

UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DE MARINGÁ

MELISSA SPERANDIO

**NAVIGATING THROUGH RELATIONSHIP COACHING:
A Practice Theory Analysis of Women's Consumption Practices in Love
Relationship Pursuits**

Supported by: Capes

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MELISSA SPERANDIO

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A Practice Theory Analysis of Women's Consumption Practices in Love Relationship
Pursuits**

Doctoral thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Business Management in the Graduate College of Management at the State University of Maringa (PPA/UEM).

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Francisco Giovanni David Vieira.

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To Jaque: With all the love my heart can hold!

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*“Cause we are living in a material world
And I am a material girl
You know that we are living in a material world
And I am a material girl

Living in a material world
And I am a material girl
You know that we are living in a material world
And I am a material girl...”*

Material Girl - Madonna

Abstract

This study examines how women's consumption of relationship coaching content impacts and shapes their pursuit of romantic relationships. The research followed a qualitative and descriptive approach within an interpretive framework, combining document analysis, participant observation, and in-depth interviews. Researchers analyzed 14 online courses, 4 eBooks, live coaching sessions, and conducted 30 interviews to explore this topic. Using Practice Theory as a guide, the data was analyzed through categories such as agents, body, discourse, knowledge, mind, objects, and structure (Reckwitz, 2002). Along the way, other themes like emotions, spirituality, and sociability also surfaced. The findings showed that love relationships carry deep symbolic meaning for women, often tied to ideas of personal achievement, social recognition, and cultural ideals. These relationships were found to play a key role in shaping women's sense of identity and are influenced by societal expectations, driving their aspirations and consumer habits. The study highlighted how different aspects of practices—like self-care routines, emotional healing, and skill-building—interact and shape consumption habits. Social interactions emerged as a crucial element, providing collective support and validation that help sustain and evolve these practices. Additionally, the behaviors tied to these practices often involve repeated engagement with both symbolic and material aspects, creating a cycle that adapts and reinforces these practices over time. This research makes a valuable contribution to Practice Theory by introducing sociability as an essential element of practices, offering a richer framework for studying consumption behaviors within cultural and social contexts. On a practical level, it shows how women's engagement with self-help products and coaching reflects broader societal narratives, illustrating the dynamic relationship between material, symbolic, and social factors in shaping their aspirations for romantic relationships. Ultimately, these findings offer a deeper understanding of how consumption practices can drive both personal growth and societal change.

Key Words: Consumption Practices; Love Relationships; Practice Theory; Relationship Coaches.

Resumo

Este estudo examina como o consumo de conteúdos de coaches de relacionamento pelas mulheres impacta e molda sua busca por relacionamentos amorosos. A pesquisa seguiu uma abordagem qualitativa e descritiva dentro de um paradigma interpretativo, combinando análise documental, observação participante e entrevistas em profundidade. Foram analisados 14 cursos online, 4 eBooks, sessões ao vivo com coaches e realizadas 30 entrevistas para explorar o tema. Utilizando a Teoria da Prática como guia, os dados foram analisados por meio de categorias como agentes, corpo, discurso, conhecimento, mente, objetos e estrutura (Reckwitz, 2002). Durante o estudo, outros temas, como emoções, espiritualidade e conexões sociais, também surgiram. Os resultados mostraram que os relacionamentos amorosos têm um profundo significado simbólico para as mulheres, frequentemente associados a ideias de realização pessoal, reconhecimento social e ideais culturais. Esses relacionamentos desempenham um papel central na formação da identidade feminina e são influenciados por expectativas sociais, orientando suas aspirações e hábitos de consumo. A pesquisa destacou como diferentes aspectos das práticas—como rotinas de autocuidado, cura emocional e desenvolvimento de habilidades—interagem e moldam os hábitos de consumo. As interações sociais emergiram como um elemento crucial, oferecendo suporte coletivo e validação que ajudam a sustentar e evoluir essas práticas. Além disso, os comportamentos associados a essas práticas frequentemente envolvem engajamento repetido com aspectos simbólicos e materiais, criando um ciclo que adapta e reforça essas práticas ao longo do tempo. Esta pesquisa contribui de forma significativa para a Teoria da Prática ao introduzir a sociabilidade como um elemento essencial das práticas, oferecendo um quadro mais rico para o estudo dos comportamentos de consumo dentro de contextos culturais e sociais. No nível prático, o estudo mostra como o envolvimento das mulheres com produtos de autoajuda e coaching reflete narrativas sociais mais amplas, ilustrando a relação dinâmica entre fatores materiais, simbólicos e sociais na formação de suas aspirações por relacionamentos amorosos. Em última análise, os achados oferecem uma compreensão mais profunda de como as práticas de consumo podem impulsionar tanto o crescimento pessoal quanto as mudanças sociais.

Palavras-chave: Práticas de Consumo; Relacionamentos Amorosos; Teoria da Prática; Coaches de Relacionamento.

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Beginning the journey of discovery

*“Where do I start
Where do I begin
Where do I begin
Where do I start
Where do I begin...”*

Where do I begin? - The Chemical Brothers

I got married and divorced in 2013. Since then, I’ve interacted with many women with different personalities, appearances, and life experiences. From these experiences, I can confidently say that romantic relationships are a topic that often comes up in conversations among women. I always thought about: why love relationships occupy so much time on women’s mind? So, my research stems from my own experiences as a single woman and from my interactions with other women in similar situations.

The idea for this research on relationship coaches came from a close friend of mine who was searching for a meaningful, long-term relationship. She used to have many dates, but none of them led her to a relationship. We often had deep conversations, and I was something of a confidant to her. One day, after a few weeks of not seeing her, we met at a café, and I immediately noticed something was different. She had changed her hairstyle, was more dressed up, wearing a flowing, light-colored skirt that wasn’t her usual style, and spoke about new interests like wine and reading. She told me she was working on becoming a “high-value woman” to attract a relationship that matched that image. Curious, I asked her what had brought about this change. She replied, “I bought a course to learn how to be in a relationship! Clearly, I don’t know how, and I need to learn.”

I was intrigued and kept asking her about the course. She explained, “We put so much effort into learning how to manage our careers, we study, plan, and work hard... But when it comes to romantic relationships, we assume they’ll just happen or that God will send someone our way. But that’s not how it works.” Intrigued, I asked her to describe the course in more detail. She explained it was an online program with pre-recorded lessons divided into modules. Then she added, “If you want, I can share my login details so you can take a look.” I jumped at the chance.

That same evening, I logged in to explore the course. It was divided into modules, each teaching strategies for women to attract and maintain romantic relationships. The instructor, a

woman in her 30s, covered topics like how to communicate, how to dress, how to create a checklist for the right man, self-love, how to present yourself on Instagram or WhatsApp, and many other tips, tricks, and strategies for building a “high-value relationship.” At that moment, I thought to myself: this will be the focus of my research. I realized there was a market in this area focused on a topic of great importance to women: love relationships.

And that’s how it began! I started researching relationship coaches online and on YouTube, and to my surprise, there were so many of them! I can’t even quantify the amount of free content I consumed from these internet personalities. Thanks to the algorithms, I began receiving at least five or six sponsored posts daily from different professionals. They covered a wide range of topics: how to win someone back, how to be valued, how to get a marriage proposal, how to stand out in public. I even came across a video about what to wear on a first date, where the coach recommended pink because it’s a “feminine” color ideal for the occasion.

After discussing the topic with my advisor and drafting a theoretical essay, we decided to focus the research on the consumption habits of women who purchase these digital products. To qualify for an interview, participants needed to have consumed this kind of content. The women I studied were specifically those seeking serious, monogamous relationships.

It’s important to clarify that not all women want a serious relationship. Many women are happy being single, traveling, living life on their own terms, and engaging in casual (or not-so-casual) relationships. My research does not focus on this group. Instead, it centers on heterosexual women who are looking for a life partner. I should also note that my research follows an interpretivist/marketing paradigm, so while gender roles are an important topic, they are beyond the scope of this study.

Additionally, my research does not have a racial focus. I fully acknowledge the importance of racial perspectives and the fact that the experiences of Black and white women differ greatly. However, the initial context of this study was to identify women who consume relationship coaching content, and participants were invited based on their engagement with such courses, without specific regard to their geographical, social, or demographic characteristics. A different research approach would be needed to address racial nuances in this context.

Another area my research does not address is the ethics or effectiveness of these courses. While this is a valid and important topic for debate, it falls outside the scope of my study.

Instead, the course content served as a foundation for developing my research strategy and understanding how women implement these teachings in their everyday lives.

This research has also prompted a lot of personal reflection. There were times when I found myself questioning my own beliefs about relationships and the choices I've made in my life. Maintaining the neutrality required of a researcher was challenging at times, especially when participants' stories resonated deeply with my own experiences. However, these moments also brought a unique depth to the study, as they allowed for a genuine sense of empathy in my interactions with participants.

In conclusion, this work explores the consumption practice of the women in a love relationships pursuit in the relational coach context. It has been fascinating to examine this phenomenon through the lens of consumer culture, analyzing how relationship coaching content engages with women's social and cultural expectations. By studying these practices, I hope to understand how cultural shifts and consumption narratives shape the ways women seek, experience, and reimagine love relationships.

1. UNVEILING THE FIRST STEPS: THE PATH TO UNDERSTANDING

*“If you start me up
If you start me up, I'll never stop
(Never stop, never stop, never stop) ...”*

Start me Up - The Rolling Stones

Consumption is a universal phenomenon. Even in their lack of agency, newborns partake in consumption, a trend that persists as they grow. Throughout adulthood, the act of consuming becomes a daily ritual, intricately woven into society's fabric. Positioned as a conduit to comprehend the contemporary world, consumption's significance is undeniable (Barbosa, 2004). Rooted in both conscious and subconscious processes, it unveils layers of identity, aspirations, status, and culture within individuals (Paterson, 2006). Beyond the mere content consumed, understanding the "how" and "where" of consumption becomes imperative (Sassatelli, 2007). So, I rely on the Practice Theory to defend my thesis: **Consumption practices shape women's pursuit of a romantic relationship.**

In pursuit of understanding consumption, the Practice Theory places the concept of practice at its core. It scrutinizes the web of social relationships, routines, and elements that shape, sustain, transform, and fade in accordance with human behaviors (Cetina et al., 2005). When studying consumption through the lens of Practice Theory, it entails a profound analysis of the interactions between individual and collective consumption behaviors, the social and cultural contexts within which they transpire, and the structural influences on these practices. Numerous perspectives contribute to the exploration of the Practice Theory (Reckwitz, 2002). This theory isn't singular; instead, it comprises a collection of theoretical approaches from diverse authors, each offering their unique interpretation of the phenomenon (Isboli, 2019).

The Practice Theory, as articulated by Shove et al. (2012), emphasizes that everyday activities can serve as a foundation for complex investigations. Consumption transcends mere economic transactions; it's interwoven with symbolic meanings attributed to goods (Warde, 2005). Phenomena observed through the lens of the Practice Theory are embedded in individuals' routine behaviors rather than extraordinary events (Shove et al., 2012). Observing these phenomena through the prism of the Practice Theory entails understanding consumption not solely as a transactional act but as a holistic set of behaviors.

The phenomenon under examination in this research pertains to the pursuit of love relationships by heterosexual women. Before delving deeper, I must first establish the key conceptual underpinnings that inform this study. At its heart, my research explores women's pursuit of love relationships—a term that refers to interpersonal bonds characterized by intimacy, commitment, and mutual affection (Berscheid & Peplau, 1983). These relationships manifest in diverse forms, shaped by cultural norms, social contexts, and individual desires (Collins & Feeney, 2004).

To further ground my analysis, I also define romantic love, a construct that emerged during the Romanticism of the 17th and 18th centuries. This ideal emphasizes passion, mutual affection, and individuality in relationships, marking a shift from traditional, pragmatic marital arrangements to an emphasis on personal happiness through deep emotional connection (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Giddens, 1992). In contemporary times, romantic love is deeply mediated by media narratives and consumer culture, which promote ideals of emotional fulfillment and overcoming challenges in the name of love (Bauman, 2003).

These definitions are not abstract; they are important to my study. Women in this study, who seek love relationship, do so out of the ideal of romantic love. In setting these grounds, I am situating their pursuit of romantic relationships as both deeply personal and a reflection of broader cultural and social dynamics (Jackson, 1993; Collins & Feeney, 2004). This understanding allows for an in-depth look into the ways their expectations of romantic love impact their consumption habits and inform their relationship goals.

Though the process of choosing a love partner might appear to be a very personal and spontaneous thing, seemingly triggered by chance and coincidences and fate, it is very clear that such decisions are greatly determined by cultural contexts. The cultural environment in which people seek love massively impacts social norms, emotional priorities, and what relationships are considered acceptable or not (De Botton, 2015). Love relationships, then, are not just personal matters but also cultural stories instantiated in society at large, reflecting the intricate interplay between personal desires and social norms.

Before the emergence of the Romanticism art and literature movement in the 17th and 18th centuries, most relationships tended to have a practical nature. The selection of a romantic partner was of little significance in the context of marriage, which was generally determined by economic and social considerations. Marriages were primarily arranged to ensure reproductive

success and secure family alliances, while love, sexuality, and individual gratification took a back seat (Odent, 2000).

For a significant period, romantic love played a minimal role in partner selection for relationships. Instead, cultural, ideological, social, political, and economic factors dominated as the primary determinants in forming couples (Azevedo, 1986). In his study on the history of marriages from the late 19th to the early 20th century, Azevedo (1986) found that such unions were largely driven by economic and social considerations, with the primary goal of preserving family traditions. Over time, this dynamic began to evolve, giving rise to romantic love as a more influential factor, albeit shaped by culturally imposed norms for establishing a life together (Costa, 1998). Today, love relationships are actively pursued in a wide range of settings—such as clubs, parks, bars, cafes, and other social environments—but increasingly through apps and social networks, reflecting the modern landscape of connection and intimacy.

Love relationships are characterized by ambivalence, wherein one side encompasses the yearning for a connection, while on the other, it lies contemplation of the potential impact of this permanence on an individual's life (Feres-Carneiro, 2010). Despite the evolution of a new feminine identity that emphasizes individuality, freedom, and independence, with women actively seeking fulfillment in the public sphere (Borges, 2013), some women still harbor a desire for romantic relationships following conventional patterns, it means there is a pursuit of marriage and family establishment to attain happiness (Santos, 2015).

Cultural and societal changes have led to profound alterations in the characteristics of intimate relationships, with non-conventional dynamics gaining greater visibility. These atypical associations frequently deviate from established power hierarchies and relational models, integrating various agreements customized to the desires of the participants (Feres-Carneiro, 2010). As a result, the modern relationship landscape features a diverse range of arrangements, such as same-sex partnerships, threesomes, open unions, polyamorous setups, along with casual and liberal connections, among others. In my study, the focus is placed strongly on women who are in heteronormative relationships. The research explores their desires for love relationships to progress to formal unions, thus contributing to the formation of what is often described as a "traditional" family or a "tradicional" relationship.

I further think it is important to emphasize that the concept of family is not inherently biological or natural; rather, it represents a historical and social form of organization among human beings (Narvaz & Koller, 2006). Consequently, the diverse configurations of

relationships are influenced by the cultural and social dynamics of each historical period, with marital structures adapting to the prevailing norms of time, space, and culture (Anton, 2012). Furthermore, social roles within families are delineated by gender, and these roles undergo modifications in response to evolving societal norms and geographical contexts (Lins, 2010).

So, in this manner, I delve into the distinct nature of the quest for a loving relationship for men and women. Romantic Love is often characterized as a sentiment associated with femininity, with intimacy being a particular concern for women (Warr, 2001). This perspective sees love as a domain frequently expressed through emotional facets, encompassing aspects such as gratification, affirmation, caregiving, and passion (Thagaard, 1997).

For women, being in a relationship is deeply intertwined with their sense of identity, playing a pivotal role in shaping their personality. The concept of the "device" is introduced by Zanello (2018) as a mechanism that influences how romantic relationships subjectify both men and women. According to this author, women are primarily driven by the "love device," which implies they often derive fulfillment and self-worth from their relationships, experiencing a sense of failure when single or divorced. In contrast, men predominantly seek to construct their identity through professional achievements, guided instead by the "effectiveness device." Unlike women, men typically do not view love relationships as central to their personal fulfillment. Supporting a similar perspective, Yakalı Çamoğlu (2019) explored how women's expectations of a partner intersect with men's aspirations to be perceived favorably by women, further highlighting the gendered dynamics of relational and identity constructs.

Love relationships occupy a central position in social life, their understanding grounded in social interactions, and serving as basis in which human choices unfold (Neves, 2007). The dynamics of loving relationships are shaped by historical and social factors, with the qualities sought in a partner and the values associated with such relationships contingent upon the temporal and spatial context in which individuals exist (Beal & Sternberg, 1995).

Engaging in romantic relationships frequently necessitates an interruption of the established routine, resulting in both symbolic and tangible reinforcements based on experiences influenced by available offerings and consumption opportunities (Ilouz, 1997). In contrast to early modern periods when literary creations significantly contributed to the propagation of romantic love, the duty of this dissemination has transitioned to the realm of advertising and the cultural industry in late modernity. Movies, television shows, novels, and

advertising all join in the public talk regarding romance, one that links romances to beliefs of self-fulfillment (Illouz, 1997).

Taking cinema as an illustrative example, a prevalent narrative, particularly in romantic comedies, revolves around a hero protagonist who completes the life of a seemingly clumsy girl. A classic case is the film "Pretty Woman" (1990), which follows a script reminiscent of a 1990s Cinderella tale. In this storyline, a millionaire falls in love with a call girl, and driven by love, he confronts various obstacles, ultimately rescuing her from a challenging life she had endured, culminating in the most idyllic 'happily ever after.' This trope is not unique to cinema but is also deeply ingrained in our Brazilian culture, especially evident in soap operas, particularly on *Rede Globo*. Here, the narrative of love takes center stage in individual lives, presenting itself as the goal, especially for women.

An intersection between the market and love, as elucidated by Illouz (1997), is observed in the public sphere where discourses on love relationship unfold. This takes shape through 'dating,' a social practice involving meetings between two individuals in public spaces like restaurants, cinemas, bars, and pubs. Following the initiation of an official relationship, couples engage in travel and outings, establishing various ritualistic behaviors (Illouz, 1997).

The pursuit of a romantic partner is filled with the characteristics of consumption, that is, imagery and experiences which shape the romantic identity of individuals. Thus, advertisements, consumer buying power, television programming, and beauty routines become vital components of such identities (Costa, 1998). In addition, emotions are linked with emotions and individual choices and continuously influenced by external social forces. Thus, romantic relationships are set within the constant interplay of private needs and public norms (Kessler, 2013).

In modern societies, the nexus between romantic love and the economy is nuanced, as a successful marriage is often viewed as a sound investment, and romantic relationships, along with dating activities, were traditionally overseen by the family (Illouz, 1997). Romantic love shifted towards being perceived as a mode of self-expression, evolving into the concept of dating, and becoming increasingly associated with leisure activities. Presently, the pursuit of love is characterized as a journey toward individual fulfillment, where outcomes, whether success or failure, hinge on the strategic actions and personal development embraced by the individual (Illouz, 1997; Kessler, 2013).

Love relationships are often pursued with a market-oriented logic, where individuals engage based on economic considerations, almost as if relationships were a transaction, and in professional settings, there's an expectation for individuals to approach their tasks with love and passion, giving rise to what can be termed as emotional capitalism (Illouz, 2011). Complementing this perspective, Perel (2007) observes that love relationships are network-based, a departure from the clarity of social roles our grandparents experienced some 60 years ago. Although there is now greater freedom, there is also increased negotiation involved in establishing a romantic relationship. This negotiation spans various aspects, including determining individual roles, career choices, preferred residence, family size, and even the nature of the relationship itself, whether it will be monogamous or not (Perel, 2007).

In this context, characterized by significant shifts in how we forge connections and the diverse array of relationship configurations, navigating the landscape of being in a relationship has become a strategic task, permeated by market influences, a new role has emerged – that of “the relationship coach”. Coaches are individuals available to instruct others; essentially, it's a process where one person aids another in personal development (McLennan, 2017). Hicks and McCracken (2011) define coaching as a collaborative effort between the coach and coachee to establish behavioral standards, with the goal of enhancing performance and building resilience to confront new challenges. Coaches bear the responsibility of offering guidance for the cultivation of personal skills, steering individuals, and furnishing constructive feedback (Heslin et al., 2006).

Nyman and Thach (2013) delineate distinct types of coaching: holistic coach, content coach, and managerial coach. As per the authors, holistic coaches provide guidance based on their own perspectives; content coaches specialize in specific areas, drawing from their success in those domains; and managerial coaches operate within corporate environments. Over the past few decades, coaching has experienced a significant ascent, finding application in elements of therapy and personal development (Ferreira, 2008).

Personal development coaches have become commonplace in the virtual environment. A myriad of courses is offered, ranging from personal finance, dog training, and packing tips for trips to weight loss strategies, elegance coaching, becoming a writer, writing scientific articles, organizing kitchen Tupperware, managing personal finances, investing in the stock market, mastering the art of dressing, cultivating femininity, and guidance on attracting and

maintaining relationships. The online landscape has made such coaching accessible, offering insights into a plethora of everyday issues.

All the services and content delivered by these professionals are crafted into info products. As per Mlabs (2021), info products are digital products centered around information and distributed online, available in various formats including eBooks, podcasts, video classes, and more. These products are typically acquired through an On-Demand model, bought and consumed entirely in a digital format. Info products find their space on specialized digital platforms like *Hotmart*, *Sympis*, and *Eduzz*, facilitating their purchase and consumption in the digital realm.

The empirical foundation of this research revolves around heterosexual women engaging with the content of relationship coaches and their info products. As outlined by the Brazilian Coaching Institute (2019), these professionals are characterized as development mentors specializing in matters of love. They impart knowledge on how to actively pursue, attract, and sustain meaningful emotional relationships. Their roles encompass devising strategies to locate an ideal partner, enhancing communication within established relationships, and fostering self-awareness and personal positioning (Ibc, 2019). In essence, relationship coaches catalyze a transformative process, guiding individuals toward adopting new behaviors and attitudes aimed at achieving success in their relationships.

The intertwining of the pursuit of a relationship with consumption is indeed possible, given that choices in love are rooted in cultural considerations, and the expression of love encompasses a diverse array of products, objects, places, and rituals (Pinheiro, 2006; Costa, 2005). The link between love relationship and consumption is manifested through the existence of a romantic economy, extending beyond sentimental gains to influence various realms of the consumer market. This involves a spectrum of monetary investments in relationships, including gifts, dinners, cards, travel, jewelry, clothing, and more (Kessler, 2013).

Ássimos et al. (2019) explored the role of consumption in the early stages of romantic relationships, emphasizing its pervasive influence as a cultural and social construct. The study highlighted how individual consumption behaviors are shaped by cultural norms and underscored the integration of consumption as a key factor in establishing and strengthening romantic bonds. Far from being a superficial element, consumption operates as a critical evaluative mechanism in the initial stages of relationships and as a tool for consolidating and envisioning their future trajectory. In line with the critique that consumption is a transversal and

indissociable phenomenon, the findings affirm that it is inherently present in and permeates all relationships and social events, underscoring its fundamental role in human interaction and connection (Ássimos et al., 2019).

The examination of the pursuit of romantic relationships through relationship coaches can be explored through the lens of Practice Theory. Within this theoretical perspective, social practice serves as the unit of analysis (Schatzki, 1996), defined as a collection of actions and behaviors influenced by individual dispositions and social structures (Shove et al., 2012). Applying this theory to the study of engagement with relationship coaches allows for an exploration of how daily practices, spanning the search for a partner to the implementation of communication strategies, are molded by the guidance and instructions imparted by these coaches.

