development. Now in current social setting transition from adolescent to adulthood has becomes elongated and less orderly. According to Settersten *et al*, (2005) [15] it takes longer to achieve various markers or milestones of adulthood to become an adult. Individuals alternate and combine higher education and work, while moving in and out of various relationships. Hence, development of romantic relationship is a developmental milestone for young adults (Shulman and Connolly, 2013) [13]. Love has been typically defined as an emotional and passionate experience between two individuals, which may be reflected in several facets, such as attitude, emotions, or behavior. Forming and maintaining a romantic relationship or intimacy is one of the critical developmental tasks of transitioning into young adulthood (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Similarly, it was also one of the important needs of human life after biological and safety needs (Maslow, 1943).

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Love attitude is the reflection of one's basic view, value, and attitude towards love. It portrays the features of the value orientation of marriage of young adults. It can be influenced and restricted by different patterns of cultures, economic conditions, and political systems. Physical maturity and psychological sexual development generate the need for love. One's emotions and behavior can also project the image of one's attitude about love and relationship. Numerous researchers have described and classified love in different ways. Lee describes love through colors in his theory 'colors of love' in 1973. Based on Lee's theory Hendrick and Hendrick developed the love attitude scale (LAS) with six dimensions;

Eros (passionate love): This love style refers to strong physical and emotional attraction followed by the commitment to the loved one.

Storge (friendship love): This love style refers to a love relationship developed slowly from friendship.

Ludus (game-playing love): This love style refers to playful love or game-playing love. In this love style, there is no commitment towards love and the partner.

Mania (possessive love): This love style is characterized as a combination of Erotic and Ludus love styles which results in an obsessive, intense, full feeling, and possessive kind of love.

Pragma (practical love): This love style is a combination between Ludus and Storge whereby love is perceived as realistic and practical.

Agape (altruistic love): This love style is a combination of Erotic and Storgic love. This love is seen as intense and full of friendship and increases the quality of love with the need for mutual helping (altruism).

The present study aims to explore the love attitude of young adults (who are romantically involved) of G.B.P.U.A. &T. Pantnagar, (Uttarakhand) and P.A.U., Ludhiana, (Punjab) on the premise of cultural deference, age, and gender.

Materials and Methods

Locale

The present study centered on exploring the love attitude of romantically involved young adults under two populations i.e. GBPUA&T, Pantnagar, and PAU, Ludhiana Universities.

Research tools

LAS is a 42-item questionnaire designed by Clyde Hendrick and Susan S. Hendrick (1986)^[8] to measure attitudes toward

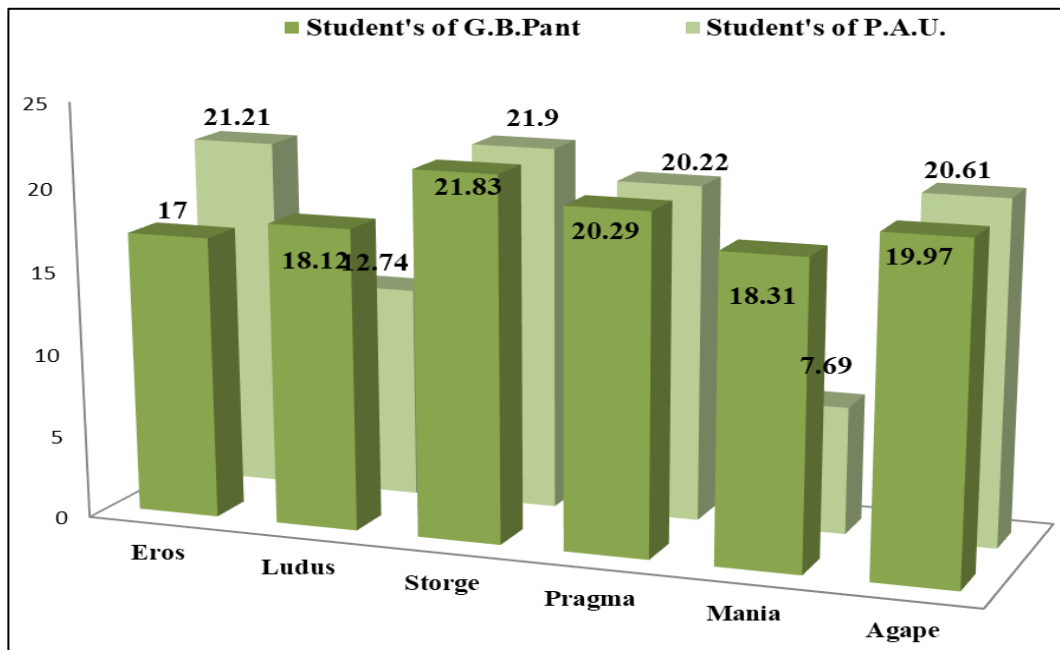
love. The questionnaire combines attitudes toward one's current/recent/hypothetical partner with attitudes about love in general. The scale is broken into 6 subscales (7 items each), which each represents a different love style. The scale uses a five-point Likert format which is "1"- strongly agree to "5"-strongly disagree. The higher the scores obtained through the items, the lower is the respondents' agreement with the love style. The higher the scores obtained through the items, the lower is the respondents' agreement with the love style.

