



## Saranghae: Love Languages and Romance Among K-Drama Viewers and Non-Viewers

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**Abstract:** The Chapman theory of love languages identifies five types: acts of service, gift giving, physical touch, quality time, and words of affirmation. Individuals may prefer different love languages. Love language determines how one expresses their love and or the type of love they expect from others. With an understanding of the love language, one can communicate better which can bring more stability in the relationship. The purpose is to study the love language and romance among people K-dramas viewers and non-viewers. A total sample of (N= 60) 30 K-drama viewers and 30 non k-drama viewers. The Five Love Languages Test and The Scale of Myths of Romantic Love (SMRL) were used as scales to conduct the studies. The results found out that there is a no significant relationship between words of affirmation and romance, quality of time and romance and words of affirmation, receiving gifts and romance and words of affirmation, acts of service and romance and quality of time and receiving gifts, acts of service and romance and quality time and receiving gifts, physical touch and romance and words of affirmation and quality of time and receiving gifts. Additionally , the results found out that there is a significant negative relationship between receiving gifts and quality of time, between acts of service and words of affirmation, between physical touch and acts of service. These disparities imply that partners' perceptions and experiences of romance may differ due to misaligned priorities in their love languages. In the independent T-test, words of affirmation was marginally significant among non-viewers, suggesting that non-viewers seem to value words of affirmation more strongly than

viewers. It is suggested that watching Korean dramas may enhance individuals' understanding of love languages and contribute to greater relationship satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *Love Language, Romance, K Drama*

## 1. Introduction

*“There is no charm equal to tenderness of heart.”*

*Jane Austen.*

Korean dramas are South Korean television shows that are well-liked all over the world because of their compelling plots and deeply felt characters. These dramas frequently focus on relationships between friends, families, and couples, ranging from romcoms like *Legend of the Blue Sea* and *Business Proposal* to gripping thrillers like *All of Us Are Dead* and *Sweet Home*. Their distinctive depiction of love, which is full of soft gestures, emotional sacrifices, and the slow development of passion, is what makes them particularly compelling. While *Crash Landing on You* demonstrated how fate and love can overcome even the most insurmountable boundaries, classics like *Boys Over Flowers* captivated audiences around the world with their tale of teenage love triumphing over social barriers. Likewise, *Goblin* and *Descendants of the Sun* emphasized themes of sacrifice, destiny, and eternal love, solidifying K-dramas as a cultural phenomenon that profoundly influences viewers' perceptions of romance.

However, the ways that people express and feel love in their own lives also have an impact on human relationships, in addition to cultural narratives. According to Gary Chapman's 2009 *Five Love Languages* theory, there are five different ways that people express love: physical touch, acts of service, receiving presents, spending quality time together, and using words of affirmation. These love languages provide a foundation for comprehending each person's particular emotional needs and explain why some relationships work well when partners' preferences match, while others struggle when these needs are ignored.

When combined, love language theory and K-dramas provide an intriguing perspective for studying romance. These love languages, from emotional admissions (words of affirmation) to lengthy walks or dinners spent together (quality time), to selfless sacrifices (acts of service), to symbolic presents, and even small gestures that have emotional weight, are frequently brought to life in K-dramas. Because these depictions reflect the ways in which love is conveyed in real life, audiences find resonance in them. Viewers' expectations of romance and their chosen love

languages may change as a result of their reflections on their own relationships.

### ***Love Language***

Chapman (2009) proposed that each of us has a metaphorical “love tank”, which reflects how much we feel loved by other people. We can think of our love tank as being full when we feel close to and loved by others, and we can think of it as low or empty when our emotional needs are not being met by our relationship(s). Chapman wrote that certain behaviours fill our love tanks better than others. Each of us has preferences for how love is communicated to us, that is, each of us has a love language (or two) that we prefer over the others. Surijah and Septiarly (2016) conducted a study to find empirical evidence to support the theory of Chapman's Five Love Language. A Likert Scale was constructed and tested on 400 participants. Statistical analyses showed that there were 17 valid items in Five Love Languages Scale. Conformity factor analysis supported the five factors in Chapman's initial proposal.