Practice constitutes a behavioral pattern characterized by a series of actions performed by a physical and mental agent. This agent serves as the practitioner, embodying both the behaviors and methodologies inherent in the practice (Reckwitz, 2002). In essence, practice serves as a 'nexus of doing and saying' (Schatzki, 1996), comprehensible not only to those actively engaging in it but also to observers. Therefore, “a practice is thus a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described, and the world is understood” (Reckwitz, 2002, p.250).

Moreover, Practice Theory provides a framework for examining how social interactions, cultural expectations, and social norms shape individuals' choices and behaviors within the realm of searching for romantic relationships guided by coaches. This theoretical approach presents a comprehensive lens for understanding the intricate and interconnected dynamics involved in the quest for love and relationships under the guidance of a personal development coach.

The arguments outlined in this introduction underscore that the pursuit of a romantic relationship is deeply interwoven with evolving cultural and social dynamics. Moreover, significant variations exist in how love relationships are perceived and valued by men and women. This pursuit for a partner is intrinsically tied to multiple aspects of consumption, reflecting the broader interplay between individual desires and societal norms. As consumption serves as a powerful lens through which to understand social phenomena, this research is driven by the central question: **How do consumption practices shape women's pursuit of a**

romantic relationship? To address this inquiry in the next section, I articulate the objectives that guide this study.

1.1 Research Purposes: Where I want to go

1.1.1 The Heart of This Journey

The primary objective of this research is to delineate how consumption practices contribute to shaping women's pursuit of a romantic relationship.

1.1.2 Specific Goals: Unfolding the Purpose

1. Identify the symbolic significance, for women, of being in a romantic relationship.
2. Describe the elements of to the consumption practices of women seeking romantic relationships through the consumption of info products.
3. Highlight how the elements intertwine in shaping the consumption practices of women seeking romantic relationships through info products.
4. Analyze the dynamics involved in both the production and reproduction of women's consumption practices as they pursue romantic relationships.

1.2 Why Is This Research Essential?

The first aspect highlights the significance of investigating women's pursuit of love relationships within the context of consumption. This focus is particularly relevant as romantic pursuits are deeply intertwined with consumer practices, where material goods, services, and experiences often serve as vehicles for expressing emotions, building connections, and constructing identities. By examining these dynamics, the research seeks to uncover how consumption shapes and is shaped by the pursuit of romantic relationships, reflecting broader cultural and social patterns. This analysis provides a robust framework for understanding the interplay between consumption and societal norms, and Practice Theory offers insights into how everyday actions and routines contribute to the enactment of romantic and consumer practices.

Concerning the theme of love relationships, it is imperative to explore their development in our times, considering sociocultural and economic perspectives along with their implications. Justification for this thesis extends beyond the realm of romantic relationships and

consumption. It is grounded in addressing matters with widespread economic involvement, particularly from a market-oriented standpoint.

When I approach the justification from a marketing perspective, an insightful analysis involves the study of dating apps. According to Adjust (2021), a global marketing data analysis platform specializing in applications, the market is projected to generate over US\$8.4 billion in revenue by 2024. Another noteworthy statistic is that 48% of individuals aged between 18 and 29 report using an app or website to connect with others (Adjust, 2021).

The dating app market exhibited substantial growth, amassing a revenue of US\$5.61 billion in 2021, nearly reaching US\$3 billion on a global scale (Statista, 2022). This thriving market encompasses 18 million Brazilians, with 4.4 million users subscribing to premium plans on these apps, contributing to an anticipated US\$81 million in revenue for 2022 in the country (Statista, 2022). According to Match Group, the company that owns popular platforms like Tinder, OkCupid, and Parperfeito, Brazil stands as the second-largest market globally in the love industry, trailing only behind the United States. Notably, one of its products, ParPerfeito, garners 5 million new users annually (Gomes, 2018).

A report from Match Group unveiled that in the third quarter of 2020, the company recorded 10.8 million paying users on its dating apps globally, marking a 12% increase compared to the corresponding period in the prior year. Consequently, the company's overall revenue experienced an 18% surge, reaching \$640 million. Inner Circle, an alternative dating app, saw substantial growth in 2020, with a 99% increase in the average number of matches and a 116% surge in messages sent (Del Carmen, 2021).

The dating app Tinder publishes an annual report titled "Tinder's Year in Swipe" (2022), which delves into user behavior on the platform. This analysis encompasses user preferences regarding ideal dates, favored locations, dressing etiquettes, and behavior during flirtatious interactions. This social practice, the pursuit of love, involves a spectrum of products, objects, and services. Consequently, we observe that consumption plays a pivotal role in the realms of love relationships, providing cultural products that symbolize ideals and affectionate sentiments. It also offers context and ideas aimed at realizing a meaningful romantic relationship.

Some studies within the realm of consumption, particularly focused on love and affective relationships, have been conducted. Minina, Masè, and Smith (2022) delved into

online dating services to unravel how market logic transforms human relationships. Ássimos et al. (2019) explored the dynamics of constructing romantic relationships within the framework of consumption. In another study, Ássimos et al. (2017) scrutinized the reflection of loving relationships and the role of material goods in moments of gift exchange between couples. The overarching objective of this research is to discern the interconnection between the pursuit of a loving relationship and the theme of consumption, unraveling the intricate ways in which these two aspects are intertwined in contemporary society.

Consumption, being a social phenomenon, has been explored by certain authors through the lens of Practice Theory (Warde, 2005; Shove et al., 2012). Practice Theory seeks to comprehend how practices contribute to shaping society (Halkier et al., 2011). This perspective acknowledges that the activities associated with consumption extend beyond the individual sphere, involving the interconnectedness of material elements, skills, and meanings (Shove et al., 2012). Consequently, the formation of romantic relationships is perceived as a social phenomenon. In this context, studying it from the perspective of Practice Theory is instrumental in gaining a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics involved (Lodi, 2018). This approach facilitates an exploration of the social fabric woven through the practices associated with the pursuit and maintenance of romantic relationships.

Numerous studies have been conducted from the perspective of Practice Theory, spanning diverse and varied themes. Examples include research on sustainable consumption practices and fashion by Basaglia (2022), an exploration of smartphone use and consumption practices among people with disabilities by Melo (2022), an investigation into cultural environments and water consumption practices in Brazilian and English homes by Isboli (2019), a study on food consumption practices and obesity by Lodi et al. (2020), an examination of food consumption practices of women and their bodies by Sauerbronn et al. (2019), and an analysis of electrical energy consumption by Castro and Silva (2022). Another study by Henrique and Suarez (2021) analyzes nostalgia in marketing, distinguishing between sentimentalist and cultural approaches, while proposing the use of Practice Theories to broaden the understanding of the phenomenon. It highlights the evolution of the concept and how consumption shapes and is shaped by nostalgia. In this context, delving into practices as a perspective on the formation of relationships can be a valuable avenue of investigation, contributing to the broader understanding of the Practice Theory. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the social dynamics inherent in the practices associated with the development and maintenance of relationships.

2. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS: FUNDAMENTALS AND DEFINITIONS

Every day, it's a gettin' closer
Goin' faster than a roller coaster..."

Every day - Buddy Holly

2.1 Practice Theory

It is crucial to establish that the act of consumption goes beyond a mere process of communication (Campbell, 2018; Falk & Campbell, 1997). Furthermore, challenging the suitability of the voluntaristic and reflexive individual agency model is essential. It involves scrutinizing the concepts of habit and routine, delving into instances where consumption becomes routinized, and identifying implications for both consumer behavior and the sociological research agenda (Ilmonen, 2001).

Consumer research has its interest in practice theories in the exploration of consumption, yet conceptual blind spots remain in understanding the interplay between consumption and practices (Hartmann, 2013). Therefore, delving into the study of consumption through the lens of Practice Theory might serve as a robust theoretical framework capable of shedding light on the intricate relationship between consumption and a specific phenomenon.

Numerous perspectives contribute to the exploration of the Theory of Practice (Reckwitz, 2002). This theory isn't singular; instead, it comprises a collection of theoretical approaches from diverse authors, each offering their unique interpretation of the phenomenon (Isboli, 2019). Perhaps it would be better to call them "Theories of Practice". The Theory of Practice, as articulated by Shove et al. (2012), emphasizes that everyday activities can serve as a foundational launchpad for intricate investigations. To Ward (2005), consumption transcends mere economic transactions; it's interwoven with symbolic meanings attributed to goods (Warde, 2005). Phenomena observed through the lens of the Theory of Practice are embedded in individuals' routine behaviors rather than extraordinary events, says Shove et al. (2012). In the next section, I will discuss shortly about Practice Theory history.

2.1.1 A Concise History of Practice Theory

In pursuit of understanding consumption, the Theory of Practice places the concept of practice at its core. It scrutinizes the intricate web of social relationships, routines, and elements that shape, sustain, transform, and fade by human behaviors (Cetina et al., 2005). The field of the

Practice Theory was developed in two phases, the first comprises studies from the 1970s onwards, with Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Marshall Sahlins, and Michel Foucault, and the second, the so-called “the practice turn”, with studies by Schatzki, Knorr Cetina and Von Savigny (Warde, 2016). The first one focuses on explaining the “action” to complement the understanding of systems and structures. The second one, the work sought to reformulate the focus on practices as a unit of analysis for the development of more complex studies in the analysis of social practices.

Embarking on an exploration of Practice Theory, Foucault proposed that the emergence of the subject hinges on techniques conceived as conscious and deliberate practices. Here, individuals adhere to rules of conduct, actively reshaping and adapting their actions (Foucault, 1987). This transformative process is particularly mediated through discourse, which functions not merely as a nexus of symbols but rather as practices that systematically construct the subjects they speak of. These practices shape relationships between objects, styles, themes, theories, and concepts (Foucault, 1979).

Contrarily, Giddens (1984) shifts the focus to the microsociological level, highlighting individual choices and the role of individual interpretation in reproducing social structures. Giddens posits that the crux lies not only in the "how" of doing but fundamentally in the act of human doing itself. Understanding the role of the agent and the nuanced interpretation of the social environment are paramount in Giddens' framework (Giddens, 1984).

Within the realm of Practice Theory, Bourdieu (1983) posits that the social landscape can be comprehended through three distinct theoretical lenses: phenomenological, objectivist, and praxeological knowledge. However, Bourdieu staunchly advocates for the praxeological approach due to its perceived advantages over the other two paradigms. Bourdieu dismisses phenomenology, deeming it inadequate as it rests upon the initial subjective experiences of the social realm. Similarly, he critiques objectivism, asserting that this approach disregards the experiential component known as "doxic experience." Instead, Bourdieu champions praxeology for its potential to forge a dialectical interplay between phenomenology and objectivism, thereby offering a more comprehensive and dynamic understanding of the social world.

Therefore, for Bourdieu, praxiological knowledge encompasses the set of objective relationships and the dialectical relationships between structures and structured factors. Given this, Bourdieu (1983) develops the Theory of Practice, as a method of knowledge of the social world, where the foundation is the concept of habitus. Habitus, then, is the set of practices that are assimilated based on the structure, which means that the practices of each agent depend on

its position in the structure. These practices are not understood individually nor by the external structure, but each factor is important for determining the habitus (Jenkins, 2014).

In the view of Bourdieu (1983), practices serve as the driving forces behind actions, acquired from external sources. They manifest themselves as accomplished facts, deeply embedded within their enactment. Habitus, on the other hand, is encapsulated within practices, and these practices form the foundational elements underpinning the categories explored within Bourdieu's sociological framework: habitus, various forms of capital (economic, cultural, social, symbolic), social classes, and fields. Comprehension of the social world becomes feasible through the lens of practices, providing a window into the intricate dynamics that shape society.

Marshall Sahlins' (1990) approach underscores the intrinsic connection of events, individuals, and symbolism to a historical backdrop, highlighting the importance of incorporating this dimension into the analysis of social theories. In this framework, historical events unfold within a cultural sphere, attributing symbolic meanings to history that subsequently shape human actions. Departing from the notion of a system impervious to events, Sahlins suggests that the prevailing culture becomes discernible through the actions of historical subjects, with the structure revealing itself as an event, thereby becoming susceptible to contingencies. Everyday life emerges as the backdrop where culture is not just encountered but actively lived (Sahlins, 1990).

Another significant contribution to the Theory of Practice originates from Certeau (2014). This author delves into the exploration of everyday life, proposing a framework structured around three distinct levels of analysis: action, practices, and the modes of enacting daily existence. Certeau (2014) contends that understanding everyday life necessitates a focus on the production of individuals and the interactions stemming from this production.

Certeau's argument posits that the discussion surrounding everyday life should revolve around the actions and interactions of individuals, all of which are facilitated through practices. In his view, practices can be defined as the methodologies through which actions are carried out. These methodologies, often referred to as "ways of doing," encapsulate the myriad practices through which individuals organize, reorganize, and appropriate spaces. In doing so, they infuse new significance into prevailing structures and models (Certeau, 2014). When delving into the historical aspects of the Theory of Practice, it becomes imperative to acknowledge the work of Schatzki (1996), a significant contributor to this field. His work

notably encompasses the classification of social practices, marking a pivotal advancement in the understanding of this theory.

Schatzki's profound contribution involves the categorization of practices into distinct forms. First, he identifies practices as coordinated entities intertwined with performance. Within practices, there exists both the tangible action itself and the corresponding verbal representations, culminating in a harmoniously coordinated set (Schatzki, 1996). Furthermore, practices are perpetually upheld and rejuvenated through their consistent enactment (Schatzki, 1996). This underscores their dual nature, as practices function as coordinated entities while concurrently necessitating performance for their sustenance (Warde, 2005).

Schatzki's second classification pertains to the intrinsic nature of practices, distinguishing between "dispersed practices" and "integrative practices." Dispersed practices pertain to the realm of knowing how to accomplish specific tasks, often requiring only explanatory information. In contrast, integrative practices are notably more intricate, constituting distinctive domains within the social fabric (Schatzki, 1996). In essence, Schatzki's contributions resonate deeply in shaping the discourse surrounding social practices, offering a nuanced framework that aids in comprehending the multifaceted nature of human behavior within various contexts.

Cetina, Schatzki, and Von Savigny, contributors to "The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory" (2005), delve into profound philosophical explorations regarding the centrality of practice and practices in human activities. This collaborative work gathers diverse scholars, presenting original essays and critiques that aim to position Practice Theory as a foundational element within sociological and philosophical studies. With its interdisciplinary nature, the Theory of Practice has spurred significant contributions from scholars addressing contemporary issues like embodiment, rationality, language, subjectivity, human action, and the organization and perpetuation of human life. While acknowledging the absence of a unified theory, the authors assert the existence of a distinct and comprehensive field known as the Theory of Practice (Cetina et al., 2005). Figure 1 summarizes this path.

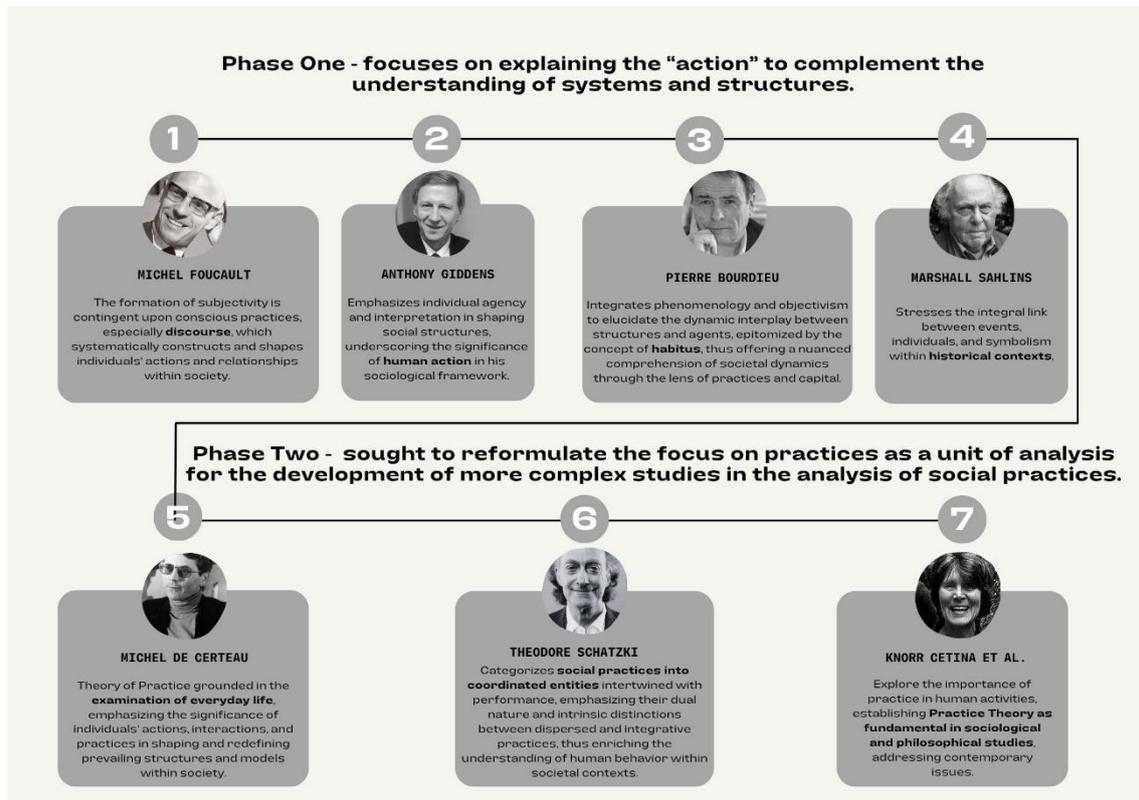


Figure 1– Concise History of Practice Theory

Source: Created by authors.

Practice Theory is a concept that encompasses several theoretical approaches in various disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and psychology. It focuses on comprehending the intricate interplay between human actions, social and cultural contexts, and the structures that mold these actions. In essence, Practice Theory aims to analyze how individuals' everyday activities are both influenced by and contribute to the social and cultural frameworks in which they are situated. Practice Theory also underscores the significance of examining human behavior within its social and cultural milieu, acknowledging that individual and collective practices are pivotal in shaping and perpetuating human societies and cultures.

2.1.2 The Theory of Practice in Consumption Studies

Despite the increasing body of empirical research in the late 20th century, social scientists made minimal progress toward developing a satisfactory overarching or comprehensive theory of consumption. Nonetheless, a recent concerted effort has been undertaken to leverage theories of practice as a potential means of reorienting and synthesizing perspectives in this domain (Warde et al., 2017).

According to Halkier et al. (2011, p.4), Alan Warde's article *Consumption and Theories of Practice*, published in the *Journal of Consumer Culture* in 2005, may be regarded as "the first 'programmable' piece offering an examination of the potential of practice theoretical perspectives for analyses of consumption". Warde (2015) suggests the act of consumption is intricately woven into various practices, making it a distinct moment within those activities. It is situated within the broader context of practices, functioning as a pivotal element during specific instances.

Apart from this integration, there are also the objects that traverse these practices (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove and Pantzar, 2005). This perspective not only implies that practices necessitate consumption but also emphasizes the active engagement of individuals in consuming these practices. Consequently, from this viewpoint, consumption transforms into an integral component of the overall practice itself (Warde, 2005).

When studying consumption through the lens of Practice Theory, entails a profound analysis of the intricate interactions between individual and collective consumption behaviors, the social and cultural contexts within which they transpire, and the structural influences on these practices. In the following sections, I will delve into the works of prominent researchers who employ the Theory of Practice as a framework for understanding consumption: Andrea Reckwitz (2002), Alan Warde (2005), and Elizabeth Shove et al. (2012).

The selection of Andreas Reckwitz, Alan Warde, and Elizabeth Shove to discuss consumption practices is justified by the complementarity and comprehensiveness of their approaches within Practice Theory. Reckwitz (2002, 2007, 2023) is one of the leading theorists in this field, offering a culturalist perspective that defines practices as socially shared patterns composed of elements such as body, discourse, knowledge, mind, objects, and structure. His perspective allows for an understanding of consumption not merely as an individual choice but as a phenomenon rooted in routines, tacit knowledge, and networks of artifacts. Warde (2005, 2014) deepens this analysis by linking Practice Theory to consumption, challenging the notion of the sovereign consumer and emphasizing the relevance of habits, dispositions, and materiality in everyday consumption. His approach helps to understand consumption as a socially structured process shaped by recurring practices, which are not limited to individual decisions but are influenced by cultural and historical contexts. Finally, Shove et al. (2012) expand this perspective by proposing an analytical model based on three fundamental elements of practices: materials, competencies, and meanings. Their approach highlights the role of materiality and infrastructure in the reproduction and transformation of consumption practices,

offering a more dynamic framework for understanding changes in consumer behavior over time. Thus, the combination of these three approaches enables a broad and integrated analysis of consumption as a social phenomenon, capturing both its structuring and its transformation within social and cultural dynamics.

2.1.3 The Theory of Practice by Andrea Reckwitz

The term "Practice Theory" encompasses various perspectives within late twentieth-century social and cultural theory that underscore the routine and performative nature of human action, emphasizing its reliance on implicit understanding and tacit knowledge. Additionally, these approaches accentuate the tangible aspects of action and culture, asserting their connection to embodiment and networks of artifacts (Reckwitz, 2007).

From a sociological standpoint and serving as a social-theoretical heuristic for empirical analyses, Reckwitz and Rosa (2023) defend that the theory of social practices is perceived as offering a comprehensive yet focused perspective on the social world. From the author's standpoint, it presents highly promising avenues for research across the entire spectrum of social and cultural sciences, not limited to sociology alone.

It is worth noting that the appeal of Practice Theory lies in its nature as a social-theoretical tool rather than a rigid theoretical system. This characteristic endows it with the advantages typical of "tool theories," providing flexibility in adjusting guiding concepts, seamlessly integrating with other theoretical frameworks, and fostering dynamic engagements with new objects and concepts in unexpected and innovative ways (Reckwitz & Rosa, 2023).

Additionally, as per Reckwitz (2002) even though the concept of a theory of practice lacks systematic categorization, it shouldn't be dismissed or relegated. The Theory of Practice aligns itself with cultural theory, as cultural theories engage with the world by exploring questions and employing symbolic structures of meaning. To provide some organization or clarification of Practice Theory, Reckwitz (2002) draws on theoretical concepts from the models of *homo economicus* and *sociologicus*. Specifically, he incorporates culturalist mentalism, textualism, and intersubjectivism into his framework.

Reckwitz (2002) posits that "*homo economicus*" elucidates actions driven by individual purposes and interests, culminating in a social order shaped by the amalgamation of these personal motivations. In contrast, "*homo sociologicus*" elucidates actions through the lens of collective norms and values, with social order anchored in a normative consensus. Presently, practice-theoretical frameworks exert a considerable influence on a diverse array of empirical

analyses within sociology and cultural studies. These analyses span topics ranging from gender studies to organizational and science studies, examining social structures through the lens of actively "doing" culture, encompassing areas such as organization, gender, and individual subjects (Reckwitz, 2007).

Cultural theories, in their exploration, emphasize the innovation inherent in explaining actions by reconstructing the symbolic structures of knowledge that govern agents' interpretations of the world. In this nuanced perspective, social order transcends the mere fulfillment of mutual normative expectations; rather, it is an integral component of collective cognitive and symbolic structures, constituting a "shared knowledge" that molds the socially collective approach to attributing meaning to the world (Reckwitz, 2002).

The term "practice" in its singular form denotes a description of individual human actions, whereas its plural counterpart, "practices," is employed within the Theory of Practice to refer to routine behaviors consisting of interconnected elements. These encompass various aspects, including forms of physical and mental activities, the utilization of objects, a background knowledge manifested through comprehension, know-how, emotional states, and motivational understanding (Reckwitz, 2002). Therefore, an individual is not only an agent in terms of bodily and mental activities but also a repository of knowledge, communication, and desires. This same individual engages in the reproduction of multiple practices, which may not necessarily be coordinated (Reckwitz, 2002).

