

The DASBIEN Theory of Love: A Comprehensive Analysis of Its Relationship with Mental Health and Well-being

Abstract

This report provides a comprehensive academic analysis of Andy Kid Figueroa Cárdenas's DASBIEN theory of love, specifically examining its intricate relationship with mental health and well-being. Departing from traditional emotional definitions, DASBIEN conceptualizes love as the deliberate action of "giving something good," with "good" defined from the receiver's perspective. The report delineates the theory's foundational elements—Emisor, Receptor, Actividad, and Situación—and the procedural "Triángulo del Amar" (Subjectivize, Intentional, Feedback). It integrates extensive psychological and social science research to demonstrate how DASBIEN's emphasis on empathy, altruism, and receiver-centric action aligns with established determinants of mental health, fostering healthier interpersonal relationships, promoting self-compassion, and combating social isolation. Furthermore, the analysis explores DASBIEN's broader societal implications, including its critique of consumerism and its potential to rebuild social solidarity and institutional trust, thereby addressing systemic factors influencing collective mental well-being. The report concludes by highlighting the theory's practical applications in education and community initiatives, while also identifying critical areas for future research, such as the ethical complexities of defining "good" in diverse contexts.

1. Introduction

The study of love has historically been a multifaceted endeavor across various academic disciplines, often conceptualizing love primarily as an intense emotion, feeling, or subjective experience, particularly within romantic or intimate relationships.¹ This traditional emphasis, while valuable, has sometimes led to a partial or even misguided understanding of love, potentially contributing to relational distress, misunderstandings, and negative outcomes such as infidelity, mistreatment, or violence.¹ Existing academic discourse includes diverse perspectives, from the deconstruction of romantic love to paradigms of concrete love.¹

Against this backdrop, the DASBIEN theory emerges as a distinctive and innovative perspective, seeking to provide a more practical and universally applicable framework for understanding love beyond its conventional romanticized or purely emotional interpretations. The DASBIEN theory of love was proposed by Andy Kid Figueroa Cárdenas, a psychologist and researcher affiliated with the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos.¹ The theory's foundational concepts are elaborated in his book "Das Bien," which translates to "Dar Bien" in Spanish, meaning "Give Good" in English.¹

At its core, DASBIEN fundamentally redefines love not as a passive sentiment or emotion, but as a deliberate, observable, and tangible action: the act of "giving something good".¹ A crucial distinguishing feature of this definition is that the quality of "good" is determined exclusively

from the perspective of the *receiver* of the action, rather than the giver.¹ This stands in stark contrast to many traditional theories that center on the feelings, desires, or subjective experiences of the person expressing love.¹ This redefinition of love, moving it from an often-uncontrollable internal state to a controllable, observable behavior, inherently suggests that love is a skill that can be developed, learned, and refined.¹ This has profound implications. Individuals grappling with relational difficulties, attachment issues, or various mental health challenges often experience feelings of helplessness or feel victimized by their emotions or the actions of others. By offering a concrete, actionable pathway for individuals to *engage* in loving behaviors, DASBIEN fosters a sense of agency and control over their relational experiences. This reframing empowers individuals to actively shape their relationships and, consequently, their mental well-being, rather than passively experiencing love or its absence. It provides a practical roadmap for constructive interaction. Furthermore, many forms of relational suffering, such as feelings of being unloved, misunderstood, or taken for granted, often stem from a disconnect between the giver's intention and the receiver's perception. By explicitly stating that "good" is defined by the receiver and emphasizing "Retroalimentación" (feedback)¹, DASBIEN provides a clear mechanism to bridge this gap. This focus on the receiver's perception and the active seeking of feedback can significantly reduce miscommunication, unfulfilled expectations, and the resentment that frequently erodes relational health. It encourages active inquiry and validation, leading to more effective and satisfying interpersonal interactions, which are crucial for mental well-being.²

This report aims to provide a comprehensive academic analysis of the intricate relationship between Andy Kid Figueroa's DASBIEN theory of love and mental health. It will explore how DASBIEN's action-oriented, receiver-centric, and empathy-driven definition of love offers a "healthy, useful, and simple to apply" framework for fostering individual psychological well-being and promoting healthier societal dynamics.¹ The analysis will integrate the theoretical underpinnings of DASBIEN with established psychological and social science research on mental health, interpersonal relationships, empathy, altruism, and societal determinants of well-being, demonstrating the theory's significant potential for practical application in mental health promotion and intervention.

