

Influence of Marriage Duration and Family Type on Love: A Study among Married Couples

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the influence of **marriage duration** and **family type** on love among married couples. Although love is considered a fundamental element of a successful marital relationship, its expression and intensity may vary across different stages of marriage and family environments. Limited empirical research has investigated the combined effect of marriage duration and family type on love, particularly among married couples in the Indian context. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to explore the individual and interaction effects of these variables on love. A total of **600 married couples** from different regions of Gujarat, India, were selected through purposive sampling. The participants were classified into three categories of marriage duration (0–5 years, 8–12 years, and above 15 years) and two family types (joint and nuclear), following a **3 × 2 factorial research design**. Love was measured using the **Triangular Love Scale (TLS)** developed by **Sternberg (1986)**, which assesses the dimensions of intimacy, passion, and commitment. The collected data were analyzed using **Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**. The findings revealed that **marriage duration had a significant effect on love** ($F = 8.19$), indicating that the level of love differs across different stages of married life. **Family type also showed a significant influence** ($F = 7.10$), with couples living in nuclear families reporting comparatively higher levels of love than those residing in joint families. Furthermore, the **interaction effect between marriage duration and family type was statistically significant** ($F = 3.91$), suggesting that the influence of marriage duration on love varies according to the family environment. The findings highlight the importance of developmental and family-related factors in understanding marital love and provide useful implications for psychologists, marriage counsellors, family therapists, and other mental health professionals working to strengthen marital relationships and family well-being.

Keywords: *Love, Marriage Duration, Family Type, Married Couples, Intimacy, Passion, Commitment, Two-Way ANOVA*

Love has long been recognized as one of the most important dimensions of marital life, influencing the quality, stability, and continuity of intimate relationships. Beyond emotional attachment, love represents a dynamic psychological process through which partners develop trust, commitment, mutual understanding, and emotional security. A satisfying marital relationship is not merely sustained by legal or social obligations; rather, it

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is strengthened through affection, empathy, effective communication, and the ability of partners to adapt to changing life circumstances. Consequently, the presence of love within marriage has been consistently associated with better psychological adjustment, stronger family relationships, and greater overall life satisfaction.

Marriage is a lifelong social institution that requires continuous emotional investment from both partners. As couples progress through different stages of married life, they encounter various developmental transitions, including role adjustments, parenthood, occupational responsibilities, financial challenges, and changing family expectations. These experiences influence the way partners express affection, resolve conflicts, and maintain emotional intimacy. While love is often perceived as a stable emotional bond, psychological research suggests that its expression and intensity may vary across different phases of marriage depending on the challenges and opportunities experienced by couples.

Marriage duration is one of the important factors that may influence the quality of love between spouses. During the initial years of marriage, couples generally experience excitement, emotional closeness, and the process of learning about each other's personalities, habits, and expectations. However, this period may also involve adjustment difficulties as partners negotiate roles, responsibilities, and individual differences. As the marital relationship matures, couples often develop improved communication, stronger emotional understanding, and greater confidence in dealing with everyday challenges. At the same time, prolonged marital life may introduce additional responsibilities related to children, employment, financial commitments, and ageing parents, all of which can influence emotional closeness between spouses. Therefore, understanding how love differs across various stages of marriage remains an important area of psychological investigation.

Another important contextual factor affecting marital relationships is the family system in which couples reside. In India, both joint and nuclear family structures continue to coexist, although rapid urbanization and socioeconomic changes have significantly altered family living arrangements. Joint families often provide emotional, financial, and practical support through the presence of multiple family members. Such support may reduce stress and create opportunities for shared responsibilities, thereby strengthening marital relationships. At the same time, living in a joint family may also require couples to adjust to multiple interpersonal relationships, family traditions, and collective decision-making processes, which can sometimes generate interpersonal conflicts.

In contrast, couples living in nuclear families generally experience greater independence in making personal and family decisions. They enjoy increased privacy and autonomy, allowing partners to spend more time together and establish their own family routines. However, the absence of extended family support may increase the burden of childcare, household responsibilities, occupational stress, and financial management. Consequently, both family systems possess unique characteristics that may either facilitate or challenge the expression of love within marriage. These contrasting family environments make it important to examine whether family type contributes significantly to differences in marital love.

Love within marriage is also influenced by cultural values and social expectations. Indian marriages are often characterized by strong family involvement, shared responsibilities, and long-term commitment rather than individual preferences alone. Cultural norms encourage cooperation, mutual respect, and adjustment between spouses, making love a multidimensional construct that extends beyond romantic attraction. Emotional support,

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sacrifice, trust, understanding, and companionship become increasingly important as couples navigate different stages of married life. Therefore, examining love within the Indian sociocultural context provides valuable insights into the factors that contribute to healthy and satisfying marital relationships.

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that marital relationships are influenced by a wide range of demographic, psychological, and family-related variables, including age, education, communication patterns, socioeconomic status, commitment, emotional intimacy, and family environment (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Fincham & Beach, 2010; Finkel et al., 2017). Although substantial research has examined marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, and relationship quality, comparatively limited attention has been given to understanding how marriage duration and family type jointly influence love among married couples, particularly within the Indian socio-cultural context. This gap in the existing literature provided the rationale for undertaking the present investigation.

In view of the limited empirical evidence available on the combined influence of marriage duration and family type on love, the present study was undertaken to examine these relationships among married couples. Marriage duration was categorized into 0–5 years, 8–12 years, and above 15 years, while family type was classified as joint and nuclear. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to the existing literature on marital relationships and provide useful insights for psychologists, marriage counsellors, family therapists, and other professionals working in the field of family and marital well-being.

