

# TRIANGULAR THEORY OF LOVE IN GEN X AND GEN Z: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2024

*Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj:* **University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište u Splitu, Filozofski fakultet**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:172:515710>

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*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2025-01-13**

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**Triangular Theory of Love in Gen X and Gen Z: A Comparative  
Study**

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BS thesis

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Split, 2024



## Abstract

This study examines generational differences in romantic relationships between Generation X and Generation Z using Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love as a framework. A sample of 414 participants, comprising 187 from Gen X and 227 from Gen Z, completed the Sternberg Triangular Love Scale. The study found that Gen Z scored higher on all three love components—intimacy, passion, and commitment—compared to Gen X, suggesting a more intense or positive experience of love among younger individuals. Additionally, while both generations generally prioritized intimacy and commitment over passion in their ideal relationships, significant gender differences emerged, with women valuing intimacy more and men prioritizing passion. Regression analyses revealed that religiosity and religious/spiritual compatibility between partners positively predicted overall scores on the Sternberg Love Scale, while spirituality unexpectedly showed a negative association. These findings provide insights into the evolving dynamics of love across generations and genders, highlighting the need for further research on generational and gender influences on romantic relationships.

*Keywords: generational differences, Triangular Theory of Love, Gen X, Gen Z, romantic relationships*



## Sažetak

Ovo istraživanje ispituje generacijske razlike u romantičnim odnosima između Generacije X i Generacije Z koristeći Sternbergovu triangularnu teoriju ljubavi kao okvir. Uzorak od 414 sudionika, od kojih je 187 iz Generacije X i 227 iz Generacije Z, ispunio je Sternbergovu skalu triangularne ljubavi. Studija je pokazala da je Generacija Z postigla više rezultate u sva tri elementa ljubavi—intimnost, strast i predanost—u usporedbi s Generacijom X, sugerirajući intenzivnije ili pozitivnije iskustvo ljubavi kod mlađih osoba. Osim toga, dok su obje generacije općenito davale prednost intimnosti i predanosti nad strašću u svojim idealnim vezama, pojavile su se značajne spolne razlike, pri čemu su žene više cijenile intimnost, a muškarci strast. Regresijske analize otkrile su da religioznost i religijska/spiritualna kompatibilnost između partnera pozitivno predviđaju ukupne rezultate na Sternbergovoj skali, dok je spiritualnost, suprotno očekivanju, negativno povezana. Ovi nalazi pružaju uvid u evoluirajuću dinamiku ljubavi kroz generacije i spolove, ističući potrebu za daljnja istraživanja o generacijskim i spolnim utjecajima na romantične odnose.

*Ključne riječi: generacijske razlike, Triangularna teorija ljubavi, Generacija X, Generacija Z, romantični odnosi*



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## Introduction

Scholars, poets, psychologists, and theologians have explored and studied love throughout history. While there are many different types of love, Robert J. Sternberg proposed the Triangular theory of love, which suggests that love can be understood in terms of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment (Sternberg, 1986). This theory provides a useful framework for examining the nature of love and its varied expressions. In this bachelor thesis, the Triangular theory of love will be contrasted between Generation X (individuals born between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Z (individuals born between 1995 and 2010).

### Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love

Love is defined as: „a complex emotion involving strong feelings of affection and tenderness for the love object, pleasurable sensations in their presence, devotion to their well-being, and sensitivity to their reactions to oneself” ("Love," American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Love appears to be partly influenced by our genetic instincts and drives, but it is probably shaped more by the social role models we observe and learn from, which help define what we understand as love (Sternberg, 1986). While there may not be a universally agreed-upon taxonomy, several prominent types of love have emerged in literature and research, shedding light on how humans experience and express affection, attachment, and devotion. Erich Fromm (1956) describes love as a multidimensional and multitype concept. He posits that at the core of love lie *self-love*, *altruistic love*, *brotherly love*, and *erotic love*, most commonly found in romantic partnerships. *Erotic love* transcends mere physical attraction, encompassing a profound emotional and spiritual connection between partners. It involves mutual respect, understanding, and a shared commitment to nurturing intimacy and passion.

Similarly to Fromm's explanation of Erotic love, Robert J. Sternberg proposed the Triangular theory of love, in which he claims that love can be understood in terms of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment, which together form the vertices of a metaphorical triangle (Sternberg, 1986). The component of intimacy embodies feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness within loving relationships, encompassing sensations that evoke warmth. It is predominantly linked to emotional investment in the relationship, being perceived as the "warm" aspect among the three. The passion component encompasses the desires driving romance, physical attraction, sexual engagement, and associated phenomena in loving relationships. Primarily stemming from motivational engagement in the relationship, it is considered the "hot" component (Sternberg, 1986). The decision/commitment component pertains to acknowledging love for someone and the commitment to sustaining that affection over time. This component encompasses the cognitive aspects of deciding on and committing to a loving relationship's existence and potential longevity. Predominantly rooted in cognitive decision-making and commitment to the relationship, it represents the "cold" aspect (Sternberg, 1986). The triangular representation underscores the idea that these components are not isolated but interconnected, influencing each other's strength and expression within a relationship. Moreover, Sternberg acknowledges that the triangle serves as a heuristic tool, emphasizing its utility in understanding and analyzing the complexities of love rather than offering a precise mathematical or geometric model. It allows individuals and researchers to visualize the multidimensional nature of love and recognize that different combinations and configurations of the components can lead to various forms and qualities of love experienced in relationships. Based on these three components, Sternberg (1986) explained eight kinds of love that can

emerge from various component combinations: *nonlove*, *liking*, *infatuated love*, *empty love*, *romantic love*, *companionate love*, *fatuous love*, and *consummate love*.

Based on his theory, Sternberg developed a scale that measures the three mentioned constructs, the Triangular Love Scale (TLS). Before and concurrently with Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale, psychologists have developed other measures of love. Rubin (1970) developed one of the first measures of love, "Love and liking" in which he explained love as comprised of attachment, caring, and intimacy and attempted to differentiate love from liking. Hendrick & Hendrick (1986) designed a measure assessing six different styles of love (LAS): "Eros (intense, passionate, erotic love), Ludus (love as a game, love as a series of conquests), Storge (companionate, friendship-based love), Pragma (logical, practical shopping-list love), Mania (obsessive, possessive dependent love), and Agape (selfless love, putting the other before oneself)" (Graham, 2011, p. 4), based on Lee's (1973) color theory of love. The passionate love scale (PLS) developed by Hatfield & Sprecher (1986) also measures love but is unidimensional and focuses only on measuring the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral manifestations of passionate love.

### ***Components of the Triangular Theory of Love***

Sternberg's research suggests that the Intimacy component includes feelings such as " (a) a desire to enhance the well-being of the loved one, (b) shared happiness with the loved one, (c) a deep respect for the loved one, (d) reliance on the loved one in times of need, (e) mutual understanding, (f) sharing of oneself and possessions, (g) receiving emotional support, (h) giving emotional support, (i) intimate communication, and (j) appreciating the loved one's significance in one's life" (Sternberg, 1986, p.121.). These emotions represent only a portion of those within the intimacy component of love, and it's unnecessary to experience all of them to feel love.

Rather, experiencing a sufficient number of these emotions constitutes experiencing the intimacy component of love, with the necessary number likely varying from person to person. These feelings are often interconnected rather than experienced in isolation, forming a unified emotional experience. The structure of the intimacy component of love could be nearly the same from one loving relationship to another, but the amount of love one feels toward an individual may differ considerably.

The passion aspect of love encompasses the driving forces and stimuli that evoke feelings of intense desire. While sexual desires may often dominate in romantic relationships, other needs, such as those related to self-esteem, support, nurturing, social connection, power dynamics, and personal growth, can also contribute to the experience of passion (Sternberg, 1986). These needs manifest through both psychological and physiological arousal, which are intricately intertwined, with psychological arousal influencing physiological arousal and vice versa (van Lankveld et al., 2018).

The passion and intimacy elements of love often have a strong and mutually influential relationship. One's sense of intimacy within a relationship is influenced by the degree to which the relationship fulfills one's desires for passion and vice versa; intimacy can trigger feelings of passion. For instance, in certain close relationships, passion may emerge almost instantly attracting individuals to one another, while intimacy develops over time and maintains closeness. Since both individual preferences and specific circumstances can influence this relationship, there can also be a negative correlation between intimacy and passion. For example, some individuals perceive that emotional closeness and intimacy hinder their ability to achieve sexual satisfaction (Ben-Ze'ev, A, 2023). Overall, intimacy and passion dynamics may differ depending

on the person and the situation but they undoubtedly interact in some manner with each other within close relationships.

The decision/commitment aspect of love comprises both short-term and long-term elements. The short-term element involves the decision to love someone, while the long-term entails the commitment to sustain that love. However, these two facets of the decision/commitment component don't always coincide (Sternberg, 1986). Deciding to love someone doesn't automatically mean committing to love them, and vice versa. Surprisingly, commitment doesn't always entail making a conscious decision. Many individuals may be committed to someone without acknowledging or realizing their feelings of love. Sternberg's model suggests that commitment can be driven by many factors, including familiarity, shared experiences, and a sense of duty, which may operate beneath the surface of conscious awareness. Generally, though, the decision to love typically precedes and logically leads to commitment. Marriage, for instance, formalizes the commitment to love someone for life based on a prior decision. It's crucial not to overlook the importance of the decision/commitment aspect of love simply because it lacks the intensity or excitement of the intimacy and passion components. Almost every loving relationship endures tough times and challenges during which the decision/commitment component is the one that sustains the relationship and helps navigate restoring harmony (Sternberg, 1986).

The decision/commitment component of love interacts with elements of intimacy and passion. For many individuals, commitment arises from the emotional engagement fostered by intimacy or the motivational arousal stimulated by passion. In contrast, intimate involvement or passionate feelings can also stem from commitment, as seen in certain arranged marriages or close relationships where one lacks the freedom to choose partners. This commitment doesn't

always lead to increased emotions, though. For example, a person might commit to their partner and get married but later encounter someone other than their romantic partner and develop feelings for them. While managing the intimacy and passion aspects of love can be challenging, the decision/commitment component offers greater control, potentially preventing the relationship from dissipating (Sternberg, 1986).

### ***Properties of Love Components***

A deeper comprehension of Sternberg's three love components can be achieved by examining their properties, which can vary in intensity within each component. Those properties are *stability*, *conscious controllability*, *susceptibility to conscious awareness*, *experiential salience*, *typical importance in short-term relationships*, *typical importance in long-term relationships*, *commonality across loving relationships*, and *psychophysiological involvement* (Sternberg, 1986) (Table 1). *Stability* is the property that represents the consistency and endurance of the component over time within a relationship. It is moderately high for decision/commitment and intimacy, while passion is unstable and tends to come and go on a somewhat unpredictable basis. *Conscious controllability*, defined as having conscious control over a feeling a person is aware of having, is high for the decision/commitment, moderate for intimacy, and low for passion. The next property, *susceptibility to conscious awareness*, is closely related to the term "conscious awareness", which refers to the degree of awareness people have over their experiences in romantic relationships. People are generally highly aware of their passion, less aware of decision/commitment, and relatively unaware of intimacy. Another property that involves the degree to which individuals are aware of and consciously recognize certain aspects of love is *experiential salience*. *Experiential salience* reflects the prominence or importance of the component in individuals' subjective experiences of love. It indicates how much attention and

significance individuals attribute to each component within their relationships. Generally, passion is highly salient for most, while intimacy and decision/commitment vary. Another property is the components' *typical importance according to the length of the relationship (short-term/long-term)*. In brief romantic encounters, passion tends to be highly valued, with intimacy having a moderate and decision/commitment minimal role. Conversely, intimacy and decision/commitment usually hold considerable significance in lasting intimate relationships. At the same time, passion tends to be less crucial in enduring relationships and may decrease in importance over time. Another property, the *commonality* of the three components, varies across different loving relationships. This property refers to the degree to which the components of love are present in different types of loving relationships. Intimacy appears fundamental in many loving relationships, regardless of whether it's directed towards a parent, sibling, romantic partner, or close friend (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984). On the other hand, passion is typically found only in specific types of relationships, particularly romantic ones. At the same time, the decision/commitment aspect can fluctuate significantly across different types of loving relationships. Lastly, the three components also differ in their extent of *psychophysiological involvement*, or the physiological and psychological responses associated with the experience of love. It encompasses the physical reactions, such as increased heart rate and hormonal changes, and emotional responses, such as feelings of happiness, excitement, or anxiety, that occur when one is in love. The passion component is highly dependent on psychophysiological involvement, the intimacy component moderately, and the decision/commitment minimally.

**Table 1**

*Properties of components (intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment) according to the triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986, p.120)*

Properties	Components		
	Intimacy	Passion	Decision/ commitment
Stability	Moderately high	Low	Moderately high
Conscious controllability	Moderate	Low	High
Susceptibility to conscious awareness	Moderately low	High	Moderately high
Experiential Salience	Variable	High	Variable
Typical importance in short-term relationships	Moderate	High	Low
Typical importance in long-term relationships	High	Moderate	High
Commonality across loving relationships	High	Low	Moderate
Psychophysiological involvement	Moderate	High	Low

### ***Temporal Changes in Components of Love***

Each of the three components of love follows its temporal trajectory, and these distinct temporal paths invariably lead to shifts in the dynamics of a particular loving relationship as time progresses. Drawing upon Berscheid's (1983) theory of emotion in close relationships, Sternberg (1986) explained that intimacy is not identical to the emotional component, however, it predominantly comprises emotional elements and operates in a manner akin to emotions. Because of this, Sternberg uses Berscheid's emotional trajectory as an assumption of the trajectory of intimacy in romantic relationships. Berscheid (1983) explains that emotions in close relationships often arise when our expected routines or plans with someone else get interrupted,



similar to when a script we're following suddenly changes. These interruptions can happen less as people spend more time together, become more familiar with each other, and get used to each other's habits and ways of doing things. This familiarity leads to fewer surprises and disruptions in routines, making the relationship more predictable. As a result, they start depending on each other more, reducing the relationship's uncertainty. Contrary to expectation, this decrease of interruption in the relationship routines corresponds to decreased emotional engagement and/or outward intimacy. However, this reduced emotional intensity does not necessarily indicate growing apart or weakening of underlying intimacy but forming a deeper bond between partners.

The trajectory of passion in close relationships differs significantly from that of intimacy. While the passion component is heavily influenced by motivational arousal, it does not solely rely on it. Instead, it aligns closely with Solomon's opponent-process theory of acquired motivation (Solomon, 1980), suggesting that motivation stems from two opposing processes: a quick-developing positive process and a slower-developing negative one. When meeting someone attractive, passion can surge rapidly but also peak quickly. Subsequently, the positive force diminishes as the negative force increases, leading to a decline in passionate arousal until reaching a stable level. Losing the individual intensifies negative feelings, akin to withdrawal symptoms in addictions which is why Peele and Brodsky (1976) link love to addiction. Like with addictive substances, initial use creates a "high," but over time, habituation occurs, necessitating continued use to avoid withdrawal symptoms. Ceasing use leads to withdrawal, with eventual return to baseline being the best outcome.

The temporal trajectory of the decision/commitment component within a close relationship is primarily influenced by the success of that relationship and vice versa. Initially, the commitment level starts at a zero baseline before meeting or getting to know the individual

and then gradually increases. For relationships destined for longevity, commitment grows steadily at first before accelerating. Over time, commitment typically stabilizes in enduring relationships. However, if the relationship encounters difficulties, commitment may decline, and in cases of failure, it may revert to baseline. It's important to acknowledge that real relationships often face challenges, regardless of their success. Even the most prosperous relationships experience fluctuations in commitment, altering the smoothness of the hypothetical curve and showcasing the intensity of one's commitment.

### **Variables Related to Sternberg's Love Components**

Previous research has explored a range of factors related to Sternberg's love components, including demographic characteristics, relationship length, cohabitation, and the influence of religious and spiritual beliefs.

Research studies have failed to agree on the exact association between age and Sternberg's love components. For example, Reeder (1996) found data showing that the three components of Sternberg significantly decrease with age. Ahmetoglu et al. (2010) found that participant's age was negatively associated with passion and positively associated with intimacy and commitment, while Acker and Davis (1992) specified that the expected decline in passion over time occurs in women only. A study by Sumter, Valkenburg, and Peter (2013) used four categories to divide participants by age: teenagers (12–17 years), young people (18–30 years), middle adults (30–50 years), and seniors ( $\geq 50$  years). Adolescents (12–17 years) reported lower levels of all love components than young adults (18–30 years). Late adults (50+) reported lower levels of passion and intimacy but similar levels of commitment compared to young (18–30 years) and middle adults (30–50 years). In his meta-analysis, Bühler (2021) concluded that

general relationship satisfaction decreased from age 20 to 40, reached a low point at age 40, then increased until age 65, and plateaued afterward.

