



Mixed-methods analysis of cultural influences on the attitudes of love and hate

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Accepted: 22 February 2023

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Abstract

Objectives The religious influence on the construction of emotions like love and hate have lacked empirical attention. This study sought to address this issue by exploring the influence of culture and religion on love and hate using both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Method Samples from Japan ($n = 397$), Thailand ($n = 258$), the U.S. ($n = 198$), and Sweden ($n = 80$) took an online survey on either love or hate. Quantitative measures were used to assess either positive or negative attitudes towards love and hate while qualitative measures were used to assess differences in the concepts of love and hate.

Results Quantitative measures revealed that cultures (Japan and Thailand) with stronger Buddhist influence tend to have more moderate views of love and hate, while cultures with stronger Christian (Sweden and the U.S.) influence tend to have more polarized views of love and hate. Qualitative measures revealed that although the universal presence of love and hate share similar qualities across cultures, there are unique elements of both that may be lost when measuring love and hate.

Conclusions These findings demonstrate a need to consider the religious influence on emotions. Especially when it comes to emotions like love and hate which have considerable influence over relationships, formation of family, and dissolution of alliances, religion may have a significantly broader influence than currently considered in the empirical literature.

Keywords Love · Hate · Culture · Emotions · Measures

Public Significant Statement Different countries have different religions and values that can impact attitudes towards and concepts of emotions. A quantitative and qualitative study compared 4 different countries' concepts of love and hate. Countries like Thailand and Japan had more moderate views of love and hate while countries like the U.S. and Sweden had more polarized views, likely due to the religious differences in these countries.

The universal presence of romantic love has been identified by various disciplines, notably anthropology (e.g., Ahearn, 2001; DeMunck, 2006; De Munck et al., 2009; Hirsch & Wardlow, 2006; Jankowiak & Fisher, 1992) and psychology (Aron, Fisher, & Strong, 2006; Berscheid, 2006; Dion &

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Dion, 2010; Hatfield, Rapson, & Martel, 2007; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986, Lee, 1977; Ze'ev, 2004; Zeki & Romaya, 2010). These studies also found that the universal presence of love does not imply the same universal meaning or construction. Using comparative approaches, researchers have found both similarities and differences in the construction of love. For example, de Munck and colleagues (2006) found that when interviewed, U.S. participants would mention concepts like friendship, comfort, content(ment), and security (p. 424) while these concepts were absent in the Lithuanian sample. Similarly, De Munck and colleagues (2009) found that U.S. and Russian samples shared some similar structural components of love, like “doing anything” for the person and “constantly thinking”, however Russians were much more likely to agree that “Romance without finance is no good” while the U.S. sample was much more likely to agree that “Loves makes fools of us all” (p. 353).

From a psychological perspective, similarities and differences about attitudes towards love have also been found across cultures. For example, Shaver et al. (1992) found student samples in the U.S. and Italy were much more likely to equate or pair love with happiness, while student samples in Beijing, China were much more likely to have a sadder view of love. Using a prototype approach to the study of love, Fehr (1988) found evidence that although passionate love and companionate love may be conceived as separate, when looking at the prototypical features of love, passion may be more peripheral and companionate aspects more central to the conception of love. Other studies have provided further evidence that more collectivist cultures are more likely to centralize companionate views of love (e.g., Dion & Dion, 1996; Karandashev & Karandashev, 2019; Simmons et al., 1986, 1989).

Expanding a culturally comparative approach

Studies in psychology have gradually become more proactive in sampling beyond the college aged WEIRD samples (e.g., Henrich et al., 2010) and identifying models and processes of emotion construction. Mesquita (2022) has specified a MINE and OURS model for understanding emotions across cultural contexts. For example, in some cultures, emotions are often viewed as MEntal, INside the person, and Essentialist (MINE) while for other cultures, emotions are viewed as OUtside the person, Relational, and Situated (OURS). These different perspectives on emotions can have significant impacts on the expression and reaction to emotions. Mesquita (2022) recognizes that culture can embody many factors, including religion. Religious and spiritual doctrines are part of most cultures, exhibiting significant influence on the view of relationships and often the influence of

religion is unconscious or invisible. For example, Buddhism and Shintoism are the most prevalent religions in Japan, nevertheless most Japanese would not consider themselves religious (Bullivant et al., 2019). Instead evidence of the influence of Buddhism and Shintoism is often layered into customs and societal habits without regard to their religious roots (Scroope, 2021).

