PSG

Journal of Social Cognition and Communication

panorama-sg.com

ISSN 3054-6958
Publisher: Panorama Scholarly Group

Vol. 1, No.1, 10-21, 2026
DOI:10.63802/jscc.V1.I1.290



Editorial Office of Journal of Social Cognition and Communication

Recognising Love Across Cultures: A Cross-Cultural Extension of the Love Confirmation Mechanism Model

Chengwen Song[1*]

[1] *Department of Public Administration, Graduate School of Public Administration, Kookmin University, Seoul 02707, Republic of Korea*
[*] *Corresponding author*

Corresponding author:
wenshao521@kookmin.ac.kr



Published: March 21, 2026

Abstract

Love is a central concern in psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, yet existing scholarship has concentrated far more on what love consists of than on the epistemic problem of how actors know, judge, and validate that love is present. Structural theories have clarified the components of love, experiential theories have examined attachment and affect, and cultural approaches have analysed romantic discourse and symbolic expression. Much less attention has been given to the interpretive process through which individuals decide that a feeling, relationship, or social bond should count as love. Building on Song (2025)'s Love Confirmation Mechanism (LCM), this article advances the Love Confirmation Mechanism Model (LCMM) as a cross-cultural theoretical extension. The core argument is that love is not simply an internal emotional state but a socially interpretable phenomenon confirmed through multiple forms of evidence. The model identifies four domains of confirmatory signals: affective, relational, symbolic, and institutional. These signals do not possess fixed meaning. Rather, they are interpreted through culturally organised frameworks that shape how actors weigh emotional intensity, behavioural consistency, romantic symbolism, and social legitimacy. By shifting analytic attention from the ontology of love to the epistemology of love recognition, the LCMM makes three contributions. First, it theorises love recognition as a distinct process linking private feeling, interpersonal interpretation, and social validation. Second, it extends the LCM by specifying a multi-signal architecture of confirmation and by distinguishing intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social levels of recognition. Third, it provides a comparative framework for explaining why the same relational act may confirm love in one cultural setting but not in another, while also clarifying how love may be under-recognised, over-recognised, or contested when signals are incongruent or differently weighted. The article concludes by outlining implications for cross-cultural intimacy research, communication studies, and future empirical work on romantic legitimacy.

Keywords: love recognition; Love Confirmation Mechanism Model; cross-cultural intimacy; relational signals; symbolic signals; institutional signals

1. Introduction

Love is among the most studied and yet most elusive topics in the human sciences. Psychology has approached love as an emotional and motivational phenomenon, sociology has treated it as a socially organised relationship form, and cultural studies has examined the symbols, narratives, and representations through which romance becomes meaningful in everyday life. Across these traditions, three broad questions have dominated the literature: what love is made of, how love is emotionally experienced, and how love is socially expressed. These inquiries have generated influential frameworks, from structural models of intimacy, passion, and commitment to attachment-based accounts of emotional bonding and discursive analyses of romance as a cultural script. A substantial canonical literature already exists on love measurement, passionate love, attachment, prototypes, self-expansion, discourse, and intimacy under late modernity (Aron et al., 1991, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Fehr, 1988; Fehr & Russell, 1991; Giddens, 1992; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Illouz, 2012; Jamieson, 1998; Rubin, 1970; Sternberg, 1986).

However, this theoretical wealth has created an epistemological imbalance: love theory has been far richer on the *ontology* of love (what it is) than on the *epistemology* of how love becomes knowable. A theoretically consequential question remains insufficiently clarified: how do individuals recognise that what they feel, perceive, or experience genuinely constitutes love?

This article is published in *Journal of Social Cognition and Communication* under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

The problem is not trivial. Emotional intensity does not automatically produce conceptual certainty. Closeness, desire, dependence, jealousy, longing, care, sacrifice, and commitment may all be experienced without immediately being named as love. Likewise, declarations, gifts, rituals, cohabitation, and even marriage may be interpreted either as evidence of love or as mere convention, obligation, strategy, or performance. Love, in other words, is not only experienced; it must be interpreted, confirmed, and named. The recognition problem is therefore epistemic before it is classificatory: it concerns how actors infer love from uncertain, partial, or contradictory evidence.

This article argues that the recognition of love should be treated as a distinct theoretical problem. To say that a person loves, or is loved, is not simply to describe an inner state but to register a judgement made from emotional, relational, symbolic, and social evidence. Such a judgement is never purely individual. It is shaped by interactional experience, culturally available categories, communicative norms, and institutional structures that authorise or withhold relational legitimacy. Consequently, love becomes intelligible only through a process of *confirmation*.

Song (2025)'s Love Confirmation Mechanism (LCM) offers a critical starting point for theorising this process. In that framework, love confirmation is understood as a multilayered interpretive sequence linking expressions of love, perceptual filters, attributional processes, and confirmation judgements. The model makes a major contribution by demonstrating that love should not be reduced to expression alone; what ultimately matters is whether the expression is recognised by the recipient as genuine love. However, culture remains under-specified in the original formulation, appearing primarily as contextual background rather than as a constitutive dimension of recognition itself.

To address this limitation, the present article advances the Love Confirmation Mechanism Model (LCMM), a culturally elaborated framework for understanding how love becomes recognisable across different social worlds. The central claim is that love is confirmed through the interpretation of multiple signals within culturally structured frameworks. Four classes of signals are paramount: *affective* signals, *relational* signals, *symbolic* signals, and *institutional* signals. These signals do not possess fixed meanings. Their significance depends entirely on the interpretive repertoires through which actors organise emotion, interaction, morality, and legitimacy.

The article makes three core contributions. First, it reframes love recognition as a distinct epistemic problem rather than a secondary consequence of emotion or relationship structure. Second, it extends the LCM into a cross-cultural, multi-level model that specifies how confirmation operates across intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social domains. Third, it connects psychology, cultural sociology, and communication theory by showing that love confirmation depends simultaneously on subjective feeling, interactional practice, symbolic coding, and institutional validation.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews key literatures on structural theories of love, emotional experience, and cultural representation. Section 3 identifies the theoretical gap concerning the recognition process of love. Section 4 revisits the Love Confirmation Mechanism. Section 5 introduces the Love Confirmation Mechanism Model and systematically unpacks its four signal domains. Section 6 examines cross-cultural variation in signal weighting and interpretation. Section 7 develops the model's theoretical, empirical, and practical implications while clarifying its scope conditions. Section 8 concludes by summarising the significance of treating love confirmation as a culturally mediated process.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Structural Theories of Love

One of the most influential traditions in love research conceptualises love in structural terms. Rather than asking how individuals come to identify love, these approaches specify the core components or dimensions that constitute it. Sternberg (1986)'s triangular theory remains the best-known example. According to this model, love consists of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Different combinations of elements generate different relational forms, such as romantic love, companionate love, infatuation, or consummate love. The theory has been especially valuable because it offers an analytically parsimonious way of distinguishing varieties of love while also accounting for changes in relationships over time.

