

Critical analysis



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Delineating Trends in Intimate Relationships Relationships are the foundation of human survival in many respects. Here we review the current findings from research on relationships. From these findings, we aim to generate additional research questions to explore.

In *Foundations of Interpersonal Trust*, Jeffrey A. Simpson discusses how close relationships and interpersonal processes from different theoretical perspectives (Kruglanski, A. W. and Higgins, E. T. (Eds.), 2007). His research on empathic accuracy explores how accurate people's inferences about their partner's mindset during conflict resolution and problem solving might be. He found people use differing social tactics to persuade their partners and that certain tactics tend to be more or less effective based on the social context. To what extent is the accuracy of one's ability to assess their partner's mindset correlated with how well they influence by their partner? To what extent is the accuracy of one's ability to assess their partner's mindset correlated with how much they are influenced by their partner?

In *Grounding Communication: Synchrony*, Gün R. Semin discusses how to understand social behavior explain as the sum of many processes (Kruglanski, A. W. and Higgins, E. T. (Eds.), 2007). Human behavior is adaptive to contextual variations; thus interpersonal behavior processes may be seen as the whole of communication, social cognition, and language. In other words, social behavior is clearly interactive based on flows of information internally within the individual, interpersonal between individuals, and socially between interpersonal interactions. Does this mean we are only as socially adept as the particular language will allow us to be? How might we investigate the extent a given language allows for social interaction?

Regan (2008) contended the mating process is the result of combinations of evaluations individuals make of one another. Men and women are at the behest of both modern and ancient forces that shape the way mating occurs in humans. Some of the evaluations are instinctually executed whereas others are more cognitively-based on current social trends. In either case, the selection process for any individual is based on evaluations of the mating candidate's temperament, social status, interpersonality, and physical attractiveness. Mating decisions are also based on so called deal killers. For example, a man may possess all of the desirable attributes in sufficient degree to a woman, but the fact he may be HIV positive automatically excludes him from her choices. What are the most common of such deal-breakers for men and women? To what degree, does each of the most common positive traits play into the decision of selecting a mate?

Researchers have proposed that satisfaction is associated with idealistic rather than realistic perceptions of one's partner (Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W., 1996). To provide baselines for assessing relationship illusions, both members of married and dating heterosexual couples rated themselves and their partners on interpersonality. They also rated typical vs. ideal partners on them same interpersonality. It was found that people saw their partners more of a mirror self-image rather than their partners self reportage interpersonality. People tend to see their partners more positively than the partners see themselves. Idealization correlated with satisfaction where people were happier in relationships when partners idealized one another. Is there a line of demarcation? Is there a place where over idealization of a partners leads to unrealistic expectations?

We have reviewed current findings from research on relationships and

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generated questions to explore. A method of investigating those questions is to submit participants to appropriate pilot studies and social scientific surveys. As such, we may be able to see whether a person who is better at inferring a partner's mindset might be better at influencing their partner or how a person is not so good at inferring their partner's mindset might be more likely to be manipulated. Furthermore, we could delineate the most "deal-breakers" and estimate the percentage of influence each of the positive attributes contributes to mate selection on average. Plus, we could ask about negative relationship issues and see how their frequency and magnitude correlate with partner idealization. That is, are people with more idealized views of their partner more likely to be disappointed in their partner's behavior? These are just some of the avenues for investigation. Perhaps, in the near future some of these empirical findings could be expressed as vector qualities in a flowchart format such that they might be applied in a software format that predicts human mating behavior.

References

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