

Perceived Control of Love and Emotions

Kruti Surti & Sandra J.E. Langeslag
University of Missouri- St. Louis

UMSL

Introduction

- Almost everyone falls in love (1)
- Love is often seen as somewhat uncontrollable (2)
- Love is not an emotion (2)
- Emotion Regulation: cognitive and behavioral strategies used to change the intensity of emotions (3)
- Love Regulation: cognitive and behavioral strategies used to change the intensity of love feelings (2)
- Previous studies did not compare love and emotions (2)
- **Research Question 1:** Is there a difference in people's preconceptions regarding their ability to control love feelings and emotions?
- **Hypothesis 1:** People may feel it is easier to modulate emotions than love feelings
- **Research Question 2:** Is there a difference in people's preconceptions regarding their ability to regulate different types of love feelings and emotions?
- **Hypothesis 2:** People will find it easiest to modulate attachment and sadness (2,4)
- **Research Question 3:** Does people's habitual use of reappraisal to regulate their emotions influence their perceived ability to up- and down-regulate different types of love feelings?
- **Hypothesis 3:** The more people use reappraisal in their daily lives, the more they will think they can control love feelings

Methods

- 286 Participants: 18 to 40 years (Male = 54 Female = 232)
- Format: Online questionnaire
- Includes:
 - Demographic Questions
 - Preconceptions of Love and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (PLER)
 - 1-9 Likert Scale
 - 1 = Strongly disagree; 9 = Strongly agree
 - Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)
 - Reappraisal subscale

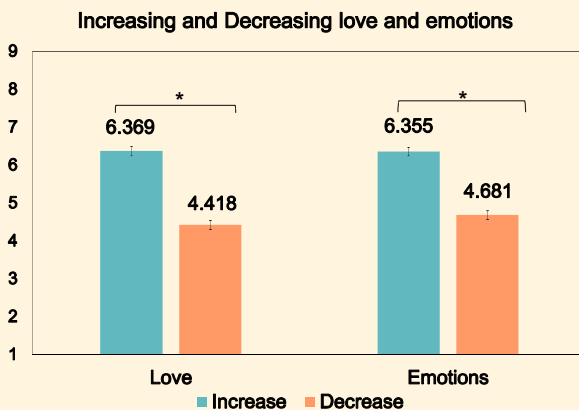


Fig 1. Perceived control over increasing and decreasing love feelings and emotions in general

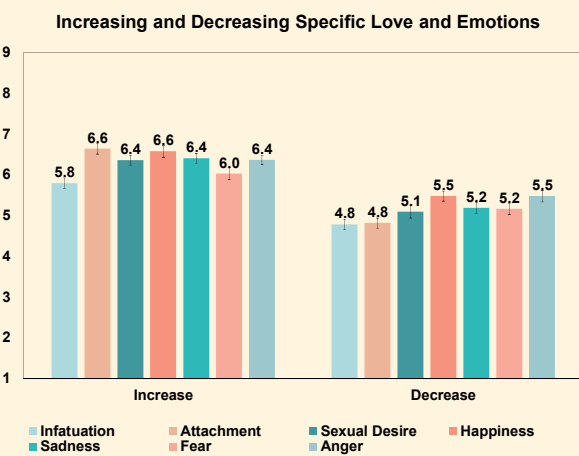


Fig 2. Perceived control over increasing and decreasing different types of love feelings and emotions

References

- (1) Carver, Joyner, & Udry (2003) *Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers*
- (2) Langeslag & van Strien (2016) *PLoS ONE*
- (3) Gross (1998) *Review of General Psychology*
- (4) Webb, Miles, & Sheeran (2012) *Psychological Bulletin*

Correspondence to Kruti Surti: ✉ krutisurti@mail.umsl.edu

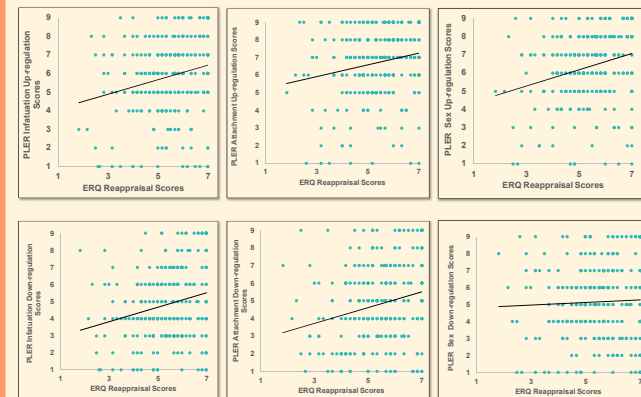


Fig 3. Correlations between ERQ reappraisal scores and the perceived ability to up- and down-regulate love feelings

Results

- People thought increasing was easier than decreasing (Fig 1,2)
- There were no significant differences in people's perceptions of love and emotion regulation in general
- Infatuation was hardest to up- and down-regulate, while attachment was easiest to up-regulate but not down-regulate, and happiness and anger were easiest to down-regulate (Fig 2)
- ERQ reappraisal scores were positively correlated with perceptions about love regulation, except down-regulation of sexual desire (Fig 3)

Discussion

- People perceive love and emotion regulation as similarly feasible
- People perceive infatuation as hardest to modulate, and happiness and anger as easiest to modulate
- Those who use reappraisal for emotion regulation in their daily lives perceive love as more controllable
- Need to objectively compare the feasibility of emotion regulation and love regulation