In contrast to other social theories that rely on discourses and social interactions as the foundation for research, the Practice Theory, as proposed by Reckwitz (2002), places practice at the core of its analytical framework. Practice is characterized as routine behavior, comprising interconnected elements such as bodily activities, mental activities, objects, knowledge, know-how, emotions, and motivation (Reckwitz, 2002). A comprehensive explanation of these elements is provided in Table 1.

Summarizing Reckwitz's argument, practice is essentially an everyday routine encompassing bodily movements, object manipulation, subject treatment, thing description, and world understanding. Furthermore, practice serves as a template that can be realized through various distinct and often singular actions, reinforcing the essence of the practice. For instance, a particular type of consumption can be conveyed through numerous individual acts of consumption.

Table 1 - Practice's Components – Reckwitz (2002)

Practice Components - Reckwitz (2005)

Agent	Body	Discourse	Knowledge	Mind	Things	Strutecture
Agents are the carriers of practice, not merely passive and uncritical adherents to norms. They comprehend the world and their own identities, utilizing knowledge and motivation in alignment with specific practices.	Practices entail regular bodily activities that are interconnected collections of behavioral acts, encompassing various body movements.	Discourse encompasses diverse forms through which the world is meaningfully constructed, whether in language or other sign systems.	It encompasses ways of understanding, knowing how to do things, and ways of desiring and feeling that are intertwined within a practice.	Social practices encompass both sets of habitual bodily performances and simultaneous sets of mental activities.	Engaging in a practice often involves utilizing specific items in a particular manner.	Structure is a characteristic inherent in the habitual nature of action.

Source: Adapted from Reckwitz (2002)

2.1.4 The Theory of Practice by Alan Warde

To begin, Warde (2014) articulates the concept of theory, contending that a theory comprises a set of propositions, whether discursive or algebraic, aimed at explaining why or how certain situations, processes, events, or states of affairs occur. In doing so, the theory identifies which elements warrant analysis and whose properties and dispositions must be described. The relationships posited by the theory can be classificatory, associative, or causal.

Essentially, theories simplify the complexity of reality, providing explanations for the operation of specific phenomena. Various disciplines may differ in their pursuit of more concise or reductive theories. Consequently, a theory accentuates specific features of the world at the expense of others, and within a discipline, theories distinguish themselves based on the emphasis placed on different aspects (Warde, 2014).

In elucidating the genesis and significance of the Theory of Practice, Warde (2014) delves into the "cultural turn" that unfolded in the realms of human and social sciences during the 1970s. This paradigm shift marked a departure from the economistic approach, where various social aspects, including consumption, were scrutinized solely through a rational market lens. This shift not only contested purely economic interpretations but also confronted earlier moral critiques of consumer behavior. Mass-produced goods, far from merely providing

comfort and entertainment, extended the cultural experience to a broader audience, offering avenues for self-development and personal expression.

According to Warde (2014), the emergence of theories of practice serves to expand the analytical scope provided by cultural theories, particularly within the realm of consumption. Introducing practices into this analysis offers a perspective that underscores the idea that consumption is influenced by factors extending beyond individual choices. Such influences remain obscured when scrutinized solely through the lens of cultural studies (Warde, 2014).

Warde (2014) further elucidates that, in contrast to the notion of the sovereign consumer, theories of practice emphasize the significance of routine over individual actions, the flow and sequence of behaviors rather than isolated acts, the role of dispositions over decisions, and the impact of practical consciousness in contrast to deliberate thought. In response to cultural shifts, the focus shifts towards effective practices as opposed to mere contemplation, material considerations over symbolic ones, and embodied practical competence rather than expressive virtuosity in deliberately shaping one's image.

The agent plays a crucial role in practices, serving as their carriers and endowed with the power of agency. This entails understanding the world and oneself, utilizing both know-how and knowledge to produce and reproduce various practices (Warde, 2005). Furthermore, Warde (2005) asserts that numerous social practices exist, with each agent engaging in a multiplicity of these practices. Consequently, the individual becomes the sole conduit for practices, encompassing both bodily and mental routines. According to Warde (2005), the key elements of practices include understandings, engagements, procedures, and consumption items, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 Practice’s Components – Warde (2005)

Practice Components - Warde (2005)			
Understandings	Engagements	Procedures	Consumption itens
Mental aspect of practices, involving the comprehension and interpretation of the world.	Active participation and involvement of individuals in various social practices.	Specific methods, routines, or actions undertaken within a practice.	Material aspects of practices, such as the goods or services consumed within a given social practice.

Source: Adapted from Warde (2005)

An additional crucial concern within practice-theoretical perspectives revolves around the interrelation of practices. Given the proposition that the social world is essentially constituted by practices, comprehending their interactions becomes paramount. The degree of

autonomy exercised by each practice becomes a focal point for consideration. Some practices exhibit a substantial reliance on the organization of others, effectively operating in a subordinate capacity or displaying a high level of interdependence within broader configurations or fields, such as economic, material, temporal, or spatial contexts. (Warde et al, 2017).

Therefore, according to Warde (2014), delving into the Theory of Practice involves addressing fundamental questions like "Why do people engage in particular behaviors?" and "How do they go about performing actions in specific ways?" Encouraging insights stem from overarching metatheoretical considerations, encompassing the recognition of concepts like habit and routine, the acknowledgment of the significance of the local context or environment in shaping behavior, and the realization of the communal and social aspects inherent in practices, as underscored by Warde (2014).

2.1.5 The Theory of Practice by Shove et al.

Practices are situated between human subjects and social structure, not to be construed merely as a collection of individual actions but fundamentally as modes of social relations involving mutual actions. Consequently, they exert an influence on consumption patterns and the corresponding institutions and infrastructures (Shove et al., 2012). Moreover, as society undergoes constant change, Practice Theory serves as a foundation for comprehending these transformations (Shove et al., 2012). Practices are integral elements of consumption owing to their exploratory nature and their role in shaping desires, knowledge, and judgments.

Shove et al. (2012) contend that practices are molded by the interplay of three key elements: materials (objects and their technical specifications), competencies (skills and techniques), and meanings (symbolic factors), explained in Table 3. These routine activities are intricately linked through the integration of materials, competencies, and meanings, extending beyond the individual sphere (Shove et al., 2012).

Table 3 -Practice’s Components – Shove et.al, (2012)

Practice Components - Shove et al (2012)		
Competences	Meaning	Materials
Various types of comprehension, expertise, practical knowledge, and regulations.	The social and symbolic significance of engagement at any given moment.	Items, structures, implements, hardware, and the human body itself.

Source: Adapted from Shove et al (2012)

Things extend beyond mere objects, encompassing technologies and the substances from which objects are constructed (Shove et al., 2012). Essentially, they involve the tangible dimensions of a practice, including tools and bodily components (Fuentes & Svingstedt, 2017). Competence involves the skills, knowledge, and techniques essential for the execution of a practice (Shove et al., 2012). The elements of meaning comprise the symbolic significances that constitute the mental aspects, emotions, and motivational knowledge associated with practices (Fuentes & Svingstedt, 2017).

Explores the interconnection between objects and daily routines, highlighting how the form of various items reshapes the significance of routines and the practical functions they fulfill within the broader context of social life. The primary objective is to demonstrate the profound involvement of objects in the life cycle of practices within the realm of everyday life (Shove et al., 2007).

The notion that items are acquired and employed within the framework of social practices carries substantial implications for theories concerning consumption and innovation. Merely showcasing the influence, mediation, and constraints of goods by existing culture and conventions, as previously articulated, is inadequate from this standpoint. Inverting the problem, the added challenge is to expound on the mechanisms driving changes in practices and the consequent impacts on the consumption patterns they encompass (Shove & Pantazar, 2005).

To underscore the material aspects of daily practices, Shove et al. (2007) researched household appliances such as dishwashers, microwaves, and refrigerators. These appliances, often overlooked in daily life, were found to imbue new meaning into everyday experiences. The authors explored how individuals attend to their clothing, the products they use, and even the choices they make when purchasing and wearing items. In doing so, they uncovered the implicit factors influencing the emergence, persistence, and dissolution of patterns in everyday life (Shove et al., 2007).

Practices exhibit a dynamic cycle encompassing their emergence, existence, and decline, where crucial connections among key elements play a fundamental role in this process (Shove, et al., 2012). These elements, comprising materials, skills, and meanings, constitute the building blocks of social practices. The integration of these elements takes place during the execution of practices, where connections are established and dissolved, contributing to the initiation, sustenance, and ultimately, cessation of these practices (Shove et al., 2012).

The human actor assumes a pivotal role as an integrating force in this context, as asserted by Shove et al. (2012). When practitioners engage actively, they concurrently replicate the practices in which they are involved and the fundamental elements constituting those practices. By scrutinizing the trajectories of these elements and the establishment and dissolution of connections among them, we can grasp and analyze the dynamics of change and stability without necessarily prioritizing either agency or structure (Shove et al., 2012).

Shove et al. (2012) assert that a comprehensive understanding of practices necessitates an examination of the concurrent interaction among the three constituent elements: materials, meanings, and skills. Analyzing the histories of practices must thus consider the convergence of these elements, acknowledging their interdependence in the formation and evolution of practices over time. Moreover, when delving into the distribution of practices within and between societies, it becomes imperative to consider the circulation and persistence of fundamental elements: materials, meanings, and forms of competence. Therefore, studying social practices and comprehending how these components move and endure is crucial for gaining a comprehensive insight into how practices are shaped, disseminated, and maintained in diverse social contexts.

2.1.6 Comparative Insights: Unraveling the Threads of Practice Theory in Reckwitz, Shove, and Warde.

The Theories of Practice, as discussed above and developed by Reckwitz (2002; 2007; 2023), Warde (2005; 2014), and Shove et al. (2012), **share a common focus on comprehending the everyday activities of individuals within a broader social context, using practices as the unit of analysis.** However, each theory brings its unique perspective to the subject, emphasizing certain distinctions in their approaches. Table 4 encapsulates both the commonalities and distinctions among the practice theories discussed.

Table 4 - Comparative Analysis of Practice Theories

Fous of Theory	Symbolic structures of knowledge influencing actions	Interconnected dynamics of understanding, engagements, procedures, and consumption items in the formation of social practices.	Dynamics of change and stability within practices, emphasizing the relationships among materials, meanings, and skills.	Consumption Practices
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<p>Cultural Perspective</p>	<p>Incorporates concepts from cultural theories and culturalist mentalism. Reckwitz (2002) emphasizes the role of symbolic structures in shaping and interpreting actions through cultural knowledge.</p>	<p>Integrates cultural theories with a socioontological standpoint. Warde (2005, 2014) emphasizes the dynamic interaction between different elements of practice, including cultural aspects.</p>	<p>Examines the interplay of materials, competencies, and meanings, extending beyond cultural aspects. Shove et al. (2012) highlight the materiality of consumption practices.</p>	<p>Reckwitz (2002) views consumption as shaped by cultural symbols and cognitive structures, emphasizing shared meanings and knowledge. Warde (2005, 2014) analyzes consumption through habitual behaviors and social engagement, while Shove et al. (2012) highlight how objects, skills, and meanings drive consumption changes over time.</p>
<p>Role of Agent</p>	<p>Recognizes the role of individuals with an emphasis on shared cultural representations. Reckwitz (2002) argues that individuals act within collectively established symbolic and cognitive structures.</p>	<p>Places significant emphasis on the individual's role, highlighting agency and engagement in practices. Warde (2005, 2014) sees individuals as active carriers who reproduce and transform practices.</p>	<p>Recognizes the role of individuals but may not prioritize it as heavily. Shove et al. (2012) introduce a unique perspective on the material aspects of practices, considering objects and infrastructures as essential components.</p>	<p>Consumption is seen as a practice reproduced through collective symbolic structures (Reckwitz, 2002), habitual actions influenced by engagements (Warde, 2005, 2014), and dynamic material interactions (Shove et al., 2012).</p>

<p>Consideration of Material Elements</p>	<p>Primarily focuses on the symbolic and cultural dimensions. Reckwitz (2002) explores how knowledge, emotions, and motivations are embedded in cultural structures.</p>	<p>Considers the dynamic interconnection of materials, competencies, and meanings. Warde (2005, 2014) acknowledges material aspects but focuses on their integration into broader practices.</p>	<p>Examines the material aspects of practices, including objects and technologies. Shove et al. (2012) emphasize how materials shape and sustain consumption practices over time.</p>	<p>Reckwitz (2002) highlights the symbolic meanings of consumption, Warde (2005, 2014) sees consumption as structured through habitual interactions with materials, and Shove et al. (2012) emphasize the transformative power of material elements in shaping consumption behaviors.</p>
<p>Approach to Change and Stability</p>	<p>Addresses these aspects but may not emphasize them as prominently. Reckwitz (2002) discusses how social orders are maintained through shared symbolic knowledge but does not focus extensively on transformation.</p>	<p>Touches on these aspects but may not emphasize them as prominently. Warde (2005, 2014) acknowledges the evolution of practices but does not provide a specific model for change.</p>	<p>Explicitly addresses the dynamics of change and stability within practices. Shove et al. (2012) analyze how materials, meanings, and competencies interact over time to create, sustain, or dissolve practices.</p>	<p>Reckwitz (2002) discusses how symbolic meanings shape stable consumption practices, Warde (2005, 2014) considers change through evolving social habits, and Shove et al. (2012) focus on the transformation of consumption practices through shifting material and social elements.</p>

Source: Created by author

Reckwitz (2002), in conceptualizing the theory of practice, underscores the significance of symbolic structures of knowledge in shaping and interpreting actions. The emphasis lies on the impact of shared cultural representations on the execution and comprehension of practices. In contrast, Warde (2005, 2014) directs his approach towards the dynamic interconnection of

elements such as understanding, engagement, procedures, and consumption items in the formation of social practices. His theory accentuates the active role of agents in the ongoing reproduction and transformation of practices over time. Shove, et al. (2012), concentrate on understanding the dynamics of change and stability within practices. They emphasize the significance of the relationships among materials, meanings, and skills in the emergence, persistence, and dissolution of practices, placing special emphasis on the influence of human actors in this process.

Therefore, Reckwitz (2002) emphasizes symbolic structures, Warde (2005, 2014) concentrates on the interconnected dynamics of constituent elements and agents, while Shove et al. (2012) analyzes the temporal dynamics of practices. All these theories converge towards a profound understanding of the complexities of human activities within social contexts. Each perspective contributes to the understanding of practice theories, enriching the field with diverse and complementary approaches.

The three theoretical foundations differ as well as per a cultural perspective. Reckwitz (2002) incorporates concepts from cultural theories and culturalist mentalism. In contrast, Warde (2005) integrates cultural theories but introduces a socioontological standpoint. Shove et al (2012). approach extends beyond cultural aspects to examine the interplay of materials, competencies, and meanings.

The role of the agent in practice is a recurring theme. Warde (2005) places significant emphasis on the individual's role, highlighting the power of agency and engagement in multiple practices. Reckwitz (2002) and Shove et al. (2012) also recognize the role of individuals but may not prioritize it as heavily. Shove et al. (2012) introduce a unique perspective by delving into the material aspects of practices, considering objects and technologies as integral components. In contrast, Reckwitz (2002) and Warde (2014) primarily focus on the symbolic and cultural dimensions.

Lastly, the approach to change and stability within practices is explicitly addressed by Shove et al. (2012), while Reckwitz (2002) and Warde (2014) touch on these aspects but not emphasize them as prominently. These three practice theories share fundamental principles in understanding practices and consumption, yet the nuances in their theoretical foundations, perspectives on agency, consideration of material elements, and approaches to change and stability contribute to a rich and diverse landscape within the broader framework of Practice Theory.

3. THE ROAD TO DISCOVERIES

*“Every breath you take
And every move you make
Every bond you break
Every step you take
I'll be watching you...”*

Every Breath You Take - The Police

This section I seek to clarify how the general objective and specific objectives were achieved. Therefore, the methodological procedures that I used in this research are presented here. Faria (2012) and Triviños (1995) argue about the importance of epistemological vigilance to guarantee research that demonstrates coherence between the object studied and the expected results, that is, any scientific research requires rigor and a detailed methodology for its validation.

Epistemological coherence, therefore, serves as the "[...] sole assurance for researchers that excursions into other theories can be conducted with significance" (Faria, 2012, p. 6). In other words, these journeys extend beyond mere contemplation and hold validity within the realm of science. Hence, it becomes exceedingly vital to delineate the chosen methodological procedures, thereby ensuring a comprehensive comprehension of the research subject.

Various philosophical currents exist for analyzing the perception of reality, each contributing distinctively to the comprehension of phenomena. One such current is the paradigm framework developed by Burrell and Morgan (1979), encompassing four paradigms: interpretivist, functionalist, radical structuralist, and radical humanist (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Each paradigm is underpinned by theoretical assumptions regarding science, humanity, society, and the comprehension of the world. This study aligns with the interpretivist paradigm, as it seeks to comprehend the consumption practices of women seeking relationships through an exploration of how competencies and shared meanings interplay in nurturing the pursuit of romantic relationships.

The interpretivist paradigm assumes that individuals' reality is shaped by their subjective experiences (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In this case, it is possible to describe and interpret social phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Neuman (2014) argues that from the perspective of this paradigm, it is possible to understand in detail the verbal and non-verbal communication of research participants and their interaction with the context in which they are inserted, as well as the different meanings traced by individuals.

3.1 Essence of the Research

The nature of my thesis is something like this: aligned with the interpretivist perspective in Marketing, this study assumes a qualitative approach (Tadajewski, 2006). Qualitative research enables the exploration of phenomena by capturing and observing subjects while interpreting collected data (Ribeiro, 2000). By adopting this approach, the study follows the perspective that qualitative methodology allows researchers to capture participants' perspectives and articulate their accounts in a profound manner to comprehend their experiences with the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Moreover, this research endeavors to provide an enhanced depiction and understanding of participants' behaviors, worldviews, opinions, and values.

According to the research problem and objectives, this study's typology aligns with a descriptive approach from a cross-sectional standpoint (Triviños, 1995; Vieira, 2004). Consequently, practices are selected as the primary unit of analysis (Shove et al., 2012; Warde, 2005). These distinctive attributes—qualitative and descriptive research coupled with practices as the analytical focal point—will facilitate the exploration of how the practices of women in pursuit of romantic relationships influence consumption behaviors and subsequently impact the lives of these women.

3.2 Research Plan

This research employs a strategic approach, underpinned by the rationale for selecting three complementary data collection methods: document analysis, participant observation, and in-depth interviews. These techniques were thoughtfully chosen to align with the research problem and objectives, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of women's evolving consumption practices in their pursuit of romantic relationships. This methodology ensures a richer and more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under study.

To begin, document analysis was employed to examine online courses and eBooks, aiming to uncover theoretical and practical elements related to body, mind, possessions, knowledge, discourse, structure, and agency as presented to women. This method provided a condensed understanding of the material, allowing for inferences about a broader reality beyond the explicit message (Bardin, 1977). Rather than focusing solely on content, the analysis also considered the context, purpose, and usage of the documents (Flick, 2009), contributing to a deeper comprehension of the themes.

By engaging in participant observation during live classes and activities, I observed how participants applied the concepts in practice. This immersive approach not only minimized potential researcher bias but also enriched the data by capturing the nuances of interactions as they unfolded (Elliot & Jankel-Elliot, 2003). Gradual integration into the field fostered a deeper familiarity with the phenomena, allowing for more focused and insightful observations (Sherry & Kozinets, 1999).

To complement the observational data, in-depth interviews were conducted to capture the personal experiences and perspectives of participants. Interviews are widely recognized as a key qualitative method for obtaining detailed insights, allowing for a deeper understanding of how individuals relate to the phenomena under investigation (Turner, 2010). These conversations offered a more intimate look into the participants' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, enhancing the overall richness of the research.

The data collection took place between October 2023 and June 2024. While I was analyzing the courses and reading the ebooks. At the same time, I participated in live classes and conducted interviews. Conducting the data collection simultaneously provided a more holistic and integrated view of the coaches' methods and impacts. This approach allowed for immediate correlation between different types of content and interactions, ensuring a richer and more detailed analysis. Additionally, simultaneous data collection optimized time and resources, enabling continuous and dynamic evaluation, adjusting the focus as new information emerged. The figure 2 illustrates the data collection methods employed in this research.

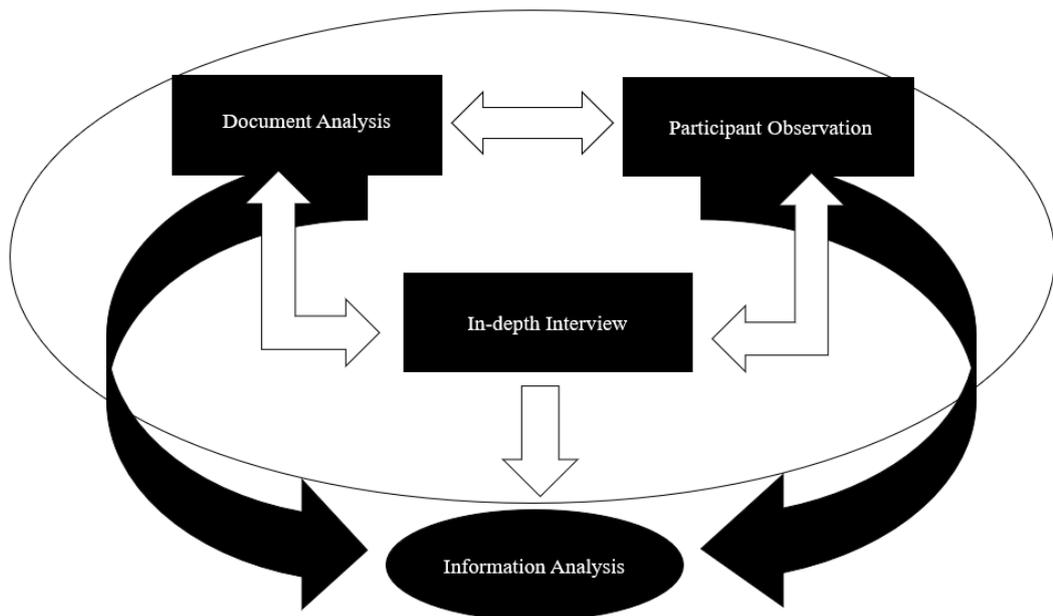


Figure 2 - Methodological Scheme

Source: Created by author

By employing these diverse methods, the research was able to create a comprehensive and layered analysis of women's consumption practices as they navigate romantic relationships. The simultaneous use of document analysis, observation, and interviews facilitated immediate triangulation and correlation of data, resulting in a robust and dynamic understanding of the topic. Each method enriched the findings, providing complementary perspectives that together offered a more nuanced view of the research objectives.

Even though this research was not submitted to the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the Universidade Estadual de Maringá (UEM), all procedures adhered to the ethical guidelines established by Resolution CNS No. 510/2016, which specifically governs research in the Human and Social Sciences. To ensure compliance with ethical principles, the following precautions were taken:

1. Free and Informed Consent: Participants were clearly informed about the research objectives, methodology, and their right to withdraw at any time, ensuring their autonomy in participation.
2. Confidentiality and Anonymity: All collected data were treated confidentially, with no participant identification, preserving their privacy.
3. Minimization of Risks: Every effort was made to avoid any form of embarrassment, coercion, or harm to participants, ensuring that all questions and interactions respected their dignity and rights.
4. Ethical Use of Information: The data obtained were used exclusively for academic purposes, without any manipulation that could compromise the integrity of the research or the individuals involved.
5. Respect for Diversity: The research was conducted with sensitivity to cultural, social, and individual aspects, ensuring that participants' perspectives were considered impartially.