2. Foundations of the DASBIEN Theory of Love

The DASBIEN theory posits a radical departure from popular understandings of love as an intense emotion or sentiment driven by passion.¹ Instead, Figueroa defines love as a specific, intentional action: "giving something good".¹ This definition explicitly excludes love from being merely a sensation, feeling, desire, liking, choice, or the act of giving everything.¹ A cornerstone of this redefinition is that the determination of what constitutes "good" rests entirely with the *receiver* of the action, not the *giver*.¹ This crucial distinction introduces an element of cultural and individual variability, underscoring the necessity of empathy and contextual awareness in applying the theory.¹ This active, dynamic, and practical conceptualization of love serves as a

critique of romanticized and idealized notions, challenging the passive, abstract, and unalterable portrayals often prevalent in popular culture.¹ DASBIEN asserts that love is fundamentally singular in its nature, though the specific actions of love and the diverse recipients (e.g., parents, children, siblings, friends, pets, plants, or other beings) may vary.¹

To provide a structured framework for analyzing and understanding the dynamics of love, DASBIEN identifies four essential elements that constitute the act of loving.¹ These elements are interdependent and provide a comprehensive lens through which to view loving interactions:

- **Emisor (Sender):** This is the entity that carries out the action of giving love.¹
- **Receptor (Receiver):** This refers to the living being who articulates or demonstrates what they consider to be good for themselves.¹
- **Actividad (Activity):** This is the intentional action of giving love, which is initiated by the sender and received by the receiver.¹
- **Situación (Situation):** This encompasses the various social, ideological, psychological, physical, and other contextual variables that create the specific environment in which the loving activity takes place.¹

Table 1 provides a concise overview of these fundamental elements.

Table 1: Elements of Love in DASBIEN Theory

Elemento	Descripción
Emisor	La entidad que realiza la acción de amar. (The entity that performs the action of loving.)
Receptor	El ser vivo que expresa lo que considera bueno para sí mismo. (The living being who expresses what they consider good for themselves.)
Actividad	La acción intencional de dar amor, enviada por el emisor y recibida por el receptor. (The intentional action of giving love, sent by the sender and received by the receiver.)
Situación	Las variables sociales, ideológicas y de otro tipo que crean un contexto para que la actividad tenga lugar. (Social, ideological, and other variables that create a context for the activity to take place.)

Within the broader "Actividad" (Activity) element, the DASBIEN theory proposes a more detailed model for the practical execution of loving actions, known as the "Triángulo del Amar" (Triangle of Loving).¹ This model outlines three crucial, interconnected components for effective loving:

- **Subjetivizar (Subjectivize):** This component involves the sender actively reflecting upon and investigating what is genuinely good for the receiver, taking into account their internal world, unique perspective, and specific needs.¹ This process demands a significant exercise of empathy and a deliberate effort to understand the other person's reality.¹
- **Intencional (Intentional):** This refers to the conscious and deliberate action undertaken by the sender to give something good to the receiver, ensuring that the action is imbued with clear meaning and motivation.¹ This emphasizes the volitional and purposeful nature of love within the DASBIEN framework.¹
- **Retroalimentación (Feedback):** This critical component requires the sender to actively seek confirmation that the action given has indeed been perceived as "good" by the receiver.¹ This highlights the paramount importance of open communication, validation, and responsiveness in the process of loving according to DASBIEN.¹

The "Triángulo del Amar" is presented through an analogy to the "Triángulo del Fuego" (combustible, combustion, energy of activation).¹ In this parallel, "Subjetivizar" represents the fuel (the understanding of the receiver's needs), "Intencional" is the energy of activation (the deliberate act of giving), and "Retroalimentación" signifies the combustion (the confirmation that the act achieved its desired positive effect).¹ This model offers a process-oriented view of how love is effectively carried out. Table 2 further details these components.

Table 2: Components of the Action of Loving ("Triángulo del Amar")

Componente	Descripción
Subjetivizar	El emisor reflexiona e investiga qué es bueno para el receptor, teniendo en cuenta su mundo interno y su perspectiva. (The sender reflects and investigates what is good for the receiver, taking into account their internal world and perspective.)
Intencional	El emisor da algo bueno al receptor de manera consciente y deliberada, con un significado y una motivación claros detrás de la acción. (The sender consciously and deliberately gives something good to the receiver, with clear meaning and motivation behind the action.)