Religious texts and norms have been recently applied to understanding mindfulness (Lutz et al., 2006; Wielgosz et al., 2019), yet little in terms of understanding discrete emotions. Love and hate are central relationship emotions. They form and dissolve relationships quickly and sometimes with both incredible grace and terrible destruction. Christian and Buddhist texts both have views about love and hate that may impact the attitude of people who identify with these religious messages or who are living in a country where that religion is influential. Christianity polarizes love and hate, much as opposites of each other. Love is God and good (1 John 4: 8, 16) while hate is associated with evil and strife (Proverbs 10:12; Burris, 2022; Halperin, 2008). Buddhism approaches love and hate in a more middle way with the four noble truths. The second noble truth states that the cause of suffering is from *tanhā*; desire, longing, greed and attachment. This desire can be found in both passionate love and hate (Takó, 2019; Zürcher, 2013). Given these foundational differences between the religions, cultures where either Christianity or Buddhism are more prevalent may have very different views of and attitudes towards, love and hate.

Importance of attitudes towards love and hate

Measuring an attitude about an emotion is arguably different than measuring the qualities of the emotion itself (e.g., Yoon et al., 2018). For example, one could conceive of fear as involving an identification of incredible danger, risk of death, and the need to withdraw or freeze (Buss et al., 2004), yet many people have a positive regard for fear as is evident with the engagement of roller coasters, haunted houses, and recreational horror in general (Andersen et al., 2020). Similarly, many may view *hygge*, the Danish feeling of coziness and comfort with others, as warm, pleasant, and involving close comforting bonds with family and friends (Wiking, 2016), yet some may have a more negative view of *hygge*, especially after prolonged grouped isolation (Olagnier & Mogensen, 2020).

The need to measure the attitude of an emotion separately from the concept of that emotion is useful. Attitudes are the cognitive and affective evaluations of a construct (or object) and is usually valenced as positive or negative (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Attitudes towards one's own emotional experience can impact emotion-regulating strategies and

behaviors (Harmon-Jones et al., 2011). For example, negative attitude towards an emotion can lead to using avoidance as an emotion regulation strategy (Mitmansgruber et al., 2009; Olatunji et al., 2010). Avoidance can actually prolong the undesired emotional state that one has a negative attitude towards and exacerbate depressive symptoms (Hayes et al., 1996). On the other hand, a positive attitude towards an emotion (e.g., joy), may lead one to seek stimuli that elicit that state more often (Markovitch et al., 2017). Tsai (2021) and Tsai and colleagues (2006) use affective valuation theory to argue that ideal affective states are culturally shaped. The value one has about an emotion and the valence of emotion may have significant health outcomes. For example, Tamir and colleagues (2017) found that feeling emotions, positive or negative, that one prefers to feel is associated with better health. More recent research has demonstrated that the habitual emotion judgment one has about emotions, for example positive judgements or negative judgements, is related to psychological health. Specifically, positive judgments about positive emotions associated with better psychological health and negative judgements about negative emotions associated with poorer psychological health (Wilroth et al., in press).

There is likely a cyclical relationship between culture and attitudes towards emotions. Culture can impact the attitudes one has about emotions, which impacts how often those emotions are expressed and experienced, which inevitably changes the culture, norms, and values in a place (Hatfield & Rapson, 2011). For example, hate is often considered the antithesis of love, occasionally its opposite (Sternberg, 2003), and has been understudied until recently.