Huges and Camden (2020) conducted a study to predict that partners who perceived that a partner used their preferred love language well would report greater feelings of love and relationship satisfaction. An online survey was done on 981 couples. Using multiple regression, the result showed that their partner using their preferred love language well would increase love emotion in them. It also found that women who thought their partners were using their preferred love language (i.e., gifts, acts of service, and physical touch) well reported greater feelings of love as compared to men.

### ***Romance***

Romantic love in realistic sense can be referred to as the expression of affection, both physical and emotional, that offers pleasure and satisfaction to its participants (Firestone, Fireston & Catlett, 2006). A romantic relationship is defined as mutual, ongoing and voluntary interactions between two partners that is characterized by specific expressions of affection and intimacy (Collins et al., 2009).

Bachen and Illouz (1996) conducted a study through interview method on 183 students of age groups from 8 to 17 to find how children imagined romance. The study showed that long before children understood the meaning of romance, media already shaped their opinions about it. Similarly, Rubin (1970) conducted a study on 158 undergraduate dating couples and a laboratory experiment was conducted on 79 undergraduate dating couples, using a 13 item love scale questionnaire. The results showed that dating couples who loved each other a great deal would

spend more time gazing into each other's eyes than those who loved each other to a lesser degree.

However, romance is not only built on genuine emotions but is also shaped by certain *myths of romantic love*. These myths suggest that “true love conquers all,” that “there is only one perfect partner meant for everyone,” or that “love is enough to ensure lifelong happiness.” While such ideas are often glorified in cultural products like K-dramas, they can create unrealistic expectations in real relationships. Believing too strongly in these myths may lead individuals to overlook incompatibility, normalize sacrifice at the cost of personal well-being, or idealize their partners beyond reality. The Scale of Myths of Romantic Love (Algovia & Rivero, 2020) was developed to measure such beliefs, highlighting how they impact individuals’ views of relationships.

In this way, romance can be seen as a blend of genuine emotional connection and the influence of cultural ideals. While affection, intimacy, and commitment are essential to sustaining relationships, myths of romantic love can either enhance the feeling of magic and passion or place pressure on individuals by fostering unattainable expectations.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose is to study love language, and myths of romantic love among K-dramas viewers and Non viewers.

## 3. Hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There will be significant relationship between love language and myths of romantic love among K Drama viewers and non-viewers.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There will be significant difference between K drama viewers and non viewers in love language and myths of romantic love.

## 4. Method

### 4.1 Sample

A total sample of ( N= 60) 30 K-drama viewers and 30 Non k-drama viewers were collected from Chandigarh, India.

### 4.2 Measure

***The Five Love Languages Test:*** The perceived love language scale was used to measure love language for the study. The scale was developed by Dr. Chapman. The scale consisted of 30

items and rating was done by circling correct choice for each question. The scale had five Subdimensions including, Words of Affirmation , Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service and Physical Touch.

***The Scale of Myths of Romantic Love (SMRL)***: The perceived Romantic Love Scale was used to measure myths of romantic love. The scale was developed by (Algovia and Rivero, 2020). The scale consisted of 11 items and Likert Rating scale was used 1 ( completely disagree), 2 (disagree,) 3 (neither agree or disagree),4 (agree ) and 5 (completely agree).

#### 4.3 Procedure

Google forms titled ‘ Saranghae’ was created and was distributed among a sample of 60 people out of which 30 were K-drama viewers and 30 were non viewers. Participants were thanked for their co-operation.

