

## **Concept of Love in Islam and it's Relationship with Rasional Thinking**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research is about the Malay adolescent's understanding on the concept of love in Islam and its relationship with rational thinking. Two instruments were developed to measure the level of understanding, attitudes and practices of the adolescents in selected Malaysian universities embracing the concept of love through the psychological and Islamic approaches, and the level of rationality while in love. This quantitative studies involved adolescents in public and private universities with two instruments constructed specifically for this study. Through the 599 respondents this study found a significant relationship between demographic factors, category of university attended, background and status of love with the understanding of the concept of love in Islam and rational thinking. The findings are useful for increasing the understanding and appreciation of love from the Islamic perspective and to address problems arising from moral decadence stem from the misunderstanding of the concept of love.

**Keywords:** Malay adolescents, understanding love & rational thinking

## INTRODUCTION

Allah, the Creator of mankind has provided men with the necessary apparatus for thinking and living a righteous life. He has revealed the Qur'an as the true guidance (*huda*), a shining light (*nur*), and a cure (*shifa*) for human problems. As true believers of the religion called Islam, which means submission to Allah, Muslims should be leading their lives based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of His Messenger, Muhammad (pbuh) (Syaidatun, 2004). Accordingly, in relation to love, Muslims should be able to think rationally based on the teachings of Islam. Ellis and Harper (1961) affirmed that one could live happily once a person is able to manage his or her thinking. To manage one's thinking, means, to be able to think rationally.

Love is a field of knowledge that is widely studied in the West (Freud, 1963, 2007; Fehr & Russell, 1984; Rubin, 1970; Sternberg & Barnes, 1988; Sternberg & Weis, 2006; Hatfield 1984, 1988; Hatfield & Rapson, 1985). However, the reality in Malaysia, love has been scientifically studied very recently although there are a handful of local academicians who did researches on love (Suzana, 2009, 2010, 2011; Syaidatun, 2004; Robiah, 1997, 2001; Sarip, 2010; Umi Nadzrah, 2012). There are a wide range of untapped love studies in Malaysia, specifically when it is associated with rational thinking. These researchers found that there are significant differences between the concepts of love that is understood by the Western psychologists, in comparable to the concept of love that is understood by the scholars and psychologists, as enshrined in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Researchers in the Western states that love acts such as kissing, touching and sexual intercourse are the appropriate behaviors while a couple are in love (Fehr & Russell 1984; Branden 1988). However, the acts of love are contrary to the teachings of Islam for the unmarried couples. The acts of love, are only lawful and full of blessings for the married coupled only (Malik, 1979, 1989; Al-Qaradawi, 2003). If young

Muslims take the Western approach in understanding love, then they will clearly commit the acts which are against to the teachings of Islam. Something that is considered normal and rational by Western psychologists, may be considered to be abnormal and irrational by Muslim psychologists. So in this case, no kissing, no physical contact and no sexual intercourse between unmarried couples may be considered abnormal and irrational by Western psychologists, but this is normal behaviors as required by Islam (Malik, 1979, 1989). Thus, understanding the Western concept of love cannot be taken as a benchmark to understand the nature of love among young Muslims, especially for this research, the Malay adolescents. Thus, a plenty of modifications and adaptations should be done according to the norms of the local community and the psychology of the Muslims if they intended to use psychometric testing tools that have been built in the West. Other proactive step is to build new psychometric testing tools as appropriate to the religion and local culture.

### **Literature Review**

In the age full of challenges and trials, many adolescents involved with the problems arising from love, especially in their efforts to find love, while in love and also having been a victim of love (al-Maslamani, 2009). This is because the understanding of love is seen from the narrow and shallow perspectives, and the ability to defer the pleasure (delay of gratification) is very low. For most adolescents, enjoying the fruit of romance is something of pride to the extend one is willing to mortgage his or her dignity in the name of love by surrendering his or her virginity (al-Maslamani 2009). The activities of this love is seen more striking when the arrival of feast days, especially Valentine's Day is often celebrated by young adolescents in love (Abdul Latif, 2011).

According to Ellis and Harper (1961), rational thinking is contrary to emotional thinking, in which individuals can live a satisfying life if he can learn to organize and discipline the

mind. Ellis (1992) defines rationality as the cognitive, emotional and behavior in order to achieve the perfection of self (self-fulfillment) and self-actualization. Sidek (2009) stressed the word "rational" comes from the root word "ratio" refers to the mind or *aql*. Rational thinking means thinking to get an answer or guidance based on revelation, which are the Qur'an and Sunnah. He stressed that the concept of rationality in the broadest sense not only refers to the function of the human mind, but how the vision driving the human mind to think. While according to Holton (2004), there are two kinds of rational, namely the rational thinking rational practice.

