Rational Love: How Personality Types Can Influence Conflict Resolution

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Rational Love

How Personality Types Can Influence Conflict Resolution

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Is it true that opposites attract? In this study, we will conduct first-hand research and consult supporting literature to explore the following:

- Does an individual's enneagram type have a positive correlation with their love language?
- Does an individual's personality type have an impact on resolving conflict within their interpersonal relationships?

1 Introduction

Love Languages and Enneagram Types both help to explain human personality and interpersonal interactions. Personalities impact how an individual handles general conflict and the duration of any conflict (Deventer, Wagner, & Lüdtke, 2019; Geukes, Breil, & Hutteman, 2019). The current literature below shows why studying the ties between personality type and interpersonal conflict resolution is essential.

Conflict duration can prolong if an individual takes conflict personally (TCP), feeling they are receiving a negative evaluation of their personality (Hample & Richards, 2019; Leary & Allen, 2011). In addition, TCP may cause conflict resolution to go unresolved and instead grow into a serial argument (Squires, 2022). Additionally, while conflict may be more hostile for those in a committed relationship, less committed individuals will experience fewer conflicts overall (Lemay, 2015).

Individuals often assume that others hold similar personality traits which may cause conflict (Liu, 2018). When comparing themselves to their partner, the individual will tend to believe that their personality is better than their partner's (El, 2015). Here, we see confirmation bias (i.e. the tendency to only seek out information that supports one idea) in action which likely will prolong the conflict overall.
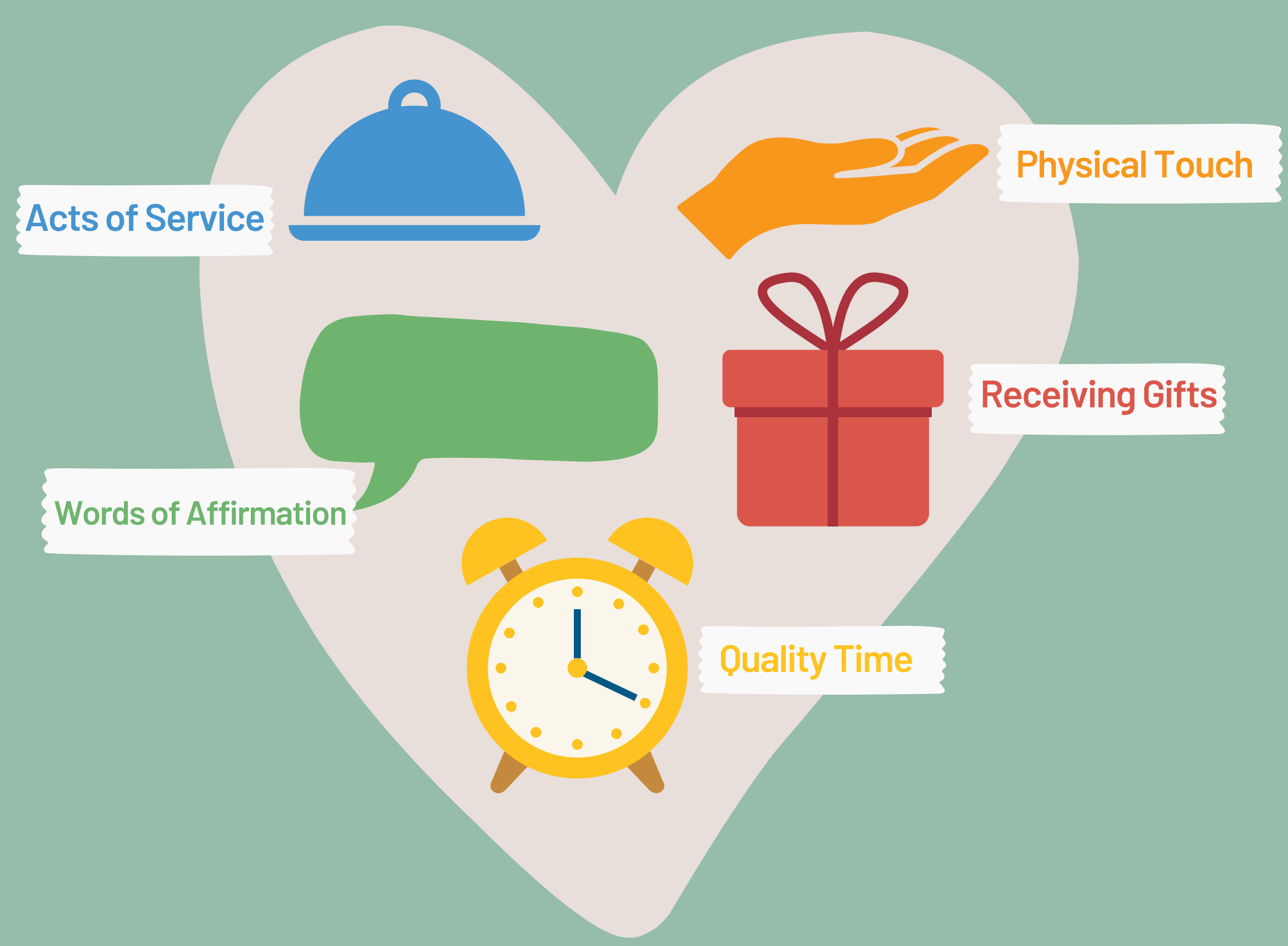
2 Objective

