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The Capacity of Feeling Loved Predicted Life Satisfaction and Positive Affect in Married Individuals

Edwin Adrianta Surijah^{1, 2}, Kadek Dilan Ari Rahayu², Supriyadi³

Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Faculty of Health, School of Psychology and Counselling, Brisbane, Qld, Australia¹

Universitas Dhyana Pura, School of Psychology, Jalan Raya Padang Luwih, Badung, Bali² Universitas Udayana, School of Psychology³

e-mail: edwin@adrianta.com

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Abstract. Love is an indispensable part of human life, and this study specifically investigated the expression of feeling loved. This study aims to explore the association between couples' feeling loved and different components of wellbeing. We constructed a continuous rating scale to measure couples' feeling loved and its contribution toward life satisfaction and positive affect. There were 252 couples participated in this study. To examine the measurement's consistency, this study compared the continuous rating scale of feeling loved with its Likert scale and rating scale counterpart. This study also investigated the role of feeling loved towards the scores of positive affect and life satisfaction as the components of wellbeing. Actor partner interdependence model and linear regression results showed that feeling loved was positively contributed to life satisfaction and positive affect; however, there was no significant interactive effect within partner. This study suggested feeling loved influenced wellbeing, although other predictors may play more prominent roles in determining wellbeing.

Keywords: love, feeling loved, wellbeing

Abstrak. Cinta adalah bagian tak terpisahkan dari kehidupan manusia dan studi ini mengkaji ekspresi perasaan dicintai. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menelusuri asosiasi antara perasaan dicintai pasangan terhadap komponen dari wellbeing. Penulis menyusun suatu continuous rating scale (skala peringkat grafik) untuk mengukur perasaan dicintai pasangan dan kontribusinya terhadap kepuasan hidup dan afek positif. Sejumlah 252 pasangan dilibatkan dalam penelitian ini. Untuk menguji konsistensi pengukuran, studi ini membandingkan alat ukur perasaan dicintai tersebut dengan bentuk skala Likert dan rating scale (skala peringkat) dari perasaan dicintai. Studi ini juga menguji peranan perasaan dicintai terhadap skor afek positif dan kepuasan hidup sebagai komponen dari kesejahteraan. Hasil analisis data dengan model actor partner interdependence dan regresi linear menunjukkan perasaan dicintai berkontribusi positif terhadap kepuasan hidup dan afek positif; akan tetapi, tidak ada efek interaksi yang signifikan di antara pasangan. Penelitian ini menghasilkan luaran bahwa perasaan dicintai berkontribusi terhadap wellbeing, walau prediktor lain berperan lebih penting dalam menentukan wellbeing.

Kata kunci: cinta, perasaan dicintai, wellbeing

Love and romantic relationships are universal aspects of human life and they bring significant impacts on our lives. Love has been categorized as one of the aspects of interpersonal strength (Viejo, Ortega-Ruiz, & Sánchez, 2015). Romantic relationship has been associated with number of positive outcomes, such as positive emotion (Bao, 2012) and reduced cortisol production (Weisman, Schneiderman, Zagoory-Sharon, Feldman, & Physiology, 2015). Moreover, relationship quality was also positively to wellbeing (Carr, tied Freedman, Cornman, & Schwarz, 2014). These findings emphasized the significance of studying love as one of the expressions in human behaviour.

Previous studies had investigated different aspects of love, such as love styles and the capacity to love. Love styles examined different types of individual's attitudes toward love (Woll, 1989; Zadeh & Bozorgi, 2016). For example, the *pragma* type considers a relationship to have a purpose of utility. Individuals with different love styles could have a different coping mechanism, which in turn is linked to different relationship outcomes (Vedes, et al., 2016). *Eros* or passionate type would

tend to have a constructive coping and higher level of relationship satisfaction (Vedes, et al., 2016). Capacity to love investigated an individual's capability to engage in a romantic relationship (Busch & Kapusta, 2017; Kapusta et al., 2018). Capacity to love was believed to have a clinical advantage as the predictor of therapeutical outcome and the indicator of an individual's risk (Margherita, Gargiulo, Troisi, Tessitore, & Kapusta, 2018). These previous studies diverse showed possibilities opportunities and to understand love as a fundamental human experience.