This structural tradition sits within a broader psychological canon. Rubin (1970)'s distinction between love and liking helped establish love as a measurable object of social-psychological inquiry. Hendrick & Hendrick (1986) developed the Love Attitudes Scale, showing that individuals organise romantic beliefs through distinguishable styles. Hatfield & Sprecher (1986) conceptualised passionate love as intense longing for union with another, while Aron et al. (1991) and Aron et al. (1992) linked love to self-expansion and inclusion of the other in the self. Fehr's prototype approach (Fehr, 1988; Fehr & Russell, 1991) further demonstrated that ordinary understandings of love are organised around central features rather than around a single necessary-and-sufficient definition.

Subsequent scholarship has reinforced the importance of structural thinking. Sorokowski et al. (2021), for example, found cross-cultural support for the triangular theory in a large-scale study across 25 countries, suggesting that intimacy, passion, and commitment retain broad conceptual utility across cultural settings. This line of work is important because it demonstrates that love can be meaningfully analysed through recurring dimensions, even when particular norms or practices differ from one context to another.

At the same time, structural theories leave a central issue unresolved. They tell us what love may consist of, but not *how* actors determine that these components are present in lived experience. A person may indeed feel intimacy, passion, or commitment, but the presence of such components does not automatically produce recognition. One may be uncertain whether attachment is "really" love, whether commitment reflects affection or obligation, or whether passion without stability should count as love at all. Thus, while structural theories remain indispensable, they require supplementation by an epistemic process model of recognition.

The distinction matters because romantic life rarely unfolds as a clear taxonomy. Individuals do not normally encounter love as a pre-labelled psychological object. They infer it from sensations, behaviours, words, expectations, and social signs. Thus, while structural theories remain indispensable, they require supplementation by a process model of recognition.

2.2. Love as Emotional Experience

A second major body of literature approaches love primarily as emotional experience. Here, the focus is less on conceptual architecture than on the subjective intensity and felt qualities of attachment. Hazan & Shaver (1987)'s extension of attachment theory to romantic love was foundational in this regard. They argued that adult romantic bonds can be understood as attachment processes, shaped by internal working models formed in earlier relationships. This perspective highlighted the emotional and developmental dimensions of love, especially the ways individuals seek security, closeness, reassurance, and regulation through intimate bonds.

Recent work has continued to expand this line of thinking. Doherty

& Brumbaugh (2024) synthesize evolutionary, psychological, and biological accounts to describe romantic love as an intense emotional and motivational system linked to pair-bonding and relationship maintenance. Emerging research on emotional and physiological synchrony similarly suggests that romantic bonds are not only internally experienced but also co-regulated in interaction. Emotional synchronisation is more strongly linked to relationship quality in romantic couples than in close friendships (Chen et al., 2024), and the capacity for synchrony itself appears related to romantic attractiveness (Cohen et al., 2024). At the behavioural level, profiles of affectionate and sexual behaviour are strongly associated with relationship satisfaction in adult partnerships (Clark & Lefkowitz, 2025).

While this experiential tradition has advanced the field by taking emotional life seriously, its principal emphasis remains on the internal experience of love rather than on the process by which such experience is interpreted and confirmed. Emotional experience is often treated as self-authenticating, as though intense feeling naturally verifies itself as love. Yet this assumption underestimates ambiguity. Anxiety may resemble devotion; dependence may resemble attachment; habit may resemble commitment. The emotional experience of love therefore necessitates an interpretive account.

Parallel developments in the sociology of emotion complicate the idea that love can be understood as inner feeling alone. Hochschild's analyses of emotion work and feeling rules (Hochschild, 1979, 1983) demonstrated that emotions are socially managed and normatively organised. Giddens (1992) described intimate life in terms of the "pure relationship," while Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1995) emphasised the uncertainty built into modern love. Jamieson (1998) questioned overly idealised accounts of intimacy, Zelizer (2005) showed that intimate ties are entangled with economic transactions, Holmes (2010) linked intimacy to reflexive emotional labour, and Illouz (2012) analysed the institutional contradictions that make modern love both aspirational and painful. This body of work is crucial because it shifts attention from love as a private emotion to love as a socially organised practice.

2.3. Love as Cultural Representation

A third body of scholarship treats love as a cultural phenomenon organised through narratives, symbols, communicative forms, and institutional scripts. From this perspective, people do not merely feel love; they learn how love should look, sound, and be enacted. This premise resonates with Averill (1985)'s argument that emotions are socially organised categories rather than purely private substances. Swidler (1986)'s conception of culture as a "tool kit" is especially relevant here. Cultural life supplies repertoires of symbols, habits, stories, and strategies that actors draw on to organise and validate intimacy.

Recent contextual scholarship has strengthened this claim by arguing that relationship science has a persistent "context problem": macro-level forces such as culture, law, media, and inequality often remain backgrounded even though they shape relationship initiation, maintenance, and dissolution (Kawas & Ogolsky, 2023). Cross & Joo (2023) similarly show that East Asian and Euro-American romantic paradigms reflect distinct ideological, institutional, and emotional traditions rather than merely different styles of expression.

Illouz (1997) deepened this insight by showing how modern romance is saturated with commodity forms, media images, and ritualised scripts. Dating, gift-giving, and public displays of affection are socially coded forms through which romantic meaning is communicated. A declaration such as "I love you," a bouquet of flowers, a candlelit dinner, or a family introduction can function as evidence of love not because of any universal meaning built into the act itself, but because culture has taught actors to read it that way.

Love discourse research strengthens this point by showing that romance is narratively and linguistically constituted. Barthes (1978) approached love as a discourse of fragments and rhetorical positions. Cancian (1987) traced gendered changes in the meaning of love in the United States. Luhmann (1986) treated love as a historically specific semantic code, Swidler (2001) demonstrated that people draw on distinct cultural repertoires when they talk about love, and Shumway (2003) analysed the instability of modern romantic narratives surrounding marriage and intimacy.

Communication research adds another layer by showing that emotional meanings are shaped by culturally patterned styles of expression. Hall (1976)'s distinction between high-context and low-context communication, and Gudykunst et al. (1996)'s work on cross-cultural individualism-collectivism, underscore that relational meaning is sustained through patterned practices. Ge et al. (2022) demonstrated that Chinese participants preferred more indirect romantic communication than European Americans, and that perceived relational quality increased when communication style matched cultural expectations. These findings are crucial because they show that the same emotional intention may be differently recognisable depending on the communicative norms through which it is expressed.

Recent work on mediated intimacy reinforces this point. McEwan & LeFebvre (2023) show that social media now function as central sites of partner search, relationship display, electronic tie-signs, surveillance, and dissolution. Digital platforms expand the symbolic repertoire through which romantic meaning is made public, negotiated, and contested.

Taken together, cultural approaches reveal that love is mediated by stories, performances, symbols, and norms. They explain how romance becomes thinkable and visible. Yet even here, the recognition process remains under-theorised. The literature shows that culture shapes the expression of love, but not exactly how multiple forms of evidence are integrated into a holistic confirmation judgement.

3. Theoretical Gap

The preceding review suggests that existing scholarship has produced strong explanations of love's structure, experience, and representation, but a weaker explanation of love's recognition. This omission matters because love is not automatically self-interpreting. Neither emotion nor behaviour arrives with a stable label. A person may experience longing but be unsure whether it signals love, attachment, fear of abandonment, or desire. A partner may provide care, spend time, or make sacrifices, yet these actions may be interpreted as kindness, responsibility, guilt, habit, or social expectation rather than love.