Retroalimentación	El emisor busca activamente asegurarse de que lo que se ha dado ha sido percibido como bueno por el receptor, destacando la importancia de la comunicación y la validación en el proceso de amar. (The sender actively seeks to ensure that what has been given has been perceived as good by the receiver, highlighting the importance of communication and validation in the process of loving.)
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The detailed, actionable nature of DASBIEN, particularly the "Triángulo del Amar," provides a robust blueprint for developing and implementing targeted interventions. If love is indeed a "skill that can be learned" ¹, then educational programs, workshops, and therapeutic modalities can be designed to teach individuals how to "Subjetivizar," "Intencionar," and "Retroalimentar" effectively. This shifts the focus from generic advice on "being loving" to specific, trainable behaviors that can improve relational dynamics and individual well-being. For example, a therapist could guide a client through the "Subjetivizar" process to enhance empathy, or through "Retroalimentación" to improve communication in a relationship. This operationalization of love opens up significant avenues for empirical research. The explicit mention of "degrees" (frequency/quantity) and "levels" (complexity) and the assertion that love "can be measured" ¹ allow researchers to design studies to quantitatively assess the frequency and quality of DASBIEN-consistent behaviors and correlate these with various mental health outcomes, such as reductions in depression, anxiety, and loneliness, and increases in life satisfaction, self-esteem, and social support. This provides a basis for evidence-based practice, moving DASBIEN beyond a purely theoretical proposition into a framework that can be empirically tested and refined.

The DASBIEN theory further refines its conceptualization of love by introducing the notions of "degrees" and "levels". ¹ "Degrees" refer to the frequency or quantity of times an action of love is received, suggesting a quantitative aspect of love that can be measured. ¹ "Levels" pertain to the complexity of love, ranging from concrete to abstract, and from ephemeral to durable, implying a qualitative dimension that can be studied. ¹ This dual approach suggests that love, within the DASBIEN framework, is amenable to both quantitative and qualitative empirical investigation.

Furthermore, the theory outlines "the three senses of love," highlighting its necessity and direction throughout different stages of life and interactions ¹:

1. **Receiving love from others:** This direction emphasizes the importance of receiving "good" from others, particularly during vulnerable periods such as childhood, illness, old age, and during processes of growth and learning. ¹
2. **Giving love to our own being:** This sense focuses on the individual's capacity to direct loving actions towards themselves, crucial for personal growth, continuous learning, and

effective interaction with the external world.¹ This aspect directly aligns with modern psychological concepts of self-care and self-compassion.

3. **Giving love to other beings:** This direction encompasses the outward manifestation of loving actions in interactions with family, colleagues, pets, plants, and the broader community.¹

The inclusion of "giving love to our own being" as one of the "three senses of love" is particularly noteworthy, emphasizing its importance for personal growth and interaction with the world.¹ This concept aligns profoundly with established psychological constructs such as self-compassion and self-love practices. Research indicates that self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance, especially during times of suffering, and is linked to decreased anxiety, depression, anger, and loneliness, while increasing happiness, gratitude, and connectedness.³ By advocating for "giving love to our own being," DASBIEN implicitly promotes self-care activities, self-advocacy, and the active challenging of the "inner critic".³ This cultivation of self-love is presented not as indulgence, but as a necessary component of personal growth and transcending egocentrism.¹ The practice of self-love, as conceptualized by DASBIEN, directly contributes to a calmer nervous system, a reduction in self-critical voices, and an increased capacity for engagement with the world and other people.³ This internal resilience, fostered by "giving good" to oneself, is a protective factor against stress and adversity, leading to improved mental health outcomes.³ Thus, DASBIEN provides a holistic framework where internal well-being (self-love) is a prerequisite and a continuous process that enables more effective and healthier external loving actions, creating a virtuous cycle of positive mental health.

3. The Critical Role of Relationships in Mental Health

Interpersonal relationships are universally recognized as fundamental to human psychological functioning and overall well-being.⁵ Defined as reciprocal social and emotional interactions, these relationships are so integral that problems in this domain accompany almost every mental disorder.⁵ The interpersonal school of psychiatry, for instance, focuses specifically on the profound interplay between psychopathology and an individual's relationships with significant others, underscoring their critical role in both health and illness.² Beyond clinical contexts, robust social connections are vital for human thriving, influencing even metabolic health, and are key players in building and strengthening mental health.⁶ Conversely, a lack of social connection is directly linked to increased risks of loneliness, depression, and anxiety.⁶ The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes this by defining "social health" as the "adequate quantity and quality of relationships in a particular context to meet an individual's need for meaningful human connection".⁷ WHO explicitly states that social health is the third interdependent dimension of health, alongside physical and mental well-being, and that social connection enhances mental, physical, and brain health across the entire life course.⁷