In previous research, we introduced the possibility that an individual's enneagram type may positively correlate with their love language. This study explores this phenomenon in-depth and offers grounding for further analysis on this subject.

We hypothesize that an individual's love language & enneagram type (i.e. personality type) influences the way that they resolve conflict within their interpersonal relationships.

In addition, we expect to find that opposites really do "attract", and that when these individuals experience conflict, it will be resolved more smoothly than those who are similar. This, we argue, may be due to the difference in personality type which allows an individual to give what the other person may lack.

Figure 1:
The 5 Love Languages
(5lovelanguages.com)

- Acts of Service
- Physical Touch
- Words of Affirmation
- Receiving Gifts
- Quality Time

Figure 2: Enneagram Types (Truity.com)

1. The Perfectionist
2. The Giver
3. The Acheiver
4. The Individualist
5. The Investigator
6. The Skeptic
7. The Enthusiast
8. The Challenger
9. The Peacemaker

3 Methodology

With IRB approval, we recruited current students of Governors State University (GSU) through posting flyers online and on-campus. We also sent out email invites within the GSU community to participate in our research study. As a result, 121 currently enrolled GSU students over the age of 18 volunteered for our study, with over 59% being between the ages of 18 and 25, and over 75% of the population identifying as female. While students mostly identified as either Black or White, 20% identified as Latinx. 113 participants were enrolled as an undergraduate student at the time of the study while 8 were graduate students.

This study was conducted online via Google Forms. First, participants responded to demographic-based questions pertaining to ethnicity, relationship status, as well as self-reflection on personality. Survey asked participants to take two self-assessment quizzes, including those regarding the Enneagram Personality Type as well as their Love Language. Following these assessments, participants were asked to reflect on a specific conflict that has occurred within one of their platonic or romantic relationships as well as how they have/plan to resolve said conflict. Within this survey, 70.2% reflected on romantic relationship conflicts, while 20.2% reflected on a platonic relationship; (others on "talking stage, "friends with benefits").

4 Analysis

- Enneagram Type 4 (Individualistic & Quirky) is most desired in relationships (46% romantic; 53.1% friendship)
- Enneagram Type 7 (Busy & Sociable) is not preferred in a romantic partner (4%), but is rated as a positive quality in a platonic friendship (19.5%)

- 60% of participants rate themselves as similar to their partner (platonic & romantic) in terms of conflict resolution style (CRS).
- Additionally, the following CRSs may be positively influenced by enneagram types:

  - 66.1% withdraw from partner to cool off
  - 33.9% work on solving the conflict immediately

  - 27.4% try to take control during arguments
  - 40.3% try to satisfy their partner's needs rather than their own

5 Results & Conclusion

Findings show that individuals look for similar personality traits in friendships and romantic relationships (with the exception of being busy and sociable [Enneagram type 7] for friendships but not romantic relationships). This suggests that we demand more time and to be more of a priority from romantic partners than from friends, as could be expected.

Further, we have similar love language preferences (in terms of what we value most) for both friendships and romantic relationships, with the exception of physical touch (which is important for romantic relationships but not for friendships). The tendency for a pair of individuals to share similar CSRs may be due to sharing the same enneagram type and/or love language.

While further analysis is needed to determine the statistical significance of findings, our results suggest the probability of correlation between enneagram type and love language. However, we were unable to determine the relation between conflict resolution and love language from initial analysis. An interesting finding that people tend to seek out similar qualities in friendships as well as romantic partners may lead to additional research.

Related literature

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