Thus, this study followed the ethical principles for research in Social Sciences, as established by Resolution CNS No. 510/2016, ensuring respect for the dignity, privacy, and integrity of all participants.

3.3 The Journey of Information Harvesting

I begin by presenting the data collection metrics. The study analyzed 14 online courses from 8 different coaches, totaling 74 hours and 8 minutes. Additionally, the dataset included 4 eBooks by 4 different coaches, comprising 548 pages, as well as 13 live classes and an analysis of my own Instagram profile, collectively amounting to 25 hours and 4 seconds. Furthermore, 30 interviews were conducted, totaling 33 hours and 42 minutes. The overall monetary investment for this research was R\$ 4,057.00.

Document analysis is a methodology designed to comprehend and dissect documents of diverse types (Sá-Silva, Almeida, and Guindani, 2009). This approach allows for the examination of various sources, including written texts, photographs, videos, newspapers, and more. Document analysis serves as a comprehensive and immersive technique, providing the opportunity for subjective interpretation of pertinent research information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Its scope extends beyond content alone, encompassing the nuanced process of comprehending and deciphering accessible information (Flick, 2009).

Document analyses were conducted using info products supplied by relationship coaches. During this phase, the focus was on extracting insights regarding consumption practices recommended by coaches to women actively seeking relationships. All professionals are cited anonymously. Although I have purchased all the info products mentioned here, the decision is because none of them were notified that I was conducting research. Therefore, anonymity prevents potential negative repercussions for the coaches, ensuring that the research is conducted ethically and respectfully. Citing them anonymously also promotes honesty and openness among the participants, facilitating more accurate and reliable data collection. To symbolically maintain this confidentiality, I chose to name the coaches after mythological gods and goddesses. The choice of gods and mythological figures as codenames for coaches reflects the influence, power, and controversial nature of these figures. Originating from Greek mythology, Norse mythology, and European popular mythology, these entities are known for their power and ambiguous behavior. The info products and coaches are described in Table 5.

Table 5 - List of Coaches and Info Products

Coach	Info Procut Description	Plataform	Price	Course Duration (Hours)
Circe	Video lessons explaining how to be mature and feminine	Hotmart	R\$ 197,00	08:47:24

Circe	Video lessons with daily challenges for communication development	Hotmart	R\$ 497,00	12:55:55
Circe	Video lessons with daily challenges to become magnetic	Hotmart	R\$ 107,00	06:24:31
Medea	Video lessons focused on profile development on social media	Hotmart	R\$ 197,00	01:58:34
Medea	Video lessons focused on the secrets of love and seduction	Hotmart	R\$ 197,00	05:44:44
Medea	Video lessons focused on how to attract and keep a man	Hotmart	R\$ 197,00	02:45:52
Loki	Video lessons on how to communicate effectively with a man	Hotmart	R\$ 197,00	02:44:34
Faust	Video lessons with daily challenges on how to communicate on WhatsApp.	Eduzzz	R\$ 97,00	03:37:46
Faust	Video lessons focused on how to position yourself for a serious relationship.	Eduzzz	R\$ 47,00	02:40:04
Faust	Video lessons focused on transforming a casual relationship into a serious relationship	Eduzzz	R\$ 197,00	06:02:18
Pandora	Video lessons focused on how not to be deceived by a man and develop personal power	Eduzzz	R\$ 107,00	02:26:48
Nyx	Video lessons with daily challenges for the evolution of feminine energy	Ticto	R\$ 297,00	07:36:24
Icarus	Video lessons focused on learning a no-contact method for rekindling	Kwify	R\$ 107,00	04:24:21
Athena	Video lessons focused on the development of feminine energy	Kwify	R\$ 497,00	05:58:45

Source: Created by author

Document analysis involved active participation in the courses, with observations and reflections recorded in a dedicated field diary (Creswell, 2007). I engaged with the online courses and communities in alphabetical order, transcribing all notes into Word documents. For each course purchased, I created a separate document, detailing observations for each module and class. This systematic approach ensured a well-organized record of insights throughout the study.

The selection of products and professionals outlined in the above table was rooted in research conducted on social media platforms, particularly Instagram and YouTube. All these individuals operate within these platforms and engage with their customer base there. The selection process is guided by the nature of the products they provide, which include eBooks and video lessons, as well as their active communities – whether on Facebook or WhatsApp. Furthermore, factors such as the platforms used for product distribution, price and the diverse

personal attributes, like race, gender, and geographical location of these professionals were considered during the selection process.

The same selection criteria used for choosing the online courses were applied to the selection of the eBooks that were analyzed. The eBook by coach Loki was purchased together with the online course, as was the case for coach Hades. The books by coaches Hermes and Hecate were bought based on recommendations from interviewees due to the content they provide in their eBooks. The data collection was carried out through the reading of books, and all notes and observations were recorded in a Word document. Table 6 details the eBooks, including price, number of pages, and the content covered.

Table 6 - List of Coaches and eBooks

Coach	Ebook Description	Price	Number of pages
Loki	eBook with explanations and a list of prohibited and suggested messages for communicating with a man.	R\$ 47,00	24
Hermes	eBook with explanations and exercises to activate the Cleopatra archetype	R\$ 47,00	81
Hecate	eBook with explanations on how to be feminine and powerful	R\$ 97,00	279
Hades	eBook with techniques to be a rare woman	R\$ 97,00	164

Source: Created by author

The second method of data collection is participant observation. This technique facilitates the gathering of information through the observation of human behavior within their natural settings and across different time frames (Paterson, Bottorff & Hewat, 2003; Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Moreover, in alignment with the Practice Theory, it is crucial to observe research subjects within the environments where their interactions occur, which is a compatible opportunity provided by this data collection technique (May, 2004).

This approach enables the researcher to engage with participants, collect pertinent research information, and develop an understanding of the cultural context (Bernard, 2006). The participant observation was conducted by actively participating and engaging in live classes organized by the coaches. Some of these classes are part of courses that consist solely of live sessions, such as the classes by Coaches Echo, Hades, and Prometheus. I was invited to participate in Prometheus's class by one of the interviewees, hence there was no cost. The classes in the Icarus course are related to the Q&A sessions of the online course I purchased,

and they occur monthly for everyone who bought the course. Additionally, I purchased a service from Coach Hades that involves analyzing my Instagram profile, including photos, captions, and videos, with the focus on having a beautiful and organized Instagram to attract potential partners. I attended all the classes, noting the content of the lessons and the interaction between the girls and with the coach, the observation guide is on appendix B. All notes were recorded in a Word document. Table 7 summarizes the characteristics of the classes, as well as the platform used.

Table 7 – List of Coaches and Classes Attended

Coach	Class Description	Price	Plataform	Class Durantion (Hours)
Icarus	Question and Answer Class related to the purchased course described in Table 6.	R\$ 137,00	Zoom	01:48:23
Icarus	Question and Answer Class related to the purchased course described in Table 6.	-	Zomm	01:22:45
Icarus	Question and Answer Class related to the purchased course described in Table 6.	-	Zomm	01:12:23
Echo	Live mentorship on behavioral profile explanation and the language of love in courtship	R\$ 497,00	You Tube	01:07:43
Echo	Live mentorship on behavioral profile explanation and the language of love in courtship.	-	You Tube	02:14:05
Echo	Live mentorship on behavioral profile explanation and the language of love in courtship.	-	You Tube	01:52:13
Echo	Live mentorship on behavioral profile explanation and the language of love in courtship.	-	You Tube	01:54:31
Echo	Live mentorship on behavioral profile explanation and the language of love in courtship.	-	You Tube	01:45:14
Echo	Live mentorship on behavioral profile explanation and the language of love in courtship.	-	You Tube	01:42:23
Hades	Live classes on how to use Instagram and WhatsApp focused on courtship.	R\$ 197,00	Zoom	02:34:23
Hades	Live classes on how to use Instagram and WhatsApp focused on courtship.	-	Zoom	02:22:19

Hades	Live classes on how to use Instagram and WhatsApp focused on courtship.	-	Zoom	02:45:33
Prometheus	Live class on feminine traits that attract men.	R\$ 0,00	Zoom	02:20:45

Source: Created by author

The Thrid method selected for data collection to meet the research objectives was semi-structured in-depth interviews. Within the realm of qualitative research, this technique stands as one of the primary modes of data gathering (Triviños, 2005). Semi-structured interviews provide the researcher's presence, creating an environment where participants feel at ease, enabling them to freely and spontaneously share their ideas, opinions, and thoughts (Triviños, 2005).

Another aspect of semi-structured in-depth interviews is the intersubjective rapport between the researcher and participant. This connection provides insights into the social dynamics that participants construct to attribute meaning to their surroundings (Minayo, 2012). After establishing the interview concepts, it becomes pertinent to realign with the overarching research objective. In this context, aiming to comprehend the consumption practices of women pursuing relationships, a script is formulated rooted in the theoretical framework to guide the interviews. This comprehensive script can be located in Appendix A.

Thirty interviews were conducted, with 28 taking place remotely and two in person. The interviews had an average duration of 1 hour minutes and 7 minutes. Twenty nine interviews were recorded and 1 was not. All interviews recorded were promptly transcribed within 72 hours of the respective sessions. The one that was not recorded, notes were taken on the momento of the interview. All the transcriptions were individually documented into Word files. The average age of the interviewees is 39 years, and their identities will be kept anonymous. I chose the names of women mentioned in the Bible as codenames because religiosity, faith, and spirituality are relevant and important aspects of these women's lives. Table 8 provides all the information about the participants in this research.

Table 8 – List of the participants

Participant	Age	City of Residence	Estate	Occupation	Interview Duration
Abigail	45	Recife	PE	Public Servant	00:59:52
Aquila	42	Rio de Janeiro	RJ	Laboratory Technician	00:50:03
Bathsheba	43	Maringá	PR	Businesswoman	00:42:01
Deborah	52	São Paulo	SP	Teacher	01:27:58

Dinah	56	Planaltina	DF	Merchant	00:43:05
Elizabeth	37	Salvador	BA	Architect	01:17:19
Esther	46	London	England	Holistic Therapist	01:24:00
Eunice	40	Novo Gama	DF	Cook	00:51:36
Hagar	65	São Paulo	SP	Retired	01:18:13
Hannah	34	São Paulo	SP	Innovation Manager	00:56:31
Joanna	37	Belo Horizonte	MG	Nutritionist	01:39:46
Judith	27	São Paulo	SP	Restaurant Cashier	01:00:54
Leah	38	Belo Horizonte	MG	Homemaker	00:52:34
Lydia	55	Tramandai	RS	Furniture Designer	01:08:47
Mary	30	Florianopolis	SC	Marketing Professional	01:09:35
Mary Magdalene	32	Ipojuca	BA	Journalist	00:51:18
Martha	38	Maringa	PR	Businesswoman	00:42:32
Miriam	36	Salvador	BA	University Professor	02:38:24
Naomi	26	Nova Iguaçu	RJ	Project Analyst	01:19:56
Phoebe	26	Rio de Janeiro	RJ	Student	01:48:54
Priscilla	40	São Paulo	SP	Physical Education Teacher	01:00:11
Rebecca	45	Curitiba	PR	Psychologist	00:49:05
Ruth	43	São Paulo	SP	Business Consultant	00:47:17
Sapphira	43	Santos	SP	Ride-share Driver	00:57:04
Sarah	55	Vila Velha	ES	Public Servant	00:48:23
Susanna	30	São Paulo	SP	Textile Artisan	01:27:08
Tabitha	42	Maceio	AL	Lawyer	01:30:01
Talitha	38	Hortolandia	SP	Holistic Therapist	00:57:04
Tamar	24	Porto Alegre	RS	Lawyer	00:53:17
Zipporah	32	Osasco	SP	Real Estate Agent	00:49:26

Source: Created by author

Other research endeavors grounded in the Practice Theory within the realm of consumption have also utilized in-depth interviews (Feiereisen et al., 2018; Fuentes et al., 2019). This approach is feasible because interviews serve as a mechanism for comprehending participants' behaviors, encompassing both contemporary and historical practices (Fuentes et al., 2019). Importantly, consumption practices are subject to incorporation, alteration, and reinterpretation by individuals (Feiereisen et al., 2018).

3.4 Understanding the Context of the Materials – Documentary Analyses

The online courses analyzed are available on digital education platforms. These platforms allow access to pre-recorded content organized into modules. The modules are divided into recorded lessons that present multimedia content, including videos, supporting

materials in PDF format, and practical exercises. Each module covers different aspects of the process of developing romantic relationships, such as self-knowledge, interpersonal communication, confidence, identifying compatible partners, and building healthy relationships.

The eBooks analyzed complement the content offered in the online courses and function as independent info products. They provide information, practical tips, and exercises related to the world of romantic relationships, focusing on women who are looking for a serious partner. The eBooks also serve as a tool for self-knowledge, encouraging readers to reflect on their personal experiences, their expectations regarding a relationship, and to set goals for building a serious relationship.

A total of 14 online courses from 8 different professionals were analyzed. The content of these courses is centered on personal development and romantic relationship strategies, particularly for women seeking to improve their love lives and establish serious relationships. Below is a summary of the key themes covered in these courses:

- **Maturity and Feminine Development:** Some courses emphasize developing maturity and enhancing feminine energy.
- **Effective Communication:** A significant focus is on improving communication skills, both in general and in romantic contexts. Courses cover how to effectively communicate with a man, including techniques for more impactful conversations on social media, WhatsApp, and in person.
- **Magnetism and Attraction:** Several courses teach how to become "magnetic" and develop an irresistible presence. This includes strategies for attracting the right partner and maintaining a relationship, with particular attention to creating an attractive social media profile and mastering the art of seduction.
- **Building and Maintaining Serious Relationships:** The courses provide detailed guidance on positioning oneself for a serious relationship. They cover how to transform casual relationships into committed ones and how to avoid being misled in romantic pursuits.
- **Personal Power and Self-Protection:** Some lessons focus on personal empowerment, teaching women how to develop self-awareness, avoid manipulation, and assert their

needs in relationships. These modules are designed to strengthen personal boundaries and enhance the ability to maintain control over one's love life.

- **No-Contact and Rekindling Relationships:** One of the courses introduces a "no-contact" method as a strategy for rekindling a past relationship. This approach is presented to create space and potentially revive interest from a partner.
- **Harnessing Feminine Energy:** There is an emphasis on the evolution of feminine energy, offering daily challenges that help women connect with and nurture their inner femininity. These lessons promote self-discovery, confidence, and the power of feminine allure.

The eBooks analyzed in this research serve as complementary materials to the online courses, providing in-depth explanations, practical tips, and exercises for women looking to develop their personal and romantic lives. Each eBook covers a specific theme related to self-development, communication, and cultivating a unique feminine presence. Here is a detailed description of the contents of the eBooks:

- **Communication with a Man:** It provides comprehensive guidance on effective communication with men, including specific messaging strategies. It includes explanations about the nuances of interacting with a potential partner and features a detailed list of messages that are categorized as either "prohibited" or "suggested." The content aims to equip women with the knowledge of what to say and what to avoid in various scenarios to foster healthy communication and build attraction.
- **Activating the Cleopatra Archetype:** It focuses on helping women embrace and activate the "Cleopatra archetype," which symbolizes power, charm, and allure. It guides readers on how to embody traits associated with this powerful figure.
- **Feminine and Powerful:** It delves into the concept of being both feminine and powerful. It provides readers with detailed explanations on how to harness and express their femininity in a way that also conveys strength and self-assurance.
- **Becoming a Rare Woman:** It is centered on techniques and practices that help women cultivate a "rare" and unique quality. It provides insights into developing traits and behaviors that set one apart in the dating world. By offering advice on building a sense of mystery, confidence, and allure, this content aims to guide readers in becoming someone who is perceived as exceptional and desirable.

3.5 Understanding the Context of the Materials – Participant Observation

In the participant observation process, I took part in various classes and mentorship sessions led by different coaches, each focusing on key aspects of personal development and relationships. Below, I will describe the specific classes facilitated by each coach that I participated in, highlighting their approaches and areas of expertise.

- **Icarus Classes** – The classes follow a structured Q&A format, held via live Zoom video calls, with no recordings available afterward. The primary focus of these sessions is to address questions and concerns from participants who have purchased the "No Contact" course. Topics often revolve around how to implement the no-contact strategy and include case analyses brought by participants. Each session is an opportunity for participants to clarify doubts and receive personalized guidance on their specific situations. During the sessions, there are no materials or resources explicitly referenced, as the classes are built around real-time interactions between the coach and participants. The coach's role is to respond directly to each participant's questions. Interaction is predominantly one-way, with each participant given the floor to ask their question, while the others listen without interrupting or engaging. The coach answers each question thoroughly, providing feedback and advice, which is highly regarded by the participants. All participants seem to value the coach's insights, taking his advice seriously and applying it to their situations. The participants display enthusiasm for the mentorship, though their involvement remains passive. They eagerly listen and absorb the coach's guidance but do not actively interact with one another during the session. There is a clear focus on the coach-participant dynamic, with no observable peer-to-peer exchange.
- **Echo Classes** - The classes focus on topics related to personality profiling through the DISC system and the "Languages of Love," specifically tailored for single women. The content is delivered in a recorded video format via YouTube, where the coach provides detailed explanations of these concepts. Unlike some other courses, the chat feature is not available for interaction during the sessions, limiting the opportunity for real-time discussion or questions. The materials used in the class include PowerPoint slides, which the coach uses to explore and illustrate the key themes. This allows for a

structured, visual presentation of the material, helping participants to better understand the application of DISC profiles and love languages in the context of romantic relationships. In terms of interaction, participants can only engage with the coach through the YouTube chat function, which does not allow for voice interaction. This limits the depth of real-time engagement, and not all questions posted by participants are addressed by the coach during the session. The interaction is therefore predominantly one-way, with the coach delivering content and selecting which questions to respond to from the chat. While participants may seek more engagement, the lack of direct voice interaction and limited response to chat questions results in a more passive learning experience. The coach does not directly call on individuals but encourages participation by prompting questions and providing opportunities for input via the chat. However, this interaction remains somewhat restricted compared to live, two-way discussions. The overall structure is more of a lecture format, with participants listening to the coach's explanations rather than engaging in interactive discussions.

- **Prometheus Class** - The class centers on themes of femininity, spirituality, and the characteristics of a feminine and virtuous woman. The content is delivered via live Zoom sessions, with no video recordings made available afterward. The coach provides detailed explanations of these topics, emphasizing the development of these qualities in personal and relational contexts. The materials used include PowerPoint slides, which the coach uses to elaborate on key concepts related to femininity and spirituality. These visual aids help structure the lessons and provide a clearer understanding of the values and traits associated with a virtuous woman as defined by the coach. In terms of interaction, participants can only engage with the coach through the Zoom chat function, as there is no voice interaction. Although participants can ask questions, the coach does not respond to all queries posted in the chat, leading to a predominantly one-way flow of communication. The limited interaction prevents deeper engagement, as participants do not have the opportunity to discuss topics verbally or directly address the coach in real time. The participants' behavior appears mostly enthusiastic, with active engagement in the chat when allowed. However, due to the passive nature of the interaction, participants seem to take on more of a listening role, absorbing the information rather than actively participating in discussions. The coach does not specifically encourage participation beyond inviting questions through chat, which limits the depth of engagement.

- **Hades Classes-** The classes focus on the use of Instagram and WhatsApp as tools for romantic pursuits, teaching participants how to strategically utilize these platforms to attract potential partners. The content is delivered through Zoom sessions, with recordings made available later at the Hotmart platform. These sessions are structured with the help of an assistant who asks the coach pre-prepared questions, allowing the coach to explain the key strategies for online presentation and communication. In the sessions, the coach and his assistant guide participants through the intricacies of crafting an appealing social media presence. Topics are explained in detail, and the interactive format allows participants to directly ask for feedback on their Instagram profiles, WhatsApp photos, and conversations with potential partners. This practical, hands-on approach ensures that participants receive tailored advice based on their real-life experiences. Unlike more passive learning environments, Hades fosters an interactive atmosphere where participants are encouraged to unmute their microphones and engage in real-time conversations with the coach. This two-way communication is a significant part of the class, as participants frequently request the coach to analyze their social media profiles and offer specific suggestions. The coach responds to each inquiry with personalized advice, reviewing photos, bios, and messages in detail. Participants show high levels of trust and commitment to the coach's advice, often making immediate changes to their Instagram bios or photos based on his suggestions. They actively seek validation from the coach by returning to the session after making adjustments, indicating their confidence in his teachings. This level of engagement demonstrates a strong belief in the coach's expertise and a willingness to implement his recommendations quickly. In terms of peer interaction, most participants direct their focus on the coach, seeking his approval rather than engaging with one another. The coach fosters participation by addressing participants directly, offering personalized advice, and encouraging them to take actionable steps during the session.

3.6 Choosing the Voices: Participant Selection Process

Getting the interview participants stands as a pivotal concern. The aim is to delve deeply into the consumer experiences of women in pursuit of romantic relationships through the guidance of coaches and their infoproducts. Participants were chosen from those engaged in participant observation within groups, communities, and live events. The criteria for participant selection encompass: (1) Women who engage with coaches content and infoproducts; (2) Single women

actively seeking relationships; (3) Committed Women who engaged with the coaches content and info product in order to find a relationship; (4) Meeting the legal age requirement; and lastly, (5) Being fully informed and consenting to partake in this research.

The participant selection involved an intentional approach, wherein I deliberately selected individuals who fit a specific profile aligned with the research problem (Saunders & Townsend, 2018). Initially, the number of participants was intended to include participants from five different courses. These five courses are the ones that involved the group on Telegram or WhatsApp. The courses purchased for this purpose were (1) Circe, Video lessons with daily challenges for communication development; (2) Nyx, Video lessons with daily challenges for the evolution of feminine energy; (3) Icarus, Video lessons focused on learning a no-contact method for rekindling;(4) Pandora, Video lessons focused on how not to be deceived by a man and develop personal power; e (5) Hades, Live classes on how to use Instagram and WhatsApp focused on courtship. The relationship between the participants of this research and the courses attended is described in Table 9.

Table 9 - Relationship between Research Participants and Attended Courses

Participant	Course Attended
Naomi	-
Esther	Circe
Joanna	Circe
Judith	Circe
Lydia	Circe
Phoebe	Circe
Priscilla	Circe
Rebecca	Circe
Ruth	Circe
Sapphira	Circe
Susanna	Circe
Talitha	Circe
Deborah	Hades
Elizabeth	Hades
Hannah	Hades
Abigail	Icarus
Aquila	Icarus
Dinah	Icarus
Eunice	Icarus
Hagar	Icarus

Mary Magdalene	Icarus
Sarah	Icarus
Tamar	Icarus
Bathsheba	Medea
Leah	Medea
Mary	Medea
Martha	Nyx
Miriam	Nyx
Tabitha	Nyx
Zipporah	Nyx

Source: Created by author

The only participant who did not come from one of the courses is Naomi. She heard about my research from one of the other interviewees and approached me asking to be interviewed. After this first participants selection, the number of participants were determined by the saturation criterion (Thiry-Cherques, 2009), which signifies that data collection continues until the addition of more data ceases to contribute to an enhanced comprehension of the consumption practices of women seeking loving relationships.

I accessed all participants through groups on WhatsApp. Three of these groups were managed by the coach (Nyx, Medea, and Hades), while one was managed by the participants (Circe). And one group originated from a Telegram community associated with the course, where these women decided to create their own group to speak freely. The Telegram community was managed by the coach, and we were not supposed to bring up all kinds of subjects there.