Irrational in love are identified as the cause of problems among adolescents. A person becomes irrational when he think and act emotionally, so intense in his feelings that his mental judgment in no longer dominates him (Ellis & Harper, 1961). This means that irrational individual is an individual who has lost his ability to make sound judgment due to over indulge in emotions or desires alone. For example, when the person is too sad or too angry, he can act outside of the reasonableness and hurt themselves or others. Irrational thoughts can usually be seen in children, since they are more inclined to be emotional (Beadle, 1970). However, adolescents are not spared from being irrational, as well as adults. Adolescence is a stage where individuals face a drastic change from the point of physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and social. This is because adolescence is a transitional stage in which the child will step into adulthood, and at this stage that the individual seeks identities that can be used as a handle and lifestyle. During this time various processes occur either physically or psychologically (Arnett, 2000). Thus, adolescents are also prone to be irrational, especially when it involves the problems of love.

In this case, an adolescent might be seen as an individual who do not think rationally and have a narrow understanding of the concept of love. Out of wedlock, sexual intercourse has taken place and in a short time risk of pregnancy and baby

dumping. In addition, studies in Malaysia have discovered that the adolescents were confused and lack of the real understanding of love. This consequently led many young people involved in social ills stemming from love (Johari, Nasruddin & Siti Nor Baya 2009; Syaidatun 2004; Nor Asiah 2001). Al-Maslamani (2009) has identified more than 150 women in the Middle East were victims of love in the form of fraud by couples, date-rape, gang-rape, cyber romance, the influence of the parabola, incest, infidelity, divorce, adultery and murder. Some of the victims of love have strong religious background, but they have been victims of love and victims of the surroundings.

Acts of worship are not merely mechanical in nature, but have to be performed with full consciousness. The mind and the body should be at one in serving Allah. Reflection and contemplation are considered to be among the most virtuous types of worship (Muhammad Abd. Rauf, 1991). When human related the strength of Quranic value-based thinking, they actually are choosing a path of spiritual and power of thoughts combine together, in the *zikr* (remembering of Allah) and *fikr* (contemplation). This foundation can lead people becoming future thinkers (Sidek Baba, 2009). The sane and truly enlightened individualist, however, will not define his desires as demands, nor his preferences as needs. He will be carefully considerate of others because he realizes that only by such consideration can he hope to build and sustain the kind of world he wants to live in. He will be loving devoted, in most instances, to other people because through such intimate relationships he can more fully know and enjoy himself (Ellis, 1961).

The concept of love often studied in the West is based on the love between couples of different genders (Sternberg, 1988, 1990; Freud, 1963). Romantic love between men and women is assessed through acts of love as trust, joy, kindness, communication, commitment, intimacy, sexual attraction, sexual activities, beauty and more elements of love that can be

described with words (Regan, Kocan & Whitlock, 1998). The difference between the West and Islam is that the love for Allah and the Prophet Muhammad are at the highest level, followed by a love of fellow beings, the creatures, knowledge and goodness (al-Ghazali, 1967). This significant difference shows that love is not only judged from the standpoint of humanity, but it must also be assessed from the point of divinity.

Hence, to fill the gap of scientific research on love in Malaysia, we are motivated to study the love from the psychological and Islamic perspectives, and to create instruments that can measure the love dimensions. This research approach is combining psychology and highlights the teachings of the al-Qur'an and the Sunnah in understanding the adolescents' psychology in particular. This study will also take into account aspects related to the understanding, attitudes, and practices related to love. The level of understanding the concept of love in Islam

## **METHOD**

In this study, the researchers have built two instruments using two forms of data collection methods namely: interviews and analysis of documents. Interview data was the primary data of this study, while the analysis of documents were the supporting evidences. Since the interview data was taken as the primary data, then this data can stand alone to be taken into consideration in developing the instruments in qualitative research. However, the Qur'an and the Sunnah are also the primary sources. For the analysis of the documents, other data are also taken into account in the construction of instruments from the psychology references, journals, the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

In this study the definition of love taken from Islamic perspective so that young Muslims get a broader and more comprehensive view of love and human relationships with

creatures and man's relationship with God. Love is not only seen as a form of horizontal (human relations and human) but also include sacred relationship of love that is vertical (human relationship with God) (al-Ghazali, 1967; Nor Asiah, 2001). Seven dimensions of love in Islam has been identified for this study, namely, (1) the dimensions of the love of God; (2) the love of the Prophet Muhammad; (3) self-love; (4) the love of parents; (5) love of creatures; (6) the love for knowledge; and (7) the love for goodness. The concept of love in Islam will be measured by the instrument built by the researchers named as the Instrument of Love in Islam (ICDI).

This study also will focus on practical and rational aspects of thinking, where the ability to think rationally could drive individual to distinguish between right and wrong, between the halal and haram, in addition to the ability to make a justification based on Qur'an and Sunnah. In this study, rational thinking will be measured using the Rational thinking in Love Instrument (IPRP) which was specially developed for this study.