This current study investigated other aspects of love that is the capacity of feeling loved. Love tank functions to gauge how fulfilled someone feeling loved by their partners (Chapman, 2010). This concept argued that love tanks would be filled when partner treats someone appropriately to his/her needs. Love tank is part of the general idea of love languages which formerly has been studied (Cook et al., 2013; Surijah & Septiarly, 2016) that individuals have five different preferences on feeling loved. When individuals feel loved, the love tank is filled (Chapman, 2010). Thus, this present study examined

the influence of love tanks on individuals in relationships.

Love tank is often represented as a fuel gauge. The originator of the love tank illustrated the concept is similar to a fuel gauge in a motor vehicle (Chapman, 2010). An empty fuel tank would make the vehicle could not operate and an empty love tank would create a disruptions in a relationship (Chapman, 2010). To better fit with the illustration, this study proposed continuous rating scale (CRS) to measure the gauge of feeling loved. This scale asks participants to evaluate in visual form or a graphic representation instead of itemized of measurement. CRS comes in different names such as interval metric scale or 'Ruler and Options' (Yusoff & Mohd Janor, 2014), graphic rating scale (ten Klooster et al., 2006), and visual analogue scale (Klimek et al., 2017). In practice, participants in this study reported their feeling loved by placing a mark on a continuous line.

CRS has more benefits compared to other scales and it is more appropriate to measure love tanks. CRS has better factor loadings and higher reliability (Yusoff & Mohd Janor, 2014) compared to the Likert scale. We also took into consideration the risk of social desirability. Variables such as

satisfaction and wellbeing are prone to participants' tendency to increase their degree of positive make-up (Caputo, 2017). CRS can improve response style bias (Sung & Wu, 2018) and it becomes the basis for this study to use CRS. Lastly, Chapman (2010) illustrated the concept as if a fuel tank in a motorized vehicle with 'low' and 'full' indicators. CRS matches the love tanks polarity's conceptualization (DeCastellarnau, 2018). Moreover, the graphical nature of CRS is an appropriate method to illustrate a gauge of feeling loved.

This research the assessed relationship between feeling loved and individual wellbeing. Wellbeing has been thoroughly studied as a prominent indicator for interventions (White, Uttl, & Holder, 2019), and was linked to activities, such as art-related actions (Daykin et al., 2018), leisure (Shin & You, 2013), and physical exercise (Windle, Hughes, Linck, Russell, & Woods, 2010). A systematic review suggested that romantic relationship is an important source of wellbeing for adolescents and emerging adults (Gómez-López, Viejo, & Ortegaexperience Ruiz, 2019). Positive romantic relationships would predict greater wellbeing (Hudson, Lucas, &

Donnellan, 2020). Wellbeing is one of the most acclaimed concept in psychology as there are various publications or journals dedicated solely to wellbeing. Hence, wellbeing is suitable to indicate the impact when someone feeling loved.

As wellbeing was thoroughly studied, there are two challenges in utilising wellbeing as a criterion. The first challenge related wellbeing components as there were concerns that each culture has different components of wellbeing (Joshanloo & Weijers, 2019). For example, the overarching themes of wellbeing in Indonesian context are attainment of the basic needs, social relations with family and community, and positive world views of selfthe acceptance, gratitude, and spirituality (Maulana, Obst, & Khawaja, 2018). The second challenge is related to the overlap between wellbeing, happiness, lifesatisfaction, and quality of life (Medvedev & Landhuis, 2018). Studies has shown the terminological heterogeneity of wellbeing (Gómez-López, Viejo, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2019; Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012).

To overcome the complexity, first of all, this study defined wellbeing as "an umbrella term for different valuations that people make regarding their lives, the events

happening to them, their bodies and minds, and the circumstances in which they live" (Diener, 2006, p. 153). This definition allows a broader and inclusive understanding of an individual's wellbeing. We argued that wellbeing might consist of several components but there is also underlying similar experience of wellbeing across individuals. This experience of wellbeing is reflected through individuals' positive affect (Hills & Argyle, 2002) and satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Thus, in this study, wellbeing is a composite of positive affect and life satisfaction (Medvedev & Lanhuis, 2018). When an individual feels loved, they would also report their affect and their satisfaction with life.

related Love and relationship variables consider the interaction effect between members inside the relationship. This study investigated the influence between being loved and wellbeing. We used the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) to evaluate this interaction and to reflect the interrelatedness of couples within their relationships (Cook & Kenny, 2005). We hypothesise that there is a positive correlation between feeling loved and wellbeing's positive affect (H1) and life satisfaction (H2). Feeling loved

would contribute to the positive affect (H3) and life satisfaction (H4) between-partners and within-individuals.