To initiate contact, I reached out individually to each participant via WhatsApp, seeking their willingness to participate in interviews. Initially, I contacted all women who had participated at least once while I was also a member, totaling 112 women. Of these, 39 did not respond, and 16 declined. I received a positive response from 57 women. However, despite the high number of positive responses, it was difficult to set a date and time with most of them. I followed up two more times, and if scheduling was still not possible, I moved on. Ultimately, I was able to interview 29 women.

After receiving their acceptance, we coordinated specific times and locations. Two interviews were conducted in person, and the other 28 were carried out remotely using the Google Meet platform. Permission to record interviews were sought. If granted, the interviews were promptly transcribed after completion.

For every participant, a comprehensive explanation was provided regarding the nature of the research, its objectives, and methodology. Participants were assured that their rights and individuality were fully respected throughout the process. A. This document emphasized the strict confidentiality of the research and underscore that participant identities remained undisclosed under all circumstances. The Consent Form was distributed to all participants online using the Adobe Sign platform, where they were able to electronically sign the PDF document. For reference, the Consent form can be found in Appendix C.

Given that the subject at hand is a social phenomenon intertwined with consumption practices, the approach adopted were involved comprehending the contextual dynamics through documental analysis, and participant observation, —actively engaging with products endorsed by coaches. It will also encompass the analysis of social networks and the narratives, as well as the facets of reality that surface from the interactions and behaviors of the participants (Dezin & Lincoln, 2006), specifically single women seeking romantic relationships. In parallel, semi-structured interviews were employed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocate for the amalgamation of various data collection methods and diverse sources to heighten the credibility of an inquiry.

Recognizing the involvement of diverse individuals and the sensitive nature of romantic relationships, meticulous consideration was given to ensure the ethical and emotional well-being of participants. As such, the methodology has been meticulously crafted in adherence to the guidance provided by the Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Maringá (Universidade Estadual de Maringá), as outlined in Resolution-510-2016-CNS-Humanas. This approach underscores a comprehensive approach, ranging from participant selection to data collection, safeguarding the moral and emotional concerns of all involved.

3.7 Classifying Outcomes: Data Analysis Categorization

Data analyses were decoded using categorical content analysis. As per Bardin (1977), content analysis is a versatile approach applicable to various forms of communication, enabling researchers to dissect and thereby objectify interpretations. Bardin suggests that content analysis aims to alleviate uncertainty, enhance comprehension, and administer tests that bolster research reliability.

Content analysis is recognized as an objective technique, particularly useful for ensuring data reliability when derived from interviews (Belk, 2006). It is defined as a method that processes messages extracted from documents, making them suitable for document or linguistic

analysis, with a primary focus on words and their connotations (Dellagnello & Silva, 2004). This approach seeks to uncover psychological, sociological, and historical variables, revealing implicit meanings embedded within messages. Since the data collection involved participant observation and semi-structured in-depth interviews, content analysis was employed to expose underlying nuances and insights that might otherwise remain implicit and only perceptible during data collection.

Categorical content analysis, as put forth by Bardin (1977), involves dissecting text into categorized groups, offering an effective avenue for comprehending textual analysis. The analysis process adhered to Bardin's (1997) methodological framework, encompassing three distinct phases: 1) pre-analysis, 2) exploration of material, and 3) treatment of outcomes, inference, and interpretation. To facilitate this process, the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti version 7.1 was employed.

The analysis categories served as the foundation for structuring, coding, and managing the collected data, shaped by a logical framework. This aligns with the notion that qualitative research is iterative, meaning that data analysis occurs in parallel with data collection, allowing researchers to refine and adjust the collection process (Creswell, 2007). The categories were defined based on specific objectives and aligned with the theoretical foundation. As outlined in the conceptual framework, these categories were structured according to the Practice Theory proposed by Reckwitz (2002): body, mind, things, knowledge, discourse, structure, and agent, specifically addressing the consumption practices of women in pursuit of romantic relationships, also including symbolic aspects.

Reckwitz was chosen over Warde and Shove et al. to define the theoretical categories in this study due to his comprehensive and foundational approach to Practice Theory, which offers a nuanced perspective on the structuring of social practices. Unlike Warde, who focuses on the interconnection of various elements within practices and their reproduction over time, or Shove et al., who emphasize the material components and their role in shaping and transforming practices, Reckwitz (2002) provides a more encompassing cultural and symbolic framework. His model integrates cognitive, emotional, and material dimensions within practices, making it particularly useful for analyzing consumption and social interactions beyond habitual behaviors or material constraints. Reckwitz's approach allows for a deeper exploration of the symbolic structures of knowledge, discourse, and embodiment, which are crucial in understanding how practices are shaped, sustained, and interpreted by individuals and collectives. Given the

theoretical need to analyze practices as configurations of meanings, emotions, and actions rather than just sequences of behaviors or material interactions, his framework aligns more effectively with the objectives of this study.

Prior research endeavors have already harnessed Practice Theory and categorical content analysis. For instance, Lodi et al. (2020) delved into the connection between food consumption practices and obesity, employing participant observation and in-depth interviews for data collection, followed by content analysis. Similarly, Sauerbronn et al. (2019) leveraged the Practice Theory to probe the interplay between women's food consumption practices and body perceptions, employing categorical analysis for data treatment.

As previously stated, the semi-structured interview script can be found in the appendix of this document. To provide clarity on how categories will be examined within interviews, Table 13 has been included. It is crucial to note that the categorization of questions in their respective sections serves as a guide for navigating the field. It is conceivable that certain questions may yield data relevant to multiple categories. Concerning the remaining data collection methods—document analysis, participant observation, and —the data were classified according to the research's designated categories.

Table 10 – Allocation of Questions within Analysis Categories

Category	Questions
Symbolic Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does being in a romantic relationship symbolize for you personally? • How do you perceive the role of love and relationships in your overall life journey? • Can you share a specific moment or experience in the course that deepened your understanding of the symbolic meaning of relationships? • How do you think others perceive your relationship status, and how does that perception influence your self-image?
Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe your daily routine, from waking up to going to bed? • Have there been any changes in your routine, such as health, diet, consumption patterns, or interests, after enrolling in this course? • Building on the previous question, have your perspectives shifted regarding health, diet, consumption patterns, or interests due to the course?
Mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you been in a romantic relationship before? • Could you describe your ideal relationship? • In your view, how would your life change if you were to find a partner?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the pursuit of a loving relationship mean to you personally?
Things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you typically invest in self-help or coaching products from other coaches as well? • Do you often share images of your relationship-related journey on social media?
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main takeaways you've gained from this course? • Do you believe that the content in this course aligns with your aspirations for a romantic relationship? • What aspects of the course content resonate with you the most? • Have you been applying the knowledge and practices you've learned in the course?
Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any friends or acquaintances who are also consumers of similar products? • Do you engage with other participants in the course or have interactions with friends about the content? • Do you believe your communication has shifted following your engagement with this course? If so, in what manner? • Do your friends seek dating advice as well? • Are you often the go-to person among your friends for dating advice? • Can you recount an event or experience that stands out to you since you began consuming this course content?
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you a social media user? • Do you often capture and share these processes through photographs on social media? • Which social media platforms do you primarily use? • Do you use dating apps?
Agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been a student of coach X? • What motivated you to choose and enroll in this specific course? • Is this your first time purchasing a course of this nature?

Source: Created by author

Prior to the research, I initially established the categories above to guide the analysis. These categories were designed to explore various dimensions of consumption practices among women seeking romantic relationships. However, as the research progressed, it became clear that additional factors were at play, influencing these practices in significant ways.

Emotions emerged as a category, reflecting the profound impact of emotional experiences on the participants' behaviors and decisions. The emotional landscape—ranging from feelings of love and longing to fear and uncertainty—proved to be a driving force behind many of the consumption practices observed. This category highlights how emotions are not

just reactions but active components that shape and are shaped by the consumption of informational products related to romantic relationships.

Spirituality was another category that surfaced during the research. It became evident that for some participants, their spiritual beliefs and practices played a significant role in how they approached romantic relationships and the consumption of related products. Spirituality influenced their perceptions of love, their sense of purpose in relationships, and their engagement with content that resonated with their spiritual values. This category underscores the intertwining of spiritual and relational practices, providing a deeper understanding of the motivations behind their consumption choices.

Sociability emerged as a distinct category, reflecting the importance of social interactions and networks in shaping consumption practices. The research revealed that participants often engaged in these practices not in isolation but as part of a broader social context, where peer influence, social media interactions, and community belonging played pivotal roles. Sociability underscores the collective dimension of these practices, where the desire for social connection and validation drives certain behaviors and choices.

The inclusion of Emotions, Spirituality, and Sociability as additional categories enriches the analysis by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing consumption practices in the context of romantic relationships. These categories, alongside the pre-established ones, offer a view of the complex interplay between individual experiences, social dynamics, and consumption behaviors.

4. FROM STORIES TO KNOWLEDGE: A DATA-DRIVEN EXPLORATION

*We call upon the people
People have this power
The numbers don't decide*

The Numbers – Radiohead

This chapter presents the description of the information collected in the field, organized into eleven categories that structure the interpretation of the data. The first eight categories — *Symbolic Aspects, Agent, Body, Discourse, Knowledge, Mind, Objects* and *Structure* — were previously established as guidelines for the study. The last three — *Sociability, Spirituality, and Emotions* — emerged during the fieldwork, reflecting aspects observed directly in practice. The description integrates the three data collection methods employed: document analysis, participant observation, and interviews, enabling a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the subject of study. The chapter is structured into subsections corresponding to each category to provide a detailed description of the identified.

4.1 Symbolics Aspects

Across all data sources, societal expectations emerged as a central theme shaping women's experiences with romantic relationships. Interviews revealed that many participants internalized the idea that being in a stable, long-term relationship was not only desirable but essential to achieving personal and social validation. Some quotes reflected on how this pressure operates within social circles:

"I still feel this pressure... it's between us, among ourselves, among us women. When someone starts dating, it's as if they've achieved something really important, like a trophy. But when you don't have a relationship, it feels like a gap in your life—a void that society constantly reminds you of." Elizabeth

"That's a good question. I had never thought about it from that perspective of being validated, of being respected, you know... But I do think that a married woman... she is viewed more favorably in society than, especially, a divorced or single woman... A divorced woman, I think... I think there's always this notion like, oh, you didn't make it work, right?" Lydia

This narrative was mirrored in observations during workshops, where students frequently expressed feelings of inadequacy when single. Coaches often highlighted this anxiety as a pervasive societal construct, emphasizing that women are often judged by their ability to secure and maintain romantic partnerships. For instance, during one session, one of the coaches shared that student often described relationships as a form of “social proof,” aligning personal worth with relational status.

Document analysis further reinforced these findings. In eBooks and courses, societal pressures were frequently framed as challenges that women must navigate strategically. For example, Fausto’s course emphasized the importance of positioning oneself as “high value” to attract and retain a desirable partner. Such guidance reflects a broader cultural narrative where women’s success and self-worth are tied to their relational achievements.

Family dynamics further intensified these societal pressures. Participants recounted instances where family members openly questioned their relationship status, often implying that their singlehood was a shortcoming. Some participants shared her frustration with this dynamic:

"At 38 and with a child... my aunts say I'm getting old and need to find someone. But what if I don't want to? No one asks that!" Leah

"So, I've been through this, right? I'm not going to say it's something that doesn't cross my mind, especially because my mom sometimes says, "Okay, so when are you going to get married?" Because my mom sometimes puts pressure on me for something to happen, and sometimes it's not the person I want, but it's because it's the person she wants. So, sometimes I get this feeling like, "Gosh, I'm alone, I don't have anyone..."
Mary

This familial scrutiny was also evident in observations during group sessions, where participants frequently described feeling obligated to meet family expectations around marriage and long-term relationships. One participant shared during a session that she often avoided family gatherings to escape judgment about her single status. Coaches such as Prometheus and Medea frequently addressed these challenges, emphasizing the cultural weight of familial expectations in shaping women’s decisions. Prometheus often critiqued the societal tendency to equate a woman’s worth with her relationship status, while Medea provided strategies to navigate these pressures by setting personal boundaries and reframing singlehood as an opportunity for self-development. Document analysis reflected these pressures in prescriptive advice, with many courses suggesting ways to balance family expectations while maintaining autonomy and personal boundaries.

Social media emerged as a powerful arena where romantic relationships are publicly validated and symbolically reinforced. For many participants, acknowledgment on social platforms like Instagram was seen as critical to affirming the legitimacy of a relationship, as per quotes below:

"I only posted so people would know that I have a boyfriend... after we'd been dating for a while, I mentioned him on Instagram just to mark my territory. It's not good to be dating and have nothing on social media, right?" Ruth

"I think it's nice, right? Because, for example, if you want to flirt with someone, the first thing you do is check their feed to see if they're involved with someone. The same goes for me; if I'm in a relationship, I want anyone who visits my social media to know that I'm with someone, you know? So, I think it's important. For example, some people don't like to post pictures. I don't think it's cool if you're dating someone and you don't want to post a picture—that's strange..." Thalita

"Well, making a little post... A story or something... It's validation, right? I don't think... that you have to be posting everything that happens in the couple's life every day... Because I think that would be too much exposure. But I do think it's important that when there is a commitment, the person posts something and makes it... public, right?" Hannah

Document analysis revealed similar themes. Courses like Pandora's frequently highlighted the strategic use of social media to enhance a woman's desirability and relational value. Pandora's teachings framed Instagram as a "portfolio," emphasizing that every post should project confidence, success, and allure. During participant observation, mentors echoed this sentiment, advising students to curate their online presence carefully, balancing accessibility with intrigue to sustain a partner's interest.

Coaches such as Pandora and Icarus cautioned against overexposure, suggesting that excessive posting could undermine the mystery and allure necessary to maintain attraction. Pandora emphasized the importance of curating a selective and intentional online presence to sustain interest, while Icarus framed this balance as a strategic move to incite curiosity and reinforce the dynamics of attraction. This tension between visibility and privacy reflects the symbolic weight of social media in modern romantic dynamics, where public acknowledgment becomes both a tool of validation and a marker of commitment.

Traditional gender roles remained deeply influential in shaping participants' expectations of romantic relationships. Interviews highlighted the widespread expectation that men should assume the role of financial providers. Some participants articulated this perspective with clarity:

"There are many women supporting men here. Not me. I'm raising my child and working... I don't want to pay for anyone... The man really has to be the provider, period!" Dinah

"Yes, I think about a guy who is also a provider. We can't ignore that! Nowadays, you have to find a guy.... It's not about being materialistic, but I'm looking to grow, I'm trying to accomplish things. I'm not going to want someone who is less than me, in the sense of... well, it could be financially. I know that if he's a little less than me financially but is hardworking and wants to grow in life, that's fine. But I confess that I'm looking for a guy who is already at my level or above for a relationship, you know?" Tamar

"Oh no... I want someone stable, girl... A provider is hard to find... But sometimes the person doesn't even have, for example, a fixed income, but he's generous, he's the kind of guy who says, "Let's go out for lunch today, I have money." Tomorrow he might be broke, but he's someone who steps up when needed, you know? Now, there are people who don't contribute at all, don't even invite you for a glass of water, and just rely on you... They never reach into their pocket... that won't do..." Aquila

Observations during workshops revealed similar dynamics. Students frequently discussed the challenges of balancing professional aspirations with cultural expectations of femininity. Coaches often advised participants to navigate this tension by adopting what they described as "feminine energy," positioning themselves as supportive partners while maintaining independence. Circe emphasized the importance of women "creating space" for men to lead, suggesting that this balance enhances relational harmony by aligning with traditional gender roles. Similarly, Athena framed the concept of "feminine energy" to preserve emotional and sexual polarity in relationships, encouraging women to express warmth and receptivity while remaining self-assured and independent. This approach was reflected in document analysis, where courses highlighted strategies to balance professional ambitions with relational priorities, reinforcing traditional yet adaptable narratives of femininity.

Marriage emerged as a central symbol of legitimacy and security within romantic relationships. Participants expressed a strong desire for formalization as a means of achieving both personal fulfillment and social validation, as they reflected on the speeches below:

"I want a ring, I want photos on social media, and a ceremony... I want a small religious ceremony because I'm a mix... but of course, the signed marriage certificate, right? That's important. Protection, security—it makes all the difference." Priscilla

"I do want it... I want to have a wedding ritual, you know? I even know... the dress... *laughs*... Yeah... I'm taking an embroidery course, and I'm going to do the embroidery myself... That... that would be important!" Hagar

"It's something very official, yes, a civil union already is, right? I wanted a church wedding, but I can let go of that, you know? So it's more for security... This issue of a civil union doesn't have... it has some kind of social connotation as well, you know? I

feel it's important to... like... in front of society... It's something about security and also social, right? What it conveys... It conveys to others, you know?" Phoebe

During the participation in the workshops, marriage rituals were frequently discussed as milestones that solidify commitment and enhance social standing. Medea, Athena, and Hecate often highlighted the symbolic weight of formalization, framing it as a pathway to relational stability and respectability. Medea emphasized the legal and social protections afforded by marriage, describing it as a foundation for long-term security. Athena, on the other hand, framed marriage as an emotional milestone that reinforces mutual respect and partnership, while Hecate linked marriage rituals to cultural and spiritual traditions, portraying them as vital for community recognition and personal fulfillment. In this manner, document analysis revealed similar narratives, with many courses emphasizing the importance of marriage as both a personal and social achievement, often intertwining its symbolic value with practical benefits.

Another salient factor in the choice of partners was cultural and lifestyle compatibility, whereby participants often wanted to partner with individuals who are like-minded with regard to values, educational backgrounds, and lifestyles. This factor is critical in ensuring that both partners' daily practices and long-term goals are in tandem, thereby making the relationship harmonious. The level of education and social status were commonly cited as a significant factor. The stress on a partner's educational background mirrors an underlying concern for cultural and social compatibility since education is not only a marker of social status but also a way to cultivate shared interests, values, and social customs. Many respondents commented on these matters, stating:

"Educational level... I... honestly, I would like a man with a college degree, right? Like, just a high school diploma... that's difficult, right? You see... you look at the educational level and the job role, you know? They're always connected, right? It's very difficult to have just a high school diploma and a good job, there's no way, it's really hard, right? And then the conversations, you know... it's just... it can't be, you know? So distant from me..." Hagar

"I think social, educational exposure... Exposure... cultural experiences... If it's too different, it causes a glitch... It causes problems... It becomes... it becomes very unbalanced, you know? If it's too different... So, you need a guy with a similar culture, with similar social habits, who understands what I'm talking about. Or someone who can teach me more... Right?" Esther

Documentary Analyses showed that educational and social backgrounds are often cited as being significant factors in laying stronger relationship foundations. Athena, for instance, emphasized in her pedagogical approach the importance of collective intellectual and cultural experiences, asserting that "partners who align in their values and experiences are more likely

to thrive in the long term." Observations gathered during workshops supported this viewpoint, as mentors often urged participants to pursue relationships in which shared values and reciprocal understanding could prosper.

The correlation of lifestyle decisions is taken as an integral part of searching for a perfect match. Compatibility with respect to the daily routine—for instance, following a health-oriented regime, being into fitness activities, and having common hobbies—is considered necessary for the development of balance in the relationship. A shared routine and willingness to participate in common activities are also valued as very important aspects. The pursuit of a comparable way of living, encompassing aspects such as health care, inclinations towards outdoor activities, and the organization of time, underscores the significance of alignment in objectives and daily routines. The assertion below effectively illustrates this notion.

“This idea of the ideal partner... has changed a lot, especially in relation to hobbies. For example, since I like running, I like the gym scene, I do Jump classes, so I want a man like that, who can keep up, you know? He doesn't need to be into the gym, running, or anything like that, but he should have a healthy lifestyle, because something Circe said is very important... it's not opposites that attract, but rather those who are willing, you know? You have to complement each other... in the sense of living well together... those differences can end up disrupting the relationship. It doesn't work, you know? So, a guy who likes to travel, who enjoys new things, who likes to go out, for example, like, let's grab the car on Sunday morning and go for a drive. Let's go explore a new place, you know?” Lydia

Physical activity and health habits emerged as particularly significant for some participants, highlighting the growing societal emphasis on wellness and lifestyle choices as central to compatibility in romantic relationships. Many participants underscored the importance of aligning long-term goals and harmonizing daily routines to foster relational stability and shared growth. These reflections were evident in their statements:

"I have a fitness lifestyle. I've dated someone who wasn't into fitness, and it just doesn't work. For me, it's non-negotiable if the person doesn't want to be active... I want to exercise every day. You know? For me, let's do spinning today, and then after spinning, let's go for a walk... I really enjoy it. But I understand that it can't be, for example, like this guy I dated—it just doesn't work." Priscilla

“I think this is really important... For example, it's not possible for me to date a band singer, you know? Friday, Saturday, Sunday, they have shows at night, late at night, you know? Routine is something that I now fully understand as being essential. Why? Because I take care of my daughter by myself. So, I need someone who has a routine like mine. Someone who isn't available when I am just won't work. I can't fit that in anymore. What I'm doing is non-negotiable now. So, we need to be on the same path. Another thing, it's important that we have the same goals, or at least that the person is prepared to talk with you about what you believe in, because otherwise you'll talk about

things that won't interest the other person and vice versa, so it won't make much sense, because you're not on the same page, you know?" Tabitha

The analyzed course content was based on such considerations. For example, Pandora would urge women to look for shared routines and goals with potential mates, emphasizing lifestyle compatibility to move past relationship conflict. In workshops, mentors often spoke about what lifestyle compatibility looks like in daily life, including shared leisure activities and coordinated work-life balance.

Document analysis confirmed the centrality of shared goals in building sustainable relationships. Athena's teachings on the "law of balance in giving and receiving" stressed that partners must align not just emotionally but practically, ensuring that daily habits and long-term aspirations support rather than clash with each other. This theme was echoed in participant discussions, where mentors often used real-life examples to illustrate how lifestyle aligns Romantic relationships, though highly personal, are dramatically influenced by cultural and social structures—a clear testimony to the interplay of individual agency and collective expectations.

Love relationships are a field in which individuals navigate through and reproduce widespread social norms through their everyday behavior. Practices, as Reckwitz (2002) defines them, are not isolated activities; they are socially organized routines that both constitute and mirror cultural structures. For instance, the synchronization of partners' lifestyles through shared routines—such as modes of communication, recreational activities, or household responsibilities—increases relational stability by embedding individual connections within communal practices. Similarly, the practice of publicly disclosing aspects of a relationship, especially through social media platforms, becomes a ritualized behavior that legitimates and aligns the relationship with broader societal norms (Shove et al., 2012). Such dynamics illustrate how love relations are sites of engagement in which cultural symbols and shared routines encounter individual agency and allow personal relations to both reflect and transform the cultural contexts within which they unfold and contribute to relational stability.

4.2 Agent

For all the participants, emotional traumas from past relationships served as the primary drivers for engaging with self-help courses. Rejections, betrayals, and feelings of abandonment often

led them to seek solutions and tools to heal and rebuild their confidence. These women turn to info products to cope with past traumas and seek guidance on forming new romantic connections. Past emotional wounds, often marked by feelings of abandonment and rejection, serve as powerful motivators for their consumption behaviors. As participants shared:

"Since relationships are a source of pain for me... Out of all areas of my life, it's the one where patterns always repeat, and it's truly painful... So, those have been... my biggest disappointments. Now that I'm talking about it, because by accident, I experienced two very heavy ghosting. After the first ghosting... yes, I bought V's course." Priscilla

"As I was saying in the group... we need to study to stop attracting unavailable people, right? ... It's been a theme since my youth, I keep attracting unavailable people. Oh my God! (Laughs) ... Now, I understand that at the time it was because of loneliness, I was alone, living by myself, and we cling to any crumbs, right?" Dinah

These deeply personal experiences are reflected in the structure and marketing of the courses themselves. Document analysis revealed that Icarus's Lesson 1 - What is Zero Contact? positioned emotional detachment as a deliberate strategy for healing. The course instructed women to sever all forms of communication with ex-partners—no calls, messages, or social media interactions. It further emphasized milestones like noticing when an ex began viewing their stories as signs of success.