There is only one tested and standardized scale on hate by Sternberg and Sternberg (2008) yet, it only measures hate in relation to intergroup hate. Halperin has measured hate in various group contexts, but not its attitude towards it. Studies on interpersonal hate have found that both hate and love are often present together in many relationships (Aumer & Bahn, 2016; Aumer et al., 2015, 2016; Aumer-Ryan & Hatfield, 2007; Fitness & Fletcher, 1993; Zayas & Shoda, 2015), yet people often do not want to self-report or disclose their hate, reporting an avoidance in using the term or word (Aumer-Ryan & Hatfield, 2007; Aumer et al., 2015; Rempel & Burris, 2005). From the aforementioned empirical studies and the lack of studies on hate in general, one could surmise there is a negative attitude about hate. Nevertheless, some have argued that hate, although typically viewed as a negative emotion, may still be useful especially for creating or facilitating social bonds through mutual or shared feelings and gossip (e.g., Aumer & Erickson, 2022; Bosson et al., 2006; Estévez et al., 2022).

However, with the resurgence of free speech advocates, the discussion of hate and narratives for its extreme has become more apparent (Roseman et al., 2020). Norms

change and with that the attitudes towards emotions, like love or hate can change as well. Given that love and hate are such important emotions in relationships and relationships are politically and religiously regulated (Goode, 1959; Haider-Markel, 2002; Hatfield & Rapson, 2011), we hypothesize that attitudes about love and hate will be related to both culture and religious influence.

In this study, we sampled from four different sites: Japan, Thailand, Sweden, and the U.S. with varying degrees of cultural and religious profiles. We investigated both the construction and attitudes towards the emotions of love and hate. Using quantitative measures, we hypothesized:

H1: Due to the influence of Shinto in Japan and Buddhism in Thailand, both sites will have similarly positive and negative views of love and hate, while the influence of Christianity in Sweden and the U.S. will be more likely to result in polarized views, with more positive views of love and more negative views of hate.

A qualitative, thematic analysis of love and hate was also conducted for each sample to identify universal as well as culturally unique conceptions of love and hate. We recognize that there are specific individual factors that can also contribute to the experience, construction, and attitude formation of both love and hate. The goal of this study is to investigate the broad and generalized contributions of culture and religion on love and hate in the hopes of identifying religious influences.

Method

Participants

A total of 933 participants were sampled from Japan ($n=397$; 201 female, 163 male, 4 transgender, and 29 not specified), Thailand ($n=258$; 121 female, 100 male, 2 transgender, and 5 not specified), U.S. ($n=198$; 157 female, 37 male, 3 transgender, and 1 not specified), and Sweden ($n=80$; 45 female, 31 male, 4 not specified) and were recruited through various sampling methods. The sample from Japan was recruited through Pollfish. From both Thailand and Sweden, a snowball sampling method through social media was initiated by the third author and fourth authors respectively. From the U.S., participants from the university subject pool were recruited. G*Power (version 3.1.9.7; Faul et al., 2007) was used to conduct an a-priori power analysis to determine the minimum sample size required to test our hypothesis. G*Power analysis revealed that to achieve 80% power for detecting a medium effect, at a significance criterion of $\alpha=0.05$, was $N=179$ for a One-way ANOVA with 4 groups. Thus, the obtained

sample size of $N=933$ is adequate to test the study hypothesis. Samples reflected a population from emerging adulthood to late adulthood: Japan; $M_{age}=35.13$ ($SD=11.81$), Thailand; $M_{age}=26.01$ ($SD=6.96$), U.S.; $M_{age}=23.92$ ($SD=10.32$), and Sweden; $M_{age}=37.47$ ($SD=15.94$). For each sample, religious affiliation was primarily divided amongst Buddhism (34.6%), Christianity (18.9%), and Atheism/Agnosticism (39.5%). For Japan; 52% Atheist/Agnostic, 37% Buddhist, 5% Christian, 3% Shintoism, and 3% Other, for Thailand; 68% Buddhist, 24% Atheist/Agnostic, 5% Christian, 3% Other, for the U.S.; 44% Christian, 40% Atheist/Agnostic, 6% Buddhist, 10% Other, for Sweden; 57% Christian, 24% Atheist/Agnostic, 19% Other. All methods were approved by the second author's University's Institutional Review Board.