Methods

Research Participants

The participants were married couples who participated in the Marital Survey conducted by a university in Bali. Due to the de-identification process, we did not get access to demographic data. The remaining demographic data was the participants' marital duration (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participants' Marriage Duration

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Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
Duration	(couples)	
(Years)		
1 - 3	133	53.2%
4 – 6	54	21.6%
7 - 10	63	25.2%

In relation to the sample size, we used descriptive statistics data to measure power. We used a power analysis for comparing two samples with parameters as such $\kappa = 1$; Type 1 error rate $\alpha = .05$; and power = .80. The calculation showed we would need approximately 252 participants for each sample group. Thus, the Marital Survey aimed for 250 couples joining as participants.

Research Instruments

This study measured participant's capacity of feeling loved. The researchers created three different scales which refer to the similar conceptualization of the love tank. The three love tank scales were continuous rating scale (CRS), Likert scale, and rating scale (RS). This study argues that the CRS will provide a better understanding of feeling loved. Hence, we wrote six different items to measure the love tank. One psychologist and one researcher in psychological field gave professional judgment on the items and we selected two best items. One item is a statement and the other is a question. Participants gave their responses by writing a cross mark (x) along the line or a continuum. Love tank is a capacity of feeling loved; thus, the continuum varied from 'Empty' to 'Full.'

To measure the scale's reliability, we composed the Likert scale and RS counterpart. We transformed the items to match the scale's characteristics. RS is similar to CRS but the participants gave their responses by circling or choosing the number 0 (Empty) to 6 (Full). The Likert scale measures the participants' agreement. They gave responses on a scale

from 1 (Completely Disagree) to 7 (Completely Agree). Both scales also got approval by the professional judgment.

We conducted a pilot study to 45 couples (90 participants) to assess the scales' initial reliability. The Cronbach's α for CRS was .936; for the Likert scale was .955; and for the RS was .862. These results showed that the scales were reliable. We also observed that the participants tended to give marks above the line and they felt uncomfortable with item 1.

Thus. would add verbal instruction for participants to give mark right within the line and modify the item from "this far I feel loved by my partner" (sejauh ini saya merasa dicintai oleh pasangan saya) to "I feel fully loved by my partner" (saya merasa dicintai dengan penuh oleh pasangan saya). This change also got approval by the professional judgment. The example of the final item for the love tank CRS version can be seen on Figure 1, while the full scale is located at the Appendices section of this manuscript.

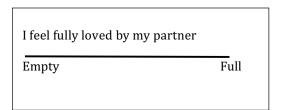


Figure 1. Example of love tank in continuous rating scale.

To measure Psychological Wellbeing, we used two scales. The first one is the Bradburn Scale of Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) or Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969). The PWB consists of ten items that split into Positive and Negative affect aspects. The scale asks someone did they feel a particular affect during the past few weeks. Items example are: Did you feel particularly excited or interested in something? (positive affect) and Depressed or very unhappy? (negative affect). Participants would then with Yes/No answer responses. Negative affect items were reverse-scored to gain a total score of positive affect as the component of wellbeing. Cronbach's α for PWB was .93. The second scale was Satisfaction With Life (SWL) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The scale has five items with Cronbach's α = .87. An example item is '*I* feel satisfied with my life' and the participants had to give responses between 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The wellbeing's scales were written in English. Thus, we translated the scale into Bahasa Indonesia. Two experts reviewed the scales by comparing the original scale and the translated scale side-to-side. The experts were a researcher and a psychologist. The researcher involved is a

linguist and also a professional translator. The psychologist had prior experience in translating and working with research instruments written in English. Following their review, we adjusted the translation and conducted a pilot study alongside the love tanks scales. Cronbach's α for PWB was .553 and for SWL was .846. PWB's alpha value was below > .700. However, we decided to proceed with the scale as Bradburn Affect Balance Scale was previously examined in 38 countries (Macintosh, 1998). The scale was also used in previous studies, such as detecting depression happiness and (Lewis, McCollam, & Joseph, 2000) and measuring subjective wellbeing (Stansfeld, Shipley, Head, Fuhrer, & Kivimaki, 2013).