Research has found differences in how genders experience love. Females generally score higher on the component of intimacy, lower on passion, and higher on commitment than men (Nanda, 2017, as cited in Muloko et al., 2020). Conversely, Lemieux and Hale (2000) found that men scored significantly higher on intimacy than women. Additionally, Acker and Davis (1992) found that the predicted decline in passion emerged only for females over time.

In his meta-analysis, Sorokowski (2020) found that levels of intimacy differed depending on relationship duration. It was lowest in relationships lasting up to 1 year, slightly higher for relationships lasting 1–3 years, followed by those lasting 3–6 years, and then again lower in couples who were together for 6–10 years, 10–15 years, 15–20 years, and 21 or more years. In contrast, Acker and Davis (1992) found that intimacy levels did not generally display the predicted decline for longer relationships. Levels of passion also differed across relationships with different durations, with the highest levels reported in couples of the shortest relationship duration and the lowest levels of passion observed in couples of the longest duration. Conversely, in her research, Muloko (2020), exploring specifically the female perspective, established that the longer the length of the marriage, the higher the mean rank score of intimacy and passion in married women. In the case of commitment, people with the shortest experience in their relationship (up to 1 year) were characterized by significantly lower commitment than those in all remaining categories. Similarly, Ahmetoglu et al. (2010) found that passion was negatively and commitment positively associated with relationship length for both men and women. Zukor (2005) also found that relationship length was positively correlated with commitment, while Muloko (2020) found no difference in the mean rank value of commitment in married women

based on marriage length. In his meta-analysis, Bühler (2021) found that general relationship satisfaction decreased during the first 10 years of the relationship, reached a low point at 10 years, increased until 20 years, and then decreased again.

Findings on how cohabitation correlates specifically to Sternberg's three components are scarce, but there is research on how cohabitation is associated with various aspects of relationship satisfaction. Ciritel (2022) found that cohabiting individuals share the same levels of sexual intimacy as those married, but they are less happy in their relationship than those married. Living apart but together (LAT) individuals enjoy overall greater sexual intimacy than cohabiting individuals, but they are less happy in their relationships. Rhoades (2012) found that cohabiting relationships are characterized by greater commitment but lower satisfaction, negative communication, and more physical aggression than dating (non-cohabiting) relationships. Similarly, much research has also concluded that compared to marriage, cohabiting unions between non-married individuals tend to be less committed, less satisfying, more conflictual, and more physically aggressive (Brown & Booth, 1996; Brown et al., 2005; Brownridge, 2004; Forste & Tanfer, 1996; Nock, 1995; Stafford et al., 2004; Stanley et al., 2004; Treas & Giesen, 2000 as cited in Rhoades, 2012). More and more couples are starting to live together, getting deeper insights into themselves, each other, and their relationship dynamic before choosing to get married than previous generations did (Rhoades, 2012), which could potentially motivate parting of ways of incompatible individuals sooner and lowering of divorce rates with new generations.

Religion has been proven to play a role in many aspects of romantic relationships. Cassepp-Borges (2021) verified the influence of the compatibility of religious affiliation between the partners on their relationship's outcomes. Specifically, participants with the same religion as their partners were more likely to continue dating, which could indicate commitment. The

research conducted by the Pew Research Center's Religious Landscape Study shows that almost half, or 47% of all adults in a marriage, declare that sharing religious beliefs with a spouse is important for a successful marriage (Trębicka & Cichocka, 2019). This view is shared by 64% of people who share the same religion, 24% in non-confessional relationships, and 17% in marriages of believers and non-believers.

The relationship between religiousness and Sternberg's love components, particularly aspects of Passion and Commitment, has been widely studied. Research suggests that stronger religious affiliation may lead to less sexual activity, indicating a possible negative link between religiousness and passion (Zukor, 2005). Regarding Commitment, studies show that higher religiosity correlates with lower divorce rates and more enduring marriages (White & Booth, 1991; Wilson & Musick, 1996). Regular church attendance, especially by both partners, has further been shown to be a protective factor against divorce (Call & Heaton, 1997). Conversely, lower religiosity is associated with a higher likelihood of cohabitation and relationship quality (Huffman et al., 1994; Stanley et al., 2006). These findings imply that religiosity increases commitment for married couples but possibly decreases commitment in the pre-marital phase. Some research shows a slight positive association between relationship satisfaction and religiousness (Zukor, 2005). Because the association between relationship satisfaction and Sternberg's theory of love scores has been shown many times (Nabila & Gunawan, 2023), religiousness could be potentially associated with a higher general score on the Sternberg love scale.

Shafranske & Gorsuch (1984) defined spirituality as the belief in a transcendent dimension or being, which occurs when the individual questions the meaning of existence and attempts to explore his or her relationship to all other beings. According to Trębicka and

Cichocka (2019) spirituality is considered on the level of the individual, but religiousness is on the group or social level. Fincham et al. (2011) found that a person's and their partner's spirituality was associated with satisfaction in the relationship for both partners. Cooke et al. (n.d.) found that those with lower levels of spirituality reported more varying levels of commitment, measured with Sternberg's Love Scale, than those with high levels of spirituality who reported fewer varying levels of commitment. Specifically for women, the higher the levels of spirituality, the more committed they were. Additionally, an association was found between spirituality and sexual behaviors among male, but not among female college students (Luquis et al., 2011).

### **Generations of People and Generational Differences**

The term "generations" originates from the Latin word "generatio-onis" and refers to the categorization of individuals into comparable age cohorts, all born within the same historical and cultural environment (Palese, 2006). In today's context, a generation refers to an entire body of individuals born and raised within a similar timeframe, spanning about 15 to 20 years (Strauss & Howe, 1991), which is typically enough time to move from one life stage to the next. There appears to be general agreement on the overall birth year ranges of generations, with different opinions varying up to only a few years. This is probably because dates selected for generational ranges usually reflect important societal and cultural issues of the time (Seemiller & Grace, 2019), such as political, social, economic, and technological events which differ from culture to culture. Merely through observations, conversations, and personal experiences, it's evident that each generation possesses its distinct characteristics and viewpoints, often referred to as peer personality (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). However, with generational birth ranges spanning 15 to

20 years, the experiences of the oldest and youngest members of one generation can differ significantly.

The current oldest living generation is the first generation of the twentieth century, the G.I. Generation, also referred to as the *Greatest Generation*, born from 1901 to 1924 (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). They entered the workforce during the Great Depression and the time of Prohibition. This generation is followed by the *Silent Generation*, born from 1925 through 1945. People of this generation experienced the highs and lows of the first half of the twentieth century, growing up in the Depression era but entering adulthood after World War II. Following the Silent Generation comes a large generation of *Baby Boomers*, born during the post-World War II baby boom between 1946 and 1964. The next generation is called *Generation X*, and its members were born from 1965 through 1980. This generation is characterized by experiencing multiple hits, including the stock market crash of 1987, the government spending resources on national security after 9/11, and the Great Recession, during which they were beginning to reach their peak earning years (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). In the Croatian context, Gen X was especially impacted by the Homeland War which disrupted their formative period of late adolescence/early adulthood (Živić & Pokos, 2004). After them, between 1981 and 1994 *Millennials* were born, a generation often referred to as Generation Y or the “echo boom” generation. The term “echo boom” comes from the fact that many are children of the Baby Boomer generation and are currently the second largest generation, as reported in the 2016 U.S. Census data (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). Millennials were raised by baby boomer parents, also known to be “helicopter parents”. “Helicopter parents” are defined as overly protective parents, named for their tendency to hover over their offspring (Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014), which might be the reason why millennials are known to be the most educated generation to date and the first

contributors to the development of social media (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). Finally, following Millennials, with Gen X parents is *Generation Z*, born between 1995 and 2010. This generation is characterized by growing up in a digitally interconnected world and experiencing COVID-19 during their formative years (Ang et al., 2021).

Seemiller and Grace (2019) explain how three main effects shape generational perspectives: *lifecycle*, *period*, and *cohort*, which help understand how generational affiliation creates differences between generational cohorts. The effect of *lifecycle*, or age, pertains to the variation in perspectives of an event depending on age or the stage of life a group is in at that moment. How young adults respond to a situation is likely to differ significantly from the reactions of middle-aged adults, who are influenced by their life stage and not just the generation they belong to. The second effect that influences generational perspectives is the *period effect*. This effect describes the lasting impact of events, circumstances, or societal forces that affect individuals regardless of age or generational cohort such as wars, economic shifts, cultural phenomena, and even pop culture. Lastly, the *cohort effect* explains how differences among generational cohorts emerge due to their unique experiences witnessing historical or societal events. When examining a generation through the lens of the cohort effect, it is crucial to consider the events occurring during their formative years of adolescence and young adulthood.

We must also consider the influence of preceding generations on shaping the society in which younger generations grow up. Parental generations can transmit thoughts, characteristics, and perspectives that impact how younger generations perceive the world. Comparable to the transmission of biological DNA from parent to offspring, older generations can convey social DNA to their younger counterparts.



### ***Generation X (1965-1980)***

Most known as the intermediary "middle child" between the vast Boomer and Millennial cohorts (Seemiller & Grace, 2019) is Generation X (or Gen X for short). This generation thrives on challenges and desires leadership roles and opportunities to be followers (Cox, 2016). They are characterized by self-reliance, resourcefulness, and a balanced approach, embracing autonomy while valuing independence over teamwork (Hahn, 2011). Growing up as latchkey children (Hill, 2004), with both working parents enduring long work hours and undergoing downsizing and layoffs (Hahn, 2011), Gen X-ers aspire to pursue professions that promise a harmonious blend of work and personal life, along with providing both professional fulfillment and economic stability. Due to their distrust of authority and institutions and facing economic challenges, they are often described as "cynical." Growing up, they also saw the emergence of new forms of media and entertainment, from the rise of MTV to the spread of home computers and video games. (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

Gen Xers in today's Croatia mostly grew up in Yugoslavia. They experienced a society characterized by socialist ideals of equality and unity, yet beneath the surface simmering ethnic and political divisions. Education and healthcare were universally accessible, fostering a sense of social cohesion, but censorship and political repression stifled dissent. Cultural diversity flourished, offering a rich tapestry of traditions and languages, yet nationalist sentiments often strained interethnic relations (Flere, 1988). Despite these complexities, Gen X-ers in Yugoslavia enjoyed a relatively peaceful and prosperous upbringing compared to their predecessors. They fondly recall shared experiences of summer vacations by the Adriatic Sea, sporting events that united the nation, and the vibrant cultural and rock and roll musical scene that thrived in cities like Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Zagreb (Blagojević, 2022). However, as they reached adulthood, the

cracks in Yugoslavia's federal structure became increasingly apparent, foreshadowing the tumultuous events that would reshape their lives and homeland. During the Homeland War, many Gen X-ers found themselves thrust into the frontline of conflict, either as soldiers defending their homeland or as civilians fleeing violence and displacement. For those who experienced the horrors of war firsthand, the psychological toll was immense, with trauma and PTSD haunting their memories long after the ceasefire. Yet, amidst the devastation, there emerged a resilience and sense of solidarity among Gen X-ers as they banded together to rebuild their shattered lives and communities (Jović, 2017). In Croatia, Generation X holds a unique perspective shaped by the tumultuous transition from the dissolution of Yugoslavia to the birth of the Republic of Croatia and, consequently, the transition from socialism to capitalism. That transition from the end of Yugoslavia to the beginning of the Republic of Croatia represents not only a chapter in their nation's history but also a defining period in their own lives, shaping their values, aspirations, and collective memory (Čurić, 2016).

Gen X'ers are trying to adapt to digitalization and social media, with many using technological gadgets for work and leisure. Many have Facebook, and some have Instagram and/or Twitter, but sometimes it's a guessing game as to what they are doing; their "IT Help Desk" are their kids. Gen X is interested in using social media to converse online with friends, share family photos, or possibly participate in political conversations in chat rooms or posts. However, they believe they can "unplug" and carry on in-person conversations and interactions with ease (Giarla, 2019).

Gen X has also changed the approach to romantic relationships compared to previous generations. "From their preference to wait to get married to their commitment to work-life

balance to their inclusion of marriage rights for all, Generation X has served as a catalyst for redefining love, relationships, and family” (Seemiller & Grace, 2019, p.36).

### ***Generation Z (1995-2010)***

Generation Z (or Gen Z for short) is a cohort that grew up in the aftermath of 9/11 amidst economic uncertainty, political division, and ongoing conflicts abroad. Their exposure to media often highlighted negativity, with their admired figures frequently facing public setbacks or scandals. Yet, they also witnessed societal progress, such as the election of an African American president in the US and advancements in LGBTQ+ rights (Talmon, 2019). A strong emphasis on diversity, inclusivity, and social justice issues generally marks Gen Z. Gen Z members often grew up in families where parenting style involved remote monitoring through technology, alongside an emphasis on independence, resilience, and skepticism toward established norms. These influences have shaped Generation Z with a pragmatic outlook characterized by risk aversion, financial caution, and a belief in the necessity of hard work to succeed. Talmon (2019) also points out that technology has significantly influenced the preferences of Generation Z, known as the first “digitally native generation.” Gen Z is also the initial generation to be brought up under the constant scrutiny of the public eye, regularly sharing their lives on social networks (Djedović, 2021).

Digitalization has also influenced the way Gen Z-ers learn. Generation Z is accustomed to having information "at hand," available at any time and place, facilitating their access to desired data (Fištrić, 2019). Consequently, the education system has adjusted to digital advances with the internet and digital gadgets progressively becoming more included in the classroom (Stamenković, 2014).

Apart from their proficiency in digital skills, a study by Google revealed that 51 percent of individuals aged 18-24 consider virtual dating significant, with 65 percent expressing that dating apps and websites enable them to engage in relationships irrespective of geographical constraints (Joyce et al., 2022).

The influx of large tourism in Croatia has significantly shaped the worldview and experiences of Generation Z individuals. With the rise of tourism, there's been a surge in seasonal job opportunities, providing young adults with avenues for financial independence and career exploration (Relja et al., 2020). Beyond economic benefits, this exposure has also fostered cultural exchange, as Gen Zers interact with visitors from diverse backgrounds. This broadened their perspectives, instilling tolerance, empathy, and an appreciation for global interconnectedness (Perajica, 2018). Moreover, it has sparked a curiosity for travel and exploration, motivating them to seek experiences beyond their immediate surroundings. However, alongside these positives, there are challenges, such as environmental concerns and cultural preservation (Garmaz,2023), which Gen Z-ers are increasingly aware of and advocate for sustainable tourism practices.

Gen Z-ers in Croatia have been raised by parents who lived during or fought the Homeland War. Many children raised by parents with PTSD experienced a volatile and distressing family environment, leading to emotional and psychological challenges that persisted into adulthood, disrupting communication and relationships within the family system and requiring significant time, energy, and support to overcome (Cramm et al., 2021).

According to the European Union (n.d.), Croatia officially joined the EU in 2013, when the oldest Gen Z-ers were 18, and the youngest Gen Z-ers were 3 years old. Growing up in a period of Croatia's integration into the European Union, Generation Z in Croatia was influenced

by this historical milestone. With Croatia's accession to the EU in 2013, young Croatians of Generation Z likely experienced a shift in their perception of identity, opportunities, and challenges. They have been exposed to a more interconnected Europe, leading to increased cultural exchange, educational opportunities, and mobility within the EU.

Gen Z in Croatia grew up in a culture that, even though illegal, tolerates underage alcohol consumption and nightclubbing. Research shows high school students in Croatia find it easy to access alcohol, with almost half of the underage drinkers purchasing it despite legal restrictions (Andrić, 2009). In their research, Domitrović and Županić (2016) also found that over 67% of high schoolers in Croatia drink alcohol.

In recent years, COVID-19 has played an important role in the lives of all generations, but especially Gen Z. It affected many during a crucial stage of their development, disrupting milestones such as transitioning from adolescence to young adulthood. The pandemic added complexity to their experiences as they navigated educational, social, and career pathways during a time of significant personal growth and identity formation (Ang et al., 2021).