#### *Instrument Validity and Reliability*

Cronbach's alpha of the instruments on Concept of Love in Islam (ICDI) and Rational thinking in Love (IPRP) among respondents indicate the range of reliability for all constructs between 0.66 to 0.88. While the Cronbach's alpha for the concept of love in Islam and rational thinking is 0.97 (112 items) and 0.82 (13 items), respectively. Thus, the Cronbach's alpha above shows that the instruments have high reliability. While the results of the correlation analysis of each construct with overall scores showed that all constructs in the instruments with an overall score was positively correlated with the range of 0.49-0.73 (moderate to very high) on a significant level,  $p < 0.01$ . Overall, the high correlation between the constructs with an overall score shows the validity of the constructs.

## RESULT

There are 6 hypotheses that has been tested in this study. The first hypothesis was to examine the relationship between the dimensions of the concept of love in Islam with the understanding construct of rational thinking. The second hypothesis was to significant relationship between the dimensions of the concept of love in Islam and practical construct of rational thinking. The third hypothesis was to examine the difference in the scores for the concept of love in Islam in IPTA, IPTA-I and IPTS. The fourth hypothesis was to examine the difference in the scores of rational thinking in the IPTA, IPTA-I and IPTS. The fifth hypothesis was to examine the difference in the scores in the understanding of the concept of love in Islam between male and female respondents. Lastly, the sixth hypothesis was to examine the difference in the scores in the rational thinking in love between male and female respondents.

### *Understanding relationships between the Concept of Love in Islam and Rational Thinking in Love*

Inferential data analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the understandings of the concept of love in Islam with rational thinking in love among the respondents. Pearson correlation analysis method was used for inferential analysis of the relationship in this study.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of the concept of love in Islam with the understanding construct of rational thinking.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of the concept of love in Islam and practical construct of rational thinking.

Pearson correlation analysis results to identify the relationship between the dimensions of the concept of love in



Islam with the understanding and practice of rational thinking among the respondents is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Correlation between the dimensions of love in Islam and rational thinking

Dimensions		Rational Thinking (Understanding construct)	Rational Thinking (Practical construct)
		r	
1.	Love for Allah	0.26**	0.46**
2.	Love for Rasulullah	0.31**	0.47**
3.	Love for oneself	0.42**	0.55**
4.	Love for parents	0.43**	0.40**
5.	Love for creatures	0.46**	0.46**
6.	Love for knowledge	0.42**	0.50**
7.	Love for goodness	0.47**	0.55**

\*\*p< 0.01

Pearson correlation analysis as shown in Table 1 above shows a significant correlation with low to strong between the dimensions of the concept of love in Islam to understanding of rational thinking and practice of rational thinking with the range (0.26 to 0.47, p<0.01) and (0.40 to 0.55, p<0.01), respectively. Thus, H<sub>01</sub> and H<sub>02</sub> were rejected.

### *Difference Scores in the Concept of Love in Islam and Rational Thinking Based on Demographic Background*

Inferential data analysis was performed to identify the different variety variables in this study. Two methods of analysis were used for inferential analysis, namely the T-test and One-way analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA). Analysis of difference scores in the concept of love in Islam and rational thinking in love based on demographic backgrounds were conducted. Four null hypothesis tests were done to answer these research questions.

(A) Difference Score on concept of love in Islam and, Rational thinking based on the category of university attended.

H<sub>03</sub>: There was no significant difference in the scores in the concept of love in Islamic in IPTA, IPTA-I and IPTS.

H<sub>04</sub>: There was no significant difference in the scores of rational thinking in the IPTA, IPTA-I and IPTS.

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences of the concept of love in Islam and rational thinking based on IPTA (Public Institute for Higher Learning), IPTA-I (Public Institute for Higher Learning with Islamic status) and IPTS (Private Institute for Higher Education). Different respondents based on category of university attended were displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2** One-way ANOVA Concept of love in Islam and Rational thinking according IPTA, IPTA-I and IPTS

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Concept of Love in Islam	Between groups	53250.56	2	26625.28	18.75*
	Within groups	846511.25	596	1420.32	
	Total	899761.81	598		
Rational Thinking	Between groups	200.37	2	100.18	2.71
	Within groups	22012.56	596	36.93	
	Total	22212.93	598		

\*p&lt;0.001

One-way analysis of variance results in Table 2 above shows that there is significant difference in score for the concept of love in Islam,  $F(2,598)=18.75$ ,  $p<0.001$  for IPTA, IPTS-I and IPTS. With this, the  $H_{03}$  is rejected. While for hypothesis  $H_{04}$  however there were no significant differences of rational thinking,  $F(2,598)=2.71$ ,  $p>0.05$  between respondents from those 3 category of universities. Therefore,  $H_{04}$  was accepted. Furthermore, post-hoc Scheffe test was conducted to identify the differences between the scores of respondents by category of IPTA, IPTS-I and IPTS. Test results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** Post-hoc Scheffe Concept of love in Islam according to IPTA, IPTA-I dan IPTS

