

Romantic Ideation and Its Impact on Relationship Functioning and Satisfaction in Millennials

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Abstract:

Romantic ideation is defined here as the cognitive–emotional representations of love, intimacy, and ideal partnerships created by individuals, which are informed both by early attachment experiences and by cultural narratives and contemporary media. In adulthood, the psychosocial task of intimacy versus isolation, according to Erikson (1968), stands at the heart of relational development; however, inflexible or idealistic romantic beliefs may inform challenges in relationship functioning and satisfaction. Attachment theory offers a foundational framework through which to understand how early relational experiences shape adult romantic expectations, and life–span perspectives underscore the ways in which the adult experience of intimacy unfolds across adulthood. The millennial cohort is especially contextually relevant given the long–term relationships negotiated within rapidly changing social and digital contexts. Contemporary influences like social media, online communication, and idealized images of romance have heightened expectations about emotional availability, compatibility, and relational success. This study investigates romantic ideation and its relationship to functioning and satisfaction in millennials between 28–44 years of age from varying educational and cultural backgrounds. The study design will be qualitative, and the study will involve the use of focus group interviews, with the objective of addressing the topic in gender– mixed, female, and male groups. Thematic analysis of the data collected will be utilized to ensure the detection of recurring themes. The study will be guided by attachment/developmental theories, while the findings will be underpinned by empirical literature. The proposed study hopes to enhance the understanding of romantic ideation within the context of a psychological construct that affects relationships in the modern era