Data Collection

The participants (romantically involved) required for the study were drawn by employing a snowball sampling method under two populations i.e. GBPUA&T, Pantnagar and PAU, Ludhiana Universities. To draw a final sample, out of 520 questionnaires, 400 (89.28%) were randomly selected, rest were dropped from the final analysis because they were either returned unfilled or filled inappropriately (participants checked on all the response choices). Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

Result and Discussion

Fig. 1 elaborates mean score of the young adults of G.B.Pant, and P.A.U. Ludhiana on Love attitude. In Table 1, an independent sample t-test depicts the significant differences in the love attitude of romantically involved young adults of G.B.P.U.A.&T. Pantnagar and P.A.U., Ludhiana. Findings showed a significant difference ($p < .05$) on Eros ($t=8.213$) and Ludus ($t=8.671$). The romantically involved young adults from G.B.P.U.A.&T., Pantnagar showed significantly higher Eros in comparison to those from PAU whereas; respondents from P.A.U., Ludhiana showed significantly higher Ludus love style. A possible cause for the significant difference in both love styles could be the cultural orientation of both universities. The prevalence of the Ludus and eros love attitude are likely dependent upon the ecological differences between the university environments, age of participants, and the demographic conditions of the students being surveyed. India is a land of diversity be it culture, traditions, religion, languages, etc. It's the diversity which to some extent influences the perspective and outlook of people from place to place. The differences in the attitude of the respondents maybe because of the locale i.e. PAU has more of an urban setup as it is situated in the Ludhiana city of Punjab whereas GBPUA&T is situated in Pantnagar which is a small town of Uttarakhand from which we can form a conjecture that participants from the urban area are more practical and logical than those from small towns or rural set-up. This difference in location of universities affects respondents because PAU provides various exposures and opportunities to respondents than GBPUA&T, Pantnagar.