Participant observation in sessions led by Icarus revealed how women internalized this practice as a tool for regaining control. One participant shared during a workshop: "It's hard, but every time I want to reach out, I remind myself why I started this... It's about protecting myself." Pandora's Lesson on Recognizing Your Failed Version took a similar approach, leveraging participants' past traumas as a motivation to engage. The course stated: "You are not a failure; you are just failing right now. This will change."

This promise of transformation resonated with participants who sought to break cycles of emotional pain. In sessions led by Prometheus, discussions often centered on the impact of unresolved traumas. The mentor highlighted how reconnecting with one's feminine essence could act as a pathway to emotional healing, further reinforcing the connection between past experiences and current consumption.

While many participants initially approached courses to resolve relationship challenges, their focus often shifted toward broader personal development. It focuses on the continuous adaptation of women as agents who initially seek to improve their romantic prospects but gradually shift their focus toward more holistic personal development. Women begin consuming these courses with the goal of finding or maintaining a partner but soon realize that

the process extends beyond romantic expectations, leading to an enhancement of their self-esteem and self-perception. This evolution was clearly expressed by some of the participants:

"Actually, actually... During the pandemic, in 2020, I took an online course with a teacher, a professor... a professor of Catalan constellations, but who talks about relationships, who is G... So, I took this course with him, which was a... a... actually, they were live online classes, right? And... it was about relationships... I started his course, well... actually, with a professional interest... wanting to become a constellation facilitator, right? But we also apply it to ourselves first, right? So, it's personal as well."
Esther

Oh... it will always add value to me, right? I think... if it gives me... even if it's just an insight, it already adds value, you know... it already makes the course worth it, you know? Because I know it will reverberate in various areas of my life... So, sometimes... I see something on Instagram, and I think... I might get an insight..." Judith

Courses actively encouraged this transition, framing self-perception and growth as essential for relational success. Document analysis revealed that Athena's teachings emphasized developing seven pillars—maturity, femininity, beauty, communication, relationship skills, spirituality, and independence—as prerequisites for becoming an "interesting woman." Circe echoed this idea, stating in her courses: "A confident woman who invests in herself naturally attracts others without needing to chase them." Medea's courses reinforced these ideas by teaching women to set boundaries and communicate effectively. This emphasis on self-perception and personal agency reflects a broader shift from dependency on relationships to empowerment through self-investment.

During participant observation, sessions led by Icarus highlighted how his "no-contact" approach not only addressed relational challenges but also served as a transformative tool for broader personal growth. Participants reflected on how this strategy helped them reconnect with themselves and regain emotional balance. One participant shared: "This whole thing about starting no-contact helped me get grounded." Icarus framed this process as more than just a relational tool; it became a pathway for fostering self-esteem and emotional resilience, encouraging participants to integrate these practices into their daily lives, reflecting a shift toward holistic personal development.

In contrast, sessions with Echos consistently emphasized the importance of transitioning from a focus on romantic problems to a broader journey of self-improvement. The mentor guided participants to prioritize self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and life skills as foundational elements of personal growth. Echos framed this evolution as essential for achieving not only relational success but also long-term fulfillment and emotional

independence, creating a narrative that resonated deeply with participants seeking transformation beyond their immediate romantic concerns.

This engagement is sparked by the initial sense of progress and empowerment participants experience from their first course. Recognizing the potential for transformation, they are motivated to explore new avenues of growth, extending beyond romantic concerns to broader areas of self-improvement. Their capacity to adapt and broaden their focus reflects a deeper commitment to personal development, as they continuously integrate new knowledge into their daily routines and evolve their practices across multiple facets of life.

A commitment to continuous learning is a defining characteristic of the participants as agents. They not only consume courses but transform the knowledge they gain into new daily practices, integrating these learnings into their routines. This process of continuous learning reflects their adaptability, as the women move from introductory courses to more advanced programs, committing themselves to ongoing personal growth. Women explained how their involvement within courses led them to buy further products of the coaches. As per below:

“I bought L's course right after I separated. And I bought the course and saw that I wanted to go for mentorship... because in the course there was a group with a lot of people talking, and I thought that, for me, it was a bit amateurish, I was a bit more advanced, you know? So, I purchased the mentorship for 4 months and renewed it for another 4 months. So, I joined her mentorship, which at the time cost R\$2000 for 4 months and only had 10 people, so I had a group with these 10 people.” Bathsheba

“I bought a connected health course from a doctor. I even joined the community. I ended up joining the community... so, I moved from the online level to the community! She has the community, and she keeps adding to it every day or every week, creating new content and adding it to the community.” Martha

Document analysis highlighted how courses were designed to encourage this cycle. Faust's *Lesson 7 - Next Steps* explicitly invited participants to enroll in follow-up courses: "I want to invite you to the next course: Irresistible Flirting." Athena's Rare Goddess Community offered subscription-based access to ongoing materials, workshops, and events, reinforcing the narrative of continuous self-improvement. This model created a sense of belonging while fostering dependency. This cycle of consumption reflects how marketing strategies capitalize on participants' aspirations for growth, creating a sense of incompleteness that drives further engagement.

Women are initially drawn to these products by the promise of quick emotional relief and the ability to regain control over their romantic lives. However, they often find themselves

trapped in a cycle of buying more courses. Participants describe how this pattern perpetuates their search for new courses, each one offering the hope of providing the key insight or breakthrough they seek. Many are drawn to these products following significant emotional events, such as painful breakups, divorce, or extended periods of loneliness. The allure of a renewed sense of self and mastery over relationships becomes a powerful motivator. This often leads to impulsive purchases driven by a desire to escape the pain of rejection, regain control, and enhance their self-esteem. Ultimately, these courses are seen as tools to rebuild confidence, reshape personal narratives, and guide them toward more fulfilling relationships. Some statements from the interviewees:

“I bought one and then two more... D's* was the last one I bought... I regretted it a bit, like, my God, I'm spending money on this. I can't be spending money on this right now. I need to manage my anxiety... It's as if these courses were going to give me the answer I'm looking for, the answer I need. You know?” Abigail

"They start to... to captivate you in a way, as if by continuing for another month, maybe two months... you'll achieve the reconquest, right? Directly... It's like a marketing strategy of theirs, but it leads you to buy more courses... Like, there's this course, 'Phrases for Reconquest,' you can buy that too, I don't know... For example, right? They talk about things related to the situation you're going through... And the person who's there is desperate, right? They want something... So... They continue... 'I need seduction phrases...' so there's a course on seduction phrases, then there's the post-contact course... and then the self-esteem course..." Naomi

Document analysis revealed explicit marketing strategies embedded in course materials. Circe's lessons subtly introduced follow-up products, while Loki offered supplementary eBooks to complement his teachings. This layering of content created a web of consumption, where each product built on the previous one. Participant observation during Prometheus's sessions illustrated how marketing influenced participants' perceptions of progress. The mentor often framed ongoing investment as a sign of commitment to personal growth, reinforcing the idea that transformation required sustained engagement.

Agents, in this context, are women whose individual experiences, traumas, and aspirations directly shape their interactions with social and consumption practices. These agents not only participate in culturally structured practices but also modify them through their personal histories and motivations. The pursuit of self-development and romantic success is often influenced by emotional experiences, such as rejection, betrayal, and heartbreak, which act as triggers for engaging in self-help courses and products.

Moreover, the process of self-discovery and transformation in these individuals goes beyond their initial romantic goals. Many participants start their journeys with the goal of being successful in their romantic relationships but gradually expand their focus to include self-discovery, self-esteem, and overall personal development. The pledge to continuous learning emerges as a crucial aspect in the lives of these women. Through participation in a variety of foundational and progressively more advanced courses, learners integrate new knowledge and skills into their daily practices, thus transforming these behaviors into habits. This cyclical pattern of learning and practice exemplifies the learners' capacity to internalize social practices and adapt them in their journey toward ongoing improvement.

Nevertheless, the consumption of these self-help materials does not occur in a vacuum; instead, it is informed by external forces, among them, marketing strategies. Advertising campaigns often promise quick solutions to romantic misfortune and paths to personal growth. This consumption cycle creates repeated behaviors, where people continue to engage, driven by emotional triggers and social norms. External factors, like marketing, become intrinsic to the choices that individuals make, reflecting the complex interplay between external and personal choices.

The following sections provide an analysis of how women, as agents, alter practices of consumption with multiple practice elements like the body, knowledge, discourse, mind, objects, and structures that shape their realities. In this way, it will be made clear how agents do not just follow the set cultural practices but also actively transform them by relating to available resources and reorganizing new consumption dynamics.

4.3 Body

This description, based on interviews, participant observation, and documentary sources, delves into how women internalize and enact practices of physical and aesthetic self-care, appearance and self-image, and body performance, revealing the ways in which the body becomes a site of identity negotiation and social engagement. To begin, physical and aesthetic self-care emerges as a fundamental practice, reflecting not only the pursuit of conformity with social beauty standards but also the incorporation of routines that reinforce self-esteem and well-being. The interviewees' statements illustrate how physical self-care is a key component of these practices.:

"I started paying attention to myself again, you know? I started going out with my daughter... I bought clothes and shoes. We spent money... laughs... I dyed my hair, got

some highlights, went back to taking care of myself, doing my nails, really taking care of myself..." Aquila

"Yes, this thing about clothes, improving my wardrobe, adapting... I felt that this really boosted my self-esteem." Bathsheba

"You want to find someone, what do you need to do? Invest in yourself first... If you don't invest in yourself, there's no way... I went for laser treatments, Botox, doing this and that... and my ex immediately came back asking what I was doing because I looked different..." Martha

Documentary analysis reinforced the centrality of physical care in fostering emotional well-being. Nyx's guidance to "move your body" through accessible activities like dancing or yoga highlighted the role of physical activity as both a mental and physical release. Similarly, Circe's advice to "look pretty even if it's just to stay at home" positioned beauty practices as acts of self-love, not merely tools for external validation.

During the classes taken on the participant observation Icarus underscores the importance of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle, encouraging participants to engage in physical activities, social interactions, and routines that help distract the mind and promote emotional well-being. These practices are framed as essential tools for overcoming emotional traumas and restoring self-esteem, demonstrating the connection between physical care and emotional recovery.

Echo takes a similar approach by linking physical care to self-confidence, advocating for participants to engage in fitness activities like CrossFit or beach tennis. These activities not only enhance physical health but also create opportunities for social engagement, boosting participants' confidence and attractiveness in various settings. The emphasis is placed on cultivating a healthy routine that integrates physical activity into daily life.

Prometheus, on the other hand, integrates physical self-care with the cultivation of feminine energy. He highlights the relationship between maintaining an attractive appearance and fostering self-confidence, positioning physical care to align with feminine roles and identities. This perspective connects physical grooming and exercise with both emotional and spiritual well-being, framing them as integral to achieving personal and relational success.

The body acts as a medium through which women express and shape their identities. Identity is formed and reinforced through routine practices, and the use of clothing and cosmetics functions as one of these practices. Here, social norms of gender and beauty are incorporated into the everyday choices women make about how to present themselves to the

world, and the body serves as the stage where these norms are reproduced and challenged. The practice of dressing well, even in the domestic environment, reflects the importance of appearance in constructing self-image. As it is pointed out above:

"Oh... This... It's really crazy, I've changed... I'm using it now... Now I'm using... I used to go out with a bare face! Laughs... And... and... now, I put on tinted sunscreen, mascara, and... and... lip gloss, every day." Eunice

"Before, I used to wear my hair only straightened... but I got tired of it... So, I started doing a hair care routine, to... hydrate, and then I embraced my curls... And I didn't wear anything... no makeup... nothing, nothing! Today, I put on mascara and lipstick... every day." Leah

"And since I stay at home... I work from home... I started getting a bit more dressed up, you know? Even in pajamas... I bought several cute ones, to wear at home... To feel a bit more put together. To feel more put together at home because, like, even my husband watches someone in a series or movie, and he says: 'Wow, it looks like your pajamas!' And they are American pajamas; I have about three pairs of American pajamas. But they're great because the pants are nice, they're satin, right? So, I like them... I feel more dressed up; I feel much better..." Phoebe

Echo's mentoring sessions linked appearance to relational dynamics, encouraging participants to cultivate their image as part of their relational strategies. Prometheus extended this perspective by promoting appearance as integral to a woman's journey toward becoming a "matriarch," blending physical self-care with spiritual alignment.

Documentary analysis highlighted similar themes. Circe urged participants to invest in personal color analysis to enhance natural beauty, while Athena emphasized the significance of "beautiful, matching lingerie and well-chosen clothing" as daily rituals that foster self-respect and confidence. These practices, rooted in social norms of femininity, illustrate how appearance functions as both an internal affirmation of identity and an external performance of self-worth.

Body performance involves both physical transformation through specific goals like weight loss and muscle gain, as well as the way the body is used to express and reinforce identity. The body is a fundamental material element in social practices, influencing how they are executed and transformed over time (Shove et al., 2021) In this context, movement and posture are performative strategies used to communicate value, femininity, and availability in social and romantic contexts.

Physical transformation signifies that the body serves as both a medium and an outlet for expressing and, ultimately, managing emotions. This highlights the role that physical change plays in the process of self-realization and emotional regulation. In this sense, the body becomes

not only a reflection of one's inner emotional state but also a tool for social transformation, as practices like dieting and exercise are employed to shape the body in accordance with societal ideals of health and beauty. This alignment of the body with external standards underscores the intersection between personal identity and social expectations. Some participants' statements exemplify these dynamics:

"I lost 22 kilos. But first, I gained weight, I was slim, and I gained weight... I gained weight because I was eating all my emotions, obviously. I had nothing else to do, eating was my refuge... But I changed some things... So, let's take it step by step... Laughs... First, one thing I started to do is use that thing on my tongue, what's it called? Scraper. Yes. And then I brush my teeth, take a shower, do my skincare, I even get dressed up to stay at home, you know?" Tabitha

"After I joined M's course, I started going to the gym to take care of myself and boost my endorphins. Endorphins boost self-esteem, right? I do therapy and see a nutritionist, but it's all part of a set of body and health care practices. The course is another pillar of development." Mirian

"So... I'm going, right? It's... for my well-being, right? But I get discouraged sometimes... Because I'm... I'm thin... I want to gain muscle... But I'm going, it's the hardest part, like... like gaining muscle, right? But... It's part of loving myself, of taking care of myself, right? So I go, laughs..." Eunice

Body performance can be understood as the intentional way in which the participants choose to move and carry themselves, revealing a profound connection between their physical bodies and the identities they wish to project. Here, the body is not a passive carrier of health; rather, it's an intentional tool through which idealized femininity is expressed. Every gesture, every stance, every physical decision counts in the making of a desirable personal image, which resonates with their constantly changing sense of self. As participants reflected, subtle changes in how they walk, move, and interact with others became expressions of self-awareness and growth. Be it walking slower to assume gracefulness, being more present in everyday life by using mindful rituals or being more aware of posture and movement that conveys confidence—the body is used actively to create identity and social presence. The following statements illustrate this relationship between body movement and self-expression.

"Some things, right? Look, there's a lot of progress to be made... a lot more to work on... But I have changed, yes... Walking more slowly, you know? Waiting for someone to take the lead instead of rushing ahead and doing everything by myself... Going to a friend's house for dinner and waiting, not immediately getting up to wash dishes like I used to, you know? It's a bit tricky, but I'm managing, I'm getting there, but I'm still far from perfect... I'd say I'm about 40%, 35% of the way there... as much as possible, I keep an eye on myself, you know? Sometimes I realize it after I've already done it, but... but I'm getting better." Lydia

"Yes... on the day I met the Viking, wow, do you remember? ... I was floating! Hahaha... You know, sometimes with the rush of work, I end up forgetting... But when I remember... I always walk with my head held high and focus on... on... the movement of my hips..." Judith

"This thing about doing things more slowly, and... and the feminine walk she talks about, the posture leaning back, right? And focusing on the hips... I feel a difference, you know? The way others look at you... When you walk down the street, and you're connected and doing it... And especially when you're more dressed up, right? There are more looks... I notice that..." Hagar

In both the document analysis and participant observation, body performance emerges as a critical practice for expressing identity, enhancing self-esteem, and navigating social and romantic contexts. The courses and eBooks emphasize how posture, movement, and physical transformation serve as tools to project confidence, femininity, and social value. Coaches such as Circe and Athena stress the importance of mindfulness in bodily actions, teaching women to embody feminine energy through deliberate posture, slower movements, and grounded physical presence. Circe specifically advises focusing on shifting energy from the mind to the hips, while Athena highlights aligning physical activity with hormonal cycles to optimize emotional and social engagement.

From the observational perspective, the participants reflected these lessons by adding physical habits to perfect their body language. Subtle practices, such as walking with conscious grace, maintaining eye contact, or improving physical presence, were explained as methods of gaining attention and creating rapport. Coaches like Medea and Pandora supplement these practices by focusing on non-verbal communication skills, such as using open body language or subtle signals like smiling and eye contact to create deeper social connections.

These findings highlight the remarkable resonance between the participants' accounts and those of the relationship coaches. The participants' accounts, described above, speak to how the practices of physical care and body performance are intertwined in their self-identity processes, emotional becoming, and relational development. Practices, most significantly, self-care practices, aesthetic modifications, and deliberate changes in physical form, were framed by participants and instructors alike as acts of self-loving and empowerment.

Participants commonly point out how increased attractiveness boosts self-esteem and creates a new identity. Coaches also focus on the same practices as very important, introducing them as the foundation for building confidence, improving physical presence, and embracing feminine energy. In both discourses, linking physical transformation to emotional recovery

places the body as a central medium in the management of emotions and the expression of self-worth in personal and social contexts.

Another significant theme is the role of movement and posture in shaping personal and social identities. Participants recount how subtle shifts in their body language—such as walking more gracefully or emphasizing certain physical traits—impact the way they are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves. Coaches echo these sentiments by teaching body performance as a deliberate strategy to embody confidence, femininity, and social presence. Practices like slowing down movements, focusing on posture, and aligning physical gestures with emotional energy are promoted as tools for enhancing self-awareness and attracting positive attention.

The coaches further connect these practices to broader relational strategies. By encouraging participants to integrate body care and performance into their routines, they foster an understanding of how physical presence influences social and romantic interactions. These teachings are reflected in the participants' accounts of dressing well at home, enhancing their physical appearance, and using movement to project their desired image. This alignment between personal practices and coached strategies demonstrates how the participants actively internalize and adapt these teachings to their own lives.

The body is perceived as a material object that reflects societal norms of beauty, health, and self-worth. Practices such as skincare routines, haircare, and cosmetic treatments represent efforts to align the body with cultural ideals of appearance, while simultaneously reinforcing individual self-esteem. These practices often necessitate the consumption of various products and services, including cosmetics, beauty treatments, and wellness regimes.

Personal expression comes through clothes, makeup, and grooming practices; the body serves as an available canvas upon which identity is both created and communicated. The activities, whether attempts to conform or defy, are critical to the formation of self-concept and social identity. In other words, it is facilitated through consumption of fashion items, accessories, and beauty products by allowing individuals to portray themselves according to the roles or positions they desire within society.

The performative strategies, which range from adopting certain postures to fitness exercises, even to bodily transformations like losing or gaining weight or developing muscles, underpin the active agency of the body in depicting femininity, self-assuredness, and social

appreciation. Such efforts also extend to buying relevant exercising equipment and services such as gym membership, sports and workout clothes, vitamins, and minerals, all of which join practices that foreground bodily change to be and receive consideration from others.

The body becomes an active agent in linking materials, skills, and meaning in consumption. People take part in and construct the cultural conventions of beauty, health, and identity through their active routines of physical self-care, managing appearance, and performing their body. These linked practices of care, management, and performance bring the body into focus as the site where consumption materialized and underlines a complex relationship between societal expectations, individual aspirations, and consumption of goods and services.

4.4 Discourse

By participant observation, interviews, and document analysis, the discourse is unpacked as an active tool through which people navigate relational dynamics, express emotions, and constitute their identities. It acts as a strong medium to reinforce societal norms, adapt language in specific social and interpersonal contexts, and reflect changes in the way people communicate, answering shifting social expectations and relational maps.

Discourse within support groups established through info product courses acts as a mechanism to both uphold and challenge existing social norms. These groups, often created by coaches or facilitators, provide participants with a space where verbal interactions become powerful tools for sharing experiences, navigating personal challenges, and discussing relationships, behavior, and gender roles. Within these interactions, participants find a non-judgmental environment where they can express vulnerabilities, receive support, and challenge societal expectations that may not align with their personal experiences. As participants exchange advice, they actively contribute to the reinforcement or reevaluation of social norms, allowing for a collective reshaping of how they view their realities and roles in both personal and romantic contexts. The following reflections from the participants further illustrate these dynamics.

"The important thing about the course is that sometimes you can't share your life with someone you know, like your family, right? But with strangers... we talk about everything... because there's no judgment!" Mary Magdalene

"Because you see that the person is sometimes going through the same situation, she knows the method you should follow, what you should post, how you should speak..."

Like... like... like that. We even exchange ideas on how we should phrase something... They understand exactly... the person understands exactly what you're going through, and sometimes, right? With family and friends... usually... when I brought up with Pedro., it was my friends criticizing him a lot... saying you need to block this guy, I didn't want to block him, they said: forget this guy... they wanted to introduce me to other people... So, with the girls in the group, it wasn't like that... no judgment." Naomi

"I think it's because I'm not judged, right? Because there it feels like everyone is in the same boat, right? And the support everyone gives, I think... everyone has the same purpose, I don't know. I think when you, for example, the other day I went to vent to a friend of mine, and she gave me a hard time, you know? She said, 'oh, you have to do this,' she scolded me, you know?" Ruth

In the eBooks and courses analyzed, coaches like Circe and Loki strategically use language to reinforce traditional gender norms. Circe, in her written materials, repeatedly emphasizes the importance of vulnerability and nurturing behavior in women, positioning these traits as the key to achieving relational harmony. Her teachings, such as "When a woman allows herself to be vulnerable, she gives a man space to be her protector," highlight how discourse perpetuates the idea of complementary gender roles. Loki's instructional documents similarly advise participants to use language that triggers the "Hero Instinct," as seen in messages like "I feel safe with you in a way I've never felt before." This guidance aims to subtly reinforce the idea of men as protectors and women as dependents, crafting a narrative that aligns with established gender norms.

Hades's eBooks, focusing on digital communication, provide participants with specific techniques for curating their online presence. For example, his guides advise crafting Instagram captions that blend authenticity with strategic messaging, such as showcasing emotional depth or vulnerability. The emphasis on presenting a cohesive "online identity" aligns with traditional expectations of women as emotionally expressive and aesthetically pleasing. His documents illustrate how discourse in the digital realm is used to reinforce these norms while adapting to modern platforms.

During observed mentorship sessions, such coaches as Prometheus and Hades flesh out these discourses with real-time guidance to deepen their written teachings. For example, in Prometheus's sessions, discussions around the avoidance of "inversion of polarity" challenge participants to stay connected with their femininity while fostering spiritual balance. The interactions observed showed how structured dialogues by Prometheus allowed participants to reflect on the social expectations of themselves and integrate relational strategies based on traditional gender relationships. His discussions also allowed for emotional connections among participants, creating a communal space where these norms could be reinforced.