Three specific theoretical absences can be identified here:

1. **A Signal Gap**: Existing theories acknowledge components of love or styles of expression, but they do not adequately classify the distinct domains of evidence through which love becomes recognisable in everyday life. Love is inferred from multiple signals, not from isolated emotion alone.
2. **An Interpretive Gap**: Even when relevant signals are present, actors must still actively decide what those signals mean. This requires cognitive interpretation, emotional appraisal, and social comparison. Recognition is therefore not a passive reaction but an active interpretive process.
3. **A Cultural Gap**: Interpretation fundamentally depends on culturally available repertoires. Cultures differ drastically in the value assigned to verbal declaration, behavioural consistency, family approval, sexual exclusivity, sacrifice, ritual, and institutional recognition. As a result, the threshold and pathway for love confirmation vary significantly across contexts.

Recognition theory provides an additional conceptual resource for articulating this gap. Taylor (1994), Honneth (1995), and Ricoeur (2005) each argue that identity and legitimacy depend on processes

of social acknowledgement rather than on private inwardness alone. Ahmed (2004) further demonstrates that emotions circulate socially and politically, rather than remaining lodged inside discrete individuals. These perspectives show why love cannot be treated as a purely internal state that simply awaits expression. It can be confirmed, contested, misrecognised, or denied.

A further issue is that recognition is often treated as a single, monolithic act, when it is better understood as occurring simultaneously at multiple levels:

- **The Intrapersonal Level**: An individual interprets their own inner feelings and sensations, deciding whether they should be categorised as love.
- **The Interpersonal Level**: An individual observes and judges whether a partner's conduct confirms love, and whether the bond is reciprocal.
- **The Social Level**: The wider network, community, or formal institution recognises the relationship as legitimate, serious, or properly romantic.

These levels can align, but they frequently diverge. A person may know they are in love while doubting that the feeling is reciprocated. Two partners may privately confirm love while lacking family or community recognition. Conversely, a relationship may be socially ratified despite weak private attachment. Existing theories rarely integrate these levels into a singular process account.

What is needed, therefore, is a theory that treats love as an interpretively organised phenomenon. It should explain how emotional experiences, relational practices, symbolic forms, and institutional markers are synthesized into a definitive judgement that "this is love". The Love Confirmation Mechanism provides an important foundation for such theorisation, but it requires systematic cross-cultural extension.

4. Revisiting the Love Confirmation Mechanism

Song (2025) introduced the Love Confirmation Mechanism (LCM) as a theoretical framework for understanding how expressions of love are perceived, interpreted, and confirmed within romantic relationships. The significance of the model lies in its shift away from the assumption that love is adequately captured by expression or feeling alone. Instead, the LCM proposes that love becomes meaningful through a multi-stage interpretive process.

In its original formulation, the LCM comprises four interrelated modules: (1) love expression, (2) individual perceptual structure, (3) interpretive attribution, and (4) confirmation judgement with relational outcomes. Love is first expressed in verbal, behavioural, or non-verbal form. The recipient then processes that expression through a perceptual structure shaped by attachment history, expectations, emotional needs, and personal schemas. On this basis, the individual makes attributions regarding the meaning and motivation of the partner's behaviour. Finally, these interpretive processes culminate in a subjective judgement about whether love has, in fact, been expressed and confirmed.

This framework is valuable for several reasons. First, it clarifies that love confirmation is not reducible to what one partner intends. Expression does not guarantee recognition. Second, it identifies interpretive mediation as central. Third, it highlights the relational consequences of confirmation and non-confirmation, including security, satisfaction, ambiguity, anxiety, and instability.

The present article adopts the following refined definition:

Love confirmation refers to the interpretive process through which emotional attachment becomes recognised as love within interpersonal and cultural contexts.

This definition preserves the main insight of the LCM while making explicit what is only implicit in the original framework: love confirmation is not merely an interpersonal cognitive event but a culturally mediated interpretive act. To recognise love is to apply a culturally available category to a set of feelings, behaviours, and social signs.

The proposed LCMM preserves the LCM's process logic while specifying four major domains of love-relevant evidence and placing cultural interpretation at the centre of confirmation. The shift is from a general psychological mechanism to a culturally elaborated model of recognition. In this article, **LCM** refers to the underlying psychological-interactional process mechanism, while **LCMM** refers to the broader theoretical model that specifies the principal evidentiary domains entering that mechanism across varied sociocultural frames.

5. The Love Confirmation Mechanism Model

The Love Confirmation Mechanism Model (LCMM) develops the earlier LCM into a cross-cultural recognition framework. Its core claim is that love becomes confirmable through the interpretation of multiple signals within culturally structured frameworks. The model may be summarised in a simple formula (see Figure 1):

Affective signals + Relational signals + Symbolic signals + Institutional signals → Cultural interpretive framework → Love confirmation

The four-signal architecture (detailed in Table 1) is not intended as an intuitive but theoretically ungrounded list. Rather, it is derived from the four longstanding traditions in love research reviewed earlier. Taken together, these traditions map four progressively externalised forms of evidence through which love can be felt, enacted, signified, and socially validated.

The model rests on four foundational assumptions:

1. **Love recognition is multi-signalled.** No single sign is universally sufficient. Love is inferred from converging evidence.
2. **Signals are weighted rather than equal.** Some cultures assign greater evidentiary value to direct emotional expression, others to behavioural reliability, social ritual, or institutional commitment.
3. **Meaning is culturally mediated.** Signals do not speak for themselves; they are interpreted through norms of intimacy, communication, morality, and legitimacy.
4. **Confirmation is cumulative and revisable.** Love is often confirmed gradually through repeated signs, but it can also be weakened when signals conflict, disappear, or lose credibility.

More specifically, the four signal domains can be mapped onto the original LCM sequence. Affective, relational, symbolic, and institutional signals constitute the principal forms of love-relevant input at the level of expression and observation. The cultural interpretive framework then shapes the perceptual and attributional stages by providing expectations about sincerity, timing, appropriateness, maturity, and legitimacy. Love confirmation remains the judgemental outcome, but it is now understood as the end point of a socially organised interpretive pathway.

The LCMM also introduces a temporal dimension. In many relationships, affective and symbolic signals dominate early recognition because they are the first signs to become salient. Over time, however, relational consistency and institutional integration often become increasingly important because they test whether initial feelings are durable, reciprocal, and socially sustainable.