### ***Research on Generational Differences***

While there is barely any research on generational differences in romantic relationships, research is abundant on differences in other aspects of human life, which could also indicate differences in romantic relations. Most of it has focused on differences in mental health, personality, and work life.

There has been much research comparing mental health between generations and exploring changes in mental health over time (Botha et al., 2023; Twenge et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2020). Twenge et al. (2019) explained that there has been an increase in mood disorders and

suicidal thoughts and behaviors since the mid-2000s onward, potentially due to cultural trends such as the rise of electronic communication and digital media and declines in sleep duration. These changes may have had a more significant impact on younger people, creating a cohort effect. With existing differences between generations in mental health, it is logical to conclude that there could be differences in romantic relationships as well because mental health and romantic relationships have repeatedly been proven to be associated in research with greater mental health predicting entry into romantic relationships, positive relationships being associated to better mental health (Braithwaite & Holt-Lunstad, 2017) and romance often being a source of well-being for adolescents and emerging adults (Gómez-López et al., 2019).

Generational differences in personality traits are influenced by biological factors and formative experiences during childhood and adolescence (Costa & McCrae, 2008; Terracciano et al., 2010). Studies by Twenge and colleagues demonstrate shifts in personality traits across successive generations, with increases in neuroticism, narcissism, extraversion, self-esteem, self-confidence, drive to achieve, and creativity, alongside declines in the need for social approval, empathetic concern, and self-assurance (Stewart & Bernhardt, 2010; Twenge et al., 2000; Twenge et al., 2001; Twenge et al., 2008; Gentile et al., 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2001; Twenge et al., 2012; Kim, 2011; Twenge & Im, 2007; Konrath et al., 2011). Similar trends are observed in Sweden and the Netherlands, with higher openness to experience and agreeableness (Andre et al., 2010; Smits et al., 2011).

Although research findings regarding generational differences in approaches to work have been mixed, most studies indicate that significant differences do exist. These differences in work approach are linked to variations in family life (Schullery, 2013; Sirgy & Lee, 2017), which in turn impact romantic relationships (Liu et al., 2022). Lyons and Kurton (2013) explain that

younger generations, influenced by experiences such as witnessing their parents dedicate themselves to their careers only to fall victim to downsizing, layoffs, and other career setbacks, prioritize a "work to live" instead of a "live to work" orientation. Accordingly, they also point out evidence that successive generations place increasing priority on work-life balance, both attitudinally and behaviorally, and are more prone to career changes.

In the quest to comprehend generations, it's crucial to acknowledge that generational studies often center on common patterns or themes observed within a group based on age demographics. Age-based groupings can contribute to our understanding of why individuals sharing a particular demographic might exhibit certain behaviors. However, it's essential to recognize that generational themes are just that – themes (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). There will always be exceptions, individuals whose perspectives or actions deviate from prevailing trends in their generation. Therefore, it's important to recognize that generational research offers insights rather than definitive answers or strict prescriptions.

A difficulty encountered in studying generational differences is the "age–period–cohort confound," where any apparent differences among generations could potentially be attributed to effects related to age (such as maturation), cohort effects (the circumstances during formative years), or the historical context when the data were collected (Lyons & Kuron, 2013). To circumvent these challenges, it is preferable to analyze differences using longitudinal sequential data or time-lag data, which allow for comparisons over the life course and across cohorts or comparison of different respondents from two or more cohorts (i.e., generations) at the same stage of life (e.g., as high school seniors), thus holding constant the effects of age and allowing for an "apples to apples" comparison of cohorts (Lyons & Kuron, 2013).

There has been little to no research on generational differences in romantic relationships, so this study aims to fill this research gap and shed light on these differences. Generation X and Generation Z have grown up in vastly different cultural contexts. Generation X experienced the rise of technology, the advent of the internet, and shifts in societal norms regarding relationships and marriage, while Generation Z has grown up in an era dominated by social media, online dating, and increased acceptance of diverse relationship structures. This could imply that there is a difference in how people from different generational cohorts experience love. By examining how each generation perceives and prioritizes intimacy, passion, and commitment in their relationships, a better understanding of the evolving dynamics of romantic relationships can be gained. For example, Generation X may emphasize commitment due to societal norms prevalent during their upbringing. At the same time, Generation Z may prioritize passion influenced by online dating and a culture of individualism and self-expression. Based on previously mentioned empirically observed differences between the generations in many other variables, we might expect differences in love components as well.

Research suggests that the quality of romantic relationships significantly impacts individuals' mental health and overall well-being (Proulx et al., 2007). Understanding generational differences in love can shed light on potential vulnerability or resilience within each generation.

### **Research Aim and Hypothesis**

General research Aim:

This study aims to explore how Gen X and Gen Z members conceive and experience love in romantic relationships using Sternberg's triangular theory of love as a theoretical framework.



Research problem:

To examine the potential differences between Gen X and Gen Z, and men and women, in romantic relationship strength and prioritization of different love components utilizing Sternberg's triangular theory of love.

This research problem is broken down into 4 sub-problems and corresponding hypotheses based on existing literature:

1. To examine the differences between Gen X's and Gen Z's, and men's and women's, total scores on Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale and its subscale dimensions (intimacy, passion, and commitment).

Hypothesis: We expect that members of Gen X will have higher scores on the commitment component and Gen Z on the passion component. We do not expect any differences in scores on the intimacy component or total score.

Men will score higher on Passion than women while no differences will be found for intimacy, commitment, and the total score.

2. To examine the differences between Gen X and Gen Z, and men and women, on the self-reported importance of different dimensions.

Hypotheses: Members of Gen X will place greater importance on commitment than Gen Z, and Gen Z will prioritize passion more than Gen X. No generational difference is expected for the self-reported importance of intimacy.

Men will place higher importance on passion while women will place higher importance on intimacy. No differences based on gender are expected for the self-reported importance of commitment.

3. To assess the extent to which additional variables predict subscale and total scores on Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale.

Hypothesis:

Overall, we expect the following variables to be significant predictors in separate regression models for each subscale (intimacy, passion, commitment) and the total score of Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale:

Demographic factors: Generation and gender

Relationship factors: Relationship length, cohabitation status

Religiousness and spirituality factors: Religious/spiritual belief compatibility with partner, self-reported religiousness, and self-reported spirituality

Additionally, we propose specific expected directional effects:

*Intimacy:* We expect a positive association with the female gender.

*Passion:* We expect a positive association with the male gender and a negative association with Gen X, relationship length, cohabitation status, and religiousness.

*Commitment:* We expect a positive association with Gen Z, female gender, relationship length, cohabitation status, religious/spiritual compatibility, religiousness, and spirituality.

*Total Score:* We expect a positive association with religious/spiritual compatibility, religiousness, and spirituality.

## **Methods**

### **Study Design**

This was a cross-sectional study using an online survey created using Google Forms.

## Sample

Participants were individuals belonging to Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2010) who had been in at least one exclusive monogamous relationship during their lifetime. During the survey, participants could refer to a past or current relationship. Those who referred to a past relationship were only included in the analysis related to hypothesis 2.

A convenience sample of 414 participants was gathered. Generation X was represented by 187 participants (131 or 70% were women) and Generation Z by 227 participants (169 or 75% were women, and 1 or 0.4% chose not to identify). In total, there were 113 (27%) men, 300 (73%) women, and 1 (0.2%) unidentified.

To examine hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 3, statistical analyses were performed on the subsample of participants who referred to their current partner, resulting in a total of 308 participants, with 155 Gen X participants and 153 Gen Z participants. The analysis for hypothesis 2 was carried out on the total sample of participants (i.e., those who referred to their current or previous partner). However, by that point in the survey, some participants gave up or did not manage to complete the questionnaire according to instructions, leaving the total sample size at 313, with 128 participants from Generation X and 185 from Generation Z.

## Survey Description

The survey questionnaire consisted of *Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale* (STLS) or (TLS-45) (Sternberg, 1988), which is composed of three subscales that measure three love components: intimacy, passion, and commitment (Appendix A). Each subscale contains 15 items, which together form a scale of 45 statements in total. The scale is specific because each statement has a blank space that participants are supposed to mentally fill in with the name of a person they love

or care for deeply. Usually, it is the name of their current romantic partner. However, for this study, participants could fill it out with the name of their current or, if they were currently single, their most significant past romantic partner. To each item, the participant was asked to assign a value on a 9-point Likert scale, which showcased how much a certain statement (item) applied to them (1- *not at all*, 5 - *moderately*, 9 - *extremely*).

The reliability of the Sternberg Triangular Love Scale (TLS-45) was tested and found high for both the total score and its subscales consistently in previous research (Cassepp-Borges, 2012; Chojnacki & Walsh, 1990; Whitley, 1993) and in this study. Cronbach's alpha indicated excellent internal consistency with the alpha of  $\alpha = 0.98$  for the total score,  $\alpha = 0.96$  for Intimacy,  $\alpha = 0.96$  for Passion, and  $\alpha = 0.96$  for the Commitment subscale.

Before filling out Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale (TLS-45) questionnaire, participants received a set of questions. Firstly, they had to decide to whom they would be referring during the questionnaire and click on one of three options: "current exclusive partner," "most significant exclusive previous partner," or "did not have an exclusive relationship so far." The survey ended for those who chose the third option, while it continued for those who chose one of the first two options. Because a group of participants referred to a current relationship, and a group referred to a past relationship, from this point on, two equivalent versions of the survey were administered depending on their answer: one with questions in the present tense (current partner) and one with questions in the past tense (most significant past partner). Upon completing the TLS-45, the participants were presented with five follow-up questions. First asked who this person was/was to them: "partner I live/lived with", "partner I do not/did not live with" or "spouse." Based on this, a binary variable "cohabitation status" was developed which categorized those who selected "partner I live/lived with" or "spouse" as living together and those who selected "partner I do

not/did not live with” as not living together. The second question inquired upon the length of the relationship with categorical options ranging from 1= “0-3 months” to 12= “30+ years” (for all categories see Appendix A). The third question asked participants to rate how much their opinions on religiousness/spirituality aligned with their chosen partner's opinions (on a 7-point scale (1 - *not at all* to 7 - *completely*)). The fourth question asked participants to rate their religiousness on a 7-point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*). The same Likert-type scale was utilized in the fifth question which asked the participants to evaluate how much they consider themselves spiritual.

The survey also included the *Triangular Love Scale- short version* (TLS-15) (Kowal et al., 2023), which consists of 15 items (Appendix A). The items described aspects of romantic relationships people tend to value, such as “I receive considerable emotional support from my partner.” or “I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with my partner”. Of the 15 items, 5 measured the component of intimacy, 5 of passion, and 5 of commitment. The reliability of the scale’s short version was calculated in numerous studies. Kowal et al. (2023) found good reliability for all three love subscales (Cronbach’s alpha for Intimacy: .89, Passion: .89, Commitment: .92, and the entire TLS-15: .95). These findings reflect the overall reliability of the scale across different linguistic versions (37 languages) and cultural backgrounds, indicating the consistency of the results across diverse language groups.

This scale is generally utilized to assess the same construct as the Sternberg’s Triangular Love Scale (TLS-45) version, but for this study it was used to assess which relationship aspects participants value most in ideal relationships. This was done by asking participants to think about their idea of an *ideal relationship* and then choose and rank by importance 6 items (out of the 15) that would be the most important to them in their ideal relationship. The presentation order of all

15 items was randomized for each participant to ensure counterbalancing and thus avoid the order effect. The chosen items were scored so that the 1<sup>st</sup> chosen item received 6 points, the 2<sup>nd</sup> received 5, and so on to the 6<sup>th</sup> that received 1 point. The 9 remaining items received no points. The total score for each person was calculated by adding the given values of all 5 items within each component subscale. That calculation showcased the value one gives to each component in an ideal romantic relationship.

Lastly, the survey had two socio-demographic questions (gender, age) and three questions regarding the participant's number of children, current relationship status, and the number of committed relationships the person has had during their lifetime, including the one they are currently in (full survey in Appendix A). Due to missing data, variables “number of children,” “current relationship status,” and “number of committed relationships” have been excluded from statistical analysis. Additionally, the variable “current/previous partner” was also excluded because there wasn't an equal number of participants referring to each option (with more referring to their current partners) and due to its negative impact on the regression model's explanatory power. Initial analyses indicated that the inclusion of the variable resulted in a reduced proportion of variance explained by the model, as evidenced by a lower  $R^2$  value.

### **Informed Consent**

Informed consent was included in the survey as the first page participants read through once they clicked on the survey link. They consented online by clicking the “next” button (Appendix B).

Participation in this study was anonymous. Participants were ensured anonymity by being asked only about information relevant to the study and not collecting any identifying information. Furthermore, the data was stored on computers secured by passcodes only known to

the researchers. There were no potential risks or benefits for those who participated in this research.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee in Split gave ethical approval on February 1st, 2024 (approval number: 2181-190-24-00013).

### **Research Procedure**

The survey link was distributed to participants via WhatsApp, Instagram, and e-mail to the researcher's contacts who fulfilled the inclusion criteria. They were kindly asked to forward it to their contacts (snowball sampling). The survey was also posted in a Facebook group called “Anketalica,” where people from Croatia post their surveys for other group members to complete and help each other reach their targeted sample. The data collection procedure started at the beginning of April 2024 and lasted until the end of May 2024. The collected data was analyzed in Jamovi and stored on the principal investigator and his associate’s computer. There was no experimental manipulation, and participants did not receive any kind of reward for participating.

### **Statistical Analysis**

All data analysis was performed using Jamovi software (The Jamovi project, 2024). The differences in scores on Sternberg’s Triangular Love Scale and its subscale dimensions (intimacy, passion, and commitment) and in the self-reported importance of different dimensions in an ideal relationship between Gen X and Gen Z were compared using Mann-Whitney test. A linear regression analysis was performed to assess the extent to which additional variables (gender, generation, cohabitation status, relationship length, self-reported religiousness, self-reported spirituality, and religious/spiritual belief compatibility with partner) predict subscale and total scores on Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale for both Gen X and Gen Z.

## Results

### **The Differences Between Generations and Genders in Their Scores on the Sternberg**

#### **Triangular Love Scale**

To compare Gen X's and Gen Z's, and Men's and Women's total scores on Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale and its subscale dimensions (Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment), the normality of distribution was examined with the Shapiro-Wilk test, which showed that all eight distributions significantly differed from normality ( $p < 0.050$  for all; for more information see Appendix C). Therefore, the Mann-Whitney test was used for between-group comparisons of generations (Table 2) which showed significant differences between Gen X and Gen Z in the total score and all three dimensions, with members of Gen Z having higher scores on the Sternberg love scale and all its subscale dimensions than Gen X. The Mann-Whitney test used for between-group comparisons of genders (Table 3), showed no significant differences in intimacy, passion, commitment, or the total score between men and women.



**Table 2**

*Results of Mann-Whitney test Comparing Gen X and Gen Z on Sternberg's Love Scale Scores and its Subscale Scores (Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment)*

Scale (theoretical range)	Gen X (n = 155)	Gen Z (n = 153)	U	df	p
	[Mdn (IQR)]	[Mdn (IQR)]			
Total Score (45 - 405)	341 (301-381)	374 (357.5 - 390.5)	6987	306	< .001
Intimacy (15 - 135)	124 (114.25 - 133.75)	129 (124 - 134)	8042	306	< .001
Passion (15 - 135)	97 (78.25 - 115.75)	118 (109.62 - 126.38)	6105	306	< .001
Commitment (15 - 135)	124 (110.75 - 137.25)	129 (123.5 - 134.5)	9235	306	< .001

**Table 3**

*Results of Mann-Whitney test Comparing Men and Women on Sternberg's Love Scale Scores and its Subscale Scores (Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment)*

Scale (theoretical range)	Men (n = 81)	Women (n = 226)	U	df	p
	[Mdn (IQR)]	[Mdn (IQR)]			
Total Score (45 - 405)	367 (341.5 - 392.5)	362 (331 - 393)	8343	305	0.237
Intimacy (15 - 135)	126 (118.5 - 133.5)	127 (119.5 - 134.5)	9114	305	0.955
Passion (15 - 135)	114 (98.5 - 129.5)	109 (90.6 - 127.4)	7971	305	0.085
Commitment (15 - 135)	127 (118.5 - 135.5)	127 (117.6 - 136.4)	8339	305	0.234

### **Generational and Gender Differences in Prioritizing Sternberg's Dimensions When Considering an "Ideal" Relationship**

Before examining the generational (Gen X vs. Gen Z) and gender differences (women vs. men) in the scores of the three dimensions of Sternberg's Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) obtained by their ranking of the six most important items when imagining an ideal relationship, the normality of their distributions was examined with a Shapiro-Wilk test. The results indicated that all distributions significantly differed from a normal distribution except for the distribution of intimacy results for Gen X and intimacy results for males ( $p < 0.050$  for all except the ones mentioned otherwise; for more information see Appendix C). Accordingly, the Mann-Whitney test was conducted to test the differences between generations (Table 4) and genders (Table 5). One participant did not identify as either male or female and was excluded from the analysis of gender differences.

