People's Love Attitudes Toward Their Pets

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Background

Love Attitudes toward Romantic Partners

Table 1

Six Love Romantic Love Attitudes or Love Styles (Hendrick and Hendrick, 1986; Lee, 1973)

Love Style		Definition	Example Item
Eros	Traditional, Idealistic Love	Intense, passionate love that is physical, mental, and emotional. Eros lovers often have a preferred physical type of partner, want to get to know a partner well, and want to be able to be fully themselves.	My partner and I have the right physical 'chemistry' between us.
Ludus	Game-Playing Love	Game-playing love that does not seek serious involvement but rather wants to enjoy different partners for different reasons. A ludic lover does not seek to hurt partners but rather simply views love as a game or pleasant pastime.	I believe that what my partner doesn't know about me won't hurt him/her.
Storge	Friendship Love	The basis for storgic love is friendship, similarity of values and goals, and fidelity to the partner as well as to the shared values. A secure, trusting, and stable relationship is a hallmark of storgic love.	Our love is the best kind of love because it grew out of a deep friendship.
Pragma	Shopping-List Love	Pragmatic love is both practical and pragmatic. Someone who has a list of qualities/assets which they seek in a romantic partner (rather than having a preferred physical type) is likely a Pragma lover.	A main consideration in choosing my partner was how he/she would reflect on my family.
Mania	Obsessive, Dependent Love	Possessive, dependent, anxious – being on an emotional roller-coaster – all that describes manic love. Contrary to stereotypes of adolescents, manic love can occur at any age: euphoria at one point and misery at another.	When my partner doesn't pay attention to me, I feel sick all over.
Agape	Selfless Love	The rarest of Lee's (1973) love styles, agapic love is characterized by compassion, generosity, looking out for the welfare of the partner, and generally "being there" for the partner in good times and bad.	I would rather suffer myself than let my partner suffer.

Table reproduced from p. 44 in Guthrie et al. (2018)

Love in Human-Pet Relationships

•Human romantic love styles and attitude toward pets were correlated (Guthrie, Marshall, Hendrick, Hendrick, & Logue, 2018).

- •Eros and pet attitudes were positively correlated.
- •Ludus and pet attitudes were negatively correlated.

Research Question: Do similar love styles exist for human-pet relationships?

Method

Participants

Participants (N = 313; 160 women; average age = 19) were recruited through the subject pool.

Measures

Love Attitudes Scale-Short Form (LAS-Short Form; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Dicke, 1998).

Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed (*1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree*), with items measuring their views of love. Table 1 shows the six subscales.

Pet Attitude Scale-Modified (PASM; Munsell, Canfield, Templer, Tangan, & Arikawa, 2004).

Using a 5-point Likert Scale (*1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree*), participants indicated the extent to which they agreed with positive and negative pet attitudes statements. the Pet Attitudes Scale-Modified.

Pet Love Attitudes Scale. We wrote 44 pet-human love style items, derived from the original LAS (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). and adapted for the pet-owner relationship.

Table 2

Adaptation of Romantic Love Attitude Scale (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986) to Pet Love Attitude

Love Attitude	Human Romantic Love Attitude Example Item	Human-Pet Love Attitude Adapted Item
Eros	My partner and I have the right physical 'chemistry' between us.	My pet and I are a perfect match.
Ludus	I enjoy playing the "game of love" with my partner and a number of other partners.	Sometimes I withdraw my attention from my pet to make my pet jealous.
Storge	Our love is really a deep friendship, not a mysterious, mystical emotion.	I would describe the love with my pet as a deep friendship.
Pragma	An important factor in choosing my partner was whether or not he/she would be a good parent.	An important factor in choosing my pet was whether he/she would be a good member of the family.
Mania	When my lover doesn't pay attention to me, I feel sick all over.	If my pet doesn't pay attention to me, I start to feel sick.
Agape	I would rather suffer myself than let my partner suffer.	I would rather suffer than let my pet suffer.

Results

Table 3

Maximum Likelihood Analysis on 26-Item Pet Love Attitudes Scale (N = 290)