Research, including studies on well-functioning marriages, identifies several key characteristics

that foster emotional maturation and healing.² These include: shared power dynamics where both partners have significant influence; high levels of both connection (commitment, closeness, shared values, intimacy) and separateness (firm self-identities, autonomy, generative solitude); prominent respect for subjective reality, allowing for open sharing and valuing differences; open expression of affects, fostering an affectionate and optimistic mood with frequent empathy; highly developed problem-solving skills, enabling negotiation and compromise; and conflict that, while inevitable, is not chronic and infrequently escalates.² Strong, supportive relationships serve as protective factors against negative psychological outcomes, buffering against the onset of depression and even reversing destructive life trajectories.² Conversely, diminished marital quality, chronic conflict, and high "expressed emotion" (hostile, critical comments) are associated with adverse courses of depressive and bipolar disorders.² More broadly, social connections provide a crucial sense of belonging, offer emotional support in times of distress, instill a sense of purpose, improve self-esteem through positive feedback, and significantly increase resilience in the face of adversity.⁶

Empathy is a complex emotional capacity that not only nurtures healthy relationships but also plays a pivotal role in therapeutic settings, enhancing patient care and outcomes.⁴ It empowers healthcare providers to deeply understand and share in the emotional experiences of their clients, laying the foundation for trust and connection essential for effective treatment.⁴ Empathy is categorized into cognitive (understanding another's perspective), emotional (sharing feelings), and compassionate (taking actionable steps to alleviate suffering) types.⁴ All three are vital for creating therapeutic environments where clients feel secure and validated. Empathetic communication skills, such as active listening and validating feelings, foster a safe environment that encourages open expression, improves therapeutic relationships, and leads to better overall treatment outcomes.⁴ It also correlates with increased job satisfaction and burnout prevention among healthcare professionals.⁴ At a community level, empathy is crucial for enhancing mental health awareness by creating safe spaces for dialogue, reducing stigma, fostering understanding and acceptance, and promoting mental health literacy. This communal support strengthens resilience and transforms perceptions of mental health issues.⁴

Altruism, broadly defined as behaviors that benefit another person or alleviate their distress without foreseeable extrinsic benefit or expectation of return, is a significant form of prosocial behavior.⁸ It often reflects an intrinsic valuing of the beneficiary's welfare.⁸ A wealth of research demonstrates a robust positive correlation between altruism and improved subjective well-being.⁸ Engaging in acts of kindness activates brain areas associated with pleasure, connection, and trust, leading to the release of neurochemicals like dopamine (enhancing mood) and oxytocin (fostering connection and reducing loneliness).⁹ Altruistic activities significantly boost self-esteem and confidence by providing a sense of accomplishment and purpose.⁹ They also alleviate stress and anxiety by promoting relaxation and reducing cortisol levels, often resulting in a "helper's high".⁹ Furthermore, altruism is a powerful catalyst for building and strengthening social connections, fostering community building, and expanding support networks.⁹ The

relationship between altruism and subjective well-being is bidirectional: altruism leads to increased well-being, and happier individuals are more likely to engage in altruistic behaviors.⁸ This positive association extends to altruists, beneficiaries, and even third-party observers.⁸ The benefits for altruists are particularly pronounced when helping is autonomous and voluntary.⁸

Social health and connection are explicitly recognized as critical determinants of mental well-being.⁷ Conversely, social isolation (the objective state of having few social roles or interactions) and loneliness (the subjective, unpleasant feeling of a perceived lack of social connection) pose serious public health risks.⁷ These forms of social disconnection are directly linked to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and even contribute to global dementia risk.⁷ Contemporary factors such as declining extended family structures, rising single-occupancy households, increased mobility, and technological shifts (e.g., social media, remote work) contribute to the growing urgency of addressing social disconnection.⁷ Social cohesion, defined as the strength of relationships and sense of solidarity within a community, is linked to better self-rated health, lower rates of neighborhood violence, and improved access to health-enhancing resources.¹⁰ Social capital, a marker of social cohesion, also has significant health ramifications, with reductions in social capital correlating with increased income inequality and mortality.¹⁰ Academic studies confirm a significant positive relationship between mental health and social solidarity, indicating that good mental health is positively correlated with better social solidarity.¹¹ Neighborhood social solidarity, for instance, provides individuals with meaningful connection, mutual respect, and an enhanced sense of purpose in life.¹¹