**Table 4**

*Results of Mann-Whitney Test Comparing the Self-reported Importance of Sternberg's Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) Subscales by Generation (Gen X and Gen Z)*

Subscales	Total score [Mdn (IQR)]  N = 313	Gen X score [Mdn (IQR)]  n = 128	Gen Z score [Mdn (IQR)]  n = 185	U	df	p
Intimacy (6-30)	10 (7-13)	11 (8.25-13.75)	10 (7-13)	10328	311	0.054
Passion (6-30)	5 (2-8)	4.5 (1.5-7.5)	5 (2-8)	10855	311	0.208
Commitment (6-30)	6 (3-9)	6 (3-9)	7 (4.5-9.5)	10950	311	0.257

**Table 5**

*Results of Mann-Whitney Test Comparing the Self-reported Importance of Sternberg's Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) Subscales by Gender (female and male)*

Subscales	Men score [Mdn (IQR)]  n = 85	Women score [Mdn (IQR)]  n = 227	U	df	p
Intimacy (6-30)	9 (6-12)	11 (8-14)	7897	310	0.013
Passion (6-30)	5 (2-8)	4 (1-7)	7967	310	0.017
Commitment (6-30)	6 (3-9)	6 (3-9)	9549	310	0.890

On average, members of Gen X did not place greater importance on commitment than Gen Z, and Gen Z did not prioritize passion more than Gen X. Marginally insignificant generational differences were registered in intimacy, with Gen X prioritizing intimacy more than Gen Z, in ideal relationships. However, although marginally, this difference still could not be considered statistically significant. A significant difference between genders was found for intimacy and passion, with women placing greater importance on intimacy than men, and men placing greater importance on passion than women. No gender differences were found for commitment.

Generational and gender differences in prioritizing Sternberg's dimensions when considering an "ideal" relationship were also examined descriptively by creating hierarchical lists of the 15 Sternberg's Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) items based on how often they were chosen by participants (Appendix C). Even though conclusions that can be drawn from examining those descriptive findings go in line with the empirical findings of this study's Mann-Whitney between-group comparisons, we thought it would be beneficial to include them in the appendix for those who might find interest in more descriptive means of showcasing results.

### **Prediction of Sternberg Dimensions with Additional Variables**

Four separate multiple linear regressions were conducted to test whether gender, generation, cohabitation status, relationship length, religious/spiritual belief compatibility, religiosity, and spirituality will significantly predict Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale score and each of its subscale (intimacy, passion, commitment) scores.

We tested the assumptions for linear regression analysis (multicollinearity, normality of residuals, and extreme residuals) and found that some of them were not completely met (e.g. collinearity and normality of residuals; for more details, see Appendix C). However, we

proceeded with performing the planned analytical procedures, considering that these deviations from the assumptions were small enough for the results to still be informative of the general trends of associations.

A multiple linear regression with Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale total score as the criterion variable was conducted first. The results indicated that the model explained 21.6% of the variance in Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale score ( $R^2 = .216$ ,  $F_{7, 299} = 11.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Male and Gen Z participants, as well as those with higher levels of religiousness and greater religious/spiritual belief compatibility, on average, had higher total scores on Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale. Conversely, higher levels of spirituality were associated with lower scores (Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Regression results using Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale total score as the criterion*

Predictor	Standardized $\beta$	95% Confidence Interval		$p$
		Lower	Upper	
Gender (male = 1, female = 2)	-0.25	-0.49	-0.02	0.035
Generation (Gen X = 1, Gen Z = 2)	0.69	0.31	1.06	< .001
Cohabitation status	0.06	-0.23	0.35	0.691
Relationship length	-0.03	-0.23	0.16	0.753
Religiousness	0.17	0.06	0.27	0.002
Spirituality	-0.12	-0.23	-0.01	0.033
Religious/ spiritual belief compatibility	0.21	0.11	0.31	< .001

Secondly, a multiple linear regression that examined the mentioned variables predicting intimacy scores was conducted. The results indicated that the model explained 17.3% of the variance in overall intimacy ( $R^2 = .173$ ,  $F_{7, 299} = 8.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Male and Gen Z participants, as well as those with higher levels of religiousness and religious/spiritual belief compatibility, on average, had higher intimacy scores, while those with higher levels of spirituality had lower (Table 7).

**Table 7**

*Regression results using Intimacy score as the criterion*

Predictor	Standardized $\beta$	95% Confidence Interval		$p$
		Lower	Upper	
Gender (male= 1, female= 2)	-0.10	-0.34	0.14	< .001
Generation (Gen X= 1, Gen Z= 2)	0.41	0.02	0.79	.038
Cohabitation status	0.04	-0.26	0.34	.779
Relationship length	-0.11	-0.31	0.09	.270
Religiousness	0.14	0.03	0.25	.010
Spirituality	-0.15	-0.26	-0.04	.008
Religious/ spiritual belief compatibility	0.23	0.12	0.33	< .001

Thirdly, a multiple linear regression that examined the mentioned variables predicting passion scores was conducted. The results indicated that the model explained 25.8% of the variance in overall passion ( $R^2 = .258$ ,  $F_{7, 299} = 14.9$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Male and Gen Z participants, as well as those with higher levels of religiousness and religious/spiritual belief compatibility, on average, had higher passion scores (Table 8).

**Table 8***Regression results using Passion score as the criterion*

Predictor	Standardized $\beta$	95% Confidence Interval		<i>p</i>
		Lower	Upper	
Gender (male= 1, female= 2)	-0.31	-0.53	-0.08	0.009
Generation (Gen X= 1, Gen Z= 2)	0.77	0.40	1.13	< .001
Cohabitation status (Living apart= 1, Living together= 2)	-0.03	-0.31	0.26	0.858
Relationship length	-0.05	-0.24	0.14	0.625
Religiousness	0.14	0.04	0.24	0.009
Spirituality	-0.07	-0.17	0.04	0.229
Religious/ spiritual belief compatibility	0.19	0.09	0.29	< .001

Lastly, a multiple linear regression that examined the mentioned variables predicting commitment scores was conducted. The results indicated that the model explained 14.7% of the variance in overall commitment ( $R^2 = .147$ ,  $F_{7, 299} = 7.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Male and Gen Z participants, as well as those with higher levels of religiousness and religious/spiritual belief compatibility on average, had higher commitment scores. Contrarily, those higher in spirituality, on average, had lower Commitment scores (Table 9).

**Table 9***Regression results using Commitment score as the criterion*

Predictor	Standardized $\beta$	95% Confidence Interval		<i>p</i>
		Lower	Upper	
Gender (male= 1, female= 2)	-0.25	-0.49	-0.00	0.047
Generation (Gen X= 1, Gen Z= 2)	0.66	0.27	1.05	0.001
Cohabitation status (Living apart= 1, Living together= 2)	0.18	-0.13	0.48	0.257
Relationship length	0.07	-0.14	0.27	0.515
Religiousness	0.19	0.08	0.30	< .001
Spirituality	-0.14	-0.25	-0.02	0.019
Religious/ spiritual belief compatibility	0.18	0.07	0.28	0.001

### Discussion

This study aimed to explore how members of Gen X and Gen Z conceive and experience love in romantic relationships using Sternberg's triangular theory of love as a theoretical framework through three different hypotheses. Firstly, the differences between Gen X and Gen Z total scores on Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale and its subscale dimensions (intimacy, passion, and commitment) were tested. Contrary to the expectation that there will be no differences in intimacy between generations and that Gen X will score higher on commitment than Gen Z, Gen Z scored higher on all three dimensions, as well as on the total score. This confirmed only the hypothesis that Gen Z would score higher on Passion than Gen X. This finding suggests that younger individuals may experience love more intensely or positively, challenging the notion that younger generations are less committed to their romantic engagements. According to Reeder



(1996) the three components of Sternberg significantly decrease with age. Apart from generational affiliation (cohort effect) which this study's hypotheses were based on, these generational differences could be attributed to age effects or the different stages of love each generation is experiencing. Additionally, Gen Z is growing up in a time of greater acceptance of diverse expressions and formats of love, which could make them more comfortable with both expressing and experiencing feelings of love. This could motivate Gen Z not to be willing to “settle” for “bad” relationships as much as previous generations. Perhaps none of this is true, and these significant differences between the two generations can be explained by Gen Z just having a more optimistic view of life and, therefore, romantic relationships as well, again, due to either younger age, generational affiliation, or having shorter romantic relationships.

Secondly, the differences between Gen X and Gen Z, and men and women, on the self-reported importance of different dimensions were tested with the expectation of Gen X placing greater importance on commitment than Gen Z, Gen Z prioritizing passion more than Gen X and no differences between generations in the importance of intimacy. Contrary to this expectation, we found no differences, with potential (marginally insignificant) differences in intimacy. These results were also analyzed descriptively by creating hierarchical lists of the 15 items that were chosen most commonly. When observing these lists, it can be concluded that both generations generally prioritized intimacy and commitment more than passion. Differences between sexes were found with women valuing intimacy more than men and men valuing passion more than women. No differences were found for commitment, confirming our hypothesis. The same conclusion can be drawn from the descriptive hierarchical lists of item frequency.

Finally, the extent to which additional variables predict subscale and total scores on Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale were assessed. Sternberg's total score was expected to be

positively associated with religiousness, spirituality, and religious/spiritual compatibility. Results indicated that religiousness and religious/spiritual compatibility indeed predicted higher Sternberg's total score while contrary to expectation, spirituality was a negative predictor. This negative association between spirituality and Sternberg's total score, which can be considered a proxy for relationship strength or satisfaction, counters much previous research (Cooke et al., n.d.; Fincham et al., 2011) and might be due to certain limitations of this study, which will be explained below. A significant negative association between the female sex and Sternberg's total score was found, indicating that females tend to have lower total scores than males. It could suggest that females have higher expectations for their overall relationship quality and, therefore, evaluate their current relationships with lower scores than men. A significant positive association was found between being part of Gen Z and Sternberg total score, demonstrating that Gen Z tends to have higher overall relationship quality scores than Gen X. Whether this is because Gen Z is younger, generally due to lower age having shorter relationships (Wilson & Cousins, 2003), or due just to cohort effects of each generation is a question worth exploring in future longitudinal research.

A positive association with the female sex was expected for intimacy, but results indicated the opposite. Because women generally value intimacy in relationships more than men, as shown in this study's results above, there is a possibility that they have higher expectations for intimacy in their current relationships and, therefore, evaluate their own relationship intimacy lower than men do. Contrary to the hypothesis, spirituality was negatively associated with intimacy. As already mentioned, this negative association between spirituality and love components counters most previous research, which explains the many benefits of spirituality for various aspects of human life, including romantic relationships (Fincham et al., 2011). This could

be due to the fact that those who identify themselves as spiritual could have a more individualistic worldview than the average person and therefore place less focus on relationships with others. Variables Generation, specifically Gen Z, religiousness, and religious/spiritual compatibility were positively associated with intimacy. The positive association between religious/spiritual compatibility and intimacy seems rather logical due to the fact that alongside this type of compatibility, various other types of compatibility such as general partner compatibility (Wilson & Cousins, 2003), personality compatibility (Richard et al., 1990), genetic compatibility (Rushton, 1988), and educational compatibility (Tzeng, 1992), are all in association to partner choice, relationship and marital satisfaction.

For the dimension of passion, a positive association with the male sex and a negative association with Gen X, relationship length, cohabitation status, and religiousness was expected. As predicted, a significant positive association between the male sex and the passion score was found, indicating that males tend to have more positive experiences regarding passion in relationships than women do. Again, in line with the hypothesis, being a member of Gen X predicted having lower passion scores compared to members of Gen Z. Previous research found a connection between participant age and lower passion scores (Ahmetoglu et al., 2010; Sumter, Valkenburg, and Peter, 2013) motivating the conclusion that passion differences found in this research can also be attributed to age. Religiousness was a negative predictor of Passion in a relationship, confirming our hypothesis. This might be because religious people often follow certain religious rules and embody religious values that tend to take a more conservative approach towards sex, an important component of passion (Adamczyk, & Hayes, 2012; Regnerus, 2007; Shaw & El-Bassel, 2014). In contrast to our predictions, relationship length, and cohabitation status were not significant predictors of passion. Even though previous research

indicated a negative association between relationship length and passion (Sorokowski, 2020), not much of it tested participants' passion scores on numerous occasions which would offer insight into how passion scores change over time. That limitation is present in this study as well.

Cohabitation status may not have emerged as a significant predictor because the participants were only asked whether they live with their partner, without specifying the duration of their cohabitation. This lack of detailed information likely limited the ability to fully understand the impact of cohabitation on the relationship components being studied.

Lastly, a positive association with Gen Z, the female gender, relationship length, cohabitation status, religious/spiritual compatibility, religiousness, and spirituality was expected with commitment. The results partially supported this hypothesis. Specifically, being from Gen Z and having higher levels of religiosity and religious/spiritual compatibility was positively associated with higher commitment scores, aligning with initial expectations. However, contrary to the hypothesis, being female was associated with lower commitment scores which might be because there were more women in the sample than men and therefore men were not represented well enough, generating non-aligning results. It could also be due to the shift in traditional gender roles that has happened over time (Sweeting et al., 2013) with women today prioritizing personal independence, career goals, and other aspects of life that could influence their level of commitment in relationships more than before. This shift could lead to women being more cautious or selective about commitment. Again, higher levels of spirituality were negatively associated with commitment countering previous expectations. This could be because individuals who identify as spiritual may prioritize self-development and their spiritual journey over traditional relationship commitments. Additionally, neither relationship length nor cohabitation status significantly predicted commitment scores.

## **Implications**

The implications of this research are multifaceted and significant for understanding romantic relationships across different generations and genders. Firstly, the study highlights that relationship dynamics can vary between generations, suggesting that either cohort, age effects, or even relationship length, can play a role in how love is experienced and expressed. This has important implications for relationship counseling and therapy, indicating that approaches should be adapted to account for these generational differences. The study also underscores the importance of considering gender differences in romantic relationships, as men and women may experience and evaluate their relationships differently. This suggests that personalized approaches in relationship support services could be more effective. Overall, these implications point to the necessity of ongoing research to better understand the evolving nature of love and relationships and to inform practices that support healthy and fulfilling romantic partnerships across diverse populations.

## **Future research**

Because this study has a cross-sectional design, making causal inferences is impossible. Future research on generational differences in relationships could greatly benefit from the implementation of longitudinal research designs, which could help untangle the effects of age, generational association, and relationship length more effectively than a cross-sectional study can.

Future research could also explore other aspects of Sternberg's triangular theory such as the concepts of the "self vs. other triangle" and the "self-perceived versus other-perceived triangles." The "self vs. other triangle" compares the unique perceptions of two individuals in a

relationship. Each person has their idea of the three love components in their relationship and consequently has their own triangle of love which represents their perception of the relationship aspects. This alignment or discrepancy between the two partners' triangles, which correlate to relationship satisfaction (Sternberg, 1986), could be compared between generations, genders, and variables that predict this alignment. The “self-perceived versus other-perceived triangles” construct refers to how much the person’s love for their partner associates with the love their partner perceives he/she is getting. A person in the relationship may have a triangle representing their love for the other, but there's no guarantee that the partner perceives this triangle in the same manner. This alignment or discrepancy could also be compared between generations, and genders, and variables that predict this alignment could be examined.

Finally, The Quadruple Theory of Love, as proposed by Tobore (2020), presents a promising and comprehensive framework that integrates various established theories of love, including Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love, Attachment Theory, and neurobiological perspectives. Future research could build on his work and attempt to create an empirical validation and a comprehensive survey instrument for it.

### **Limitations**

Despite the valuable contributions of this study, several limitations must be acknowledged to provide a balanced interpretation of the findings. More women participated in this study than men. This imbalanced sample may not accurately represent the male population, being more reflective of women's experiences and perspectives and potentially overshadowing men's. This disproportion between genders in the sample could have been caused by the fact that men tend to talk about or analyze their feelings less than women do (Rosenthal, 1999) and therefore

participate less in such research. Our study utilized convenience sampling, limiting the result's generalizability to the whole of Croatian Gen X and Gen Z population.