## 5. Analysis of Data

### Results

**Table 1: N, Mean and Standard Deviation**

|                    | Viewers | Words Of Affirmation | Receiving Gifts | Acts Of Service | Physical Touch | Quality Of Time | Romance |
|--------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|
| N                  | 60      | 60                   | 60              | 60              | 60             | 60              | 60      |
| Mean               |         | 5.07                 | 3.18            | 6.98            | 4.48           | 9.32            | 38.5    |
| Median             |         | 5.00                 | 3.00            | 7.00            | 4.00           | 10.0            | 38.5    |
| Standard Deviation |         | 2.13                 | 2.23            | 2.10            | 2.19           | 1.63            | 7.96    |

**Table 2: Correlation**

|                      | Romance | Words of Affirmation | Quality of Time | Receiving Gifts | Acts of Service | Physical Touch |
|----------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Romance              | -       |                      |                 |                 |                 |                |
| Words of Affirmation | 0.092   | -                    |                 |                 |                 |                |
| Quality of Time      | -0.252  | -0.128               | -               |                 |                 |                |
| Receiving Gifts      | 0.115   | -0.156               | -0.566***       | -               |                 |                |
| Acts of Service      | -0.198  | -0.518***            | 0.021           | -0.010          | -               |                |
| Physical Touch       | 0.215   | -0.196               | -0.181          | -0.244          | -0.421***       | -              |

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 3:** *Independent T Test*

|                             |                    | Statistic | df   | p     | Mean difference | SE difference |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Romance</b>              | <b>Student's t</b> | 1.0383    | 58.0 | 0.303 | 2.1333          | 2.055         |
| <b>Quality of Time</b>      | <b>Student's t</b> | -1.0294   | 58.0 | 0.308 | -0.4333         | 0.421         |
| <b>Words of Affirmation</b> | <b>Student's t</b> | 1.9872    | 58.0 | 0.052 | 1.0667          | 0.537         |
| <b>Receiving Gifts</b>      | <b>Student's t</b> | 0.0574    | 58.0 | 0.954 | 0.0333          | 0.580         |
| <b>Acts of Service</b>      | <b>Student's t</b> | -0.6721   | 58.0 | 0.504 | -0.3667         | 0.546         |
| <b>Physical Touch</b>       | <b>Student's t</b> | -1.0022   | 58.0 | 0.320 | -0.5667         | 0.565         |

**Table 4:** *Group Descriptives*

|                             | Group              | N  | Mean  | Median | SD   | SE    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----|-------|--------|------|-------|
| <b>Romance</b>              | Non-Kdrama Viewers | 30 | 39.60 | 40.00  | 7.77 | 1.418 |
|                             | Kdrama Viewers     | 30 | 37.47 | 36.50  | 8.14 | 1.487 |
| <b>Quality of Time</b>      | Non-Kdrama Viewers | 30 | 9.10  | 9.00   | 1.45 | 0.264 |
|                             | Kdrama Viewers     | 30 | 9.53  | 10.00  | 1.80 | 0.328 |
| <b>Words of Affirmation</b> | Non-Kdrama Viewers | 30 | 5.60  | 6.00   | 1.92 | 0.351 |
|                             | Kdrama Viewers     | 30 | 4.53  | 4.00   | 2.22 | 0.406 |
| <b>Receiving Gifts</b>      | Non-Kdrama Viewers | 30 | 3.20  | 3.00   | 1.95 | 0.357 |
|                             | Kdrama Viewers     | 30 | 3.17  | 3.00   | 2.51 | 0.458 |
| <b>Acts of Service</b>      | Non-Kdrama Viewers | 30 | 6.80  | 7.00   | 2.30 | 0.419 |
|                             | Kdrama Viewers     | 30 | 7.17  | 7.50   | 1.91 | 0.349 |
| <b>Physical Touch</b>       | Non-Kdrama Viewers | 30 | 4.20  | 4.00   | 2.47 | 0.451 |
|                             | Kdrama Viewers     | 30 | 4.77  | 4.50   | 1.87 | 0.341 |

## 6. Discussion of Results

The results found out that there is no significant relationship between words of affirmation and romance, quality of time and romance and words of affirmation, receiving gifts and romance and words of affirmation, acts of service and romance and quality of time and receiving gifts, acts of service and romance and quality time and receiving gifts, physical touch and romance and words of affirmation and quality of time and receiving gifts.