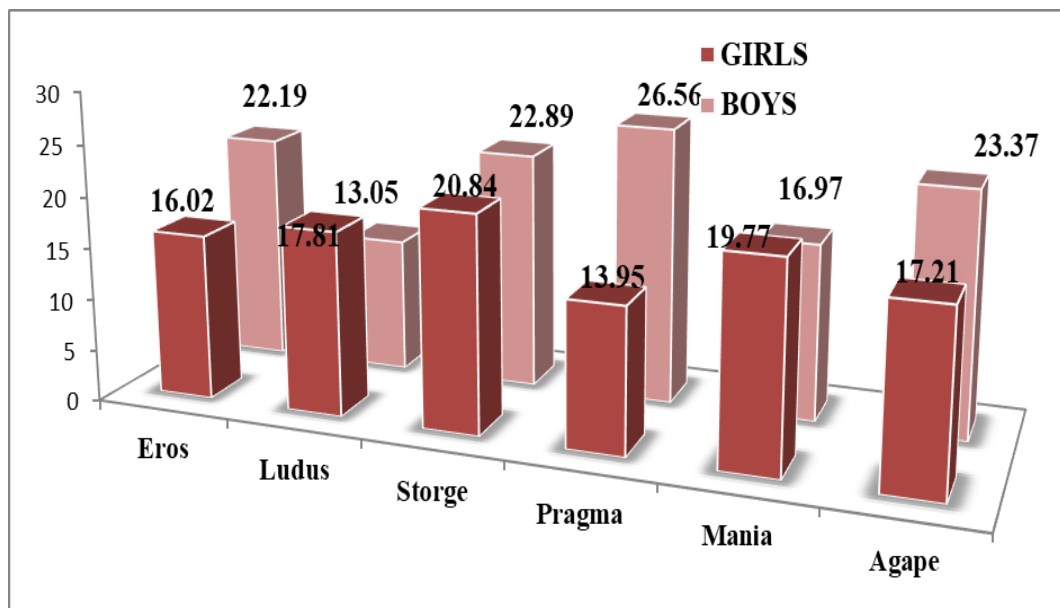


* The higher the scores obtained, the lower is the respondents' agreement with the love style

Fig 1: Mean Scores of Students of G.B. Pant University and P.A.U. Ludhiana on Love Attitude

Fig. 2 depicts mean score of girls and boys of G.B. Pant, and P.A.U. Ludhiana on love attitude. In Table 2, an independent sample t-test elicits significant difference ($p < .05$) between boys and girls of G.B.P.U.A.&T., Pantnagar and P.A.U., Ludhiana on Eros ($t = -3.873$), Ludus ($t = -7.519$), Storge ($t = 4.602$), Pragma ($t = 29.727$), Mania ($t = -3.456$) and Agape ($t = 18.381$). Romantically involved boys showed significantly higher Ludus and Mania as compared to Girls. This finding is in agreement with the view of Hendrick and Hendrick (1986)^[8] and Frazier & Esterly (1990)^[7] who also found that males scored higher than females on Ludus. This demonstrates that males avoid making long-term plans and giving promises to their partners and value physical good looks in their romantic partners more than women (Eastwick and Finkel, 2008)^[6]. Ercan (2008)^[5] also found that men have more game-playing (Ludus) love than women because they are less emotionally involved in their relationship than women. However, in the present study girls showed significantly

higher Eros, Storge, Pragma, and Agape than Boys. This reflects that women are more interested in the level of education, income, intelligence, and self-confidence in their partner than men, who focus more upon the physical attributes of women (Buunk, Dijkstra, Fetchenhauer, and Kenrick, 2002). According to Smith and Klases (2016)^[14], females are highly inclined towards a pragmatic love style than males. It can also be said that girls have distinct expectations about relationships such as obligations, responsibilities, and roles of romantic partners for their future which affect their attitude towards love. It can also assume that girls have more emotional characteristics; they live the emotion more effectively than boys, who are more focused on experiencing this process without emotional involvement. Hence, it can be concluded that young people consider educational and financial achievements during the selection of romantic partners (Manning, Giordano, Longmore, and Hocevar, 2011)^[10].