Certain limitations exist when using a survey as a measurement tool, such as social desirability bias and response biases like extreme responding and central tendency bias. Additionally, this survey provides quantitative data, which may lack the depth and nuance that qualitative data could have provided. This could potentially not capture the full complexity of the psychological phenomena and the already mentioned non-response bias.

Even though Sternberg's Love Scale has repeatedly been shown to be a reliable and valid instrument, it is important to note that love is practically impossible to measure perfectly due to the complexity of the construct. Sternberg's Love Scale is just one of many measures that have tried to quantify such a concept so far. Because of this, it is important to conclude associations between the mentioned constructs such as religiosity and spirituality and Sternberg's Love Scale Scores, and not between the mentioned constructs and love in general. Additionally, when measuring relationship strength using Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale, it is important to mention that this construct fluctuates over time. Therefore, a single snapshot might not be an entirely accurate representation of one's relationship strength but rather a depiction of the participant's current relationship climate.

Generational differences found in this study can be attributed to generational association, age, relationship length, or any combination of these variables. The question of why these differences exist could be better answered with longitudinal research, but the inherent difficulties associated with collecting time-lag data imply that cross-sectional studies are expected to continue dominating the field despite their limitations (Ryder, 1965). According to Mannheim's (1952) gestalt perspective, viewing cross-sectional and longitudinal designs as complementary

rather than competing sources of evidence is advantageous, each offering a unique angle on generational phenomena. Despite their constraints, cross-sectional studies provide a snapshot of generational differences, offering valuable insights for practitioners navigating generational challenges. Moreover, they serve as a data repository, facilitating meta-analyses and reviews (Lyons & Kuron, 2013).

In this study, 101 participants filled out the survey only partially. Most participants who submitted partial surveys gave up when they had to choose 6 out of 15 most important items from the Triangular Love Scale-Short version for their ideal relationship. Even though the survey did not take longer than 10 minutes to fill out, participants could have experienced exhaustion by that point, because of how sensitive and cognitively engaging reflecting on personal romantic relationships can be. Some participants did not give up, but rather failed to fill out that part of the survey according to the instructions, marking less than 6 items on the list. Both those who gave up and those who did not manage to fill out the survey correctly were excluded from the comparison of self-reported importance of Sternberg's Love Scale dimensions, which brought the sample down from 414 to 313 participants.

Participants in committed romantic relationships and those who weren't were included in the analysis of the self-reported importance of Sternberg's Love Scale dimensions. These two groups could have been coming from different places when it comes to forming opinions on ideal relationships and answering the survey questions based on that. Regardless, they were merged together for statistical analysis. Even though it can be argued that the participant's current relationship status does not impact answers on a questionnaire dealing with ideal, imaginary relationships, there are reasons why this could be a limitation of the study. Potentially, those currently in relationships might value behaviors and cognitions they lack in their current



relationship more than those they do have or, oppositely, value those they do have more, lowering value to those they are missing. On the other hand, participants who are currently not in a relationship might value different aspects of their relationships than they would if they were in a relationship.

### **Conclusion**

This study used Sternberg's triangular theory of love as a framework to compare how Generation X and Generation Z perceive and prioritize love in their romantic relationships. The study examined intimacy, passion, and commitment scores, alongside the reported importance of these dimensions and various demographic and relational factors.

The results indicated that Generation Z members scored higher than those from Generation X across all dimensions of Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale. Findings further showed a marginal difference between generations on the reported importance of intimacy with Gen X scoring higher than Gen Z, and a significant difference between sexes on intimacy and passion with women placing greater importance on intimacy, and men placing greater importance on passion.

The study also examined whether several variables predict the total and component's score on the Sternberg scale and found the significance of gender, generation, religiosity, spirituality, and compatibility of religious/spiritual beliefs between partners.

In summary, this study sheds light on the evolving nature of romantic relationships, highlighting the importance of considering generational and gender perspectives to promote stronger and more fulfilling romantic partnerships.

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**Appendices**

Appendix A- Full Survey (English and Croatian version)

Appendix B- Informed consent (English and Croatian version)

Appendix C- Results- expanded

## Appendix A

### Full survey- English version

Birth year (please write) \_\_\_\_\_

Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) I prefer not to say
- d) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

This survey will deal with romantic relationships

- If you are currently in an exclusive romantic relationship (i.e. a relationship with one partner), please fill in the upcoming questions in the questionnaire referring to that relationship.
- If you are not currently in an exclusive romantic relationship (i.e. a relationship with one partner), please complete the following questions in the questionnaire referring to your previous, most significant exclusive relationship in which you have been.
- If you have never been in an exclusive romantic relationship (i.e. a relationship with one partner), in the next question, mark "I have no one to refer to because I have never been in an exclusive romantic relationship."

\*Exclusive relationship = monogamous relationship = relationship with one partner

I will fill in this survey regarding to:

- a) My current partner
- b) My previous, most significant partner with whom I was in an exclusive relationship
- c) I do not have someone to refer to because I have not been in an exclusive relationship yet

This person is:

- a) Someone I do not live with
- b) Someone I live with
- c) My marital spouse

How long have you been in this relationship?

- a) 0- 3 months
- b) 3-6 months
- c) 6-12 months
- d) 1-2 years
- e) 2-3 years
- f) 3-5 years
- g) 5-10 years
- h) 10-15 years
- i) 15-20 years
- j) 20-25 years
- k) 25-30 years
- l) 30 + years

On the attached scale, indicate the extent to which your views on religiousness/ spirituality coincide with your partner's views on the same topic (1- do not match at all, 4- partially match, and 7-completely match).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On the attached scale (from 1 to 7), indicate to what extent you consider yourself a religious person (according to your personal understanding of religiosity), where 1 is not at all, 4 is partly and 7 is extremely strong.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On the attached scale (from 1 to 7), indicate to what extent you consider yourself a spiritual person (according to your personal understanding of spirituality), where 1 is not at all, 4 is partly and 7 is extremely strong.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### **Questions from Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale (TLS-45)**

Imagine that the name of your current partner is written on the blank lines, about whom you will think while filling out this questionnaire. For each statement, mark the level of agreement from 1-9 where 1- do not agree at all, 5- somewhat, and 9-strongly agree.

1. I am actively supportive of \_\_\_\_\_'s well-being.
2. I have a warm relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I am able to count on \_\_\_\_\_ in times of need.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ is able to count on me in times of need.
5. I am willing to share myself and my possessions with \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I receive considerable emotional support from \_\_\_\_\_.
7. I give considerable emotional support to \_\_\_\_\_.
8. I communicate well with \_\_\_\_\_.
9. I value \_\_\_\_\_ greatly in my life.
10. I feel close to \_\_\_\_\_.
11. I have a comfortable relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
12. I feel that I really understand \_\_\_\_\_.
13. I feel that \_\_\_\_\_ really understands me.
14. I feel that I can really trust \_\_\_\_\_.
15. I share deeply personal information about myself with \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Just seeing \_\_\_\_\_ excites me.
17. I find myself thinking about \_\_\_\_\_ frequently during the day.
18. My relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ is very romantic.
19. I find \_\_\_\_\_ to be very personally attractive.
20. I idealize \_\_\_\_\_.
21. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as \_\_\_\_\_ does.
22. I would rather be with \_\_\_\_\_ than with anyone else.
23. There is nothing more important to me than my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
24. I especially like physical contact with \_\_\_\_\_.
25. There is something almost “magical” about my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
26. I adore \_\_\_\_\_.
27. I cannot imagine life without \_\_\_\_\_.
28. My relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ is passionate.
29. When I see romantic movies and read romantic books, I think of \_\_\_\_\_.
30. I fantasize about \_\_\_\_\_.
31. I know that I care about \_\_\_\_\_.
32. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
33. Because of my commitment to \_\_\_\_\_, I would not let other people come between us.



34. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
35. I could not let anything get in the way of my commitment to \_\_\_\_\_.
36. I expect my love for \_\_\_\_\_ to last for the rest of my life.
37. I will always feel a strong responsibility for \_\_\_\_\_.
38. I view my commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ as a solid one.
39. I cannot imagine ending my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
40. I am certain of my love for \_\_\_\_\_.
41. I view my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ as permanent.
42. I view my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ as a good decision.
43. I feel a sense of responsibility toward \_\_\_\_\_.
44. I plan to continue my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
45. Even when \_\_\_\_\_ is hard to deal with, I remain committed to our relationship.

In this part of the survey, I invite you to think about your ideal relationship. So, not necessarily about the relationship you are currently in or once were, but about the relationship that would be the best possible for you. Among the attached fifteen statements, mark only six that would be most important to you for such a relationship, marking from the first to the sixth most important. Don't worry about leaving out some of the statements you'd also want to choose, it's important to select only the six most important to your ideal relationship.

**Statements from Triangular Love Scale-Short version (TLS-15)**

1. I have a warm relationship with my partner.
2. I receive considerable emotional support from my partner.
3. I value my partner greatly in my life.
4. I have a comfortable relationship with my partner.
5. I feel that my partner really understands me.
6. My relationship with my partner is very romantic.
7. I find my partner to be very personally attractive.
8. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does.
9. There is something almost “magical” about my relationship with my partner.
10. My relationship with my partner is passionate.

11. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with my partner.
12. I view my commitment to my partner as a solid one.
13. I am certain of my love for my partner.
14. I view my relationship with my partner as permanent.
15. I feel a sense of responsibility toward my partner

How many children do you have? (Write a number). If you don't have any, write 0.

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your current relationship status? (Mark everything that applies to you, regardless of the relationship about which you filled out the questionnaire).

- Single
- In a relationship but not living together
- In a relationship and living together
- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- A widower
- Someone's lover (having an affair)
- I have a lover (having an affair)
- I have more than one partner
- I prefer not to say
- Other

What is the total number of committed exclusive romantic relationships (relationships with one partner) that you have had in your lifetime, including the one you are currently in? (write with a number) \_\_\_\_\_

Full Survey- Croatian version

Godina rođenja (napišite) \_\_\_\_\_

Spol

- a) Muško
- b) Žensko
- c) Ne želim se izjasniti
- d) Ostalo: \_\_\_\_\_

Ova anketa bavit će se romantičnim odnosima

- Ako trenutno jeste u ekskluzivnom romantičnom odnosu (tj. odnosu s jednim/nom partnerom/partnericom), molimo Vas da nadolazeća pitanja u upitniku popunjavate osvrćući se na taj odnos.
- Ako trenutno niste u ekskluzivnom romantičnom odnosu (tj. odnosu s jednim/nom partnerom/partnericom), molimo Vas da nadolazeća pitanja u upitniku popunjavate osvrćući se na Vaš prijašnji, Vama do sada, najznačajniji ekskluzivni odnos u kojem ste bili.
- Ako nikada do sada niste bili u ekskluzivnom romantičnom odnosu (tj. odnosu s jednim/nom partnerom/partnericom), u nadolazećem pitanju, označite "Nemam se na koga osvrutati, jer do sada nisam bio/la u ekskluzivnom romantičnom odnosu".

\*ekskluzivan odnos=monogamni odnos=odnos s jednim/nom partnerom/partnericom

Popunjavat ću nadolazeća pitanja u anketi osvrćući se na:

- a) Trenutačnog/nu partnera/icu
- b) Prijašnjeg/nju, meni do sada, najznačajnijeg/ju partnera/icu s kojim/jom sam bio/bila u ekskluzivnom odnosu
- c) Nemam se na koga osvrutati jer do sada nisam bio/bila u ekskluzivnom romantičnom odnosu

Ta osoba mi je:

- a) Partner(ica) s kojim/om ne živim
- b) Partner(ica) s kojim/om živim
- c) Bračni partner(ica)

Koliko ste dugo u tom odnosu?

- a) 0-3 mjeseca

- b) 3-6 mjeseci
- c) 6-12 mjeseci
- d) 1-2 godine
- e) 2-3 godine
- f) 3-5 godina
- g) 5-10 godina
- h) 10-15 godina
- i) 15-20 godina
- j) 20-25 godina
- k) 25-30 godina
- l) 30 + godina

Na priloženoj skali označite u kojoj se mjeri poklapaju Vaši stavovi na temu religioznosti/ spiritualnosti sa stavovima Vašeg/e partnera/ice na istu temu (1- ne poklapaju se nimalo, 4- djelomice se poklapaju i 7- potpuno se poklapaju).                    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Na priloženoj skali (od 1 do 7) označite u kojoj mjeri sebe smatrate religioznom osobom (prema osobnom shvaćanju religioznosti), u kojoj je 1-nimalo, 4- djelomice i 7-izuzetno jako.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Na priloženoj skali (od 1 do 7) označite u kojoj mjeri sebe smatrate spiritualnom osobom (prema osobnom shvaćanju spiritualnosti), u kojoj je 1-nimalo, 4- djelomice i 7-izuzetno jako.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

### **Pitanja iz Sternbergove skale ljubavi (TLS-45)**

Zamislite da na praznim linijama piše ime Vašeg/e trenutačnog/e partnera/ice o kojem/joj ćete razmišljati tokom popunjavanja ovog upitnika. Za svaku izjavu, označite razinu slaganja od 1- 9 u kojoj je 1- ne slažem se nimalo, 5- djelomično i 9- u potpunosti se slažem.

1. Aktivno podržavam dobrobit \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Imam topao odnos s \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Mogu računati na \_\_\_\_\_ u teškim vremenima.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ može računati na mene teškim vremenima.
5. Voljan sam podijeliti sebe i svoju imovinu s \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Dobivam značajnu emocionalnu podršku od \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Dajem značajnu emocionalnu podršku \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Dobro komuniciram s \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Uvelike dajem značenje \_\_\_\_\_ u svom životu.
10. Osjećam se blisko s \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Imam ugodan odnos s \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Osjećam da stvarno razumijem \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Osjećam da me \_\_\_\_\_ stvarno razumije.
14. Osjećam da stvarno mogu vjerovati \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Dijelim duboko osobne informacije o sebi s \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Samo vidjeti \_\_\_\_\_ me uzbuđuje.
17. Zateknem se razmišljajući o \_\_\_\_\_ često tokom dana.
18. Moja veza s \_\_\_\_\_ je vrlo romantična.
19. Osobno pronalazim \_\_\_\_\_ vrlo privlačanim/nom.
20. Idealiziram \_\_\_\_\_.
21. Ne mogu zamisliti da me neka druga osoba usrećuje kao \_\_\_\_\_.
22. Radije bih bio s \_\_\_\_\_ nego s bilo kim drugim.
23. Ništa mi nije važnije od moje veze s \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Posebno volim fizički kontakt s \_\_\_\_\_.
25. Postoji nešto gotovo "čarobno" oko mojoj vezi s \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Obožavam \_\_\_\_\_.
27. Ne mogu zamisliti život bez \_\_\_\_\_.
28. Moja veza s \_\_\_\_\_ je strastvena.
29. Kad gledam romantične filmove i čitam romantične knjige, mislim na \_\_\_\_\_.
30. Maštam o \_\_\_\_\_.
31. Znam da mi je stalo do \_\_\_\_\_.
32. Predan sam održavanju svog odnosa s \_\_\_\_\_.
33. Zbog moje predanosti \_\_\_\_\_, ne bih dopustio da se drugi ljudi dođu između nas.

34. Imam samopouzdanja u stabilnost svoje veze s \_\_\_\_\_.
35. Ne bih mogao/la dopustiti da išta stane na put mojoj predanosti \_\_\_\_\_.
36. Očekujem da će moja ljubav prema \_\_\_\_\_ trajati do kraja mog života.
37. Uvijek ću osjećati snažnu odgovornost za \_\_\_\_\_.
38. Svoju predanost \_\_\_\_\_ smatram čvrstom.
39. Ne mogu zamisliti prekidanje veze s \_\_\_\_\_.
40. Uvjeren sam u svoju ljubav prema \_\_\_\_\_.
41. Svoj odnos s \_\_\_\_\_ smatram trajnim.
42. Svoju vezu s \_\_\_\_\_ smatram dobrom odlukom.
43. Doživljam osjećaj odgovornost prema \_\_\_\_\_.
44. Planiram nastaviti svoju vezu s \_\_\_\_\_.
45. Čak i kad je teško nositi se s \_\_\_\_\_, ostajem predan/na našem odnosu.