	Factor Loadings				
Item	Eros/Storge	Mania	Agape	Ludus	Pragma
My pet and I are a perfect match.	**.87**	-.11	-.13		
I would describe the love with my pet as a deep friendship.	**.78**				
My pet and I really understand each other.	**.77**				
My pet and I have a bond that has grown steadily over time.	**.75**	-.11			
I immediately became emotionally attached to my pet.	**.73**				
I knew right away that my pet was the perfect pet for me.	**.71**			-.15	
I feel that my pet and I were meant for each other.	**.67**		.10		
My pet and I care for each other.	**.62**		.10		
My pet meets my ideal standards for physical appearance and cuteness.	**.52**	-.17			
I usually make sacrifices for my pet.	**.49**		.26		-.14
An important factor in choosing my pet was whether he/she would be a good member of the family.	**.40**				.30
If my pet doesn't pay attention to me, I start to feel sick.		**.92**	-.19		
If my pet and I aren't getting along, my stomach gets upset.		**.89**		-.10	-.12
Before selecting my pet, I thought about how likely its genetic background would be to produce healthy offspring.	-.12	**.54**		-.15	.17
I cannot relax when someone else is taking care of my pet.	-.18	**.47**	.23		
Sometimes, I get so excited about being with my pet that I can't sleep.		**.39**	.23	.17	
I put my pet's happiness before my own.			**.93**		
I would rather suffer than let my pet suffer.	.18		**.60**		
I put my pet's needs before my own.	.24		**.57**	-.11	-.10
I endure everything for the sake of my pet.		.22	**.53**		
If my pet ignores me for a while, I sometimes do foolish things to get his/her attention back.				**.75**	
If my pet favors another person, I become jealous.	.20	.19	-.17	**.65**	
I like to taunt my pet sometimes by teasing it.	-.19	-.17	.11	**.48**	
Sometimes I withdraw my attention from my pet to make my pet jealous.	-.22	.14		**.35**	.14
I made sure my pet and I were compatible before I took him/her home.					**.72**
Before selecting a pet, I ensured my life was in order and I was financially stable.					**.47**
Number of Items	11	5	4	4	2
Eigenvalue	7.4	2.8	.99	1.0	.62
Percent Variance	28.45	10.81	3.82	3.83	2.38
Cronbach's alpha	.91	.80	.81	.65	.51

Note. N= 290 participants.

Table 4

Intercorrelations for Pet Love Attitudes Factors

Measure	Pet– Eros/Storge	Pet-Mania	Pet-Agape	Pet-Ludus	Pet-Pragma
Pet – Eros/Storge	1				
Pet-Mania	.194**	1			
Pet-Agape	.571***	.432***	1		
Pet-Ludus	.184	.415***	.286***	1	
Pet-Pragma	.331***	.257***	.206***	.103	1

Table 5

Intercorrelations for Pet Love Attitudes and Romantic (Rom) Love Attitudes

Measure	Rom – Eros	Rom-Ludus	Rom-Storge	Rom-Pragma	Rom-Mania	Rom-Agape
Pet – Eros/Storge	.222***	-.053	.223***	.086	.044	.178**
Pet-Ludus	-.062	.244***	.116*	.143*	.315***	.122*
Pet-Pragma	.093	-.051	.211***	.109***	-.013	.015
Pet-Mania	-.060	.253***	.116*	.269***	.332***	.103
Pet-Agape	.083	.041	.184**	.146*	.212***	.301***

Table 6

Intercorrelations for Pet Love Attitudes and General Pet Attitudes

Measure	Negative Pet Attitudes	Positive Pet Attitudes	Overall Pet Attitudes
Pet – Eros/Storge	-.463***	.710***	.692***
Pet-Ludus	.050	.308***	.183**
Pet-Pragma	.000	.164*	.109
Pet-Mania	.244***	.194**	.017
Pet-Agape	-.214***	.604***	.505***

For all correlational tables, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.
Note. For all correlational analyses, data based on pooled statistics from (20) multiple imputation with N= 313 participants.

Summary of Results and Discussion

5-Factor Solution for Pet Love Attitudes

- •The initial 44 items reduced to 26 items and 5 factors.
- •Eros and Storge items loaded on the same factor and explained most of the variance
- •The item, "I usually make sacrifices for my pet," was expected to load on Agape, but loaded on Eros/Storge.
- •The Pragma pet factor included two items and resulted in a low Cronbach's alpha. We expected the following items to load on Pragma:
  - •"An important factor in choosing my pet was whether he/she would be a good member of the family."
  - •"Before selecting my pet, I thought about how likely its genetic background would be to produce healthy offspring."

Gender Differences in Pet Love Attitudes

- •Women scored higher on Pet-Eros/Storge
- •Men scored higher on Pet-Ludus

Correlational Analyses between Pet Love Attitudes and Romantic Love Attitudes

- •Pet-Eros/Storge was correlated with both Rom-Eros and Rom-Storge.
- •Pet-Mania and Pet-Agape showed correlations above .30 with Rom-Mania and Rom-Agape, respectively.
- •Pet-Ludus was correlated with both Rom-Mania and Rom-Ludus.
- •Pet-Pragma and Rom-Pragma were not correlated.

Correlational Analyses between Pet Love Attitudes and General Pet Attitudes

- •Pet-Eros/Storge and Pet-Agape strongly correlated with Positive Pet Attitudes.
- •Pet-Ludus was moderately, positively correlated with positive pet attitudes.
- •Pet-Eros/Storge was the only pet love attitude to show a strong, negative relationship to negative pet attitudes.

Limitations and Future Research

- Cronbach's alphas for Pet-Pragma and Pet-Ludus were low. Future research will focus on writing more items to better represent these pet love attitudes.
- Most of the sample were college-aged participants who may not live with their family pet. Future research will replicate the scale with more mature individuals.
- Effect of pet love attitudes on human-pet relationship satisfaction.
- Development of pet love attitudes over time and with different pets.
- Attachment style or love styles as better predictor of relationship satisfaction.

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References

References provided upon request.