The core mechanisms of DASBIEN directly align with and promote behaviors and relational qualities empirically proven to enhance mental health. The "Subjetivizar" component of DASBIEN, which involves investigating the receiver's internal world to understand what is "good," is a direct application of cognitive and emotional empathy.¹ The "Intencional" component, the deliberate act of giving, embodies altruistic behavior.¹ The "Retroalimentación" component, ensuring the act was perceived as good, reinforces positive social connections and validates the interaction.¹ This creates a powerful, self-reinforcing cycle: consistently practicing DASBIEN principles enhances an individual's capacity for empathy and altruism, which in turn strengthens their social connections, reduces feelings of loneliness and stress, boosts self-esteem, and provides a sense of purpose.⁶ This improved mental well-being then makes individuals more inclined to engage in further prosocial and empathetic behaviors⁸, thereby perpetuating the positive cycle. DASBIEN, therefore, offers a practical, integrated approach to mental health that extends beyond merely treating existing symptoms. By focusing on the *process* of healthy and intentional relating, it addresses fundamental human needs for connection and purpose, which are often at the root of psychological distress. It provides a prescriptive framework for individuals to actively *build* and *maintain* their mental well-being through their daily interactions, positioning itself as a powerful tool for mental health promotion and prevention, rather than solely a reactive treatment.

4. DASBIEN's Direct Contributions to Mental Health and Well-being

A central tenet of DASBIEN is the redefinition of "good" from the perspective of the receiver, explicitly demanding empathy and a shift away from egocentric viewpoints.¹ This "decentralization of the lover" represents a significant philosophical and practical divergence from self-focused theories of love, which often prioritize the giver's feelings or desires.¹ This emphasis on understanding and prioritizing the other's needs aligns directly with established psychological principles regarding the critical role of empathy in mental health. Empathy is crucial for fostering trust, building strong connections, and is indispensable for effective diagnosis and treatment in mental health care.⁴ Specifically, "compassionate empathy," which involves taking actionable steps to alleviate suffering, directly mirrors DASBIEN's action-oriented approach to love.⁴

By defining love as a tangible, practical, and reciprocal action ("giving something good"), DASBIEN inherently encourages the development of more equitable and mutually beneficial relationships.¹ Love, within this framework, is not a static state but manifests dynamically and tangibly in everyday interactions.¹ The "Triángulo del Amar" provides a clear, actionable process for cultivating healthy relational dynamics: "Subjetivizar" (understanding the other's needs), "Intencional" (acting deliberately for their good), and "Retroalimentación" (ensuring positive reception).¹ This directly addresses and operationalizes key characteristics of well-functioning relationships, such as respect for subjective reality, open expression of feelings, and highly developed problem-solving skills.² The explicit inclusion of the "Retroalimentación" loop ensures continuous communication and validation, which are vital for repairing disconnections, building trust, and maintaining relational health.¹

The core principle of DASBIEN, "giving something good" from the receiver's perspective, is fundamentally altruistic.¹ This inherent altruism within the theory promotes the wide array of documented psychological benefits associated with prosocial behavior. These benefits include increased self-esteem and confidence, a reduction in stress and anxiety (often described as a "helper's high"), enhanced mood due to the release of neurochemicals like dopamine and oxytocin, and the strengthening of social connections.⁸ By focusing on the receiver's perceived "good," DASBIEN ensures that altruistic acts are genuinely beneficial and not merely self-serving, thereby maximizing positive outcomes for both the giver and the receiver, and reinforcing the bidirectional link between altruism and well-being.⁸

Uniquely, DASBIEN explicitly includes "giving love to our own being" as one of its three essential senses of love.¹ This dimension connects the theory to the growing body of psychological research on self-compassion and self-love practices. Self-compassion is strongly linked to improved mental health, including decreased anxiety, depression, and loneliness, and increased feelings of happiness and resilience.³ By advocating for self-directed "giving good," DASBIEN implicitly encourages self-care activities, self-advocacy, and the development of a kinder internal voice, which are all crucial for psychological well-being.³ The theory suggests

that practicing DASBIEN, particularly in its self-directed form, requires a certain level of personal maturity and empathy, necessitating a transcendence of egocentric perspectives.¹ This implies that personal growth is both a prerequisite for and a continuous outcome of engaging with DASBIEN principles.