5.1. Affective Signals

Affective signals refer to the internal emotional experiences that individuals often take as the earliest or most immediate evidence of love. These include longing, jealousy, emotional dependence, tenderness, protectiveness, desire for proximity, distress at separation,

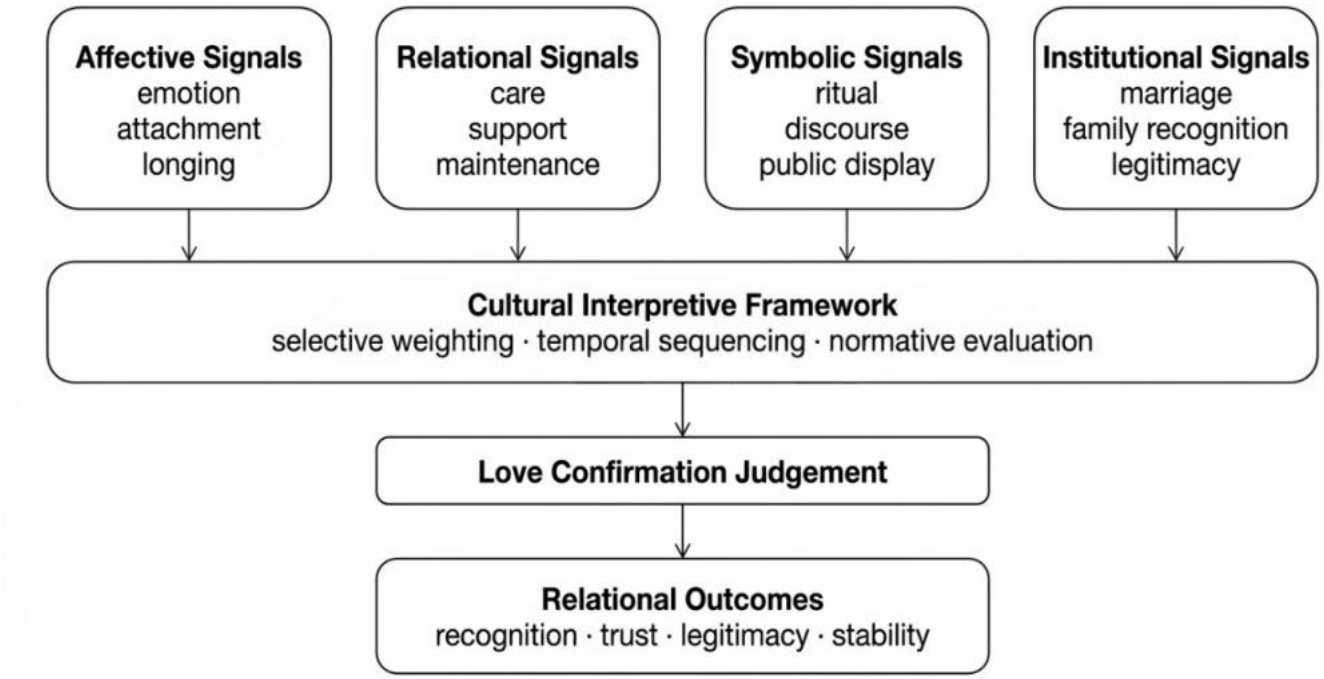


Figure 1. The Love Confirmation Mechanism Model (LCMM)

Table 1. Core Signal Domains in the LCMM

Signal domain	Theoretical lineage	Primary source	Typical indicators / Recognition function
Affective	Emotion theory, attachment theory	Internal emotional experience	Longing, jealousy, emotional dependence, tenderness, desire for proximity. Makes love feel subjectively salient.
Relational	Interactionism, relational maintenance research	Interaction patterns	Care, time investment, exclusivity, responsiveness, support. Makes love visible in ongoing practice.
Symbolic	Cultural sociology, discourse and ritual theory	Cultural codes and performances	Declarations, gifts, rituals, anniversaries, public acknowledgement. Makes love socially legible.
Institutional	Sociology of legitimacy, recognition, and intimacy	Social and legal structures	Marriage, cohabitation, family recognition, role integration, public legitimacy. Makes love formally validated.

and the persistent salience of the other person in thought and feeling. Such signals are important because they render love experientially noticeable before it is socially articulated.

Psychological theories have often privileged this affective layer. Attachment perspectives, for example, explain how distress, reassurance-seeking, and proximity needs become organised around a particular person (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Prototype studies likewise show that ordinary conceptions of love are centrally associated with caring, trust, intimacy, and emotional investment (Fehr, 1988). More recent work continues to frame romantic love as an intense emotional-motivational system oriented toward pair-bonding (Doherty & Brumbaugh, 2024).

However, affective intensity alone rarely settles the matter. Emotions are ambiguous. Longing may reflect desire, obsession, loneliness, anxiety, or attachment insecurity. Jealousy may be interpreted as passion, but it may also be viewed as possessiveness or fear. Emotional dependence may feel profound to the subject while appearing unstable or unhealthy to an observer. Affective signals therefore make love phenomenologically vivid but not automatically conceptually secure.

This ambiguity is one reason love confirmation cannot be reduced to feeling. Internal emotion requires interpretation, and interpretation is shaped by cultural assumptions about what emotions count as romantic, legitimate, mature, or moral. In some settings, intense longing may be celebrated as proof of authentic love; in others, stable calmness and mutual reliability may be valued more highly than emotional volatility. Recent work on emotional synchrony also suggests that apparently private affective processes are often dyadically patterned, with stronger synchronisation emerging in higher-quality romantic relationships (Chen et al., 2024). Within the LCMM, affective signals are best understood as necessary but often insufficient. They often initiate the process of recognition, but confirmation usually depends on whether these inner states are reinforced by relational, symbolic, or institutional evidence.

5.2. Relational Signals

Relational signals refer to observable patterns of interaction through which love is enacted in everyday life. These include mutual care, time investment, reliability, responsiveness, emotional support, exclusivity, willingness to prioritise the relationship, and practical acts of concern. Whereas affective signals make love inwardly palpable, relational signals make love behaviourally visible.

This domain is especially important because romantic partners often infer love not from one dramatic declaration but from repeated interactional consistency. Who shows up in times of need? Who remembers, supports, protects, and remains available? Who reorganises time, makes sacrifices, or offers care without immediate reward? These forms of conduct are often treated as highly persuasive evidence because they translate feeling into sustained relational practice. Their theoretical lineage lies in interactionist and relational maintenance traditions, which treat affection, support, openness, task sharing, and routine upkeep as central to relationship continuity (Dainton & Stafford, 1993; Ogolsky & Stafford, 2023).

The value of relational signals is also that they moderate the ambiguity of affective claims. A partner may declare intense love, but if they are inconsistent, emotionally unavailable, or unwilling to invest time and care, the declaration may not be confirmed. Conversely, a person who rarely verbalises love may nonetheless be recognised as loving because of dependable support, practical responsibility, and enduring commitment. Relational signals therefore often function as tests of sincerity. Recent dyadic evidence reinforces this point: maintenance behaviours mediate links between attachment and relationship quality in long-distance couples (Bouchard et al., 2023), and dyadic synchrony appears to support the perception of emotional support under conditions of lower relational turbulence (Chiasson et al., 2024).

In cross-cultural terms, relational signals may be especially significant where love is expected to be shown through action rather than explicit emotional speech. Commitment expressed through labour, provision, sacrifice, or dependable presence can carry more confirmatory force than verbal intensity alone. Within the LCMM, relational signals occupy a bridging position. They connect internal emotion with public evidence. For this reason, they often serve as the most persuasive domain in everyday confirmation.

5.3. Symbolic Signals

Symbolic signals refer to culturally recognisable acts, words, objects, and performances that communicate romantic meaning. Examples include verbal declarations of love, romantic gifts, anniversaries, ritualised dates, terms of endearment, public displays of affection, social media acknowledgment, and other acts that are legible within a culture as signs of romance. Symbolic signals matter because they transform private feeling into socially interpretable form.