### **Izjave iz Sternbergove skale ljubavi- skraćena verzija (TLS-15)**

U ovom dijelu ankete, pozivam Vas da razmišljate o svom idealnom odnosu. Dakle, ne nužno o odnosu u kojemu ste trenutno ili ste nekad bili, nego o odnosu koji bi za vas bio najbolji mogući. Među priloženih petnaest tvrdnji, označite samo šest koje bi Vam bile najvažnije za takav odnos, označavajući od prve do šeste najvažnije. Ne brinite o tome što izostavljate neke od tvrdnji koje biste također odabrali, važno je da odaberete najvažnijih šest za Vaš idealni odnos.

1. Imam topao odnos s partnerom/icom.
2. Dobivam značajnu emocionalnu podršku od svog/je partnera/ice.
3. Uvelike cijenim svog partnera/icu u svom životu.
4. Imam ugodan odnos s partnerom/icom.
5. Osjećam da me partner(ica) stvarno razumije.
6. Moj odnos s partnerom/icom je vrlo romantičan.
7. Partner(ica) mi je osobno privlačan/čna.
8. Ne mogu zamisliti da me druga osoba usređuje kao moj(a) partner(ica).
9. Postoji nešto gotovo "čarobno" u vezi s mojim partnerom/icom.
10. Moj odnos s partnerom/icom je strastven.
11. Imam pouzdanja u stabilnost svoje veze s partnerom/icom.

12. Svoju predanost prema partneru/ici smatram čvrstom.
13. Siguran/na sam u svoju ljubav prema partneru/ici.
14. Svoj odnos s partnerom/icom smatram trajnim.
15. Doživljam osjećaj odgovornosti prema svom partneru/ici.

Koliko djece imate? (Napišite brojem). Ako nemate, napišite 0. \_\_\_\_\_

Koji je Vaš trenutni status veze? (označite sve što se odnosi na Vas, bez obzira na vezu o kojoj ste ispunjavali upitnik).

- “Single”/ singl/ samac
- U vezi, bez zajedničkog suživota
- U vezi, sa zajedničkim suživotom
- Vjenčan(a)
- Razveden(a)
- Razdvojen(a)
- Udovac/ica
- Ljubavnik/ca nekome
- Imam ljubavnika/cu
- Imam više od jednog/ne partnera/ice
- Ne želim se izjasniti
- Ostalo: \_\_\_\_\_

Koji je ukupni broj posvećenih ekskluzivnih romantičnih odnosa (odnosa s jednim/nom partnerom/icom) u kojima ste bili tokom života uključujući onaj u kojem ste trenutno? (napišite brojem) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Informed consent- English version

This study is conducted by Stela Lara Tenšek for her bachelor thesis at the program of psychology in Split, under the supervision of Darko Hren, Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. The aim of the research is to examine how members of Generation X and Generation Z perceive and experience love in romantic relationships using Sternberg's Theory of Love as a theoretical framework. The study was approved by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences ethics committee in Split (Approval Number 2181-190-24-0001).

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey that will take you no more than 10 minutes. In the survey, you will encounter questions about your experience and priorities in romantic relationships and questions about your age, sex, relationship status, length of your romantic relationship, cohabitation with your partner, the total number of exclusive romantic partners in your lifetimes, and religiousness.

This research is anonymous. No data related to your identity will be gathered and there will be no way of identifying you based on the collected information. The data collected through your participation will be accessible only to researchers. The data obtained from the survey will not be linked to your name, so no one can connect you to the answers you give in the survey. Your answers will not be used for any purpose other than this research.

There are no risks for you when participating in this research. By participating in this study, you will support the student of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split in conducting her final thesis research.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are allowed to refuse to participate. You can quit your participation at any time during the survey filling process without any consequences.

If you have any questions regarding the study, you can contact us via e-mail at: [dhren@ffst.hr](mailto:dhren@ffst.hr) (Darko Hren, Ph.D., Assoc. Prof) and [sltensek@ffst.hr](mailto:sltensek@ffst.hr) (Stela Lara Tenšek). If you have any



questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Institutional Review Board by e-mail at zbornik.ffst@gmail.com. Thank you for your time.

If you have any immediate questions, please feel free to ask the researcher who shared this survey link with you or send an email to: sltensek@ffst.hr.

By clicking the “NEXT” button in the marked space below, you agree that you:

1. ...Read the information about the research.
2. ...You understand the purpose, procedures, and risks of the research.
3. ...You have received satisfactory answers to the questions about your participation in this research.
4. ...In this research you are participating voluntarily (without coercion) and aware that you can withdraw at any time without consequences.

#### Informed consent- Croatian version

Ovo istraživanje izvodi Stela Lara Tenšek za završni rad na preddiplomskom studiju Psychology u Splitu pod mentorstvom dr. sc. Darka Hrena, izv. prof. Cilj istraživanja je ispitati kako pripadnici generacije X i generacije Z poimaju i doživljavaju ljubav u romantičnim vezama koristeći Sternbergovu teoriju ljubavi kao teorijski okvir. Istraživanje je odobrilo Etičko povjerenstvo Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu (broj odobrenja 2181-190-24-0001).

Ako pristanete na sudjelovanje, od vas će se tražiti da ispunite anketu koja Vam neće oduzeti više od 10-15 minuta. U anketi ćete se susresti s pitanjima o Vašem iskustvu i prioritetima u romantičnim odnosima te pitanja o Vašoj dobi, spolu, statusu veze, dužini romantičnog odnosa, suživotu s partnerom/icom, ukupnom broju romantičnih partnera tokom života i religioznosti.

Ovo istraživanje je anonimno. Nikakvi podaci koji se odnose na Vaš osobni identitet neće se prikupljati i neće biti načina da Vas se identificira na temelju prikupljenih podataka. Podaci prikupljeni Vašim sudjelovanjem bit će dostupni samo istraživačima. Podaci dobiveni anketom neće biti vezani uz Vaše ime, tako da vas nitko ne može povezati s odgovorima koje date u anketi. Vaši odgovori neće se koristiti ni u koju drugu svrhu osim za ovo istraživanje.

Nema rizika za Vas prilikom sudjelovanja u ovom istraživanju. Sudjelovanjem u ovom istraživanju podržat ćete studenticu Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu u izradi završnog rada.

Vaše sudjelovanje je potpuno dobrovoljno i možete slobodno odbiti sudjelovanje u bilo kojem trenutku. Također, možete odustati od sudjelovanja u bilo kojem trenutku tijekom procesa ispunjavanja ankete bez ikakvih posljedica.

Za sva pitanja u vezi s istraživanjem možete nas kontaktirati putem e-maila: [sltensek@ffst.hr](mailto:sltensek@ffst.hr) i [dhren@ffst.hr](mailto:dhren@ffst.hr).

Klikom na gumb “DALJE” u označenom prostoru ispod, potvrđujete da:

1. ...ste pročitali informacije o istraživanju.
2. ...razumijete svrhu, postupke i rizike istraživanja.
3. ...ste dobili zadovoljavajuće odgovore na pitanja o Vašem sudjelovanju u ovom istraživanju.
4. ...u ovom istraživanju sudjelujete dobrovoljno (bez prisile) i svjesni da možete odustati u bilo kojem trenutku bez posljedica.

## Appendix C

### *Shapiro-Wilk for Sternberg's Love Scale Scores and it's Subscale Scores (by generation)*

	Gen X (n = 155)		Gen Z (n =153)	
	Shapiro- Wilk		Shapiro- Wilk	
	<i>w</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>p</i>
Total	0.869	<.001	0.831	<.001
Intimacy	0.797	<.001	0.824	<.001
Passion	0.941	<.001	0.904	<.001
Commitment	0.801	<.001	0.705	<.001

### *Shapiro-Wilk for Sternberg's Love Scale Scores and it's Subscale Scores (by gender)*

	Male (n = 81)		female (n =226)	
	Shapiro- Wilk		Shapiro- Wilk	
	<i>w</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>p</i>
Total	0.903	<.001	0.806	<.001
Intimacy	0.851	<.001	0.729	<.001
Passion	0.933	<.001	0.888	<.001
Commitment	0.820	<.001	0.737	<.001

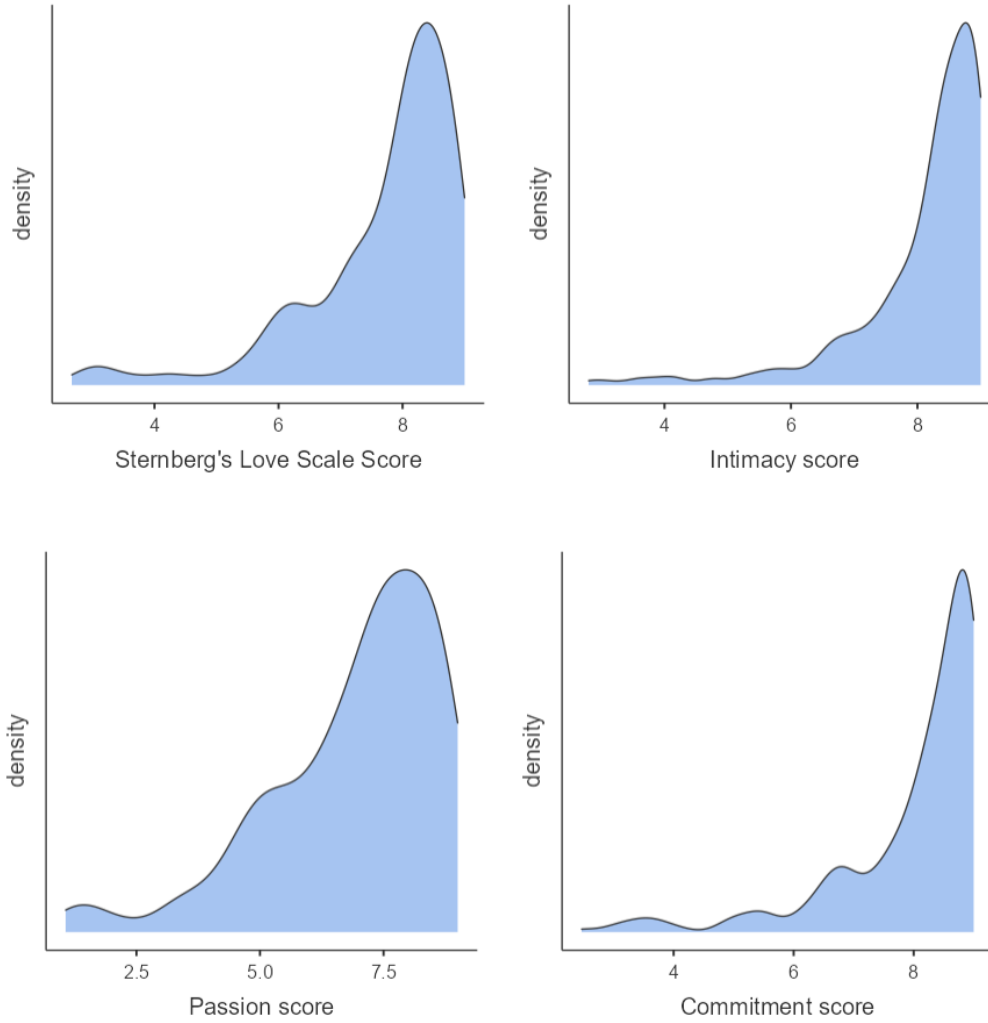
*Shapiro-Wilk for Sternberg's Love Scale- Short version (TLS-15) Scores and it's Subscale Scores when considering an „ideal“ relationship (by generation)*

	Gen X (n = 128)		Gen Z (n =185)	
	Shapiro- Wilk		Shapiro- Wilk	
	<i>w</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>p</i>
Intimacy	0.982	.089	0.984	.039
Passion	0.908	<.001	0.940	<.001
Commitment	0.961	.001	0.977	.004

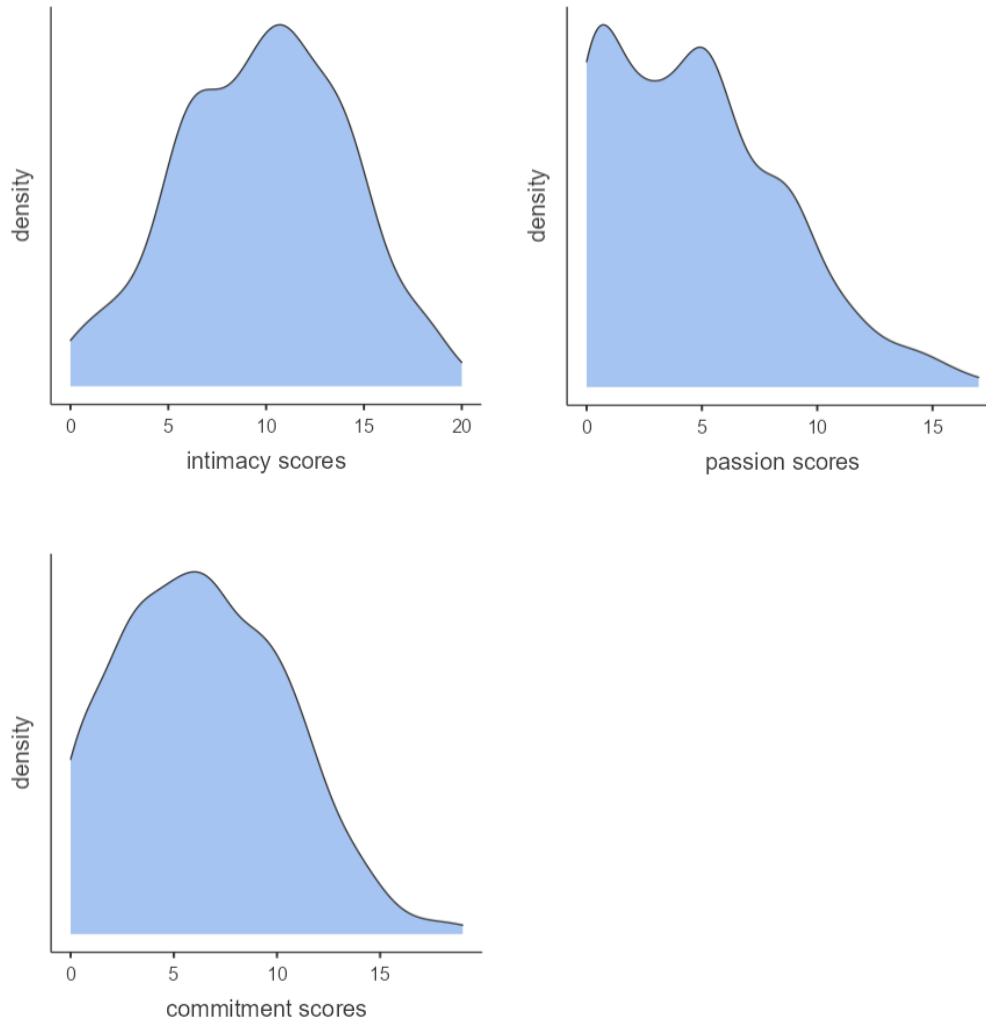
*Shapiro-Wilk for Sternberg's Love Scale- Short version (TLS-15) Scores and it's Subscale Scores when considering an „ideal“ relationship (by gender)*

	Male (n = 85)		Female (n = 227)	
	Shapiro- Wilk		Shapiro- Wilk	
	<i>w</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>p</i>
Intimacy	0.985	.433	0.046	.039
Passion	0.943	<.001	0.927	<.001
Commitment	0.965	.020	0.974	<.001

### Distribution of Sternberg's Love Scale Scores and it's Subscale Scores



Distribution of scores on self-reported importance of Sternberg's Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) Subscales



Hierarchical lists of items from the Triangular Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) based on how often they were chosen by participants (based on relative frequencies)

*Hierarchical list of items from the Triangular Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) based on how often they were chosen by participants (based on relative frequencies)- Total Sample (N= 313)*

1. I receive considerable emotional support from my partner. 0,71
2. I feel that my partner really understands me. 0,67
3. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with my partner. 0,58
4. I value my partner greatly in my life. 0,50
5. I find my partner to be very personally attractive. 0,48
6. I am certain of my love for my partner. 0,47
7. I have a warm relationship with my partner. 0,38
8. My relationship with my partner is passionate. 0,38
9. I view my relationship with my partner as permanent. 0,37
10. I have a comfortable relationship with my partner. 0,33
11. I view my commitment to my partner as a solid one. 82/ 0,26
12. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does. 0,25
13. There is something almost “magical” about my relationship with my partner.0,22
14. My relationship with my partner is very romantic. 0,20
15. I feel a sense of responsibility toward my partner. 0,18

