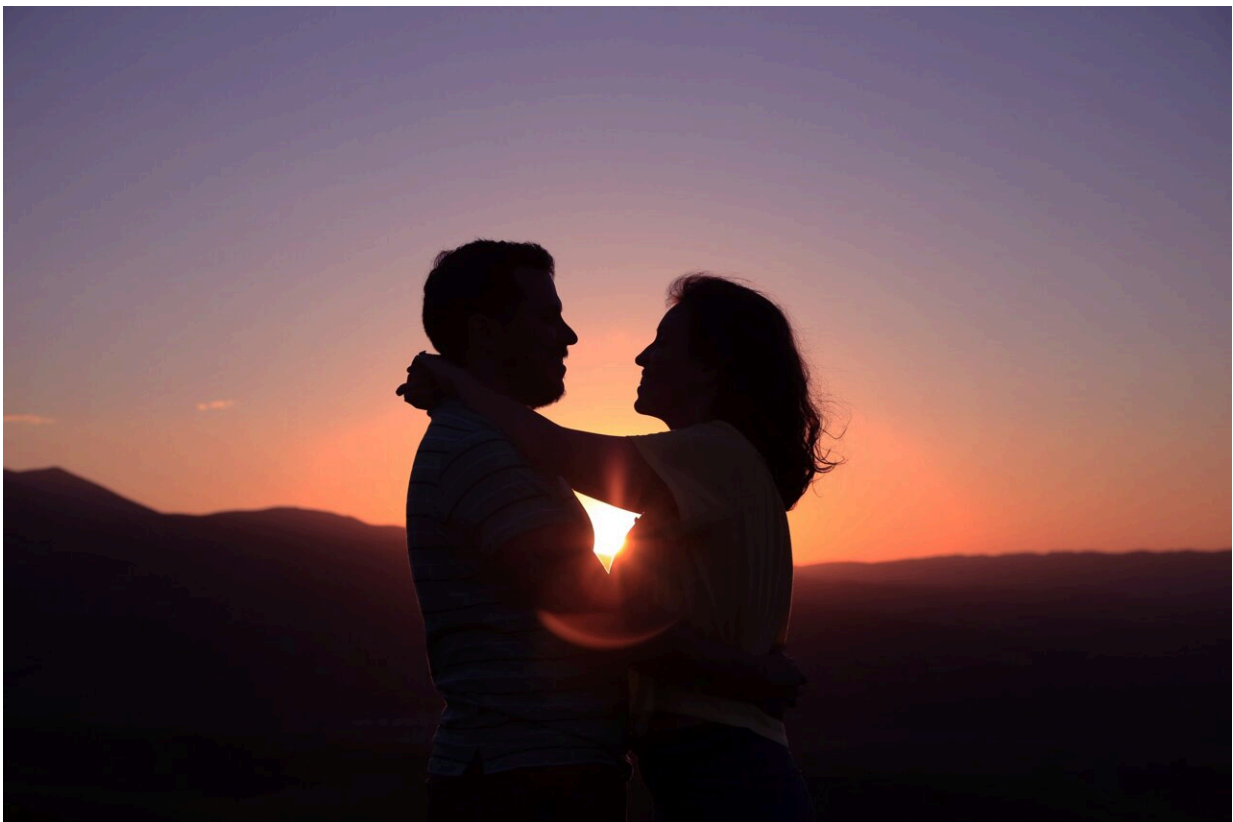


New evidence suggests love languages are important for heterosexual relationship satisfaction

June 22 2022



A silhouette of a couple standing together. Credit: Oziel Gómez, Unsplash, CC0 (creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/)

New evidence supports the idea that heterosexual relationship

satisfaction is linked to fulfillment of people's personal preferences for receiving affection expressed according to distinct love languages. Olha Mostova of the University of Warsaw, Poland, and colleagues present these findings in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* on June 22, 2022.

Love languages refer to the popular idea that people differ both in the ways they express affection and the ways they wish to receive it. This hypothesis involves five distinct love languages: words of affirmation, spending quality time together, gift-giving, acts of service, and physical touch. Despite its popularity, the concept of love languages remains relatively under-explored by researchers.

To deepen understanding, Mostova and colleagues conducted a study of 100 heterosexual couples who had been together for 6 months to 24 years. Participants were aged 17 to 58, and each completed a questionnaire with questions developed in prior research on love languages.

The questionnaire evaluated participants' preferred love languages to use when expressing love to their partner, and in turn, which love languages used by their partner most make them feel loved. These data enabled the researchers to identify the degree of any mismatches within each couple. They also assessed participants' [relationship satisfaction](#), sexual satisfaction, and empathy.

This analysis showed that, for both men and women, participants whose partners used the love languages they preferred to receive had higher levels of relationship and [sexual satisfaction](#). Greater satisfaction was also found among participants who reported using the love languages their partners preferred to receive.

The researchers had hypothesized that empathy would be associated with a greater tendency for a participant to use the love language their partner

prefers to receive. However, while the analysis showed some small support for certain sub-types of [empathy](#) affecting male participants' relationship experiences, this hypothesis was not supported overall.

While the study only included [heterosexual couples](#), the researchers suggest that focusing on partners' love-language needs might be effective in relationship counseling. They also suggest several directions for future research, such as examining whether love-[language](#) matching actually causes greater satisfaction, or instead arises from it or an entirely different factor.

The authors add: "Our findings suggest that people who better match each other's preferences for love languages are more satisfied with their relationships and [sexual life](#). Dimensional assessment may be preferable to typologizing [love](#) languages."

More information: I love the way you love me: Responding to partner's love language preferences boosts satisfaction in romantic heterosexual couples, *PLoS ONE* (2022). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0269429](#)

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