The importance of symbolism has long been noted in cultural studies of romance. Swidler (1986) emphasised that culture provides repertoires of action, while Illouz (1997) showed how modern romance is organised through powerful symbolic scripts shaped by consumer culture and mass media. A ring, a formal declaration, a public anniversary celebration, or an intimate gift may function as strong evidence of love because they draw upon established cultural meanings. Contemporary digital research extends this insight by showing that social media posts, profile visibility, and electronic tie-signs now function as important symbolic resources for signalling relationship status and commitment (McEwan & LeFebvre, 2023).

Symbolic signals are especially powerful in situations where relational status is uncertain. In ambiguous relationships, symbolic acts often reduce uncertainty because they publicly or semi-publicly classify the bond. To say "I love you," to introduce a partner in romantic terms, or to enact a recognisable ritual can move a relationship from emotional possibility to named reality. Symbolic signals thus often carry classificatory force.

Yet symbolic signals are also fragile. Because they are culturally scripted, they may be dismissed as performative, obligatory, strategic, or superficial. A gift may be read as affection in one context and compensation or impression management in another. A declaration may be considered sincere in one relationship and manipulative in another. Symbols do not merely express love; they invite judgement about authenticity. For this reason, symbolic signals in the LCMM are not treated as stand-alone proof. Their confirmatory power depends on congruence with affective and relational evidence and on the recipient's cultural expectations regarding appropriate romantic expression.

5.4. Institutional Signals

Institutional signals refer to socially recognised structures that validate and stabilise intimate relationships. These include marriage, engagement, cohabitation, family recognition, integration into kinship networks, shared residence, role obligations, and broader forms of public acknowledgement. Institutional signals matter because they locate love within systems of legitimacy that exceed the individual couple.

This domain is especially important for understanding why love cannot be treated as purely private. In many contexts, love becomes fully credible only when it is ratified by recognised institutions. Marriage, for instance, may function not only as a legal arrangement but also as public proof of seriousness, endurance, and moral legitimacy. Family acceptance may similarly serve as a crucial sign that a relationship has moved beyond private feeling into social reality. Theoretical support for this domain comes from sociological work on intimacy, legitimacy, and recognition, which emphasises that intimate bonds are always embedded in broader social structures and status systems

(Giddens, 1992; Honneth, 1995; Kawas & Ogolsky, 2023).

Institutional signals do not always reflect inner emotional certainty, of course. Marriages may occur without deep love, and love may flourish without institutional recognition. Still, from the standpoint of confirmation, institutions often matter because they reduce ambiguity. They externalise commitment, create expectations of continuity, and make the relationship accountable to broader social norms. In some cultural settings, this kind of formal validation may count more strongly than verbal or symbolic romance.

Institutional signals are also where cultural and historical variation becomes especially visible. Societies differ in how much importance they assign to marriage, cohabitation, parental approval, religious blessing, and public status. They also differ in who is allowed access to such validation. Thus, institutional signals not only confirm love but also reveal the politics of legitimacy that surround it. Within the LCMM, institutional signals represent the most formalised mode of love confirmation. They are not always necessary, but where present they often stabilise or intensify recognition by converting private attachment into socially recognised relationship status.

Taken together, the four signal domains should be understood as analytically distinct but empirically interdependent. In practice, people rarely evaluate them separately. They assess the alignment among feeling, behaviour, symbol, and institution. The confirmatory force of any given signal is therefore relational and cumulative.

This point also suggests that the LCMM is useful not only for identifying successful confirmation but also for analysing failed or unstable confirmation. Relationships may remain ambiguous not because love is absent, but because the signal ecology is contradictory. Figure 2 develops this point as a cross-cultural recognition-gap mechanism. The same multi-layered signals may be processed through different cultural interpretive frameworks, generating divergent attributions regarding the meaning of the relationship. The recognition problem is therefore not simply whether love is present in some inner sense, but how evidence is interpreted, which signs are granted credibility, and how attribution divergence produces signal misalignment, non-confirmation, and recursive doubt.

6. Cross-Cultural Variations

If love is confirmed through multiple signals, then cross-cultural variation lies not only in whether people love, but in how they interpret the evidence of love. The crucial issue is signal weighting (as illustrated in Table 2). Cultures do not necessarily invent entirely different emotions, but they do differ in which signs are treated as most credible, in what sequence such signs should appear, and in who has authority to validate them.

Recent contextual scholarship is helpful here because it treats culture not as a residual variable but as a macro-level structure shaping romantic possibilities. Kawas & Ogolsky (2023) argue that relationship science must better account for the ways culture, law, inequality, and media organise relationship processes. Cross & Joo (2023) similarly show that East Asian and Euro-American romantic paradigms differ in ideology, affective norms, and expected life-course trajectories. Adair & Ferenczi (2023) further suggest that relationship maintenance practices vary with local socioecological conditions rather than reflecting a universal behavioural template. For the LCMM, these arguments reinforce the claim that cultural interpretation is built into confirmation rather than added to it after the fact.

At the same time, cross-cultural research strongly suggests that romantic love itself is not confined to a single civilisational setting. Jankowiak & Fischer (1992)'s widely cited cross-cultural review argued that romantic love appears with remarkable frequency across societies, even though its legitimacy and expression vary. Later work has shown that cultures differ in whether love is considered a sufficient basis for marriage (Levine et al., 1995), in the meanings attached to intimacy and commitment (Dion & Dion, 1993), and in the broader cultural models through which love is understood (Karandashev, 2017; Rokach, 2024). For the LCMM, the key implication is that universality of experience does not imply universality of recognition.

Three dimensions of cross-cultural variation are especially important:

1. **Salience**: This refers to which signals are treated as especially meaningful. In many Western individualistic settings, direct emotional expression and verbal articulation are often central to love confirmation. To name love explicitly, to speak openly about feelings, and to enact visible symbolic gestures may carry high confirmatory value. This pattern aligns with broader communication norms favouring low-context or direct styles (Ge et al., 2022; Gudykunst et al., 1996).
2. **Sequencing**: This involves the expected order through which love becomes credible. In some contexts, strong affective and symbolic expression may be expected early, with institutional steps following later. In other contexts, behavioural reliability, responsibility, and long-term commitment may need to precede explicit romantic declaration. Here, love is confirmed less by sudden expressive intensity than by repeated demonstrations of seriousness.
3. **Legitimacy Structures**: This pertains to the role played by families, communities, and institutions in validating intimacy. In more collectivist or family-centred settings, institutional and relational signals may be especially important. Love may become credible when a partner shows responsibility, persistence, moral seriousness, and willingness to be integrated into kinship structures. Family recognition may therefore act as a powerful confirmation mechanism, not simply as an external addition to private love.

Comparative scholarship further suggests that cultures differ not only in signal weighting but also in the models of personhood and relationship against which love is judged. Karandashev (2017), for example, shows that romantic love is embedded in culturally specific understandings of the self, marriage, morality, and ideal partnership. What counts as mature love in one setting may appear excessive, immature, or insufficient in another. This means that cultural variation in love confirmation is not simply a matter of style; it reflects deeper assumptions about what romantic relationships are for and what legitimate intimacy should accomplish.

Recent communication research demonstrates this clearly. Ge et al. (2022) show that Chinese participants preferred more indirect communication in romantic relationships than European Americans, and that each group anticipated greater relationship satisfaction when communication matched their culturally preferred style. This finding is theoretically important for the LCMM because it reveals that the confirmatory value of a signal depends not only on what is communicated but on how it is communicated. A direct verbal declaration may confirm love in one context and feel excessive, premature, or insincere in another. Conversely, indirect care or implication may confirm love in one cultural setting but fail to register in another.