Data Analysis

To test the correlation between the variables, we conducted a zero-order correlation. The next step of the data analysis is an Actor Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) analysis and linear regression analysis to measure the interaction between partners on feeling loved, positive affect, and life satisfaction. The data analysis used IBM SPSS 25 and IBM SPSS Amos Graphic 25.

Results

Table 3 showed the capacity of feeling loved has a sound internal consistency. Within Wives and Husbands participants, both Continuous Rating Scales (CRS) versions had a positive significant correlation respectively r = .846and r = .877 (p < .01). Specifically, two CRS versions on Wives participants also had positive significant correlations with the Likert (r = .283; p < .01) and the Rating Scale (RS; r = .319; p < .01) versions. The CRS versions on Husbands showed similar result with the Likert (r = .174; p < .05) and RS (r = .294; p < .01) versions. The correlations between the different scale versions, however, were weaker than the correlations between the CRS versions.

Table 3 also showed evidence for relationship with external variables, Satisfaction with Life (SWL) and Psychological Wellbeing (PWB). For example, CRS item 2 on Wives correlates significantly with SWL (r = .127; p < .05) and PWB (r = .228; p < .01). However, on Husbands, CRS item 1 (r = .077; p > .05) and item 2 (r = .078; p > .05) did not correlate with SWL. The two CRS versions correlated significantly with PWB (r = .207; p < .01 and r = .180; p < .01).

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Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for the Studied Measures

Wife	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
CRS1	84.85	12.786	751	022
CRS2	85.75	11.898	992	.850
Likert	12.54	1.308	665	.187
RS	11.17	1.147	-1.227	.622
SWL	26.59	4.981	-1.050	1.077
PWB	6.98	1.801	496	160
Husband				
CRS1	86.38	11.918	972	.572
CRS2	86.88	11.809	-1.276	1.632
Likert	12.73	1.270	-1.090	2.433
RS	11.39	1.005	-1.701	2.574
SWL	27.03	4.934	983	.753
PWB	6.92	1.769	271	128

Table 3.

Correlation of Various Love Tank Scales and External Variables

Wife	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
CRS1	1	.846**	.283**	.319**	.127*	.228**	.614**	.535**	.099	.211**	.163**	.124**
CRS2		1	.282**	.369**	.200**	.250**	.543**	.521**	.127*	.201**	.216**	.091
Likert			1	.492**	.233**	.150*	.146*	.083	.511**	.263**	.207**	.193**
RS				1	.144*	.187*	.159*	.192**	.264**	.409**	.147*	.193*
SWL					1	.008	.080	.094	.110	.017	.724**	005
PWB						1	.179**	.154*	.132*	.254**	.034	.457**
Husband												
CRS1							1	.877**	.174*	.294**	.077	.207**
CRS2								1	.165**	.294**	.078	.180**
Likert									1	.329**	.255**	.179**
RS										1	.047	.222**
SWL											1	.062
PWB												1

Authors then conducted an analysis to test the relationship between the variables and the hypothesized model between the capacity of feeling loved, SWL, and PWB. The analysis assesses the actor-partner interdependence (APIM) between one's capacity of feeling loved influences his/her own SWL and PWB, and their partner. The dyadic analysis shows the proposed model was not fit ($\chi 2 = 236.034$; df = 6; p < .05). Comparative Fit Index and Root Mean

Square Error of Approximation also indicated that the model was not fit, similar to the chi-square result (CFI = .326; RMSEA = .277).