Measures

Half of each sample was assigned to a survey regarding their experiences with either love or hate. This evenly distributed assignment was set in Qualtrics. For participants who took the survey on love, we clarified in the survey by stating: For all following questions, the word "love" refers specifically to "romantic love". For the purposes of our hypothesis we will focus specifically on the attitudinal measures of love and hate as well as the open ended questions regarding love and hate. Supplemental materials for analysis and peer review can be found here: https://osf.io/wu67h/?view_only=0665f1ef2a0243d0b3e8eb95ed493fbc

Attitudes of love and hate

Participants were asked to rate on a 0–4 scale (0 = “not at all” and 4 = “completely”) both their positive and negative attitudes about love and hate. Specifically, to measure positivity, participants were asked: “How positively do you see love?” and “How positively do you see hate?”. To measure negativity, participants were asked: “How negatively do you see love?” and “How negatively do you see hate?”. By measuring both positive and negative views discretely and on separate continua, as opposed to one continuum where positivity and negativity are on polar ends, allowed for the specificity of more granular attitudes (e.g., seeing love as both completely positive and negative). Additionally, translating these items was the most parsimonious. Given that our hypothesis specifically tested the degree of polarity and moderation of attitudes across cultures, this method of measuring positivity and negativity also allowed us to use difference scores meaningfully. We subtracted the negative attitude from the positive attitude, with more positive views of love and hate being represented as positive numbers and more negative views of love and hate being represented as negative numbers. Additionally, if a person's score of love

and hate were equally positive and negative, this difference would be “0” and indicate a moderated view of love and hate. Given that these sampled data came from natural and non-randomized groupings, using difference scores in this way would be considered valid and reliable (Jennings & Cribbie, 2016; Thomas & Zumbo, 2012).

Open ended questions

To better assess the qualitative differences and similarities of love and hate across cultures, we asked participants to provide words, sentences, or concepts that immediately came to mind when they thought of love and hate. Japanese *ai*, Thai *rak*, Swedish *kärlek*, and English *love*, were used for questions regarding romantic love. Japanese *kirai*, Thai *keltyd*, Swedish *hata*, English *hate* were used for questions regarding hate. Participants could provide up to 5 separate responses. Responses were gathered in the language of each country (e.g., Japanese, Thai, Swedish, and English respectively). Based on Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1279), participants' responses were subject to “conventional content analysis” without imposing predefined categories. Patterns, codes, and themes were allowed to naturally arise through the participants' responses. For Japanese, Thai, and Swedish responses, translations were done by the second, third, and fourth authors respectively who are native speakers in the language. The coding team (consisting of the first, sixth, and seventh authors who have no fluency in Japanese, Thai, or Swedish) then viewed the English translations and English submissions from the U.S. sample and coded for themes separately. The coding team discussed any confusions and disparities in coding during three separate meetings and occasionally, Google translate was used whenever certain disparities or colloquial use of phrases needed to be double checked. After themes were agreed upon, the coding team went back through the responses and coded by theme, marking each response if it corresponded to one of the themes. Afterwards, the responses were corresponded with each coder to identify if there were discrepancies. Agreement for themes of both love and hate were discussed as a group until unanimous agreement was achieved.

Results

Quantitative analyses

Love

Difference scores on the positive and negative attitudes about love were compared between a one-way ANOVA with culture (i.e. Japan, Thailand, U.S., and Sweden) as the subject variable. A significant main effect of culture was found,

$F(3, 376) = 4.631, p = 0.003$, partial eta squared = 0.036. In partial support of our hypothesis, post-hoc analyses revealed that the Swedish sample saw love more positively than negatively ($M = 3.06, SD = 0.95$), compared to the Thailand ($M = 1.90, SD = 1.18, p < 0.001$), Japan ($M = 2.24, SD = 1.71, p = 0.005$), and U.S. samples ($M = 2.37, SD = 1.56, p = 0.032$). The U.S. sample ($M = 2.37, SD = 1.54$), saw love more positively than negatively compared to the Thailand sample, but this difference only approached significance ($p = 0.052$). There were no statistically significant differences between Thailand and Japan. The difference between U.S. and Japan, although supporting our hypothesis, was not statistically significant ($p = 0.53$).