More broadly, comparative work on culture and intimacy suggests that individualistic settings often place stronger emphasis on emotional self-disclosure and romantic fulfilment, whereas collectivistic settings may place greater value on duty, endurance, mutual adjustment, and social integration (Dion & Dion, 1993; Rokach, 2024). From the perspective of the LCMM, this means that the path to confirmation is culturally organised. The threshold for concluding "this is love" depends on which forms of evidence are privileged.

Large comparative studies also indicate that even when similar dimensions of love are found across countries, they do not necessarily carry identical practical meanings. Sorokowski et al. (2021) found broad support for the triangular dimensions of intimacy, passion, and

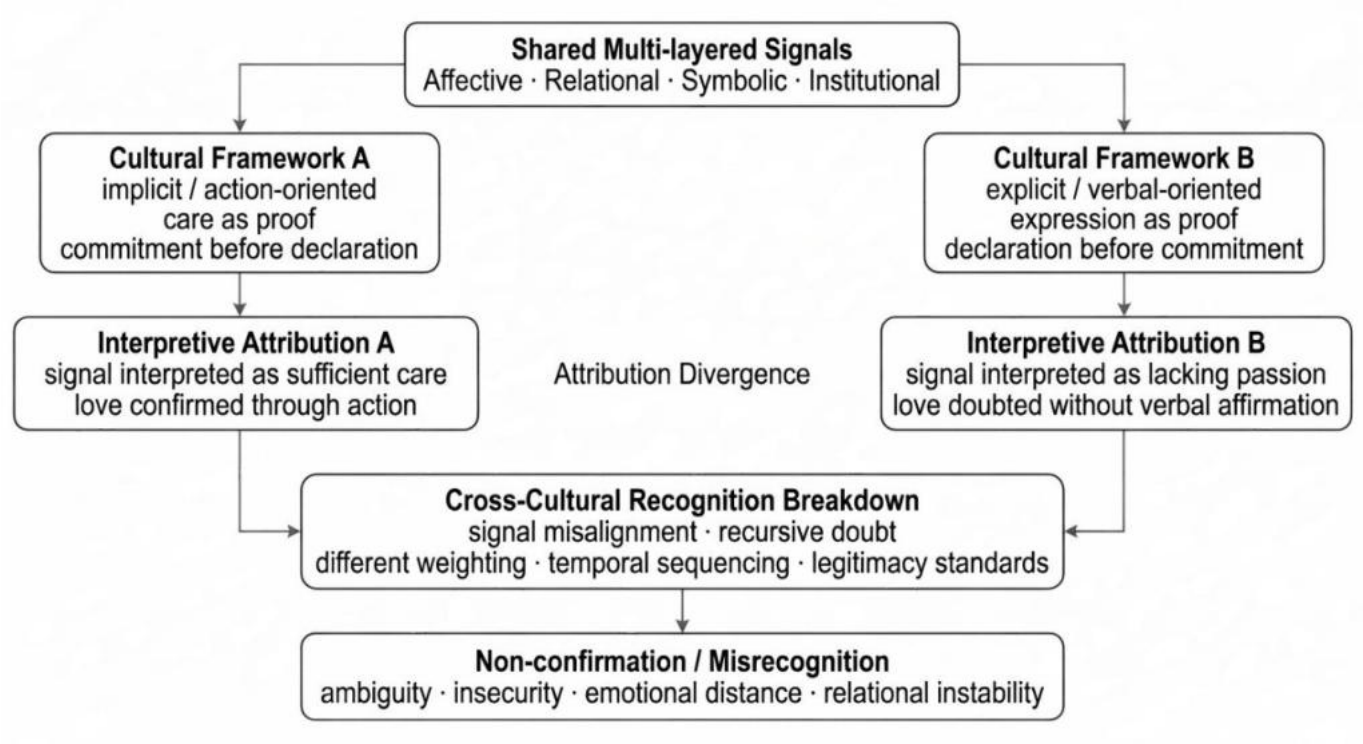


Figure 2. Cross-Cultural Recognition Breakdown in the LCMM

Table 2. Illustrative Cultural Emphases in Love Confirmation

Cultural pattern (ideal-type)	Signals often weighted more strongly	Typical confirmation emphasis
Western individualistic settings	affective + symbolic	emotional expression, verbal declaration, explicit romance
East Asian interdependent settings	relational + institutional	commitment, responsibility, endurance, family recognition
Highly expressive Mediterranean or Latin romance cultures	affective + symbolic + public display	passion, visible devotion, ritualised expression

commitment across 25 countries. Yet that apparent common structure should not be mistaken for a common recognition process. The LCMM complements such findings by explaining how similar psychological components may be culturally translated into different evidentiary hierarchies in everyday life.

Cross-cultural variation also appears differently across levels of recognition. In some societies, intrapersonal certainty may emerge relatively early because emotional self-disclosure is culturally encouraged, while social recognition may arrive later and require formal commitment. In other settings, partners may refrain from explicit self-disclosure but obtain strong interpersonal or social confirmation through patterned care, shared obligation, or family integration. The LCMM therefore suggests that cultures distribute confirmatory authority differently: some privilege the self, some the dyad, and some the wider social field.

Globalisation and digital mediation add another layer of complexity. Romantic repertoires now circulate transnationally through film, television, social media, and platform cultures, making symbolic scripts more portable than before. Yet portability does not eliminate local interpretation. People may adopt globally visible romantic forms while still evaluating them through local norms of propriety, family obligation, gender expectation, or emotional restraint. The LCMM is therefore compatible with hybridisation: contemporary actors may combine multiple confirmation logics rather than conform neatly to a single cultural script.

The model also helps explain difficulties in intercultural relationships. When partners draw on different confirmation logics, confirmation gaps may emerge even in caring relationships. One partner may expect explicit verbal and symbolic affirmation; the other may regard practical support, patience, and long-term planning as stronger signs of love. In such cases, love may be present but insufficiently recognised because the signal weighting systems do not align. Cross-cultural variation, then, does not undermine the possibility of love theory. Instead, it reveals that recognition is culturally patterned. Love may be widespread, but its confirmatory economy is socially organised.

7. Discussion

The LCMM contributes to love theory by reframing the central problem. The dominant question in much of the literature has been: what is love? Structural theories answer this in terms of components, experiential theories in terms of feelings and bonds, and cultural theories in terms of scripts and representations. The LCMM asks a different but complementary question: how is love recognised, and through what epistemic process does love become knowable?