We continued to test the interaction between the capacity of feeling loved, SWL, and PWB. As the APIM showed that there was not a dyadic relationship, we treated the data as individual cases (the data was not paired between husbands and wives). Due to the strong correlation

between the two CRS versions, we used CRS item 1 as a reference. A linear regression analysis was conducted with CRS item 1 as the predicting variable towards SWL and PWB. Feeling loved significantly predicted SWL, $\chi 2 = .106$, t(498) = 2.38, p < .05. Feeling loved also explained a significant proportion of variance in SWL scores, $R^2 = .011$, F(1, 498)= 5.69, p < .05. The effect size between feeling loved and SWL was r = .106. Meanwhile, feeling loved significantly predicted positive affect, $\chi^2 = .217$, t(498) =4.97, p < .001. Feeling loved also explained a significant proportion of variance in the scores of PWB, R^2 = .045, F(1, 498) = 24.72, p< .001. The effect size between the two variables was r = .217.

Discussion

The study showed that an actor-partner interdependence model between feeling loved and wellbeing did not fit with the data. However, separate regression analyses on individual level showed that feeling loved explained the variance of satisfaction with life and positive affect despite that the explained variances were small. The result indicated there was no effect of a partner's feeling loved on an actor's life satisfaction or positive affect.

An individual's feeling loved determined their life satisfaction and positive affect regardless of the partner's experience. It is common that the influence within dyads was not significant or varied (Deborah Carr, Cornman, & Freedman, 2015; Maroufizadeh, Hosseini, Rahimi Foroushani, Omani-Samani, & Amini, 2019; Shamali, Konradsen, Østergaard, 2019). This disconnection on the couple level might occur due to different perceived narratives of their relationship (Holman & Horstman, 2019). Husband and wife could share similar experience, but they could perceive the experience differently. It means that feeling loved is an individual experience, an intrapsychic activity that did not necessarily interact between the couple level.

Previous research also showed that an individual's own evaluation of marital quality was essential in determining his/her own wellbeing. Without crossover effect from the partner, the marital quality was positively associated with personal wellbeing; and factors such as gender, source of measurement, or marital duration moderated the relationship (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007). The current study's finding supported the idea

of independence (instead of interdependence) point of view within dyads, although there might be other explanations towards the data.

As mentioned, this study could not integrate demographic data toward the data analysis. Thus, covariates such as marital duration or age were not able to be taken into account explaining contribution toward life satisfaction or positive affect. Studies had shown that developmental different stages different associations between love and wellbeing (Nikitin & Freund, 2018; Viejo et al., 2015). Younger individuals had a positive association between feeling loved and social wellbeing as compared to middle-aged or older adults (Nikitin & Freund, 2018). This study participants' characteristics may influence the role of feeling loved on life satisfaction and positive affect. For example, older adults require financial stability and engaging social activities to attain life satisfaction (Yeo & Lee, 2019). Gender differences also play a role in an intimate relationship. Female partner contribution to working the relationships had a greater impact compared to male partner counterparts (Horne & Johnson, 2019). This evidence shows that demographic factors such as age and gender roles could explain the influence of feeling loved within individual but not on the couple level.

The standardized regression weight on both models, however, were remarkable (β < .500). These results may occur due to the data parsimony as the current study only observed feeling loved, and two experienced factors of wellbeing (life satisfaction and positive affect). Social support has been a longstanding factor known to influence individual wellbeing (Adamczyk & Segrin, 2015; Khawaja, Yang, & Cockshaw, 2016). Health and financial states also were strongly associated with wellbeing (Ngamaba, 2017). Thus, this study might have not truly captured the complexity of other wellbeing determinants and focus solely on the feeling loved.

The other problem with the data parsimony is also related to the conceptual relation between feeling loved and satisfaction variables. Feeling loved is closely related to intimate relationships. Thus, feeling loved could exhibit a greater association with satisfaction with affectionate relationships instead of life satisfaction in general. Future research may study the relationship between feeling loved and satisfaction with married life

(SWML) that is an adapted version of SWL (Johnson, Zabriskie, & Hill 2006). Since both variables are closer conceptually, it could increase the data parsimony and improve the model fit.