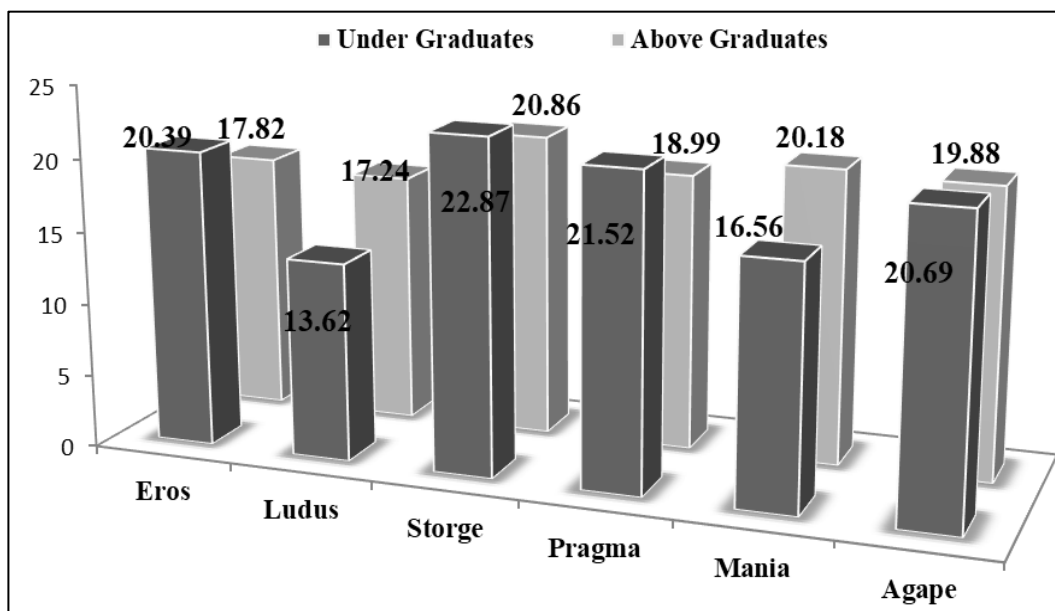


* The higher the scores obtained, the lower is the respondents' agreement with the love style

Fig 2: Mean scores of Girls and Boys on Love Attitude

Fig. 3 elicits mean scores of under graduates and above graduates of G.B. Pant, and P.A.U. Ludhiana on Love attitude. In Table 3, an independent sample t-test portrays significant difference ($p < .05$) between Under-graduates and post-graduate or above students of GBPUAT, Pantnagar and PAU, Ludhiana on Eros ($t = -4.782$), Ludus ($t = -5.554$), Storge ($t = 4.531$), Pragma ($t = 3.397$) and Mania ($t = -4.513$). Under-graduate students showed significantly higher Ludus and Mania as compared to post-graduate or above. However, post-graduate or above participants showed significantly higher Eros, Storge, and Pragma than Under-graduates. Variation in the result maybe because of the underlying factors such as the level of maturity and education that affects their outlook and experiences in romantic relationships. According to Arnett (2000) period from 18-25 years is a phase of exploration and instability. In exploring romantic relationships undergraduate students tend to be more idealistic and easily infatuated. The possible cause of this may be because they are less practical and live in a fantasy world. They tend to seek emotional security from the opposite sex in order to fill the void of parental warmth. At this stage, the students undergo a

transition from a secured home environment to an independent college environment thus; to fit into the new environment they rely on their counterparts. Therefore, it is characterized by multiple romantic relationships which eventually result in romantic success and relationship stability and commitment. During this stage, the young adults are more focused on themselves rather than establishing a lasting connection with someone else. Now young adults are no longer willing to commit to a relationship before completely exploring their romantic experiences. They are postponing their pursuit of a serious relationship into their mid-twenties or later (Rauer *et al*, 2013) [12] which supports the current findings that the above graduates are highly passionate, understanding, and pragmatic in their romantic relationships. They are more realistic and mature in life experiences than the graduates. A plausible cause for the difference in their love attitude is the length of their romantic relationship which facilitates in developing their attitude towards love. Smith and Klases (2016) [14] also reported that the longer the individual was in a relationship the less they expressed Mania love style.



* The higher the scores obtained, the lower is the respondents' agreement with the love style

Fig 3: Mean score of Under Graduates and Above Graduates on Love Attitude

Table 1: Independent sample t-test for romantically involved young adults of GBPUAT, Pantnagar and PAU Ludhiana on Love Attitude

Types of Love Attitude		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Eros	Equal variances assumed	56.993	.000	8.213	398	.000	4.20500	.51202	3.19840	5.21160
	Equal variances not assumed			8.213	350.172	.000	4.20500	.51202	3.19798	5.21202
Ludus	Equal variances assumed	175.847	.000	8.671	398	.000	5.38000	.62046	4.16022	6.59978
	Equal variances not assumed			8.671	285.117	.000	5.38000	.62046	4.15875	6.60125
Storge	Equal variances assumed	1.019	.313	-.143	398	.887	-.06500	.45599	-.96145	.83145
	Equal variances not assumed			-.143	384.604	.887	-.06500	.45599	-.96155	.83155
Pragma	Equal variances assumed	1.045	.307	.085	398	.932	.06500	.76092	-1.43092	1.56092
	Equal variances not assumed			.085	397.718	.932	.06500	.76092	-1.43092	1.56092
Mania	Equal variances assumed	1.360	.244	-.158	398	.874	-.13000	.82230	-1.74660	1.48660
	Equal variances not assumed			-.158	396.480	.874	-.13000	.82230	-1.74662	1.48662
Agape	Equal variances assumed	.494	.483	-1.408	398	.160	-.64000	.45455	-1.53362	.25362
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.408	396.109	.160	-.64000	.45455	-1.53364	.25364