Interestingly , the results found out that there is a significant negative relationship between receiving gifts and quality of time( $r=-0.56$ ,  $p<.001$ ), between acts of service and words of

affirmation( $r=-0.51, p<.001$ ), between physical touch and acts of service( $r=-0.42, p<.001$ ). These results point to potential conflicts between various ways of showing love. For example, those who value physical assistance (acts of service) more than verbal reassurances (words of affirmation) or who appreciate material displays of affection (gifts) may not place as much emphasis on spending time together. These disparities imply that partners' perceptions and experiences of romance may differ due to misaligned priorities in their love languages.

The independent T-test results revealed that there was no significant difference between K drama viewers and Non k drama viewers in most love languages. However, words of affirmation was marginally significant suggesting that non-viewers seem to value words of affirmation more strongly than viewers. One explanation could be that viewers of K-dramas, who are influenced by the dramatization of the medium, may place more value on other forms of expression like quality time, deeds of service, or symbolic gestures frequently emphasized in stories, while non-viewers may rely more on direct verbal communication to express affection.

Manda and Sokowati (2024) conducted a study to explore the reason behind why Indonesian teenage girls love watching Korean dramas. The researcher used ethnography as a method to get answers to the questions in addition to this Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic formation was used. The research concluded that the Korean dramas all tough support patriarchy system but present women happiness through happy relationships with men.

Fatima and Kewalramani (2024) conducted a study on 250 young adults of age group between 18 to 25, comprising both viewers and non-viewers of k-dramas, using Emotional Expressivity scale (EES) to check the emotional expressivity among young adults. The results revealed that viewers exhibited higher level of emotional expressivity than non-viewers.

## 7. Conclusion

According to Chapman's theory of love languages, there are five types: acts of service, gift-giving, physical touch, quality time, and words of affirmation. Individuals may have different preferences for love languages, which influence how they express affection and the type of affection they value. Understanding another person's love language can support clearer communication and may contribute to stability in relationships.

The study aimed to compare love language and romance between K-drama viewers and non-viewers. A total sample of (N= 60) 30 K drama viewers and 30.Non k-drama viewers was

taken in the age group of 15-60 from the city Chandigarh. The Five Love Languages Test and The Scale of Myths of Romantic Love (SMRL) were used as scales to conduct the studies. The results found out that there is a no significant relationship between words of affirmation and romance, quality of time and romance and words of affirmation, receiving gifts and romance and words of affirmation, acts of service and romance and quality of time and receiving gifts, acts of service and romance and quality time and receiving gifts, physical touch and romance and words of affirmation and quality of time and receiving gifts.

Additionally, the results found out that there is a significant negative relationship between receiving gifts and quality of time ( $r=-0.56, p<.001$ ), between acts of service and words of affirmation ( $r=-0.51, p<.001$ ), between physical touch and acts of service ( $r=-0.42, p<.001$ ). In the independent T test, words of affirmation was marginally significant at 0.05 level.

These findings also point to the influence of cultural ideals and myths of romantic love, which are often reinforced in K-dramas through themes of destiny, sacrifice, and the notion that “true love conquers all.” While such portrayals may inspire audiences and create powerful emotional engagement, they may also foster unrealistic expectations that do not always align with the complexities of real-life relationships.

Overall, the study highlights the significance of recognising individual love language preferences as well as the influence of cultural narratives on romantic expectations. Recognizing the gap between idealized portrayals of love and everyday relational dynamics can help individuals build more balanced, satisfying relationships. It is suggested that understanding your own love language, as well as your partner's, can strengthen relationships and boost satisfaction.

Future research with larger and more diverse samples could further explore how media exposure interacts with love languages and romantic myths, providing deeper insights into the evolving landscape of love and relationships.

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