This study showed that feeling loved was associated with SWL and PWB. However, the association between feeling loved and SWL was weaker than between feeling loved and PWB. In this study, the PWB scores revealed an only positive aspects of participants' affect. The positive and negative affect on PWB scales positively and negatively correlated with happiness (van Schuur & Kruijtbosch, 1995); thus, feeling loved was slightly more associated with feeling happy rather than feeling content. Fundamental researches on wellbeing stated that wellbeing had various elements or structures (Gallagher, Lopez, & Preacher, 2009). Those elements were clustered into hedonic wellbeing that is pleasant emotions, low level of negative emotions, and high life satisfaction (E. Diener, 1984); and eudaimonic wellbeing consists of autonomy, personal growth, and purpose in life (Ryff, 1989). The current study showed that existential relatedness and epicurean independence were the other aspects of wellbeing that have not been discovered (Joshanloo & Weijers,

2019). Existential relatedness referred to having a meaningful interrelation with others while epicurean independence was the freedom from the need to be approved by others (Joshanloo & Weijers, 2019). The complexity of human wellbeing could explain that feeling loved only played a small part within the vast network of wellbeing framework.

As a consequence of this study, future studies needs to investigate further the idea that love languages and feeling loved may have a significant positive impact on couple relationships (Chapman, 2010). Chapman said that as individuals do not romantic feel loved within their they will be relationships, in the disequilibrium state. This study showed that the influence of feeling loved in general might not be as salient as it was originally suggested. There were other components that is essential for individuals to achieve equilibrium or to attain wellbeing, such as marital strain or psychological resilience (Margelisch, Schneewind, Violette, & Perrig-Chiello, 2017).

The main limitation of this study is the inability to interpolate the data with the participants' demographic characteristics. For example, marital duration contributed

to the dynamic of marriage (Abe & Oshio, 2018). Future studies can use demographic data such as marital duration, age, age at first marriage, the experience of divorce, remarriage, and education level as the covariates. The additional data could explain how the feeling loved may depend on the participants' characteristics.

The other limitation of this study is related to the participants' characteristics. The demographic characteristic of this study had the participants mostly married for one to three years. That span could have an implication. The participants' age may fell in the same age group. A similar age group also means the participants were in a similar career stage or experiencing similar transition to parenthood. Covariates, such as career and financial stability, were associated with marital relationships (Baisden, Fox, & Bartholomae, 2018; Onuoha & Idemudia, 2018). Transition to parenthood also changed the pattern of relationship behaviors (Rauch-Anderegg, Kuhn, Milek, Halford, & Bodenmann, 2020). Future studies shall expand the age group and the marital duration of the participants. This step will increase the ability of the study, explaining the relationship between feeling loved and other observed variables.

This study also highlighted the fact that the Cronbach's alpha for PWB scale was below .600. Although the authors decided to use the scale based on the ground that PWB was thoroughly and cross-culturally tested (Macintosh, 1998), future studies may consider different alternatives in observing wellbeing. For example, to measure the positive affect, researchers can use the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Sanmartín, et al., 2018; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Wellbeing could also be measured with the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (Franken, Lamers. Ten Klooster, Bohlmeijer, & Westerhof, 2018) as opposed to breaking it down to affect and life satisfaction.

Lastly, the limitation of the study due to the data barrier needs to be addressed for future study. Using omnibus secondary data was a common practice for family or marriage studies (Hofferth, 2005). The secondary data allow a complex model analysis with adequately de-identified data such as multilevel modelling, multivariate regression, and longitudinal dyadic study. Future studies and also the

marital survey as part of this study shall provide a more robust data linkage between the demographic data and the survey responses to ensure comprehensive model testing.

Conclusion

The study investigated the association between feeling loved and wellbeing components. We concluded that feeling loved was associated with life satisfaction and positive affect; and one's wellbeing was not influenced by the partner's evaluation of feeling loved. However, the contributing factor of feeling loved was far less significant than initially expected. The discussion part argued that there was more to consider for individuals' wellbeing other than feeling loved or romantic relationship fulfilment. Focusing solely to feel loved may improve individuals' wellbeing but not the single most dominant factor in enhancing or attaining wellbeing.

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Appendices

Appendix A. The Love Tank Continuous Rating Scale in Bahasa Indonesia

1.	Saya merasa dicintai dengan penuh oleh pasangan saya	
Kos	song	_ Penuh
2.	Seberapa Anda merasa dicintai oleh pasangan Anda?	
Kos	song	_ Penuh
Αp	ppendix B. The Love Tank Continuous Rating Scales in English	L
1.	I feel fully loved by my partner	
Em	pty	_ Full
2.	How much do you feel loved by your partner?	
Em	pty	_ Full