Category		N	Score mean	Std. dev	IPTA	IPTA-I	IPTS
Concept of Love in Islam	IPTA	195	467.43	41.94		0.000*	0.215
	IPTA-I	201	489.95	35.38	0.000*		0.000*
	IPTS	203	474.07	35.52	0.215	0.000*	

\*p&lt;0.001

Revenue Scheffe post-hoc tests that were conducted as shown in Table 3 to determine the difference in score between different groups of respondents by category of universities,

public and private scores showed significant differences,  $p < 0.001$  in the Islamic concept of love between IPTA-I (score=489.95, SD=35.38) with the IPTA (score=467.43, SD=41.94), and the respondents from IPTS (score=474.07, SD=35.52). In total for the concept of love in Islam, in IPTA-I showed the highest score 489.95, SD =35.38 which have significant relationships with public and private universities.

(B) Difference Score on Concept of Love in Islam and Rational Thinking Based on Gender.

H<sub>05</sub>: There was no significant difference in the scores in the understanding of the concept of love in Islam between male and female respondents.

H<sub>06</sub>: There was no significant difference in the scores in the rational thinking in love between male and female respondents.

T-test results for test score differences according to the concept of love in Islam and rational thinking based on the gender of respondents is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** T-Test for the concept of love in Islam and rational thinking based on the gender

		N	Score mean	Std. dev	t
Concept of Love in Islam	Male	253	473.24	43.87	-2.09*
	Female	346	480.16	34.38	
Rational Thinking	Male	253	56.03	6.73	-1.13
	Perempuan	346	56.61	5.59	

\* $p < 0.05$

T-test analysis results in Table 4 above shows that there is a significant difference in scores for the concept of love in Islam,  $t = -2.09$ ,  $p < 0.05$  between male respondents and female

respondents. Thus, the  $H_{05}$  is rejected. While for hypothesis  $H_{06}$  also indicated that there were no significant differences of rational thinking,  $t=-1.13$ ,  $p> 0.05$  between male and female respondents. Therefore,  $H_{06}$  is accepted.

## **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

Measuring instrument or instruments built to make empirical studies about love should have theoretical backup with an organized structure as a scientific theory (Tzeng, 1993). In this study, the instruments built refers to the theoretical framework of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, Ellis and Harper (1961), Ellis (1973), Freud (1963), Sternberg (1988), Fehr (1988) and Kohlberg (1976). Although the view of Western psychologists were included, most of the items constructed became negative items, maybe because the Western understanding is contrary to Islamic teachings, especially those involving the concept of love in Islam.

To answer the question of the relationship between love and understanding of the concept of rational thinking, the study found a significant relationship between the three variables. Hence, this supported by the Sunnah of the Prophet which says that each individual is responsible for their own thinking and behaviors. "Gabriel a.s. said to the Prophet: 'O Muhammad, live with whatever you like to do, (but remember) surely you will die, please love whom you love, (but remember) you will be separated, just do anything you like, (but remember) you will be rewarded on the deed.' (Narrated by al-Hakim in Muhammad, 1990).

Next, to see the difference between love and the understanding of the concept of rational thinking based on demographic background, the study found that rational thinking among students in 3 categories of higher learning institutions (IPTA, IPTA-I & IPTS) has no significant difference. Categories of higher learning institutions did not

affect the way they think rationally, this is because the need to gain knowledge requires higher-order thinking, which also involves the use of rational thinking (Mazanah & Carter 2010). From the gender perspective, there is no difference in term of rational thinking in love. However, there are differences in terms of understanding of the concept of love in Islam, whereby the female respondents understands more compared to the male respondents. This may be due to the higher tendency of female students to read the materials on love in Islam, a high frequency of attending knowledge ceremonies at the universities and the higher level of shyness compared to the male students. However, if measured with great trust given to men as enshrined in Islam, men should better understand love because they are the leaders of the women, based on the word of Allah SWT, which means, "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women" (Surah an-Nisa: verse 34).

Researchers felt the need to educate the younger generation to understand the true nature of love as in the teachings of Islam and to prevent themselves and others from falling into the valley of humiliation (Syaidatun, Rezqi & Shahrul, 2010). Having identified the problems, the researchers looked at the importance of love in a scientific study. Thus, in understanding the nature of love, verses of the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet and expert views have been identified to enrich the understanding of the concept of love in Islam. The instruments built provided an initial overview of the understanding of love in Islam and rational thinking among Malay adolescents in local universities.

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