Hate

Difference scores on the positive and negative attitudes about hate were compared between samples using a one-way ANOVA with culture (i.e. Japan, Thailand, U.S., and Sweden) as the subject variable. A significant main effect of culture was found, $F(3, 399) = 18.695, p < 0.001$, partial eta squared = 0.123. Post-hoc analyses revealed that the Thailand sample ($M = -1.09, SD = 1.67$) saw hate more neutrally; as more equally negative and positive, compared to the U.S. ($M = -2.54, SD = 1.39, p < 0.001$), Sweden ($M = -2.80, SD = 1.32, p < 0.001$), and Japan ($M = -2.34, SD = 1.73, p < 0.001$) samples which saw hate as more negative than positive. There were no significant differences between the U.S., Sweden, and Japan samples on attitudes regarding hate. Figure 1 shows average differences in attitudes regarding both love and hate across cultures.

Religion

To test the hypothesis that religion could impact attitudes of emotions, two independent samples t-tests comparing difference scores in love and hate were conducted, with religion (Buddhism and Christianity) as the grouping variable. We predicted that Buddhism may encourage a more “middle way”/moderate approach to emotions while Christianity would encourage more polarity in views of love and hate. We found partial support for this hypothesis. For love, a one-sided t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between religious groups ($t(198) = -1.858, p = 0.032$) with Buddhism ($M = 2.11, SD = 1.44$) having a more middle way view of love than Christianity ($M = 2.51, SD = 1.37$), but this was not statistically significant for a two-sided t-test ($p = 0.065$; Cohen’s $d = -0.337$). For hate, both a one-sided t-test ($p = 0.003$) and two-sided ($p = 0.006$) t-test revealed ($t(198) = 2.771$) a statistically significant difference between religious groups, with Buddhism ($M = -1.82, SD = 1.58$) having a more moderate view of hate than Christianity ($M = -2.45, SD = 1.53$) Cohen’s $d = 0.505$.

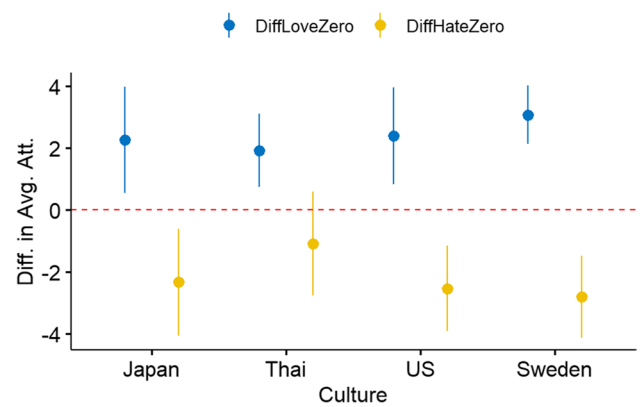


Fig. 1 Average differences in positive and negative attitudes for both love (blue) and hate (yellow) across four sites. *Note.* Difference in average positive and negative attitudes regarding love and hate. Scores closer to zero indicate similar degrees of positivity and negativity. Scores that are negative (lower) indicate more negative views while scores that are positive (higher) indicate more positive views. Blue dots represent love and yellow dots hate. The closer both love and hate scores are to each other, or the dotted red line, the more similar the attitudes are towards both emotions, while the farther away the more extreme or polarized are those attitudes. Error bars represent standard errors

Qualitative analyses

Love

Fewer participants provided free responses when asked “What words/ideas do you associate with romantic love?” A total of 277 participants responded from Japan ($n = 176$), Thailand ($n = 23$), U.S. ($n = 66$), and Sweden ($n = 12$). Thematic analyses of the free responses revealed themes that were both universal and unique to each culture regarding romantic love. The themes for love are organized in Table 1 from largest average mentioned across all samples to least. The top four themes of caring, passion, happiness, and connection were universally mentioned regarding romantic love. Percentage differences indicate cultural differences in mentioning that theme, however given the discrepancy in sample sizes and how responses could be coded under multiple themes, we emphasize the top three themes (at least 10% of sample) mentioned for each culture respectively. Japan’s top three themes for romantic love were: happiness, special occasions, and caring. Thai’s top three themes for romantic love were: caring, suffering, and connection. U.S.’s top three themes for romantic love were: caring, passion, and connection. Finally, Sweden’s top three themes for romantic love were: passion, caring, and happiness. From the thematic analysis, one can see strongest similarity in the concept of romantic love between the U.S. and Sweden which share caring and passion. Unique to Japan is the emphasis of special occasions like Christmas, walks on the beach, and fireworks