Objective of the Study

The present study was undertaken to examine the influence of marriage duration and family type on love among married couples. Specifically, the study aimed:

1. To examine the effect of marriage duration on love among married couples.
2. To examine the effect of family type (joint and nuclear) on love among married couples.
3. To investigate the interaction effect of marriage duration and family type on love among married couples.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the influence of marriage duration and family type on love among married couples. A 3×2 factorial design was employed, in which marriage duration (0–5 years, 8–12 years, and above 15 years) and family type (joint and nuclear) served as the independent variables, whereas love was considered the dependent variable. The study was conducted among married couples residing in different districts of Gujarat, India.

Sample

The study comprised 600 married couples, selected through purposive sampling. The participants were equally distributed across six groups formed by the combination of the three levels of marriage duration and two family types, with 100 couples in each group. Only legally married couples who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study were included. Participants were approached personally, informed about the purpose of the research, and assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for academic and research purposes.

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Table A

		Marriage Duration			Total
		0-5 Years	8-12 Years	Above 15 Years	
Family Type	Joint Family	100	100	100	300
	Nuclear Family	100	100	100	300
Total		200	200	200	600

Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their voluntary consent was obtained. Confidentiality of the information was assured, and the collected data were used exclusively for academic and research purposes.

Variables

1. Independent Variables

Marriage Duration

- 0–5 years
- 8–12 years
- Above 15 years

Family Type

- Joint Family
- Nuclear Family

2. Dependent Variable

- Love

Measurement Tool

Love was assessed using the Triangular Love Scale (TLS) developed by Sternberg (1986). The scale is based on the Triangular Theory of Love, which conceptualizes love through three dimensions: Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment. It consists of 45 items, with 15 items measuring each dimension. The respondents rated each statement on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 9 (Extremely). Higher scores indicate a higher level of love among married couples. The scale has demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity and has been widely used in studies related to marital and romantic relationships. In the present study, the total love score obtained from the scale was used for statistical analysis.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including Mean and Standard Deviation, were computed to summarize the data. To examine the main effects of marriage duration and family type, as well as their interaction effect on love among married couples, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed. Statistical significance was tested at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To examine the influence of marriage duration and family type on love among married couples, the collected data were analyzed using Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Marriage duration (0–5 years, 8–12 years, and above 15 years) and family type (joint and nuclear) were treated as the independent variables, whereas love served as the dependent variable. The obtained results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of Two-Way ANOVA for Love among Married Couples

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Level of Significance
Marriage Duration (A)	816.67	2	408.34	8.19	0.01*
Family Type (B)	354.07	1	354.07	7.10	0.05*
A × B	390.14	2	195.07	3.91	0.05*
Error	29611.62	594	49.85		
Total	31172.50	599			

A = **Marriage Duration** (0–5 years, 8–12 years, Above 15 years)

B = **Family Type** (Joint Family, Nuclear Family)

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that marriage duration has a significant influence on love among married couples. The obtained F-value (8.19) was found to be significant at the 0.01 level. The mean scores revealed that couples married for above 15 years reported comparatively higher love scores ($M = 460.34$) than couples married for 8–12 years ($M = 459.26$) and 0–5 years ($M = 459.16$). These findings suggest that love tends to become stronger and more stable as couples spend more years together. With increasing marital duration, partners develop greater emotional understanding, mutual trust, and commitment, which strengthen their marital relationship. Thus, marriage duration plays an important role in influencing the level of love among married couples.

The findings also revealed that family type has a significant influence on love among married couples. The obtained F-value (7.10) was significant at the 0.05 level. The mean scores indicate that couples living in nuclear families ($M = 460.92$) reported higher love scores than those living in joint families ($M = 458.58$). This finding suggests that couples residing in nuclear families may experience greater emotional closeness, better interpersonal communication, and more opportunities to spend quality time together. These factors may contribute to higher levels of love compared to couples living in joint family settings.

Further, the interaction effect between marriage duration and family type was also found to be significant, as the obtained F-value (3.91) was significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that the influence of marriage duration on love differs according to the type of family. The mean scores show that couples living in nuclear families and married for above 15 years reported the highest level of love, whereas comparatively lower scores were observed among couples in joint families with shorter marriage duration. These findings suggest that both marriage duration and family environment jointly contribute to the development and maintenance of love among married couples.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the influence of marriage duration and family type on love among married couples. The findings revealed that both variables significantly contribute to differences in the level of love experienced within marriage. Marriage duration was found to have a significant influence, indicating that love is not a static emotional state but a dynamic process that develops over time. As couples spend more years together, they tend to develop greater emotional intimacy, mutual trust, understanding, and commitment, which strengthen their marital relationship and contribute to a more stable form of love.

The study also demonstrated that family type plays an important role in shaping marital love. Couples living in nuclear families reported comparatively higher love scores than those residing in joint families. This finding suggests that the family environment influences

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opportunities for emotional expression, communication, and interpersonal interaction between spouses. However, the results do not indicate that one family system is superior to the other. Rather, they highlight that different family structures provide different relational experiences, which may influence the way love is expressed and maintained throughout married life.

Furthermore, the significant interaction effect between marriage duration and family type indicates that these two variables jointly influence love among married couples. The findings suggest that the development of love across different stages of marriage is affected by the family environment in which couples live. Therefore, marital relationships should be understood not only from the perspective of time spent together but also within the broader context of family structure and social environment.

The findings of the present study have important practical implications for psychologists, marriage counsellors, family therapists, and other mental health professionals working with married couples. Understanding the combined influence of marriage duration and family type may help professionals design more effective counselling and intervention programmes aimed at strengthening marital relationships and promoting family well-being. Future research may include participants from different cultural regions and examine additional psychosocial variables such as communication patterns, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and parenting practices to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of love among married couples.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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