In an era marked by increasing social disconnection, DASBIEN provides a concrete and actionable pathway to combat loneliness and social isolation. By emphasizing intentional, receiver-centric actions of "giving good," the theory directly fosters meaningful interactions and strengthens social bonds. The very act of engaging in DASBIEN-consistent behaviors inherently promotes interaction and connection, thereby counteracting the objective state of social isolation and the subjective feeling of loneliness.⁶ The integral "Retroalimentación" loop ensures that the act of connection is perceived as positive and beneficial by the receiver, further solidifying the relationship and reinforcing the sense of belonging for both parties.¹

DASBIEN offers a proactive, rather than merely reactive, approach to mental well-being. Instead of waiting for mental health challenges to manifest as a result of relational dysfunction, such as chronic conflict or a lack of social support, DASBIEN provides a continuous, daily practice for maintaining and enhancing psychological health. By consistently practicing "giving good" and seeking feedback, individuals are actively building and reinforcing resilient social networks⁶, cultivating self-compassion³, and engaging in altruistic behaviors⁸ that are empirically linked to increased well-being and reduced distress. This positions DASBIEN as a framework for *primary mental health promotion* and *prevention*, potentially reducing the incidence and severity of mental health issues often linked to social disconnection, relational stress, or a lack of purpose. The action-oriented and learnable nature of DASBIEN empowers individuals by providing them with concrete, controllable behaviors they can implement to improve their relationships and, consequently, their mental health. This sense of agency can be a powerful protective factor against feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, or lack of control, which are frequently associated with various forms of mental distress. It shifts the narrative from a passive "what's wrong with me?" to an active "what actions can I take right now to improve my relationships and overall well-being?", fostering self-efficacy in mental health management.

5. Societal Implications and Challenges Addressed by DASBIEN

The DASBIEN theory extends its scope beyond individual relationships to encompass broader societal implications. It aligns with John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness, suggesting that a just society is one that guarantees basic liberties and actively promotes collective well-being.¹ DASBIEN identifies contemporary social challenges that hinder the practice of "giving good" at a societal level. These include a lack of alignment between individual values and those oriented towards the common good, which can erode the social fabric, leading to unfair competition, a deficit of solidarity, and widespread distrust.¹ Socioeconomic inequality, alongside a scarcity of solidarity and empathy, is explicitly named as a significant obstacle to the societal application of DASBIEN principles.¹ This perspective is strongly supported by academic research. Low

socioeconomic status (SES) is consistently associated with higher psychiatric morbidity, greater disability, and poorer access to healthcare.¹² While the association with depression can be complex, compelling evidence demonstrates socioeconomic inequality in depression, with low-SES individuals having higher odds of being depressed, and notably, higher odds of *persisting* depression.¹² Furthermore, low SES in childhood has lasting impacts, correlating with slower academic skill development, poor cognitive development, language, memory, socioemotional processing, and consequently, lower income and poorer health in adulthood.¹³ It is also linked to learning disabilities and other negative psychological outcomes that impede academic achievement and career aspirations.¹³

DASBIEN offers a direct critique of modern societal trends, specifically highlighting how consumerism and materialism can distort the perception of what constitutes "good" for the receiver, diverting attention away from genuine well-being towards the mere possession of material goods.¹ This critique is robustly supported by a significant body of academic literature. Consumerism is deeply embedded in modern society and has profound negative effects on mental health.¹⁴ It fosters a mindset where happiness and self-worth are tied to material possessions, leading to dissatisfaction through comparison culture and the "hedonic treadmill".¹⁴ The relentless pursuit of goods increases stress and financial pressure, contributing to debt-related anxiety, the pressure to "keep up with the Joneses," and overworking that leads to burnout.¹⁴ Consumerism also promotes superficial connections by prioritizing possessions over meaningful interactions, reducing empathy, and contributing to loneliness.¹⁴ It can also create environmental guilt and anxiety ("eco-anxiety") and encourage mindless, impulsive behaviors.¹⁴ Well-being studies consistently show that materialistic tendencies are linked to decreased life satisfaction, happiness, vitality, and social cooperation, while correlating with increases in depression, anxiety, racism, and antisocial behavior.¹⁵ Young people, particularly from low-income families, are especially vulnerable to marketing efforts, with increased materialism often linked to lower self-esteem among impoverished teenagers.¹⁵

