

## Introduction

- The Reciprocating Self defines “good development” as growing in the capacity to live in interdependent relationships that promote well-being for self and others (Balswick et al., 2016).
- Drawing on attachment theory, Reciprocating Love offers an operationalized definition of how relationships can grow to promote well-being for self and others (Baer, 2025).
- Reciprocating Love is defined as the dynamic giving and receiving of proximal responsiveness, sensitivity, repair, encouragement, differentiation, and cooperation (Baer, 2025)
- Research has linked these caregiving qualities to the ability to regulate negative emotions, elevate positive emotions, enhance social understanding, and foster a positive self-concept, which is essential to caring for others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2018).
- This study sought to confirm this model via the Reciprocating Love Scale.

## Methods

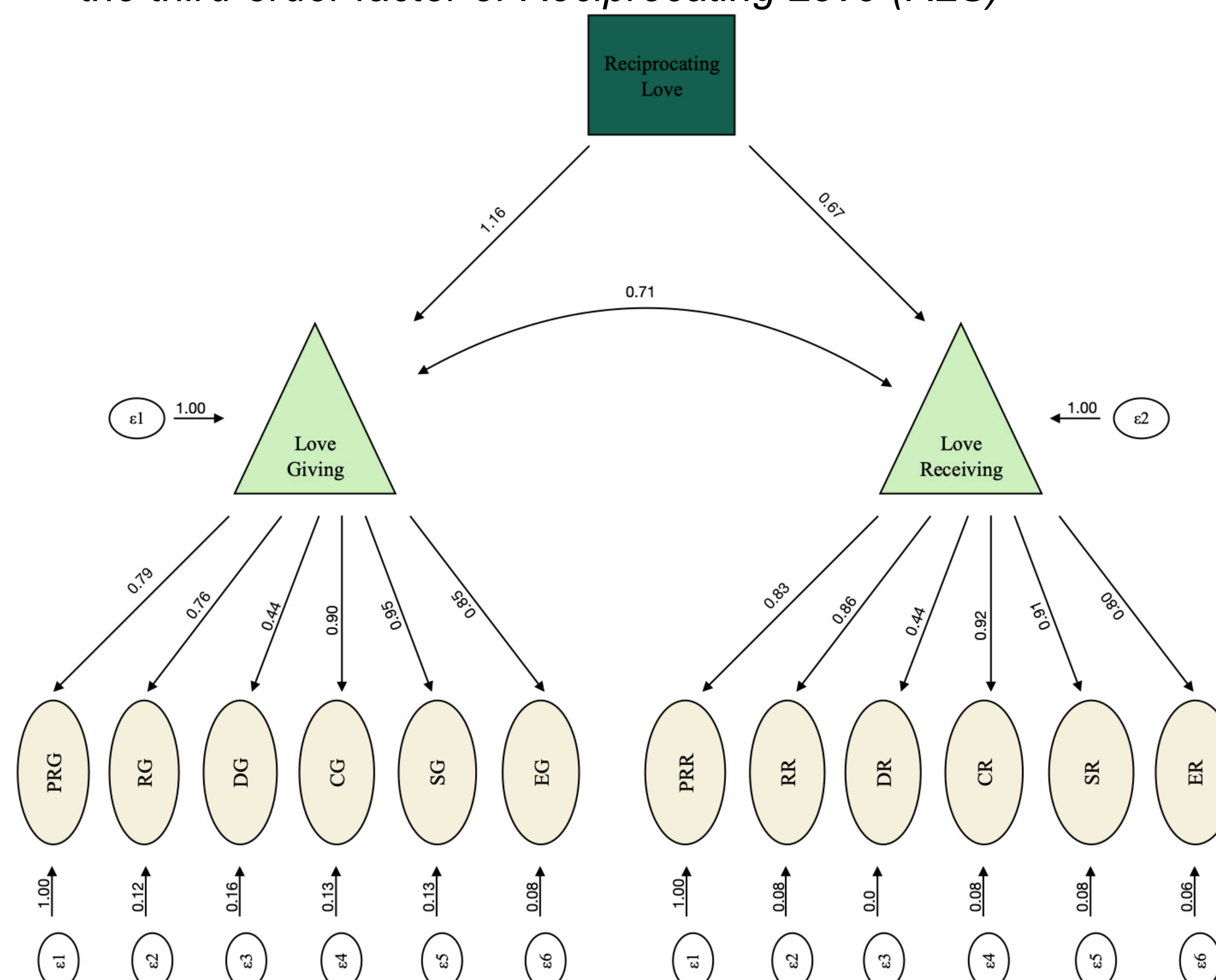
- The Caregiving Questionnaire (Kunce & Shaver, 1994) was revised and adapted.
- 84 items were drafted for the 12 factors (self perceptions of giving and receiving proximal responsiveness, sensitivity, repair, encouragement, differentiation, and cooperation in romantic relationships)
- The proposed scale was comprised of 12 first-order factors two second-order factors (Love Giving and Love Received) and one third-order factor (Reciprocating Love)
- Participants were recruited through Prolific and after data cleaning the total number of participants was N = 506 (Mage = 43.6, SD = 15.4).

## Results

- After item trimming, the first, second, and third-order factors were confirmed via Confirmatory Factor Analysis.
- The overall model had a strong model fit:
- SRMR was 0.049, within the excellent fit range
- RMSEA was 0.035, within the excellent fit range
- CFI and TLI were 0.913 and 0.908, within the good fit range

### Figure 1

Confirmatory factor analysis model of the Reciprocating Love Scale, depicting first-order factors of giving and receiving Proximal Responsiveness, Repair, Differentiation, Cooperation, Sensitivity, and Encouragement, second-order factors of Love Giving (LGS) and Love Receiving (LRS), and the third-order factor of Reciprocating Love (RLS)



## Results Continued

- RSL total scores had a strong positive correlation ( $\rho = 0.68, p < 0.001$ ) with relationship satisfaction.
- RLS total scores were moderately correlated with relationship commitment ( $\rho = 0.30, p < 0.001$ ).
- One-way ANOVAs indicated no significant effect of gender,  $F(1, 504) = 0.43, p = .512$ ; ethnicity,  $F(17, 488) = 1.04, p = .415$ ; or relationship type,  $F(19, 486) = 0.66, p = .859$
- A significant effect was found for relationship length,  $F(5, 500) = 3.17, p = .008$ , with individual in 1-2 year relationships having higher RLS total scores than those in relationships longer than 20 years ( $p = .009$ ).

## Discussion

- The RLS could be a valuable tool in marriage therapy to assist in identifying relational strengths and weaknesses, and help define treatment goals.
- Future research is needed to validate the scale and examine the application of the RLS across diversity factors.
- Investigating the RLS over time in longitudinal studies may reveal how reciprocal love dynamics develop as relationships progress and mature, especially in long-term relationships.