Table 1 Themes for Love ($N=277$). Bolded percentages indicate the top three themes for that sample

	Japan ($n=176$)	Thailand ($n=23$)	US ($n=66$)	Sweden ($n=12$)	Total Avg	Examples
Caring	10.02%	39.80%	21.45%	26.42%	24.42%	Japan: give, mutual affection Thailand: caring, warm, patient, nurture, support, empathize U.S.: caring, trust, affection Sweden: tenderness, supporting
Passion	6.56%	3.06%	21.77%	30.19%	15.40%	Japan: passion, lover, sex Thailand: passionate U.S.: sex, lustful, passionate, arousal, intense Sweden: heat, desire, longing
Happiness	11.23%	4.08%	11.67%	16.89%	10.97%	Japan: happiness, joy, enjoyable Thailand: gladness, hope U.S.: happiness, fun, magical Sweden: joy
Connection	6.39%	13.27%	11.99%	9.43%	10.27%	Japan: wanting to connect, very close Thailand: tie, bond, people who learn about each other U.S.: attraction, understanding Sweden: togetherness
Suffering	7.60%	19.39%	6.94%	5.66%	9.90%	Japan: painful, bitter, embarrassed Thailand: irritate, offended, worrying, suffering, sacrifice U.S.: pain, tired, dull Sweden: unsure, missing
Obsession and Irrational	7.43%	4.08%	5.68%	3.77%	5.24%	Japan: unrealistic, illusion, jealous, my possession Thailand: crazy in love, jealous, obsession U.S.: blind, fleeting, bold, flustered Sweden: blind, “stolthet” (haughty pride)
Expression	8.13%	2.04%	3.15%	7.02%	5.09%	Japan: “I love you”, smiling face, eye contact, “marry me” Thailand: smile U.S.: kiss, starry eyed, hugs Sweden: walk, sleeping together, kisses, hugs
Purity	5.53%	3.06%	4.10%	1.89%	3.65%	Japan: pure love, pure, sweet Thailand: true self, honest, sincerity U.S.: unconditional, forgiving, selfless Sweden: light, pure
Special Occasion	11.23%	0%	1.26%	0%	3.12%	Japan: dating under stars, hill with a view of the sea, to take anniversaries seriously, the top floor of the restaurant hotel, beautiful night view, Christmas, kiss on the beach, tea time at the cafe U.S.: ring, roses, dates

Themes are presented by both degree of endorsement and consensus across all four samples, with the most endorsed and agreed upon themes presented at top

at night. Unique to Thailand is a bittersweet mix of caring, suffering, and connection.

Hate

Again, fewer participants provided free responses when asked “What words/ideas do you associate with hate?” A total of 277 participants responded from Japan ($n=167$), Thailand ($n=28$), U.S. ($n=72$), and Sweden ($n=12$). Thematic analyses of the free responses revealed themes that were both universal and unique to each culture regarding hate. The themes for hate are organized in Table 2 from largest average mentioned across all samples to least. The top three themes of dislike, anger, and do harm were universally

mentioned regarding hate. Percentage differences indicate cultural differences in mentioning that theme, again, like the love thematic analysis, we emphasize the top three themes (at least 10% of sample) mentioned for each culture respectively. Japan’s top three themes for hate were: dislike, sad and loneliness, and do harm. Thai’s top three themes for hate were: dislike, impurity, and negative. U.S.’s top three themes for hate were: dislike, anger, and negative. Finally, Sweden’s top three themes for hate were: anger, do harm, and social transgression/crimes. From the thematic analysis, one can see some similarity across each sample, however it appears that the concept of hate can be very different depending on one’s background. The emphasis for Sweden on the social transgressions/crimes and also little emphasis

Table 2 Themes for Hate ($N=277$). Bolded percentages indicate the top three themes for that sample