*Hierarchical list of items from the Triangular Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) based on how often they were chosen by participants (based on relative frequencies)- Generation X (N= 128)*

1. I receive considerable emotional support from my partner. 0,69
2. I feel that my partner really understands me. 0,65
3. I value my partner greatly in my life. 0,59
4. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with my partner. 0,56
5. I am certain of my love for my partner. 0,45
6. I have a warm relationship with my partner. 0,43
7. I find my partner to be very personally attractive. 0,42

8. I have a comfortable relationship with my partner. 0,38
9. My relationship with my partner is passionate. 0,35
10. I view my relationship with my partner as permanent. 0,35
11. I view my commitment to my partner as a solid one. 0,28
12. I feel a sense of responsibility toward my partner. 0,24
13. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does. 0,21
14. My relationship with my partner is very romantic. 0,20
15. There is something almost “magical” about my relationship with my partner. 0, 20

*Hierarchical list of items from the Triangular Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) based on how often they were chosen by participants (based on relative frequencies)- Generation Z (N= 185)*

1. I receive considerable emotional support from my partner. 0.72
2. I feel that my partner really understands me. 0.69
3. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with my partner. 0.59
4. I find my partner to be very personally attractive. 0.51
5. I am certain of my love for my partner. 0.49
6. I value my partner greatly in my life. 0.45
7. My relationship with my partner is passionate. 0.41
8. I view my relationship with my partner as permanent. 0.39
9. I have a warm relationship with my partner. 0.35
10. I have a comfortable relationship with my partner. 0.29
11. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does. 0.27
12. I view my commitment to my partner as a solid one. 0.25
13. There is something almost “magical” about my relationship with my partner. 0.24
14. My relationship with my partner is very romantic. 0.21
15. I feel a sense of responsibility toward my partner. 0.14

*Hierarchical list of items from the Triangular Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) based on how often they were chosen by participants (based on relative frequencies)- Male sample (N= 85)*

1. I feel that my partner really understands me. 0.64



2. I receive considerable emotional support from my partner. 0.60
3. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with my partner. 0.56
4. I find my partner to be very personally attractive. 0.56
5. My relationship with my partner is passionate. 0.47
6. I value my partner greatly in my life. 0.46
7. I have a warm relationship with my partner. 0.44
8. I am certain of my love for my partner. 0.39
9. I view my relationship with my partner as permanent. 0.38
10. I have a comfortable relationship with my partner. 0.36
11. I view my commitment to my partner as a solid one. 0.27
12. There is something almost “magical” about my relationship with my partner. 0.25
13. I feel a sense of responsibility toward my partner. 0.24
14. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does. 0.20
15. My relationship with my partner is very romantic. 0.19

*Hierarchical list of items from the Triangular Love Scale- Short Version (TLS-15) based on how often they were chosen by participants (based on relative frequencies)- Female sample (N= 227)*

1. I receive considerable emotional support from my partner. 0.75
2. I feel that my partner really understands me. 0.69
3. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with my partner. 0.59
4. I value my partner greatly in my life. 0.52
5. I am certain of my love for my partner. 0.51
6. I find my partner to be very personally attractive. 0.45
7. I view my relationship with my partner as permanent. 0.37
8. I have a warm relationship with my partner. 0.37
9. My relationship with my partner is passionate. 0.35
10. I have a comfortable relationship with my partner. 0.31
11. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does. 0.26
12. I view my commitment to my partner as a solid one. 0.26
13. There is something almost “magical” about my relationship with my partner. 0.21

14. My relationship with my partner is very romantic. 0.21

15. I feel a sense of responsibility toward my partner. 0.16

Model diagnostics and assumption checks for Linear Regressions

Multicollinearity

Predictors	VIF	Tolerance
Gender	1.05	0.953
Generation	3.48	0.287
Cohabitation status	2.00	0.500
Relationship length	3.73	0.268
Religiousness	1.10	0.909
Spirituality	1.17	0.852
Religious/ spiritual belief compatibility	1.02	0.977

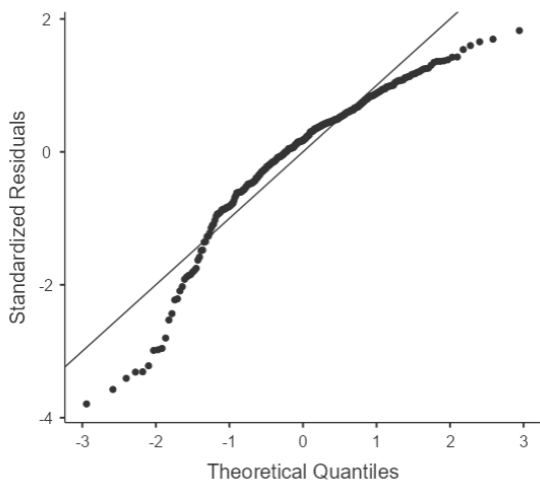
*Model diagnostics and assumption checks for Linear Regressions- Sternberg Love Scale score as the criterion*

Cook's distance (extreme residuals)

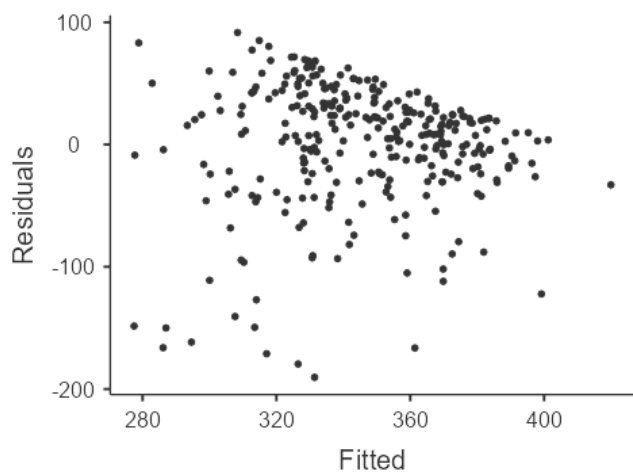
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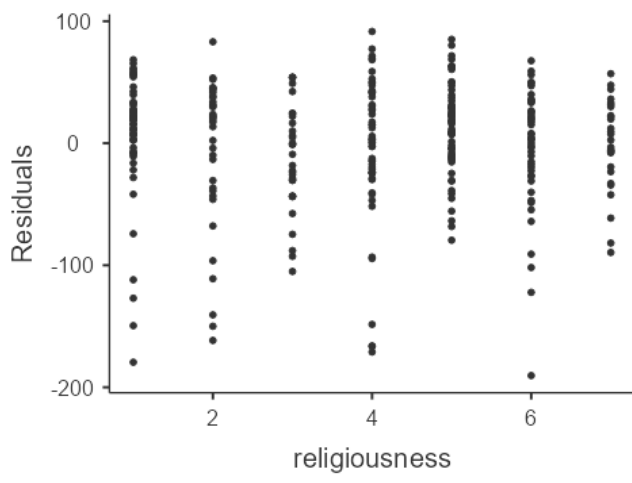
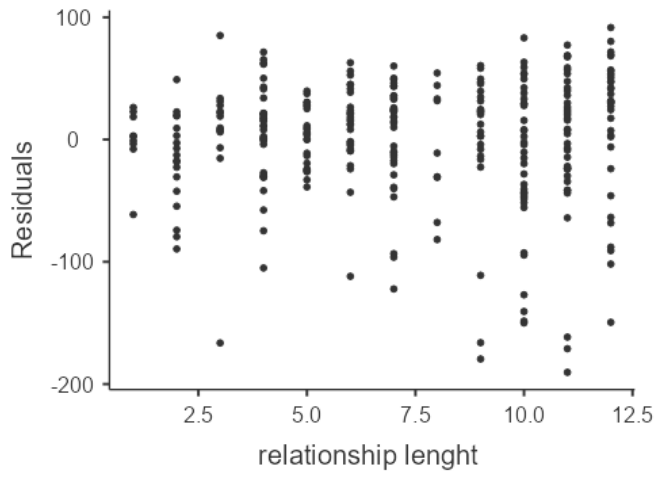
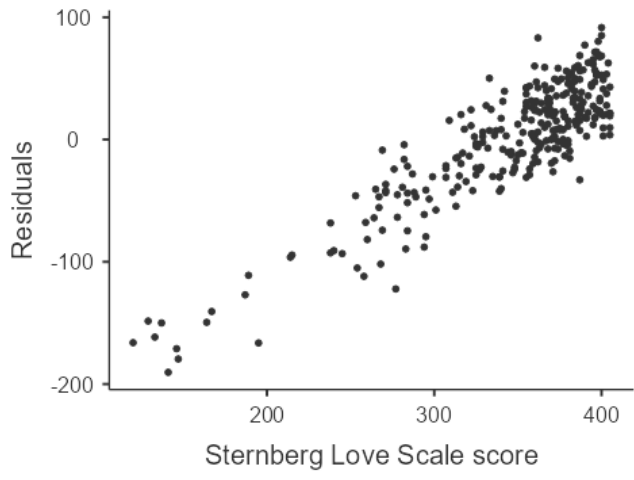
## Normality of Residuals

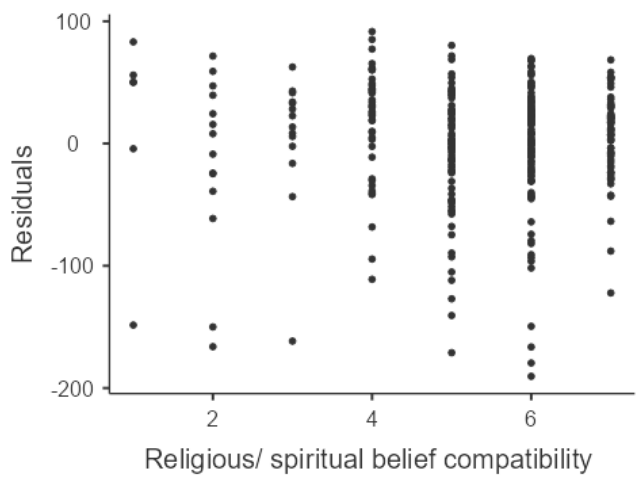
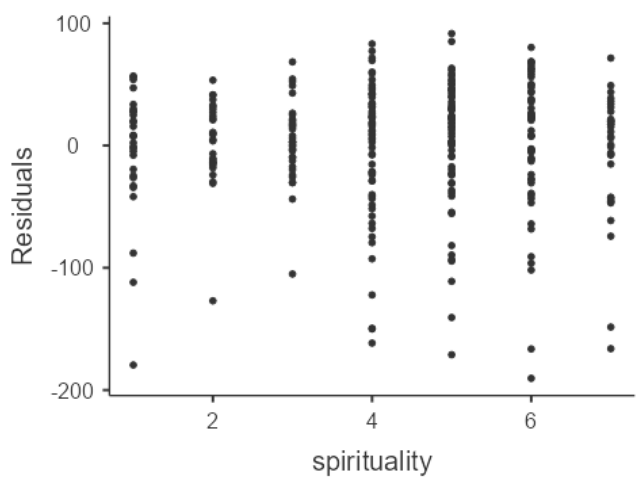
### Q-Q plot



### Residuals plots







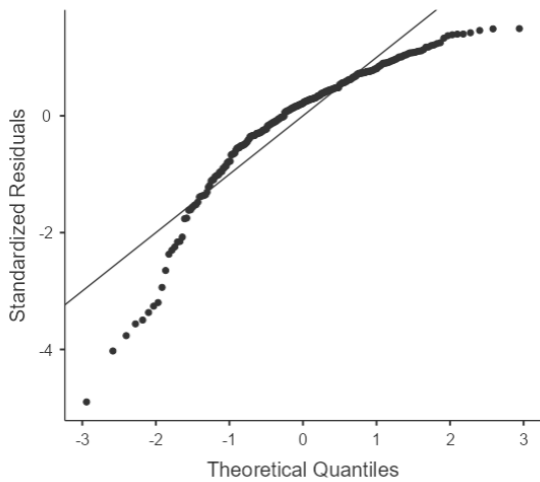
*Model diagnostics and assumption checks for Linear Regressions- Intimacy score as the criterion*

Cook's distance (extreme residuals)

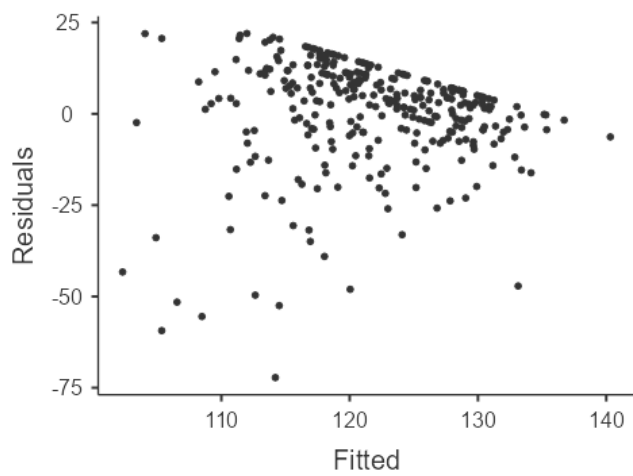
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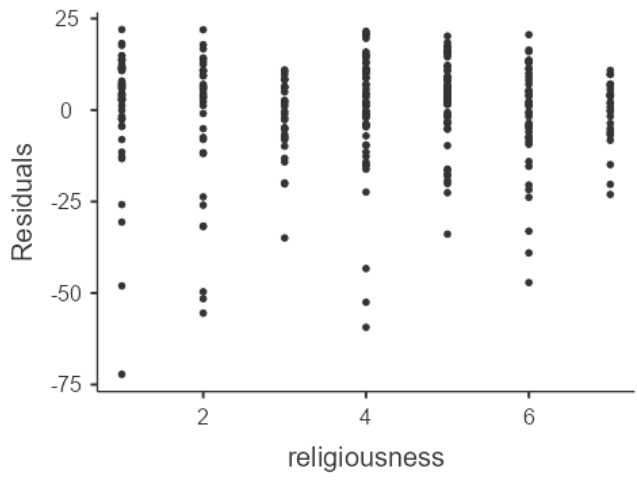
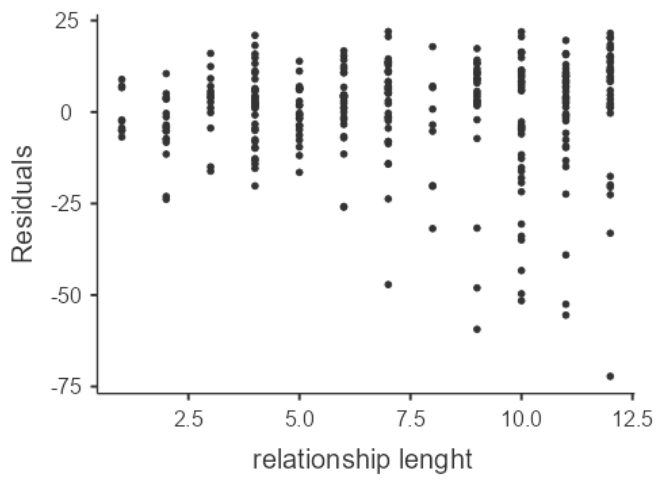
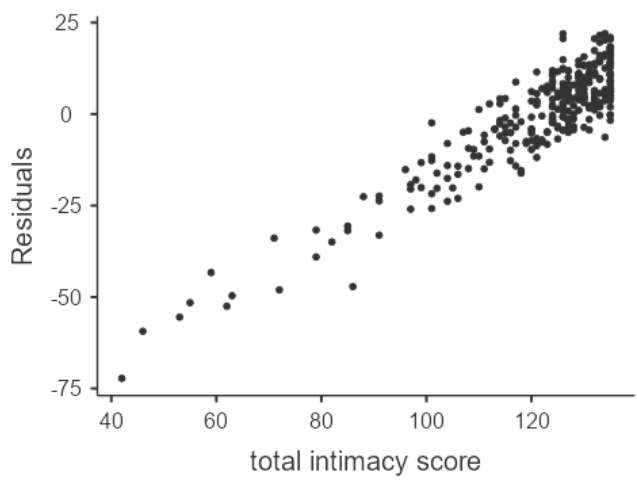
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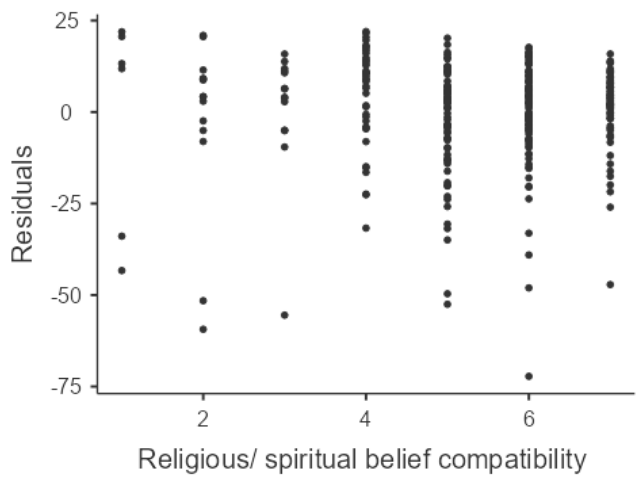
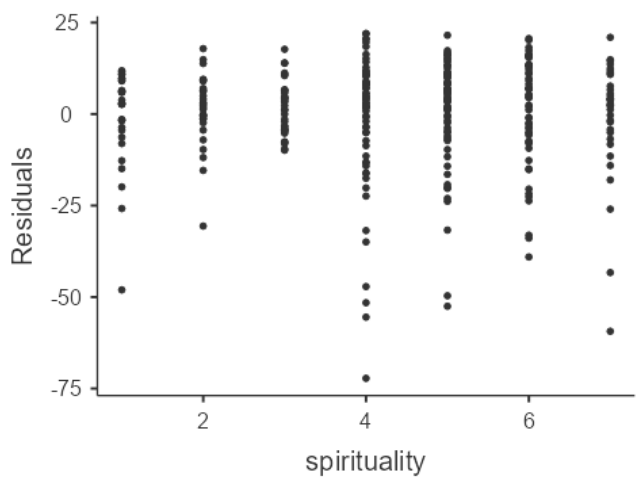
## Q-Q plot