In Hades's live mentorships, his focus on social media strategies was evident. He guided participants on crafting compelling Instagram posts and stories that align with romantic ideals, such as sharing visually appealing content and highlighting moments of self-care. Observations during these sessions revealed how participants actively practiced these strategies, discussing specific posts and captions with the coach for feedback. This interaction illustrated the practical application of discourse to construct and control online identities, reinforcing traditional norms while adapting them to contemporary digital practices.

Women strategically modify their language to express emotions and manage conflicts in both social and romantic scenarios. For these women, language becomes a tool for navigating sensitive situations, helping them articulate their feelings more effectively and appropriately. Through participation in courses, they claim to have learned to be more mindful of how they communicate, developing a balance between being assertive and maintaining sensitivity. The participant's reflections have shown how such an adaptation can enable them to express themselves not only more lucidly but also to handle conflicts in a manner that leads to better understanding and communication with others. This change in communication reflects heightened awareness of the expression of emotion, boundaries, and self-worth as they learn to express their needs without fear of judgment or misunderstanding. Some of the participants' reflections are presented below:

"Hmm... At the moment, I don't know if I can explain it... but I think my stance, you know? I'm not sure... It's... Putting myself in a way... like, in a way that's not about putting myself in a secure way and maybe... asserting myself, knowing my worth, you know? Something like that... Before, I wouldn't speak up, but now, wow... I do speak up, assertiveness, right? Eunice

"Yes, yes, yes. A lot. I used to go to the hospital with a stomachache to get medication through an IV. It's been a long time since that happened. I kept holding it in, holding it in, holding it in. Then, when I would speak... I would blurt everything out, say everything... Today I speak more gently, and I focus a lot on what I'm feeling..." Zipporah

"Ahhh. A lot! A lot... Then I bring learnings... Maybe in relation to... Circe, mainly... It's... it's... In which she talks a lot about the issue of communicating boundaries. I had a lot... a lot of difficulty asserting myself, expressing my feelings, showing vulnerability... So, in that sense, she helped me a lot, right?" Hannah

The coaches emphasize the strategic use of language as a vital tool for navigating complex social and romantic dynamics. Through both their written materials and live mentorships, the coaches offer guidance on how participants can refine their communication styles to foster emotional connection, resolve conflicts, and align their expressions with specific

relational contexts. The insights drawn from document analysis and participant observation reveal a consistent focus on helping participants cultivate emotional awareness and clarity in their interactions.

In their materials, coaches such as Athena, Medea, and Loki outline techniques for adapting language to convey emotions effectively while maintaining relational harmony. Athena's courses emphasize framing communication around emotions rather than accusations. For instance, she encourages participants to replace confrontational statements like "You never listen to me" with emotionally grounded expressions such as "I feel lonely when you don't listen." This shift fosters empathy and invites constructive dialogue, highlighting Athena's broader teaching on emotional awareness as a cornerstone of effective communication. Additionally, Athena introduces the concept of tonal variation to align verbal expressions with emotional intent, advising women to adopt softer, inviting tones—what she describes as “air” and “water” tones—in romantic contexts to create a more approachable and warmer atmosphere.

Medea, in her instructional content, focuses on the timing and content of conversations, particularly in early dating scenarios. She advises participants to avoid heavy or polarizing topics, such as politics or personal traumas, during initial interactions, instead recommending phrases like, "This is a story I'd love to share when we know each other better." By guiding participants to prioritize lighter, engaging conversations early on, Medea underscores the importance of building trust and emotional safety before delving into more intimate subjects. Similarly, Loki's materials emphasize the use of indirect language to foster connection without appearing demanding. He suggests replacing direct requests like "Can you help me with this?" with subtler invitations, such as "I'm having trouble figuring this out on my own," which allows the other person to feel empowered to help without feeling obligated.

These principles come to life in live mentorship sessions, where coaches like Prometheus provide participants with real-time feedback and practice opportunities. During observed sessions, Prometheus highlighted the importance of maintaining emotional balance in communication, particularly in relationships. He discouraged participants from overinvesting emotionally in partners who had not reciprocated and suggested phrasing such as, "I respect myself too much to accept this behavior," to assert boundaries while preserving self-respect. This approach aligns with his teachings on fostering relational equality and self-worth through mindful communication.

Medea also demonstrated the practical application of her teachings during observed sessions, encouraging participants to navigate sensitive conversations with phrases like, "I'd love to hear your thoughts on this," rather than challenging someone directly. This subtle shift fosters a collaborative tone while addressing potentially contentious topics, illustrating how language can be adapted to maintain harmony and mutual respect in relationships.

Through both document analysis and participant observation, the coaches' teachings consistently underscore the transformative potential of language. These approaches illustrate how they teach that adapting language to context serves as a tool for participants, enabling them to navigate shifting social norms, articulate their emotions with precision, and build deeper connections in their romantic and social interactions.

Participants gradually transform the way they communicate, reflecting shifts in both social norms and interpersonal relationships. Through engagement in courses and support groups, participants revisit and refine their communicative practices, moving toward a style that balances assertiveness with sensitivity. These changes highlight an intentional effort to speak with more care, empathy, and thoughtfulness, as participants become more aware of how their words impact others. This shift also illustrates how women adapt to contemporary expectations, aiming to express themselves with clarity while maintaining emotional connection in their interactions. Some reflections from the participants are shared below:

"Let's say the person is going to pay you, and you're there, sometimes you're commenting on someone's stories and you're like, 'do this, do that.' Like, that's something that changed, now I say, 'I'm curious to know about this,' or when I really need to ask, I use 'may I'—I say, 'may I ask you something?' The person is even a bit embarrassed, like, 'of course, wow, calm down, right?' 'No, here you go.' So that changed a lot, you know?" Suzanna

"What I was... well, I still am, but I can kind of control it a bit more... But it's not 100%, it's the issue Circe mentions... A lot about... how does she put it? About you being a psychologist... You're not anyone's psychologist... You don't have to keep giving your opinion... You have to say what you feel, how you're feeling in that situation. It's not 'they gave me a jacket,' it's 'I feel cold'... So it's this way of... going deeper. But it's... it's very delicate, very different from day-to-day life, because you don't see anyone talking like this: 'Hi, good morning, how are you doing? I'm feeling this way... I'm feeling that way...' That's what she tells you to do, right?" Lydia

In the analysis of documents, coaches emphasize the evolution of communication styles as a crucial element for fostering meaningful relationships and personal growth. Their teachings focus on helping participants develop communication techniques that balance assertiveness, empathy, and emotional sensitivity, aligning with changing social norms and interpersonal

expectations. This approach highlights how deliberate shifts in communication can enhance self-expression, build stronger connections, and improve overall relational dynamics.

Circe advocates for a transition from directive to expressive communication. She encourages women to step away from traditionally “masculine” methods of leading or instructing and instead embrace a more nuanced, emotionally rich style of dialogue. For instance, rather than making direct demands, such as “Can you get the plates?”, Circe suggests expressing vulnerability through statements like, “I’m having a hard time reaching the plates.” This strategy fosters collaboration and connection while maintaining assertiveness, encouraging participants to adopt a communication style rooted in mutual understanding and shared effort.

Athena integrates the concept of tone modulation into her teachings, introducing participants to the “four elements of communication”: earth, fire, air, and water. She emphasizes the importance of using softer, more inviting tones—such as “air” and “water”—in romantic contexts to create a sense of warmth and openness. Participants are guided to practice these tones in front of mirrors or through recordings, enabling them to refine their delivery and better understand the impact of their words. Athena reinforces that this subtle shift in tone can invite dialogue and reduce tension, paving the way for more harmonious interactions.

Hades takes a pragmatic approach by focusing on the digital landscape of communication. He highlights the importance of crafting an online presence that aligns with one’s authentic self while remaining mindful of how language can influence perceptions. His recommendations include using open-ended questions to encourage deeper conversations and avoiding clichés to maintain sincerity. For example, instead of asking, “Do you like your job?”, he suggests posing questions such as, “What inspired you to choose this career path?” By adopting this style, participants can foster more meaningful exchanges, transforming superficial interactions into opportunities for connection and understanding.

Through these teachings, the coaches collectively drive home the message that communication is not an exchange of information but an intentional act in creating and maintaining relational dynamics. In refining how participants make their arguments, be it through tone, phrasing, or timing, these strategies are supposed to teach women how to navigate both personal and romantic relationships with greater confidence and emotional intelligence. The change in the way of communicating, as guided by the coaches, reflects an intentional adaptation to changes in society and relational complexities.

Discourse is central to consumption practices and integral to the relationship coaching that occurs within broader cultural dynamics of romantic relationships. It is through discourse that social norms are constructed and reconstructed, certain styles of communication are created, and personal conduct is molded. Discourse does not simply reflect society; it acts as an active agent of change both in society and for individuals in terms of relationships.

Support groups and courses, usually through social media or in-person gatherings, allow participants to share experiences and advice on how to negotiate societal norms about gender roles and relational dynamics. It is in these interactions that space is opened for deliberation, contestation, and assertion of cultural ideal models and expectations. The participants' use of language in various social and romantic situations underlines that discourse is a strategic and skillful activity. It involves learning to be clear about one's feelings, to handle conflicts constructively, and to communicate in ways that are appropriate to changing social norms. For example, relationship coaching frequently trains participants in asserting their needs without losing empathy and emotional responsiveness, thus creating valid and balanced relationships.

These evolving ways of talking reflect changes both in the broader culture and how coaching operates within individuals' intimate contact. This happens through the ways in which new norms and practices are taken into everyday lives from courses and discussions. Herein, discourse is one means through which such values of relationship coaching come to be instantiated and perpetuated to the self, within personal development, and changes to relational practice.

Discourse is an active device in structuring consumption practices, since discourse makes up how consumption is internalized and negotiated in daily social life. The narratives, advice, and discussions on cultural ideals through which discourse occurs both reflect and remake the very practices that permit individual empowerment as well as reconstituting relationship dynamics within consumption.

4.5 Knowledge

Regarding the element Knowledge, some of the respondents commented on how the knowledge received through the training courses was changing into skills directly relevant to their personal life. The changes in knowledge-when it is purely theoretical and later a competence whose real application is found-is the very active, continuously ongoing process of the participant's absorbing and integrating into their everyday lives. This particularly became evident from relationship conduct or emotional handling. A few reflections by the participants:

“For example, that one... from I., I did the whole thing. He recommends doing it three times, but I did it once entirely. Then I revisited some specific parts, you know? It's... what... I needed to reinforce, you know? I was very focused, and I told myself, I need to decide and fix this... I apply it a lot... a lot... as much as possible, right? Laughs... especially when it comes to practical challenges. There's this thing that's important.” Hannah

“I do about 70 or 80%... When I get stressed: So, mercy! I really put it into practice... This thing about not talking, not calling, you know? I really try to put into practice this idea of completely stopping... Zero contact... It's really final.” Mary Magdalene

During the documentary analyses, coaches guide the participants to translate theoretical concepts into practical skills, impacting their everyday lives, particularly in areas like relationship dynamics, self-esteem, and personal growth. Coaches such as Medea, Faust, and Hecate focus on internalizing lessons and transforming them into actionable behaviors. Medea emphasizes cultivating self-worth and maintaining boundaries, teaching participants that creating value in relationships involves resisting behaviors that diminish their worth. Faust provides techniques for emotional control and strategic communication using open-ended questions to foster deeper connections. Hecate integrates psychological insights with practices like hypnotherapy and journaling, encouraging women to reconnect with their authentic selves and align behaviors with natural cycles for more harmonious relationships. Together, these approaches lead the participants to incorporate learned strategies into daily life, in order to enhance their personal development and relational success.

In the live classes, Faust introduces techniques like "playing the handkerchief," which essentially is to create the opportunity yourself for organic connections, or joining environments, such as sports communities, to meet potential partners. These methods show that he is oriented toward practical action in helping participants take theoretical insights into steps to be taken in the development of good relationships. Prometheus places spiritual and personal development within relational strategies, encouraging participants to take on for themselves the lessons of self-care, prayer, and feminine energy. He encourages women to link these practices with daily life routines, enabling personal growth and relational success. Together, these mentors show how mentorship takes abstract concepts and develops them into practical skills with which participants can engage in their relationships intentionally and confidently.

The participants slowly readjusted and personalized their understanding with insights drawn from many self-improvement courses. As time progressed, the inclusion of newer techniques and insights into daily life started to show a huge evolution in the understanding and application of the material. This kind of transformation does not occur in an instant but rather

develops through continuous revisiting of the content, trying different approaches, and refining practices with what works best for the participant. Knowledge would become dynamic, ever-changing as a function of their experience, and reshaped through the introduction of new strategies and insights the courses will provide. Continuous evolution regarding this aspect shows how deeper their understanding has become with the integration of new materials, techniques, and meanings into life for deeper and more permanent changes in behaviors and attitudes to take place.

"So... One thing that... that I feel strongly about is this issue of understanding the timing of each thing. Like, I used to apply the techniques as they were taught, but over time, I realized I had to adjust them to my own pace and reality. Today, I apply them in a way that makes more sense to me." Susanna

"I don't think there's another way... now, it's a path of stones and flowers, right? I think you have to keep working on it, over time." Deborah

"So today, it's automatic for me, you know? I've learned... so as soon as I notice something is off, I change my approach. It's continuous learning." Joanna

"I understand, everyone has their own process, it's not that simple! We think we know, but over time, we realize there's so much more to learn and adapt." Bathsheba

Coaches emphasize that the transformation of knowledge into practical skills is a gradual and ongoing process, achieved through repetition, reflection, and adaptation. Hecate highlights the importance of revisiting learning materials multiple times, advising participants to re-read her books slowly and repeatedly to deepen their understanding over time. This approach encourages women to internalize the teachings through reflection and gradual integration into their lives, fostering meaningful changes in behavior and mindset.

Similarly, Icarus underscores the value of repetition in learning, recommending that participants watch his lessons multiple times. He stresses that emotional engagement and consistent application of the material are essential for fully absorbing the teachings. By putting the lessons into practice repeatedly, participants adapt their approach and refine their understanding, allowing their knowledge to evolve through experience.

Medea takes a reflective approach by advising participants to maintain journals where they document their progress and insights. She encourages women to revisit their notes and course materials before engaging in romantic interactions, helping them refine their relational strategies based on their ongoing growth and experiences.

The participant observation of mentorships highlights a dynamic process where knowledge evolves through application, feedback, and reflection, as participants adapt these

teachings to their own experiences. Participants recount specific moments of transformation, emphasizing how these strategies integrate into their daily lives and relational contexts.

Through techniques like "zero contact" and self-control, participants in Echos' mentorships describe developing emotional resilience and behavioral awareness. One participant reflected on her journey from acting impulsively in her relationship to setting clear boundaries, guided by Echos' consistent feedback. Another shared how maintaining "zero contact" for months allowed her to reflect on her past traumas and redefine her relationship expectations, demonstrating the gradual process of internalizing these lessons. Focusing on holistic self-development, mentorships emphasize balancing emotional, professional, and personal growth as a foundation for broader life challenges. Participants following Icarus' guidance report integrating these teachings into their routines, highlighting the importance of consistency and the interplay between personal and relational well-being.

The concept of the matriarch archetype, central to Prometheus' sessions, encourages participants to harmonize spiritual, emotional, and physical practices. Participants adopt routines of self-care, prayer, and feminine expression, with one noting how these practices fostered both personal alignment and healthier relationships. Prometheus also addresses masculine and feminine energy dynamics, which participants found useful in setting boundaries and creating balanced relational roles.

In mentorships guided by Hades, participants focus on improving their digital presence as an extension of personal growth. Practical advice on crafting authentic and engaging social media profiles resonates with participants, who describe aligning their online image with their evolving identities. One participant shared how refining her digital presentation not only boosted her confidence but also opened pathways to more meaningful connections.

Participants in a learning group internalize and apply the knowledge they gain through collective experiences and shared insights. This process is characterized by regular interactions in groups, such as mentoring sessions and WhatsApp groups, where members discuss their experiences, challenges, and successes. By sharing real-life examples, participants can see how theoretical content can be practically applied in various situations, deepening their understanding and encouraging them to try new approaches. As per some quotes:

“Every 15 days we had a night mentoring session, for all of us, of course, for anyone who wanted to join at around 8:30 PM, and we would easily stay until 2:00 AM, each

one sharing their stories, in addition to the WhatsApp group where we shared all of our experiences.” Bathsheba

“There’s a group that was practically a group therapy... and we help each other a lot... We’ve been talking for almost two years, I think. Yeah... and since then, we’ve noticed a lot of growth... A certain evolution in our thoughts from when we first connected and got to know each other... at the time we signed up for that course, and it turned into something completely different, you know? I think the group helped us much more... Actually, I’m sure the group helped us even more than the courses themselves... Growing together there, exchanging experiences with each other, helped us a lot... that’s what I usually think.” Elizabeth

“I learn a lot from examples... In fact, that’s the way I like to teach things the most, you know? Explaining through examples... because I think it’s more tangible for us than just keeping information in our heads. So, what I found cool about the group exchange was that we could see examples of how that theoretical content was applied. It doesn’t feel like something just floating there.” Joana

Coaches actively promote collective engagement by encouraging participants to exchange experiences, reflect on their progress, and support one another. In the courses analyzed, Icarus uses WhatsApp groups to foster discussions where participants share challenges and successes, creating a collaborative learning atmosphere that reinforces accountability and deepens understanding. Nyx incorporates daily exercises like gratitude practices and "square breathing," urging participants to reflect and share their insights with the group, which helps connect emotional practices to their daily lives.

Similarly, Faust structures activities that require collective feedback, such as using audio messages for communication, encouraging participants to share observations about their behavior’s impact on relationship dynamics. Circe’s Telegram group allows participants to discuss personal journeys and celebrate milestones, creating a supportive network that enhances the internalization of course concepts.

During participant observation, Echos exemplifies this approach by facilitating group discussions where participants share personal experiences, such as navigating difficult relationships. These exchanges allow individuals to learn not only from the coach but also from the collective wisdom of their peers. This dynamic transform individual learning into a communal process, where participants grow through shared insights and mutual encouragement.

Knowledge is dynamic and an integral part of consumption practices, especially for women seeking romantic relationships, since it is acquired, transformed, and shared together to create behavior and decision-making. In this process, participants, through courses, coaching

programs, and social media interactions, went beyond cognitive understanding to develop practical competencies. These skills, often rooted in relational strategies, emotional intelligence, and self-management techniques, become embedded in the daily lives of participants through social and romantic contexts.

Knowledge is iteratively reworked and adjusted through practice considering novel experiences, while it becomes part of the participants' consciousness. For example, women modify their style of communication or relational method as they put into practice certain techniques that they have learned and accommodate those techniques to situations. This ongoing engagement highlights how knowledge is not static but continuously reshaped and recontextualized through practice.

Furthermore, the collective nature of learning amplifies the impact of knowledge on consumption practices. In social groups, whether through in-person courses or online forums, participants exchange insights, share personal experiences, and collaboratively refine their understanding of relational dynamics. This social integration of knowledge reinforces its role as a shared resource shaped by collective interactions. These groups, by creating a supportive environment for shared learning, facilitate the wider dissemination and application of knowledge, embedding it further within participants' practices.

4.6 Mind

Through internal processes of reflection, often initiated in the relationship coaching courses the women participated in, they describe how the practice of reaffirming their worth becomes essential for developing a healthy sense of identity. This self-evaluation not only reinforces their sense of value but also positions them more confidently in their relationships. For many, the lessons learned in these courses guide their recognition that true validation comes from within, rather than from external sources like romantic partners. This ongoing process is closely tied to the internalization of cultural norms and social expectations, shaping how these women view themselves and their roles in their relationships, as per some quotes below.

"I really liked this idea of valuing oneself. Sometimes we become so blind, so blind, that we forget about ourselves. So, for me today, it was good to focus more on myself. Is this okay? Is this bothering you or not? But you don't have the courage to say it because you think it's not? So, I found it nice to relearn how to look at myself again, right?" Aquila

"She teaches us to look at ourselves, right? To learn to feel deserving... because sometimes, before, we used to think: 'Wow, you're not worthy of a good guy... a good-

looking guy!’ Because... it doesn’t matter if... if you’re not physically perfect... nowadays it’s about attitude, you know? There are women who aren’t very pretty, but they end up with... a... a very handsome guy. Why? Because she values herself, you know?” Leah

One may look upon this category of the mind from the analysis of courses, eBooks, and interviews in which the trends and ideas on self-perception, identity construction, and relationship dynamics flow out. Coaches will, again and more so, deeply help participants have a look into themselves and their values, questioning the status quo, toward greater personal growth and fulfillment in relationships. Participants are in internal introspection to develop their self-worth, which in turn directly impacts the way they approach their romantic relationships. Coaches reinforce that this is imperative in developing an assured identity for oneself.

For example, Icarus advocates for the "zero contact" method as a foundational strategy for women to reclaim their self-worth. He teaches that by ceasing communication with a man who has treated them poorly or ignored them, women can redirect their energy toward themselves. Icarus explains that this period of emotional distancing allows women to focus on personal development—whether through pursuing their studies, working out, traveling, or reconnecting with friends. He stresses that the goal is not only to allow the man to return but to make him desire to stay by showing that the woman has become a more enhanced, confident version of herself. This approach highlights the cognitive shift that occurs when women prioritize self-worth over external validation.

Circe also reinforces the idea of personal worth, emphasizing femininity, self-care, and introspection. She encourages women to use periods of singledom for self-improvement—focusing on their appearance, emotional intelligence, and home environment. Circe believes that by learning to appreciate men as they are, while also maintaining boundaries, women reaffirm their worth. She particularly advises against casual sex, arguing that it can undermine a woman’s sense of self-respect and intimacy. Instead, Circe promotes a vision of the "high-value woman"—a woman who invests in her self-worth, nurtures her femininity, and allows herself to be both delicate and firm in her relationships.

Pandora contributes to this discourse by critiquing behaviors that stem from low self-worth, such as jealousy, control, and emotional instability. She advises women to reflect on their actions—whether they send too many messages, chase after men who pull away, or display insecurity. Pandora teaches that a high-value woman is one who values herself enough to act with dignity, adjusting her behavior to reflect confidence and emotional stability. She stresses

that personal worth is not just about projecting strength but about genuinely believing in one's inherent value and behaving in ways that align with that belief.

In the live classes, Prometheus emphasizes the importance of constructing a woman's identity through the embrace of feminine energy and a deep spiritual connection to God. He highlights that when women shift their focus excessively toward traditionally masculine pursuits, such as career advancement and independence, they risk becoming disconnected from their authentic selves, potentially leading to emotional and relational imbalances. By cultivating spiritual practices and fostering self-awareness, women can reconnect with their natural feminine polarity, reaffirm their sense of identity, and align with roles that bring emotional fulfillment and harmony. Complementing this perspective, Hades centers his mentorship on the strategic development of an online identity. He views Instagram as a modern extension of personal identity and advises women to curate their social media presence in a way that presents an idealized yet genuine version of themselves. This curated digital portrayal is framed as a powerful tool to reinforce feminine identity while supporting both romantic aspirations and broader social.