7.1. Theoretical Contributions

The model makes five primary theoretical contributions:

1. **Shifting from Ontology to Epistemology**: It extends structural theories by shifting attention from the ontology of love to its epistemology. Intimacy, passion, and commitment remain analytically important, but they do not explain how actors infer that these dimensions are present, mutually recognised, or socially credible. The LCMM addresses this missing step by analysing the evidentiary process through which love becomes knowable, contestable, and sometimes misrecognised.
2. **Decentering Pure Emotion**: The model moves beyond a narrow focus on emotion. Love is not denied as feeling; rather, feeling is treated as one domain of evidence among several. This is important because romantic life frequently involves divergence between emotion and confirmation. A person may feel intense love without receiving confirmation from the partner or the social environment. The LCMM captures these tensions more effectively than theories centred on affect alone.
3. **Interdisciplinary Integration**: The framework strengthens the bridge between psychology, cultural sociology, and communication theory. Psychology contributes insights into attachment, perception, and emotion. Cultural sociology explains how symbolic repertoires and legitimacy structures organise meaning. Communication theory clarifies how styles of expression and interpretation vary across relational and cultural contexts.
4. **Highlighting Signal Congruence**: The model clarifies the importance of congruence. Love confirmation is strengthened when affective, relational, symbolic, and institutional signals align. It is weakened when they contradict one another. A relationship in which a partner verbally declares love but avoids commitment, offers gifts without care, or seeks institutional status without emotional reciprocity may generate uncertainty rather than confirmation.
5. **Theorising Misrecognition and Power**: The LCMM makes room for the analysis of misrecognition. Love may be underrecognised when culturally expected signals are absent, even if care and attachment are strong. It may also be contested when self, partner, and social audience assign divergent meanings to the same evidence. If recognition is tied to social visibility and normative acknowledgement (Honneth, 1995; Ricoeur, 2005; Taylor, 1994), then intimate life is a field in which some bonds are more readily validated than others. Love confirmation is therefore not merely cognitive but moral and social: it confers seriousness, worth, and legitimacy.

This final point also has normative significance. Because social institutions and cultural scripts do not validate all relationships equally, love confirmation is shaped by power as well as meaning. Class expectations, religious rules, gender norms, sexuality regimes, and family authority can make some forms of love easier to recognise and others harder to legitimise. The LCMM is therefore useful not only for analysing how people confirm love, but also for examining whose love is readily confirmed, whose love remains ambiguous, and whose love is denied social credibility.

7.2. Empirical and Practical Implications

The LCMM generates a series of testable implications for future research. The first is that greater cross-signal coherence should predict stronger love confirmation than the presence of any single signal domain alone. The second is that confirmation should be higher when the form of love expression matches the recipient's culturally shaped expectations. The third is that institutional validation should exert stronger confirmatory effects in contexts where family recognition, marriage, or public legitimacy are central to romantic credibility. The fourth is that intercultural couples should be especially vulnerable to confirmation gaps when partners assign divergent weight to symbolic, relational, or institutional signs.

These implications also matter outside theory-building. In relationship counselling, for example, conflict often appears to concern emotional insufficiency when the underlying problem is actually discrepant confirmation logic. Partners may not disagree about the value of love itself so much as about what counts as persuasive evidence of love. This observation is particularly relevant for intercultural relationships, long-term relationships, and digitally mediated relationships, where symbolic and public cues may be interpreted differently.

The model also has implications for media and discourse analysis. Contemporary romance is increasingly shaped by platformed communication, visual display, and public metrics of acknowledgement. Social media posts, profile visibility, relationship labels, and digital responsiveness can function as symbolic signals with strong confirmatory effects. The LCMM provides a framework for examining how these newer forms interact with older relational and institutional

signals.

Methodologically, the LCMM lends itself to multi-method research. Survey-based work could measure the relative weight individuals assign to each signal domain. Experimental vignette designs could manipulate combinations of affective, relational, symbolic, and institutional cues to test which constellations most strongly produce love confirmation under different cultural conditions. Qualitative interviews could examine how people retrospectively narrate the moment at which they "knew" they loved or were loved. Dyadic research could compare whether partners within the same relationship rely on shared confirmation criteria or on divergent ones.

7.3. Boundary Conditions, Limitations, and Future Directions

Several boundary conditions should be stated clearly. First, the LCMM is designed to explain the recognition of romantic love rather than every form of attachment, care, or relational dependence. It is therefore most applicable where actors must interpret whether a bond should count as specifically romantic and loving. Second, the model addresses recognition rather than the ontological truth of feeling. It explains how love becomes credible, not how scholars can verify the authenticity of any inner state independent of social interpretation. Third, the framework is oriented toward culturally mediated contemporary relationships and should therefore be adapted carefully when applied to historically distant settings or to relational arrangements governed by sharply different institutional logics.

The article also has limitations. It is theoretical rather than empirical, and the four signal categories are proposed as conceptual tools rather than final measurement constructs. In addition, cultural comparisons are necessarily simplified. The model should not be used to reify cultures as homogeneous or bounded units; rather, it should guide situated inquiry into how different communities organise the recognition of love under specific historical and social conditions.

Future research may proceed in at least three directions. One avenue is scale development, including measures of love confirmation, signal weighting, and signal congruence. A second is qualitative and comparative research, such as interviews, case studies, and discourse analysis examining how people narrate the process of realising that they love or are loved. A third is relational process research, especially dyadic and longitudinal work on how confirmation develops, stabilises, or breaks down over time and across cultural difference.

8. Conclusion

This article has argued that love should be theorised not only as a structure, feeling, or discourse, but also as an epistemic problem of recognition. People do not simply experience love; they must also interpret it, confirm it, and render it credible through culturally organised judgements about emotion, behaviour, symbolism, and legitimacy.

By extending Song (2025)'s Love Confirmation Mechanism into the Love Confirmation Mechanism Model, the article has proposed a cross-cultural framework in which affective, relational, symbolic, and institutional signals are filtered through cultural interpretive schemes. This move shifts the study of love from the question of what love is to the equally important question of how love becomes knowable, nameable, and socially valid. It also clarifies why the same relational act may function as persuasive evidence of love in one context yet remain insufficient, ambiguous, unconvincing, or even misleading in another.

The broader implication is that love recognition links private emotion to public legitimacy. Whether one is loved, whether a relationship counts as love, and whether that love is socially acknowledged are not identical questions, but neither are they separable. The LCMM provides a conceptual vocabulary for analysing those connections without reducing love either to inner feeling or to institutional form.

Future research can extend this framework through comparative empirical studies, media analysis, interpersonal communication research, and work on intercultural relationships. The model may be especially useful for studies of romantic communication, relational signalling, and relationship counselling, where misunderstandings often arise not only from insufficient feeling but from mismatched standards of confirmation. Such research will be essential for understanding not only how love is experienced, but how it becomes recognisable within culturally structured worlds. Love is not simply felt, but judged, negotiated, and socially recognised through culturally structured processes of interpretation.

Author Contributions

The author independently conceptualized the Love Confirmation Mechanism Model (LCMM), developed the theoretical framework, conducted the literature integration and analytical synthesis, and wrote the manuscript.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study is a theoretical work based on existing literature and conceptual analysis. It does not involve human participants, empirical data collection, or identifiable personal information. Therefore, ethical approval was not required.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Competing Interests

The author declares no competing interests.

Acknowledgments

The author acknowledges the foundational contribution of prior scholarship in psychology, sociology, and cultural studies that informed the development of the LCMM.

References

Adair, L., & Ferenczi, N. (2023). Cultural variation in relationship maintenance. In J. K. Mogilski & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of evolutionary psychology and romantic relationships* (pp. 528-560). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197524718.013.20

Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge.