## Residuals plots







*Model diagnostics and assumption checks for Linear Regressions- Passion score as the criterion*

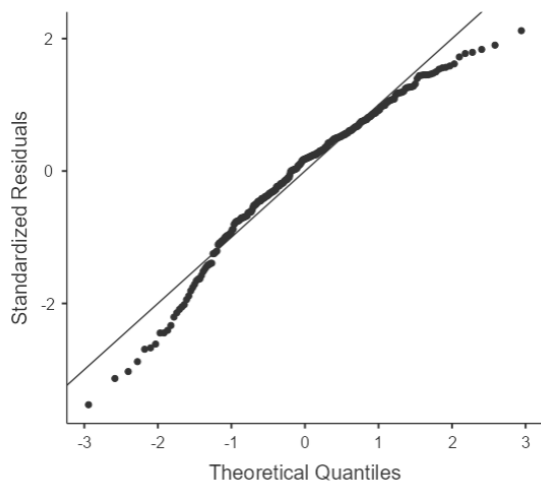
Cook's distance (extreme residuals)

Range				
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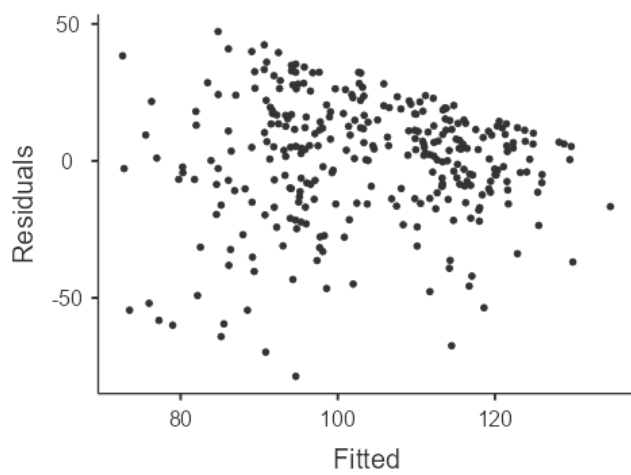


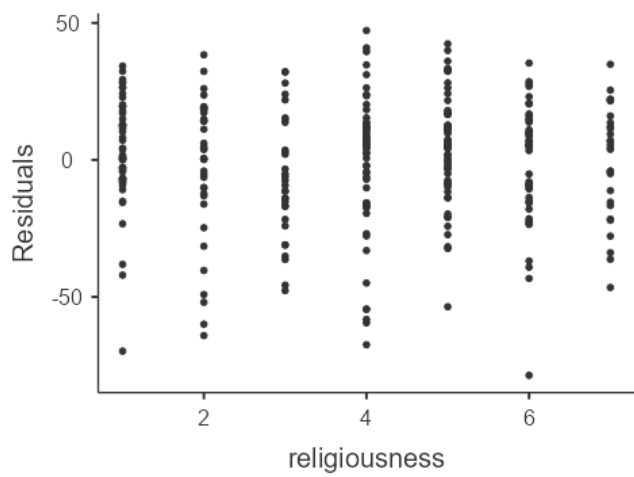
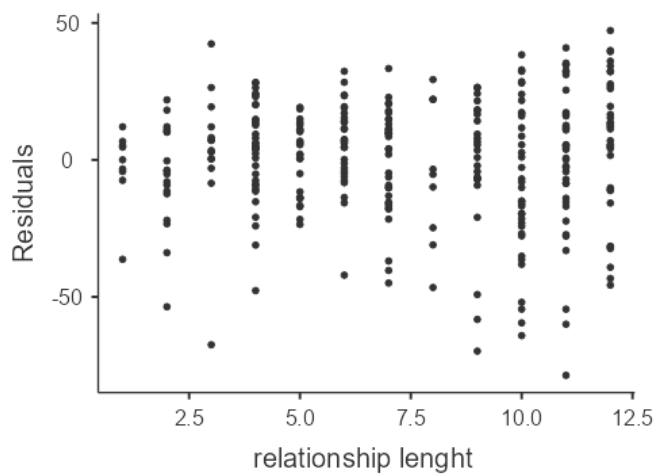
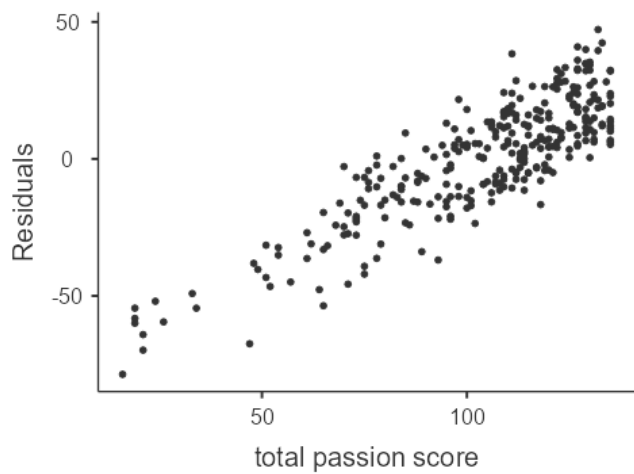
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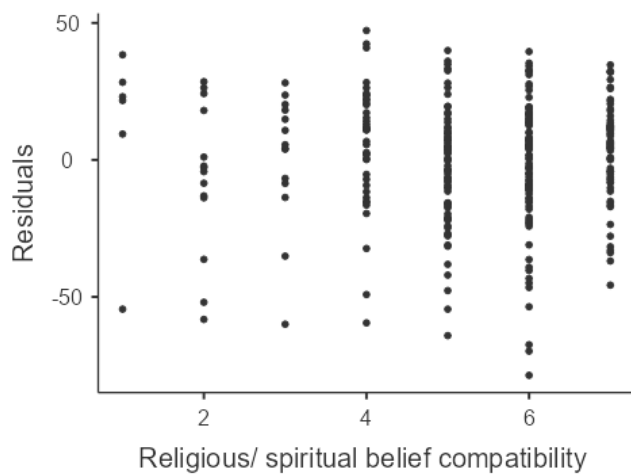
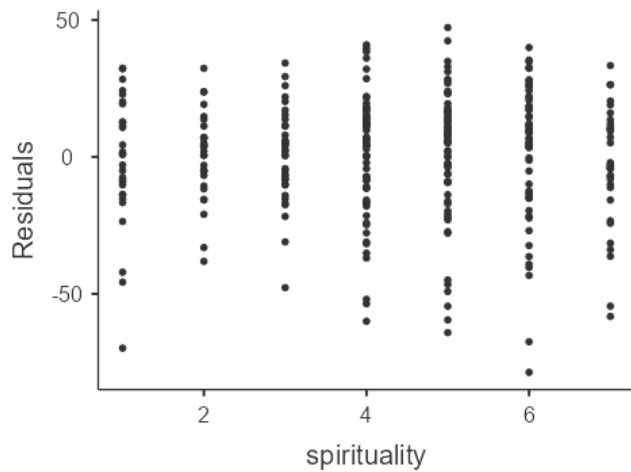
### Q-Q plot



### Residuals plots







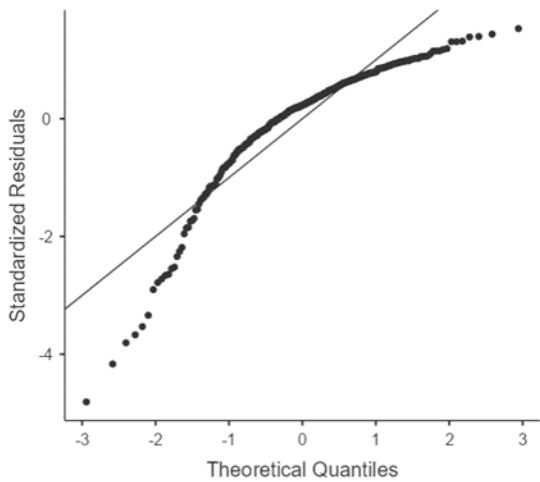
*Model diagnostics and assumption checks for Linear Regressions- Commitment score as the criterion*

Cook's distance (extreme residuals)

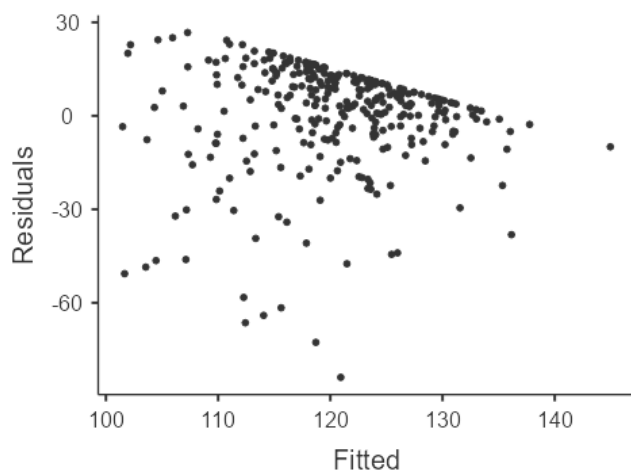
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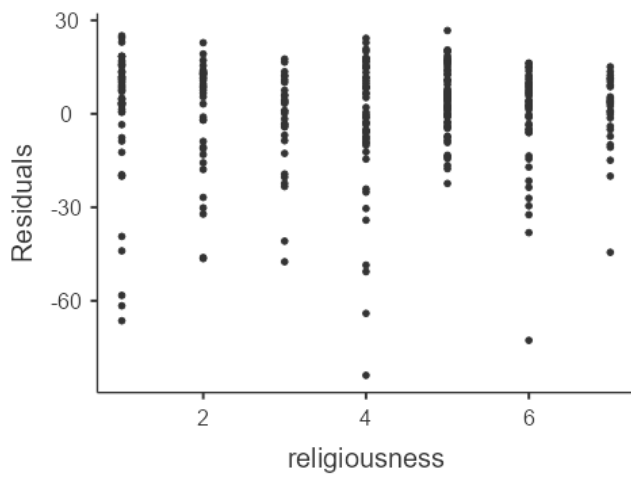
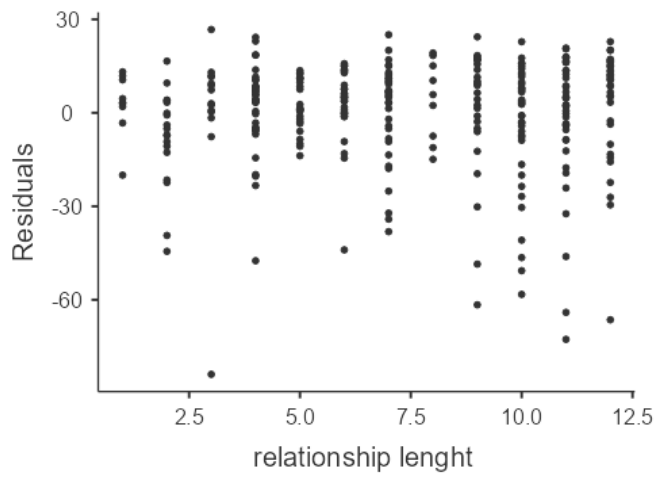
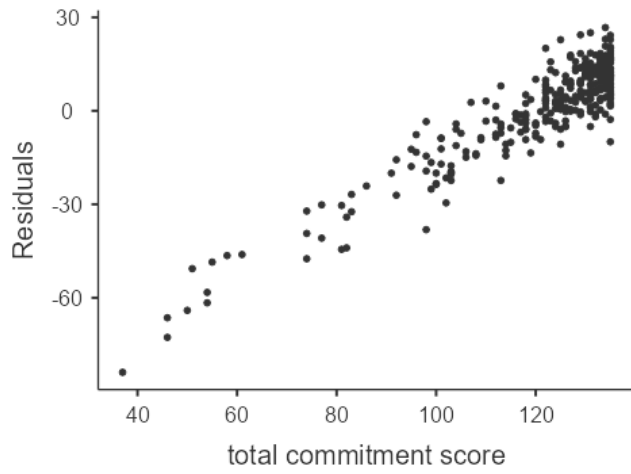
## Normality of Residuals

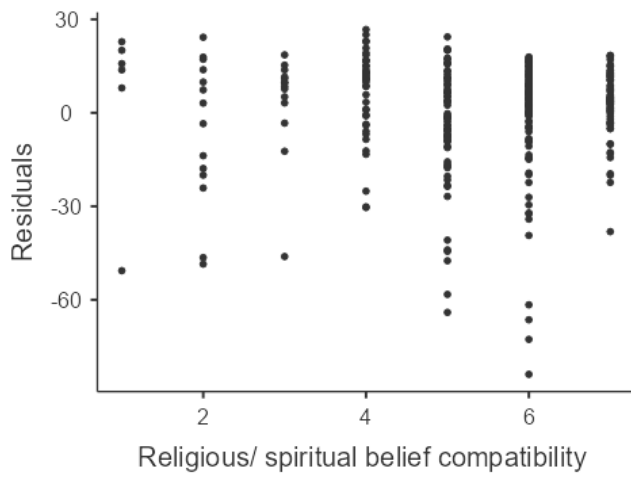
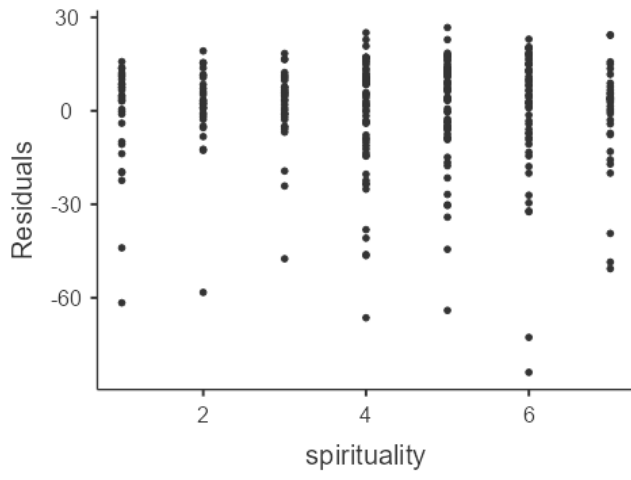
### Q-Q plot



### Residuals Plots







**Izjava o pohrani i objavi ocjenskog rada**  
(završnog/diplomskog/specijalističkog/doktorskog rada - podcrtajte odgovarajuće)

Student/ica: Stela Lara Tenšek

Naslov rada: Triangular Theory of Love in  
Gen X and Gen Z: A Comparative Study

Znanstveno područje i polje: Psihologija

Vrsta rada: završni

Mentor/ica rada (ime i prezime, akad. stupanj i zvanje):  
Darko Hren, izv. prof. dr. sc.

Komentor/ica rada (ime i prezime, akad. stupanj i zvanje):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Članovi povjerenstva (ime i prezime, akad. stupanj i zvanje):  
Katja Kalebić Jakupčević, doc. dr. sc.  
Lana Pechar, asist.

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