	Japan ($n=167$)	Thailand ($n=28$)	US ($n=72$)	Sweden ($n=12$)	Total Avg	Examples
Dislike	11.44%	26.42%	18.73%	0%	14.15%	Japan: dislike, dislike something very much Thailand: dislike U.S.: dislike, don't like
Anger	7.21%	5.66%	15.11%	15.22%	10.80%	Japan: anger, strong anger, mad Thailand: enraged U.S.: anger, angry, rage Sweden: anger
Do harm	9.41%	6.60%	5.44%	15.22%	9.17%	Japan: attack, murderous intent, killing one another, go to hell (slang) Thailand: want person to disappear, threaten, enemy U.S.: revenge, hurt, cruel Sweden: revenge, violence, beatings
Impurity	7.98%	12.26%	8.16%	2.17%	7.64%	Japan: ugly, disgust, dirty mind Thailand: disgusting, ugly, hideous U.S.: ugly, evil Sweden: disgust
Negative	3.24%	9.43%	12.99%	4.35%	7.50%	Japan: unpleasant, negative, bad Thailand: negative thoughts, negative energy, bad U.S.: awful, dreadful, terrible, negativity Sweden: naughtiness, dark, negatively
Social Transgressions & Crimes	8.15%	3.67%	3.93%	13.40%	7.29%	Japan: betrayal, cannot forgive, infidelity Thailand: bullying, bully, making reckless decisions U.S.: betrayal, assault, abuse, crime Sweden: rape, war, robbery of older people
Sad & Lonely	10.00%	4.72%	2.72%	4.35%	5.45%	Japan: sad, lonely, loneliness Thailand: dull, bored U.S.: sad, sadness, pain, dull Sweden: sorrow, pain
Beliefs	4.12%	2.83%	7.45%	6.52%	5.23%	Japan: prejudice, narrow-mindedness, education, history Thailand: inequality, political members U.S.: racism, discrimination, prejudice, capitalism, political parties, intolerance, money Sweden: extremism, unfairness, injustice
Passion & Joy	2.67%	5.66%	6.04%	6.52%	5.22%	Japan: twisted affection, joy, enjoyable Thailand: satisfy, desire, fire U.S.: hot, energy Sweden: passion, power

Themes are presented by both degree of endorsement and consensus across all four samples, with the most endorsed and agreed upon themes presented at top

on the “dislike” theme, suggests that Sweden may see hate as something more than “extreme dislike”.

Discussion

This study used a mixed-methods analysis of the attitudes and construction of love and hate from participants from Japan, Thailand, U.S. and Sweden. Given that the construct of love can be religiously and culturally influenced (e.g., Hatfield & Rapson, 2011; Tsai & Clobert, 2019) we explored the attitudes of love and hate using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A simplified quantitative measure of both the positivity and negativity of love and hate was used to assess attitudes while an open-ended thematic analysis

of love and hate was used to assess the concept of love and hate. Previous studies and literature suggest that love and hate may be influenced by both culture and religion and we found partial support for our hypothesis.

Across all samples from Japan, Thailand, U.S., and Sweden, love was seen as more positive than negative and hate was seen as more negative than positive. However, the degree of this difference was dependent on culture and religion. Samples from the U.S. and Sweden were more likely to polarize their views of love and hate compared to the samples in Thailand and Japan which had a more moderate view. Religion is related to this influence with those identifying as Christian having a more polarized attitude while those identifying as Buddhist having a more moderate attitude towards love and hate. The moderate view of love and hate is most

evident in Thailand, which also had the largest proportion of those identifying as Buddhist. Those in Thailand did not just associate love with caring and connection, but also with suffering. Similarly the notion that hate is more negative than positive is universally held, nevertheless the qualitative study of hate demonstrated that most people may find hate to be a justifiable or at least useful emotion in certain situations, for example while witnessing or being a victim of a social transgression or crime like rape, murder, betrayal, or war. This is not to say that hate is or should be considered a “positive” thing, but it seems to play a role in relationships as either self-protective (Aumer & Bahn, 2016) and/or dissolving (Zayas & Shoda, 2015).