Table 2: Independent sample t-test for romantically involved young 'BOYS' and 'GIRLS' of GBPUAT, Pantnagar and PAU Ludhiana on Love Attitude

Independent Samples Test										
Types of Love Attitude		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Eros	Equal variances assumed	140.575	.000	-3.873	398	.000	-2.10500	.54356	-3.17361	-1.03639
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.873	314.602	.000	-2.10500	.54356	-3.17448	-1.03552
Ludus	Equal variances assumed	208.284	.000	-7.519	398	.000	-4.76000	.63306	-6.00455	-3.51545
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.519	295.415	.000	-4.76000	.63306	-6.00587	-3.51413
Storge	Equal variances assumed	24.570	.000	4.602	398	.000	2.04500	.44433	1.17147	2.91853
	Equal variances not assumed			4.602	376.508	.000	2.04500	.44433	1.17132	2.91868
Pragma	Equal variances assumed	14.838	.000	29.727	398	.000	12.60500	.42402	11.77139	13.43861
	Equal variances not assumed			29.727	383.623	.000	12.60500	.42402	11.77130	13.43870
Mania	Equal variances assumed	15.458	.000	-3.456	398	.001	-2.80000	.81026	-4.39293	-1.20707
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.456	390.811	.001	-2.80000	.81026	-4.39302	-1.20698
Agape	Equal variances assumed	34.844	.000	18.381	398	.000	6.16000	.33512	5.50117	6.81883
	Equal variances not assumed			18.381	331.799	.000	6.16000	.33512	5.50077	6.81923

Table 3: Independent sample t-test for romantically involved Under-graduate and Post-graduate or above students of GBPUAT, Pantnagar and PAU, Ludhiana on Love Attitude

Independent Samples Test										
Types of Love Attitude		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Eros	Equal variances assumed	.520	.471	-4.782	398	.000	-2.57500	.53845	-3.63357	-1.51643
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.782	397.654	.000	-2.57500	.53845	-3.63357	-1.51643
Ludus	Equal variances assumed	.100	.752	-5.554	398	.000	-3.62000	.65174	-4.90128	-2.33872
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.554	397.670	.000	-3.62000	.65174	-4.90128	-2.33872
Storge	Equal variances assumed	8.669	.003	4.531	398	.000	2.01500	.44468	1.14079	2.88921
	Equal variances not assumed			4.531	384.160	.000	2.01500	.44468	1.14069	2.88931
Pragma	Equal variances assumed	.732	.393	3.379	398	.001	2.53500	.75024	1.06007	4.00993
	Equal variances not assumed			3.379	397.926	.001	2.53500	.75024	1.06007	4.00993
Mania	Equal variances assumed	1.653	.199	-4.513	398	.000	-3.62000	.80206	-5.19680	-2.04320
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.513	396.458	.000	-3.62000	.80206	-5.19682	-2.04318
Agape	Equal variances assumed	130.922	.000	1.785	398	.075	.81000	.45387	-.08228	1.70228
	Equal variances not assumed			1.785	302.900	.075	.81000	.45387	-.08314	1.70314

Conclusion

A romantic relationship or love is an important milestone at a certain stage of life of every individual. It was found that the love attitude of students can be differentiated by gender which further proves that girls were more emotionally involved in their romantic relationship than boys. It was also seen that love attitude differs according to age variable; maturity, priority, and different life experiences shape the love attitude of an individual. It can be suggested that the love attitude of an individual depends upon the educational level, age, family, and environment. These findings can be helpful to relationship counsellors and parents to aid young adults to inculcate the positive and rational attitude towards relationship. In future further studies can be done on larger populations.

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