DASBIEN postulates that the principles of love, when understood as "giving good," can serve as a fundamental basis for fostering community solidarity and act as a powerful instrument for personal and social transformation, ultimately building foundations for peace and reconciliation through mutual respect and understanding.¹ The theory implies that its societal application necessitates a certain degree of shared values and collective action.¹ This vision is corroborated by research on social solidarity. A significant relationship exists between mental health and social solidarity, indicating that good mental health is positively correlated with better social solidarity.¹¹ Neighborhood social solidarity, for instance, provides individuals with meaningful connection, mutual respect, and an enhanced sense of purpose in life.¹¹ A critical social challenge identified by DASBIEN for its broader application is the loss of trust in institutions.¹ Recent studies indicate a gradual decline in public trust across various institutions in the U.S., with Gen Z consistently reporting lower levels of trust.¹⁶ Lower institutional trust is associated with a range of adverse social and mental health factors across the lifespan. These include male

sex, racialized minority status, low household income, and maternal mental health issues in early life; internalizing and externalizing problems, bullying exposure, and school difficulties in adolescence; and perceived stress, psychotic experiences, suicidal ideation, and seeking professional help in adulthood.¹⁷ Conversely, greater social connectedness in adulthood is associated with higher institutional trust.¹⁷ A lack of trust in institutions significantly impacts an individual's willingness to access critical resources and services within their communities, particularly for historically marginalized groups, thereby hindering efforts to achieve health equity.¹⁶

DASBIEN is not merely an interpersonal theory; it offers a philosophical and practical antidote to systemic societal challenges that undermine collective mental well-being. By promoting "giving good" defined by the receiver, DASBIEN inherently shifts the societal focus from individualistic, often self-serving, pursuits, such as competitive consumerism and material acquisition, towards collective well-being and mutual benefit.¹ This directly counters the materialistic drive that contributes to dissatisfaction, stress, and superficial connections.¹⁴ By fostering social solidarity through tangible acts of "giving good" and emphasizing shared values, DASBIEN can actively contribute to rebuilding social cohesion¹⁰ and addressing the mental health impacts of declining trust in institutions.¹⁶ This positions DASBIEN as a framework for building a more mentally healthy *society*, where the well-being of the collective is prioritized over individualistic tendencies that often lead to isolation and distress. The alignment of DASBIEN with Rawls's theory of justice as fairness¹ suggests its potential as an ethical framework for guiding public policy and community development initiatives. If a society is to be "just" and promote "collective well-being" by "giving good" to its citizens, then policies addressing socioeconomic inequality, promoting equitable access to resources, fostering community engagement, and rebuilding trust in public institutions could be conceptualized and implemented through a DASBIEN lens. This could lead to more holistic and effective interventions that not only alleviate individual mental health symptoms but also address the systemic, social determinants of mental ill-health, fostering a truly supportive and healthy societal environment.

6. Practical Applications, Limitations, and Future Directions

The DASBIEN theory transcends purely theoretical discourse, finding active application in various practical domains.¹ It serves as a framework for evaluating values based on their impact on the common good, leading to the development of specific value scales.¹ This suggests a methodological utility in assessing prosocial orientations. Its potential is actively explored as a strategy to address pressing social problems, such as poverty and inequality, by directing focus towards the fundamental needs of the most disadvantaged members of society.¹ The existence of the "Fundación To Give Welfare - DASBIEN" (Fundación Dasbien) provides tangible evidence of the theory's active application and promotion in real-world settings.¹ Furthermore, the existence of the course "El amor también se aprende" ("Love can also be learned") signifies that

the principles of DASBIEN are considered a teachable and developable skill set, implying that love, as defined by the theory, can be cultivated through intentional learning and practice.¹

Given its action-oriented, measurable components (degrees, levels), and emphasis on empathy and feedback, DASBIEN holds significant potential for integration into various therapeutic approaches. It could be particularly beneficial for individuals struggling with relational issues (e.g., communication breakdowns, empathy deficits), self-esteem challenges, or those seeking to cultivate more meaningful connections. Its structured nature provides concrete steps for intervention. The theory's strong emphasis on empathy, altruism, and fostering genuine social connection makes it highly relevant for broader public health strategies aimed at promoting community well-being and combating widespread issues like loneliness and social isolation. DASBIEN's framework could inform the design and implementation of family therapy, couples counseling, and community-based mental health programs by providing a clear, actionable roadmap for improving relational dynamics, fostering a sense of belonging, and encouraging prosocial behaviors.