These findings support previous comparative studies, that more collectivist cultures tend to have a less romantic or idealized view of love (e.g., Dion & Dion, 1996; Karandashev & Karandashev, 2019; Simmons et al., 1986, 1989). This study also suggests that these findings may not just be a result of differences in collectivism and individualism, but religious as well. Buddhists texts, including the Bhagavad Gita and the noble truths emphasize the dangers of passion, whether through love or hate (Takó, 2019; Zürcher, 2013). Thailand, albeit more collectivistic than U.S. samples (e.g., McCann et al., 2010) usually does not endorse collectivism as highly as Japan, yet their view of love and hate was even more moderate. The Thai sample also endorsed Buddhism more than the sample from Japan, demonstrating more evidence that the influence of religion, especially on emotions, may be more significant than previous empirical literature has suggested.

Finally, these findings provide additional evidence in understanding the importance of attitudes towards and consideration of ideal affect (Tsai et al., 2019). Cultures vary in the amount of importance given to different emotions (Clobert et al., 2022) and this research demonstrates differences in attitudes as well. Attitudes about emotions can impact psychological health (Tamir et al., 2017; Wilroth et al. in press) and this research suggests that these attitudes may be culturally dependent. Future research may consider the relationship between culture moderating or mediating the relationship between attitudes about emotions and psychological health. Additionally, more research should consider the moral, political, and spiritual influence on love and hate (Pismenny & Brogaard, 2022) as these social factors seem to have influence over these emotions which can unite and divide.

Limitations

This study provides a foundation for future discovery and mapping of cultural and religious elements that can shape the attitudes and construction of emotions. We did not intend this to be an exhaustive study of all elements that could

impact the attitude and perception of love and hate. There are factors of personality (Emmons & Diener, 1986), age (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998), and gender (Davis et al., 2012) that were not studied and we do recognize as important. Similarly, we did not directly measure the impact of one’s religion on their conception or attitude of love and hate, however future studies can. It may be that religion influences perceptions and attitudes of love and hate indirectly, through doctrine, services, or ceremony. Given that this study was primarily exploratory in nature, we did not specify exact elements of religious service that could impact attitudes and concepts of love and hate.

It is important to note that fewer people provided free responses for qualitative analyses in the Thailand ($n=23$ for love and $n=28$ for hate) and Sweden ($n=12$) samples, compared to our Japan and U.S. samples. Additionally, there was a significant age difference between our samples that might explain some of these differences as well. The qualitative/thematic differences we observed between cultures should not be overstated. There may be larger cultural elements or interactions between factors could explain some of these differences. For example, themes from the Swedish sample should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size ($n=12$). Nevertheless, the themes revealed in their answers do seem to reflect the horizontal collectivist views of Swedish society with religious connotations that have been discussed in other literature (e.g., Trägårdh, 2014).

Finally, we want to emphasize the importance of language in not just the communication, but construction of emotions (Hinojosa et al., 2020; Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 1989; Lindquist et al., 2015). Given that we chose specific words for love (Japanese *ai*, Thai *raḡ*, Swedish *kärlek*, and English *love*) and hate (Japanese *kirai*, Thai *kelḡyd*, Swedish *hata*, English *hate*) this could have activated concepts that may not be completely congruent with the concepts of “love” or “hate”. Some may argue that one could have used another word in Japanese for love, like *koi* which also means “affection” and “love” which may have resulted in a different kind of outcome. Nevertheless, since we were most interested in passionate views of love, we settled on *ai* as most appropriate.

Implications

Attitudes towards love and hate may impact the extent to which these emotions are utilized as forms of emotion regulation (Mitmansgruber et al., 2009; Olatunji et al., 2010) and the influence religion may have on both the attitude and construction of love and hate may have implications on the formation and dissolution of relationships. This study demonstrates that both culture and religion seem to impact attitudes and constructions of love and hate. Future studies should consider not only the religious identification of the

individual, but also the normative religious influence of the area when investigating or studying love and hate.

Supplemental materials can be found at: https://osf.io/wu67h/?view_only=0665f1ef2a0243d0b3e8eb95ed493fbc

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04460-0>.

Funding This research was partially supported by the Institute for Humane Studies.

Declarations

Conflict of interest On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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