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., Tudor, M., & Nelson, G. (1991). Close relationships as including other in the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*(2), 241-253. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.60.2.241

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of other in the self scale and the structure of interpersonal closeness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*(4), 596-612. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.63.4.596

Averill, J. R. (1985). The social construction of emotion: With special reference to love. In K. Gergen & K. Davis (Eds.), *The social construction of the person* (pp. 89-109). Springer-Verlag.

Barthes, R. (1978). *A lover's discourse: Fragments*. Hill and Wang.

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (1995). *The normal chaos of love*. Polity Press.

Bouchard, G., Gaudet, M., Cloutier, G., & Martin, M. (2023). Attachment, relational maintenance behaviors and relationship quality in romantic long-distance relationships: A dyadic perspective. *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships, 17*(2), 213-231. https://doi.org/10.5964/ijpr.9771

Cancian, F. M. (1987). *Love in America: Gender and self-development*. Cambridge University Press.

Carey, J. W. (1989). *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. Unwin Hyman.

Chen, Y., Liu, S., Hao, Y., Zhao, Q., Ren, J., Piao, Y., Wang, L., Yang, Y., Jin, C., Wang, H., Zhou, X., Gao, J.-H., Zhang, X., & Wei, Z. (2024). Higher emotional synchronization is modulated by relationship quality in romantic relationships and not in close friendships. *NeuroImage, 297*, 120733. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2024.120733

Chiasson, R. M., Goodboy, A. K., & Dillow, M. R. (2024). The indirect effect of relational turbulence on received emotional support through dyadic synchrony. *Communication Research Reports, 41*(3), 167-177. https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2024.2373192

Clark, A. N., & Lefkowitz, E. S. (2025). Sexual and affectionate behaviors and satisfaction for adults in romantic relationships: A latent profile analysis. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 54*(1), 175-188. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-024-03016-y

Cohen, M., Abargil, M., Ahissar, M., & Atzil, S. (2024). Social and nonsocial synchrony are interrelated and romantically attractive. *Communications Psychology, 2*, 57. https://doi.org/10.1038/s44271-024-00109-1

Cross, S. E., & Joo, M. (2023). Sociocultural perspectives on romantic relationships: A view from the East and West. In B. G. Ogolsky (Ed.), *The sociocultural context of romantic relationships* (pp. 29-54). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009158657.003

Dainton, M., & Stafford, L. (1993). Routine maintenance behaviors: A comparison of relationship type, partner similarity and maintenance strategies. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 10*(2), 255-271. https://doi.org/10.1177/026540759301000206

Dion, K. K., & Dion, K. L. (1993). Individualistic and collectivistic perspectives on gender and the cultural context of love and intimacy. *Journal of Social Issues, 49*(3), 53-69. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1993.tb01168.x

Doherty, J. K., & Brumbaugh, C. C. (2024). Romantic love. In L. Al-Shawaf & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of evolution and the emotions* (pp. 219-234). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197544754.013.10

Fehr, B. (1988). Prototype analysis of the concepts of love and commitment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55*(4), 557-579. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.55.4.557

Fehr, B., & Russell, J. A. (1991). The concept of love viewed from a prototype perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*(3), 425-438. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.60.3.425

Ge, F., Park, J., & Pietromonaco, P. R. (2022). How you talk about it matters: Cultural variation in communication directness in romantic relationships. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 53*(6), 583-602. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220221221088934

Giddens, A. (1992). *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies*. Stanford University Press.

Gudykunst, W. B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Toomey, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (1996). The influence of cultural individualism-collectivism, self-construals, and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research, 22*(4), 510-543. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1996.tb00377.x

Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Hatfield, E., & Sprecher, S. (1986). Measuring passionate love in intimate relationships. *Journal of Adolescence, 9*(4), 383-410. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-1971(86)80043-4

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*(3), 511-524. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.52.3.511

Hendrick, C., & Hendrick, S. (1986). A theory and method of love. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50*(2), 392-402. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.50.2.392

Hochschild, A. R. (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure. *American Journal of Sociology, 85*(3), 551-575. https://doi.org/10.1086/227049

Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. University of California Press.

Holmes, M. (2010). The emotionalization of reflexivity. *Sociology, 44*(1), 139-154. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038509351626

Honneth, A. (1995). *The struggle for recognition: The moral grammar of social conflicts*. MIT Press.

Illouz, E. (1997). *Consuming the romantic utopia: Love and the cultural contradictions of capitalism*. University of California Press.

Illouz, E. (2012). *Why love hurts: A sociological explanation*. Polity.

Jamieson, L. (1998). *Intimacy: Personal relationships in modern societies*. Polity Press.

Jankowiak, W., & Fischer, E. (1992). A cross-cultural perspective on romantic love. *Ethnology, 31*(2), 149-155. https://doi.org/10.2307/3773618

Karandashev, V. (2017). *Romantic love in cultural contexts*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-42683-9

Kawas, G., & Ogolsky, B. G. (2023). The sociocultural context of romantic relationships. In B. G. Ogolsky (Ed.), *The sociocultural context of romantic relationships* (pp. 1-6). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009158657.001

Levine, R., Sato, S., Hashimoto, T., & Verma, J. (1995). Love and marriage in eleven cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 26*(5), 554-571. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022195265006

Luhmann, N. (1986). *Love as passion: The codification of intimacy*. Harvard University Press.

McEwan, B., & LeFebvre, L. E. (2023). Romantic relationships and social media. In B. G. Ogolsky (Ed.), *The sociocultural context of romantic relationships* (pp. 201-225). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009158657.011

Ogolsky, B. G., & Stafford, L. (2023). A systematic review of relationship maintenance: Reflecting back and looking to the future. *Personal Relationships, 30*(1), 19-43. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12429

Ricoeur, P. (2005). *The course of recognition*. Harvard University Press.

Rokach, A. (2024). Love culturally: How does culture affect intimacy, commitment & love. *The Journal of Psychology, 158*(1), 84-114. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2023.2244129

Rubin, Z. (1970). Measurement of romantic love. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 16*(2), 265-273. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0029841

Shumway, D. R. (2003). *Modern love: Romance, intimacy, and the marriage crisis*. New York University Press.

Song, C. (2025). How is love recognised? A theoretical model of love confirmation mechanisms in romantic relationships. *Journal of Law, Psychology, and Communication Studies, 1*(1), 199-223. https://doi.org/10.63802/jlpcs.v1.i1.56

Sorokowski, P., Sorokowska, A., Karwowski, M., Groyecka, A., Aavik, T., Akello, G., Alm, C., Amjad, N., Anjum, A., Asao, K., Atama, C. S., Atamturk-Duyar, D., Ayebare, R., Batres, C., Bendixen, M., Bensafia, A., Bizumic, B., Bousena, M., Buss, D. M., ... Sternberg, R. J. (2021). Universality of the triangular theory of love: Adaptation and psychometric properties of the triangular love scale in 25 countries. *The Journal of Sex Research, 58*(1), 106-115. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2020.1787318

Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review, 93*(2), 119-135. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.93.2.119

Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review, 51*(2), 273-286. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095521

Swidler, A. (2001). *Talk of love: How culture matters*. University of Chicago Press.

Taylor, C. (1994). The politics of recognition. In A. Gutmann (Ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition* (pp. 25-73). Princeton University Press.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. Guilford Press.

Zelizer, V. A. (2005). *The purchase of intimacy*. Princeton University Press.