Despite its promising contributions, critical considerations and areas for future research remain. A significant area for further theoretical development and empirical investigation lies in addressing situations where the receiver's perception of "good" might be harmful, unethical, or detrimental to their long-term well-being or the well-being of others. The provided information acknowledges that this specific challenge is not explicitly addressed within the current theoretical framework.¹ For instance, how does DASBIEN apply when a receiver's "good" involves enabling addiction, perpetuating abuse, or engaging in exploitative behaviors? This creates a significant ethical gap and a potential vulnerability for the theory's practical application in complex, real-world interpersonal and societal contexts. For DASBIEN to be truly "healthy and useful" and widely applicable¹, it must incorporate ethical boundary conditions. This requires developing clear guidelines or principles for situations where the receiver's immediate "good" conflicts with the giver's ethical standards, broader societal norms, or the receiver's own long-term well-being. This implies that the "receiver's perspective" cannot be an absolute, uncritical determinant of "good," but rather must be balanced with considerations of health, ethics, and sustainable well-being. This could lead to a more nuanced understanding of "giving good" that involves critical discernment and potentially, a collaborative process of defining what is truly beneficial. This ethical challenge highlights the need to refine the "Subjectivizar" component (investigating what is good for the receiver). It suggests that "investigating" should not merely involve passive acceptance of stated desires, but active, empathetic inquiry that considers the receiver's deeper needs, long-term consequences, and potential for growth, especially in therapeutic or supportive contexts where the receiver may lack insight or be in distress. This could involve an ethical dialogue that respects the receiver's autonomy while also upholding principles of non-maleficence and beneficence.

Beyond this, while the theory acknowledges that "good" is culturally and individually variable¹,

future research should systematically explore how DASBIEN principles manifest, are interpreted, and are applied across diverse cultural contexts. This is crucial for ensuring the theory's universal applicability and avoiding potential cultural imposition or misinterpretation. Although DASBIEN posits that love can be quantitatively measured ("degrees") and qualitatively studied ("levels")¹, the specific methodologies for operationalizing and empirically validating these aspects, and their direct correlation with mental health outcomes, require further rigorous development and testing. This includes designing robust instruments and research protocols. The existing literature on social solidarity and mental health highlights the need for longitudinal studies to definitively determine the direction and underlying mechanisms of observed associations.¹¹ This recommendation applies directly to DASBIEN; future research should employ longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships between the practice of DASBIEN principles and improvements in mental health and well-being over time. Finally, further research is needed to develop and evaluate effective training methodologies for individuals, mental health professionals, educators, and community leaders to effectively apply DASBIEN principles in diverse settings. This includes understanding how the "maturity and empathy" required for truly practicing DASBIEN can be cultivated and nurtured.¹

7. Conclusion

The DASBIEN theory, proposed by Andy Kid Figueroa Cárdenas, offers a novel and highly practical redefinition of love, moving beyond traditional emotional or subjective interpretations to conceptualize it as a tangible, deliberate action of "giving something good".¹ Its unique emphasis on defining "good" from the perspective of the receiver fundamentally shifts the focus from the giver's internal state to the impact on the recipient, fostering a profound sense of other-centeredness.¹ The theory provides a clear, structured framework through its four essential elements of love (Emisor, Receptor, Actividad, Situación) and the actionable "Triángulo del Amar" (Subjetivizar, Intencional, Retroalimentación).¹ These components offer concrete steps for enacting love, distinguishing DASBIEN as a highly applicable and learnable approach to human connection.

DASBIEN's principles align powerfully with established psychological research on mental health. By promoting empathy and other-centeredness, it directly fosters healthy interpersonal relationships, which are critical determinants of psychological well-being.² The theory's inherent encouragement of altruism contributes to documented psychological benefits for both givers and receivers, including increased self-esteem, reduced stress, and enhanced social connections.⁸ Furthermore, the explicit inclusion of "giving love to our own being" connects DASBIEN to the vital practice of self-compassion, which is crucial for individual resilience and mental health.³

At a societal level, DASBIEN offers a compelling counter-narrative to contemporary challenges. Its critique of consumerism and materialism, coupled with its emphasis on collective well-being, directly addresses factors detrimental to mental health.¹ By postulating love as a foundation for community solidarity and social transformation, it presents a vision for rebuilding social

cohesion and trust in institutions, thereby mitigating the mental health impacts of inequality and disconnection.¹

In conclusion, the DASBIEN theory offers a comprehensive, actionable, and potentially transformative framework for cultivating healthier, more empathetic, and more connected relationships at both individual and societal levels. Its unique approach holds significant promise for enhancing mental health and well-being, providing a practical guide for navigating human interactions in a way that fosters genuine "good" for all.

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