The mind engages in deep cognitive reflections based on past experiences, enabling women to consciously reassess and adjust their relationship choices. This process involves introspective thinking about previous relationship patterns and behaviors, leading to shifts that allow these women to approach new connections more authentically, in alignment with their evolving personal values and future aspirations. Through self-examination, they identify the relationships and friendships that no longer serve their growth, making informed decisions about who remains in their lives. This reevaluation is not just about relationships with others but reflects a broader transformation in their sense of self and identity. Some quotes of the reflect this statement:

"So, after I changed, things got a bit weird because I don't really identify with my old friends anymore. But they've been my friends for many years, so it's okay, we still hang out, but we don't speak the same language. I used to like concerts, but I don't anymore. That crowd bothers me now. So, my goals changed, and I started not identifying with my friends. You get it? But we still talk." Tabitha

"And then I became friends with the receptionist, but today I realize that we're the same age, and I told her, 'Raquel, do you realize that in eight years we'll be 40?' She's always out partying, posting pictures with a drink and all that. Then I thought, 'I don't want to know about her life, it's none of my business.' So I asked her, 'What do you want for your life?' She didn't like that. I said, 'That's fine, I respect that. Of course, everyone has their own moment.' So, we kind of drifted apart. Now it's just like, 'Hey, how are

you? All good? Great. Have a nice weekend.' Thanks, you too. And that's it, no deeper connection, you know?" Zipporah

The coaches guide participants through a process of deep introspection, encouraging them to align their relationship choices with their evolving sense of self. This reflective journey involves examining past romantic experiences to uncover recurring patterns, reassess previous choices, and understand the behaviors that may have contributed to unhealthy dynamics. By fostering awareness and intentionality, participants are empowered to make conscious adjustments, break free from destructive cycles, and approach future relationships with clarity and purpose.

Athena promotes this cognitive reevaluation by urging women to question their attraction to certain archetypes, particularly the "alpha male." She challenges them to examine whether this attraction is driven by a lack of self-worth or societal pressures, rather than genuine personal desire. Athena teaches that self-worth and relationship success come from moving beyond superficial traits and seeking deeper connections based on mutual respect and compatibility. She also introduces the concept of individuation, a process where women explore their subconscious motivations and identify the emotional wounds that shape their romantic choices. This reflection enables women to transform negative patterns and create healthier relationship dynamics.

Similarly, Hecate emphasizes the importance of balancing masculine and feminine energies in relationships. She encourages women to reassess their relationships and ensure that they are not overextending themselves in masculine roles, such as being overly controlling or competitive. According to Hecate, by embracing their feminine energy and allowing space for a more harmonious relationship dynamic, women can achieve greater emotional fulfillment and avoid relationships that drain their energy. This cognitive shift allows women to move away from relationships that no longer serve their well-being, promoting personal empowerment and healthier connections.

Medea also highlights the reevaluation process by focusing on self-worth as a determinant of romantic success. She advises women to cultivate a strong sense of self before entering relationships, warning against the temptation to settle for partners who do not align with their values or treat them with respect. Medea encourages participants to document their personal reflections in journals, revisiting these insights regularly to ensure they remain aligned with their long-term relationship goals. By continuously reflecting on their relationship choices,

women can break free from destructive patterns and cultivate relationships that honor their self-worth.

The interviewees' reflections highlight how their perceptions of an ideal relationship are influenced by cultural standards, gender expectations, and notions of happiness and success. These idealized views are essential for understanding how individuals construct a model of relationships they seek to pursue, ultimately defining the criteria that shape their romantic decisions and actions. Some reflections of the participants:

"I wanted to meet someone, a guy... Where it would be an instant match. Not like in the movies, but in the sense of realizing that there's something there, and after that first date, we wouldn't let go of each other anymore, we'd keep talking, discovering, going out, with genuine interest. The possibility of doing things together first, you know, just the two of us. Then, when we're sure it's serious, we'd bring close people into it, friends first. But after going out, maybe traveling for a weekend together, having daily conversations. It has a rhythm, you know?" Deborah

"Ah, I think it's a relationship where I can stay in my feminine role, and the man also fulfills his masculine role, but of course, in every relationship, you'll have to make concessions, have conversations, agreements, but overall, I don't have to keep telling the man what his role is. He knows that already, that I can anchor myself more in my feminine side, rest, enjoy more pleasure, work too, do what needs to be done, the usual, but not stay so... I used to be chaotic, all over the place, girl, I would wake up at midnight talking about work..." Talitha

"I wanted a man like this... Ah, I think the beginning should have the goal of forming a family, someone who knows how to say 'I didn't like this' instead of sulking and being moody. Someone fun, who likes to go out, who enjoys traveling. Honest, with values of respect, more family-oriented, someone who wants to get married, build something together, you know?" Sapphira

Medea speaks directly to the influence of cultural ideals, particularly the pressure women face to conform to societal standards of attractiveness and success in romantic relationships. She critiques the pervasive idealization of the "alpha male" and teaches women to prioritize emotional bonds over superficial attractions. Medea encourages participants to break free from these cultural scripts and focus on building connections based on mutual respect, emotional depth, and shared values, rather than chasing after unattainable cultural ideals.

Athena takes a critical stance against the hyper sexualization of modern culture. She argues that societal pressures promoting sexual freedom as empowerment often disconnect women from their own bodies and emotional needs. Athena teaches that true fulfillment in relationships comes from emotional security and connection, rather than the casual encounters

celebrated by popular culture. She advocates for women to reclaim their sense of worth by fostering deeper emotional intimacy before engaging in physical relationships, asserting that cultural norms around sexuality often lead women away from authentic connection and into emotionally unfulfilling situations.

Circe also critiques modern cultural ideals, particularly the notion that casual sex is a path to empowerment. She teaches that women should focus on cultivating intimacy and emotional connection rather than engaging in casual relationships that may leave them feeling disconnected and undervalued. According to Circe, societal pressures that encourage women to prioritize sexual liberation over emotional fulfillment can lead to dissatisfaction and undermine a woman's sense of self-worth. She advises women to set clear boundaries and prioritize emotional closeness, challenging the cultural ideal that equates sexual freedom with personal empowerment.

Hades supports this perspective by advising women to avoid feeling pressured into intimacy before they are ready. He teaches that cultural norms often push women toward early sexual involvement, but true connection and relationship success come from emotional bonding first. Hades emphasizes that women should communicate their needs for deeper connection and should not feel compelled to conform to societal expectations of quick intimacy.

The participant observation highlights how cultural idealizations shape relationship expectations and personal choices, as addressed by different coaches. Icarus illustrates how cultural norms influence relationship perceptions, such as when a participant interpreted a partner's social media actions as signs of progress. Echo encourages participants to reassess unrealistic "ideal partner" checklists by aligning choices with their own personality and lifestyle, reducing disappointment from unmet expectations. Prometheus critiques modern narratives of independence, urging women to embrace traditional roles of femininity, marriage, and motherhood, positioning these as paths to fulfillment. Hades focuses on digital self-presentation, advising participants to align their online image with cultural ideals of femininity and respectability to attract like-minded partners.

The integration of cultural idealizations into relationship practices reflects a dynamic interplay between the teachings of mentors and participants' evolving behaviors. Through guided reflection, individuals are encouraged to reassess entrenched societal norms, align their actions with deeper personal values, and navigate relational expectations with intentionality. Mentors advocate for the recalibration of priorities, urging participants to move beyond

superficial ideals and embrace strategies that foster emotional depth, self-worth, and meaningful connections. Participants internalize these lessons by engaging in practices such as rethinking their partner criteria, setting boundaries, and cultivating emotional resilience. This process of introspection and adjustment demonstrates how individuals actively reinterpret cultural norms and integrate them into their daily lives, embodying a balance of collective knowledge and personal transformation that ultimately reshapes their relational identities.

The mind is a poignant site of consumptive practices that shape women's pursuit for romance, thus acting internally as a site for reflection, reassessment, and re-internalization of culture. Through self-reflection, one reassures oneself through cognitive means as being valuable by using the mind as a tool to mold identity and self-concept in the romantic arena. These reflections often culminate in an increased sense of self-worth and congruence with societal expectations around femininity and desirability, thus illustrating how mental activities guide behavior in line with broader social practices.

Past relational experiences also serve as a critical point of mental engagement, enabling individuals to reevaluate and adapt their choices. By reflecting on previous relationships, women reassess their approaches to partnership and redefine their relational goals, facilitating behavioral changes informed by cognitive processing. This continuous mental recalibration allows individuals to align their practices with evolving personal and societal expectations.

In addition, the mind internalizes such cultural idealizations of relationships, embedding the cultural and social norms in personal expectations. These mental processes subsequently socialize female romantic behaviors, guiding the women to look for relationships which can live up to idealized expectations of love and partnership. According to Practice Theory, internalized norms are not just passive elements of abstract mental activities; instead, they are active elements in the composition and reproduction of social practices. In this way, the mind is a kind of dynamic mediator between cultural ideals and individual behaviors, driving forward the consumption of products, services, and experiences that keep pace with such expectations.

4.7 Objects

Women incorporate self-development courses and tools, such as e-books and coaching programs, into their routines. These objects are central to the participants' journey of personal and emotional growth, particularly in the context of romantic relationships. The purchase of one course often leads to others, reflecting a cycle of continuous self-improvement. Objects can

reorganize practices and routines, becoming embedded in daily life. Participants tell all about it:

“I paid... I paid for Hades' course, and then I paid for M V's, and I paid for this other guy... What's his name? I don't know... Another friend of mine, Maria, did it too, but I can't remember this guy's name... He talks about conquest, how to win someone over... I don't know his name, but I bought that one too, the Conquest Manual... It's another one I remember. That other one also talks about mental itches.” Elizabeth

“I bought several courses, the one from M... I think I paid 1,700 reais. For me, it was like paying in ten installments. It was like, ‘My God, what am I doing?’ *laughs* But I only bought it because it made a lot of sense. I also bought the one from Prometheus... Look, Prometheus is something else. He said this, he said... I watched about 60% of all those classes. I don't know if you've seen his platform; it has so many lessons...
“Deborah

“The courses I started with M... her course was called F. T. and it's all about getting to know yourself, you know? And... the relationship part, it's focused on that, you know? I started in... 2020, really looking for improvement... to have better romantic relationships, you know? Couples, right? So... in 2020, with L., then I bought the one from T., the psychologist, and... And... Circe's course, I did both... both challenges.” Hagar

As is evident from the testimonials of the participants, one course leads to another in an endless learning and self-improvement cycle. The courses are embedded in their lives and offer insight into self-awareness, personal transformation, adaptation of routine, and how to build relationships. Objects, such as self-development courses, play an active role in reshaping the routines of participants, serving as a central element in their journey of self-discovery and the pursuit of fulfillment in their romantic lives. It is within the continuous engagement of participants with info-products that they reframe their practices to reflect the transformational power these tools have upon them in molding the manner of pursuit in relationships.

Courses, eBooks, and self-development tools are positioned as central objects guiding participants in their personal growth, emotional development, and relationship improvement. Coaches emphasize the importance of integrating these materials into daily routines as key resources for building self-worth and maintaining boundaries in relationships. For example, Medea advises women to engage in daily practices such as journaling and meditation based on the course materials, noting that “it's not just about intellectual learning but practicing daily to become the high-value woman you aspire to be.” This transforms these courses and books into tools for continuous self-discovery and identity formation, directly influencing personal growth and relationship dynamics.

Icarus focuses on the concept of "zero contact" as a development tool used to redirect emotional energy towards personal goals. He advises women to refrain from interacting with men who do not respect their values and instead invest in personal growth, such as pursuing hobbies, studies, or travel during the "zero contact" phase. He asserts, "The goal isn't just to make the man come back, but for you to become a better version of yourself, someone he won't want to lose." This exemplifies how coaches defend that self-development tools can be pivotal in fostering internal transformation and improving relationship outcomes.

. For the women in this study, clothing, accessories, and makeup become key tools in embodying their newfound self-worth and femininity. Through these objects, they project an image aligned with the emotional and psychological transformations they have experienced through self-development courses, reflecting their personal growth and confidence. It can be checked it out on the statements bellow:

"Exactly, that thing about red lipstick happened the other day... I watched an amazing live with Ana Carolina Lisboa... I love her, and she asked us to put on red lipstick. I love her, but I've never bought anything from her... But, honestly... I put on the red lipstick... Laughs... But I didn't post it, I just went out... feeling all feminine, with... with... red lipstick... Laughs... Ah... red lipstick is an expression of women, right? Of femininity, I... I feel feminine with red lipstick, you know? Laughs" Hannah

"I didn't buy much... Laughs... But I started wearing all my dresses again... I already had a lot, wasn't wearing them... and now I'm using them... Always liked them, but wasn't using them... I got rid of all the clothes that were more for teenagers, you know? Skirts, little tops... those that look like they're for teenagers, you know? Yeah... I bought a pair of pants... and, and... some shorts... like, linen ones, kind of tailored, you know? Ah... and... and a long dress... elegant, you know? But, nothing like... But not the kind that covers everything, no..." Eunice

"Before, I didn't like to wear red lipstick. I see that most people, like, I hear, wow, so many people, saying, 'Oh, I wish I could wear it, but I don't have the courage.' 'Oh, I wish I could wear it, but I was too embarrassed.' And now I wear it... I really wear it, like... Now I don't care at all, like, other people's opinions don't matter." Zipporah

Participants highlight how specific choices in clothing and makeup help them express their evolving sense of self. For example, red lipstick becomes a symbol of femininity and self-assurance, while tailored outfits and flowing dresses signify their efforts to align their external appearance with their internal changes. These visual transformations are not just superficial adjustments but serve to communicate their emotional shifts to the outside world, especially in romantic settings.

Coaches discuss how these objects are more than just items of appearance; they are powerful tools for transforming identity and projecting self-worth, especially in social and

romantic contexts. Circe highlights how small details can transform a woman's sense of self. She encourages women to shift from large, geometric accessories to more delicate, feminine pieces. For Circe, "the exterior reflects the interior," and choosing outfits and accessories that emphasize femininity helps women reconnect with their authentic selves. She also emphasizes the importance of daily grooming, even when staying at home, to honor one's life and feel inspired. "Perfume, makeup, and beautiful lingerie aren't just about appearance; they're healing elements," she explains, suggesting that caring for one's appearance can elevate self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Faust advises women to remain authentic in their style when dressing for dates, emphasizing the importance of comfort and confidence over trying to please others. "If you're casual, stay casual, but in a way that makes you feel beautiful," he suggests. Authenticity, according to Faust, is key to building meaningful relationships, and projecting confidence through genuine self-expression is far more attractive than pretending to be someone you're not.

Athena takes a more strategic approach to appearance, advising women to undergo personal color analysis to choose clothing that best complements their skin tone. She also stresses the importance of balancing sensuality and sophistication, advising women to avoid outfits that are overly revealing. "Being sexy is about subtlety," she says, recommending that women show parts like the neck or shoulders rather than opting for provocative styles. Athena also encourages women to incorporate dresses and skirts into their wardrobe, regardless of their personal style, to express lightness and femininity.

Objects within the home, such as decor, scented candles, and organizational tools, serve as more than just aesthetic elements. They are instrumental in creating a space that nurtures emotional well-being and reflects self-care practices. For the participants, their homes become sanctuaries for personal and emotional growth, where they engage in practices that support their sense of femininity and self-worth. This connection between material objects and self-image underscores the importance of the domestic environment in shaping their internal experiences and how they present themselves in romantic and social contexts. Some quotes demonstrate it:

"So... flowers, right? Yeah, every week... And I light candles... scented candles, incense... The... what are they called, diffusers, right? I have those too... I like it. I like it a lot... Feminine routine, right? laughs..." Hagar

But even in my room, I put plants, so wherever I go, there's some greenery, because I feel a strong need for that... I put water out for the hummingbirds and birds to come to

my window. That's something I love doing here. Some days, I'm here working, listening to them singing right in front of me. So, did something change? It did... It was something more neglected... Today, I have less tolerance for clutter, you know? Like, after a while, I start to feel an internal restlessness, and I think, let me tidy things up. And sometimes it's nothing too complicated, I go around, freshen up the house, and then I can sit down to work with more calmness and tranquility. So... I started to realize how much it made me feel good. The organization, the house, the beauty of the house... I felt so much more harmonious with my home." Joanna

"As for my house, it's much more organized than it used to be. I can even see that the issue of prosperity has improved because I can maintain my house better. And I realized the emotional aspects, you know? I used to keep my house messy and dirty because I didn't want to receive anyone, so that was the perfect excuse, you know?" Rebecca

The participants actively use home decor, scented candles, plants, and organization to create an atmosphere that promotes tranquility and self-care. These objects not only contribute to a peaceful domestic environment but also become extensions of the personal transformations the women undergo. As their homes evolve to reflect a more organized, aesthetically pleasing, and nurturing space, so too does their emotional well-being, self-image, and readiness for social and romantic interactions. By curating their surroundings with intention, they reinforce their personal growth and project a stable, self-assured identity, aligning their domestic environments with their emotional and relational aspirations.

Household objects, décor, and organization tools shape emotional well-being and self-image, reflecting personal care and identity. Nyx suggests that a woman's home should reflect who she is, serving as a physical manifestation of her inner self. He encourages women to invest in personalizing their living spaces with objects like flowers, candles, and artwork that resonate with their feminine energy. "Your home should be a reflection of your inner world," he explains, urging women to create spaces that nurture peace and relaxation.

Circe extends this idea by connecting the state of the home to readiness for love and relationships. She advises women to arrange their homes in a way that signals emotional openness, such as leaving one side of the bed open or setting the table, even when dining alone. "Your home should be a place that invites love, relaxation, and romance," says Circe, suggesting that a well-organized and welcoming home reflects emotional well-being and a readiness for meaningful connections.

In both approaches, coaches emphasize that the objects and state of a woman's home are not just functional aspects of daily life; they are powerful symbols of how she relates to herself and the world. Decorating and organizing the home is framed as a practice of self-care

that fosters emotional balance and creates a space conducive to love, connection, and well-being.

Objects-whether they are development tools, clothing, makeup, or household items-are powerful agents of personal and relational transformation. Coaches stress the conscious use of these objects in the construction of routines and behaviors that are in line with personal values and romantic aspirations. It is through practices of appearance enhancement, space organization, and self-improvement that women build a positive self-image while creating an environment that will foster love, connection, and fulfillment.

Courses and eBooks are important in personal and relational growth. They take these abstract conceptions and give them concrete form in behavior. It is in repetition and symbolic engagement that participants internalize the new practices, changing their identities and aligning their practices with their goals. Clothing, makeup, and home decoration become the manifestations of this change, as they are representative of changes in self-concept and emotional state. An outfit put together with care, bold lipstick, or an organized space can mean a deeper shift in identity and daily practice. Domestic space becomes a haven that nurtures self-care and emotional balance, meshing inner harmony with outer practice.

These objects constitute the material infrastructure of social practices and are shaped along with, and shape, the changing identities and relational pursuits of individuals. From tools of self-improvement to items displaying identity and emotional state, they reveal an integral relationship between materiality, symbolism, and social interaction by which they can be seen as integral to the pursuit of romantic and personal fulfillment.

4.8 Structure

Romantic relationships can be understood as social practices rooted in established routines, shaped by cultural contexts, and reinforced through repetition over time. These repetitive behaviors, deeply embedded in societal norms, provide the structural framework that sustains romantic interactions in modern society. The rise of digital platforms and the shift toward quick, image-based interactions exemplify how contemporary technologies influence and reshape these routines, embedding new patterns into the fabric of romantic practices.

Dating apps and social media have become a normalized and essential part of contemporary romantic life. The pervasive use of platforms like Tinder and Bumble reflects a broader cultural shift where digital tools are seamlessly incorporated into everyday routines,

reshaping how people form and maintain romantic relationships. As these platforms become ingrained in daily practices, they offer new possibilities for connection, transcending geographical limitations and expanding social circles. Interviewees demonstrate growing comfort and acceptance of these digital tools as legitimate means of finding romantic partners, highlighting how their usage has become an established part of modern dating culture. Participants reflect about it:

"I can only connect with people using Tinder. I don't know how to flirt in person, I think I'm ugly and uninteresting. So, I'm not sure if a man is really interested in me, I don't know how to flirt. Tinder breaks that barrier because when I give a like, I already know the person is interested in me." Mirian

"It's a new reality. It really is a new reality. Because back in the day, when we were teenagers, in our 20s, we would meet people at parties, bars, and such. And now, it's an app. For example, if I'm single, I can just see who's single in the city. You go on the app and see all the singles there. A lot of people resist it, you know? They say it's not the right place and all that, but for me, it's fine, it's all normal. Yeah, you filter people, right? You filter out who's a smoker, who isn't. Just by the photos, you can tell if someone's an idiot or not, laughs." Ruth

"But I really liked Bumble. For me, it was much better... I met a lot of people from different parts of the world because a lot of foreigners use that app way more than Tinder... So it was really cool. I've met up with some people from different parts of the world... "Mary

The participants' reflections reveal how apps like Tinder and Bumble have become deeply embedded in their daily lives, offering a convenient and effective way to meet potential partners. This shift illustrates the normalization of digital tools as integral to contemporary romantic practices, reflecting a broader transformation in how relationships are initiated and sustained. As routine behaviors shape social structures, these platforms have redefined the routines and expectations around romantic interactions, making digital tools a crucial element in the landscape of modern relationships.

It is possible to address practices is the use of Social Midia for Romantic Relationships. It shows how social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook have become integral to romantic practices, often serving as complementary or even alternative tools to dating apps for initiating and maintaining romantic connections. Unlike traditional dating apps, which are specifically designed for matchmaking, social media platforms offer a more casual approach to connecting with potential partners. They allow users to showcase their personalities, interests, and daily lives, creating opportunities for organic interactions that can lead to romantic relationships.

"Yeah... Instagram... I... I agree with Hades that using it as a showcase, yes... Nowadays it really is a very powerful showcase for us, right? So, I share things from my routine, right? But what I like... yeah... but the interaction on Instagram, yeah... it represents a lot, right? So much so that in my last relationship, the person unfollowed me on Instagram... That hurt me a lot because it felt like being excluded from their life, like they were excluding me from their heart, right? But we mix up these virtual things with what's... what's real, right?" Hannah

"I've never used Tinder, tried it this time, but quickly quit. I like Instagram for flirting. I've always flirted on social media, Facebook, Strava... The person likes your posts, comments, and you comment back. Any social media is good for flirting. Laughs. I didn't have the patience for apps..." Bathsheba

"Basically, showing my day-to-day life, yes... And I think it's like I said in the group, I think it's the simple things that work, like you sharing your life. It's you showing, 'Hi, I'm available!' I think that's more like it. You have your profile open and you do that... It's like saying, 'Yes, I'm available, you can check me out, you can talk to me.'" Phoebe

The analysis of social media for love relationships underscores how platforms like Instagram and Facebook have become integral to modern romantic practices. Unlike traditional dating apps, these platforms allow users to connect with potential partners in more nuanced ways, blurring the lines between public and private life. They offer opportunities for organic interactions, where users can subtly express interest, showcase their personalities, and maintain visibility within the romantic sphere. The interviewees' experiences illustrate how these platforms enable a less direct yet equally impactful approach to building connections. This reflects the evolving nature of romantic practices, where digital tools not only normalize the pursuit of relationships but also seamlessly integrate into everyday life, becoming part of the routine

Circe, Medea, and Faust emphasize how dating apps and social media have become normalized as routine tools for forming romantic connections. The use of platforms like Tinder, Bumble, and Instagram is now a common part of dating, allowing individuals to extend their romantic pursuits beyond traditional social settings. Circe, for instance, encourages women to approach dating apps with a sense of intention and openness. She advises women to avoid using these platforms solely for casual encounters and instead to explore connections with a wider range of men. For Circe, the emphasis is on practicing feminine energy through interaction with various profiles, even when the initial attraction is not strong, as this helps reduce anxiety and fosters confidence.

Medea gives very practical tips on how to make the transition from virtual conversations to real-life meetings. She insists that dating apps are not places for endless texting, but a means

to organize meaningful dates. Her approach is to use the dating profiles strategically, curating one's image in a way that reflects genuine interests and values rather than appearing superficial. Faust supports this claim by cautioning against the tendency to overuse digital communication when speedier face-to-face interactions can be arranged and non-verbal signals more easily deciphered. He suggests that women display their interests and way of life in photos they've carefully selected, thereby employing the site as a means of exposing their personality and preferences.

In the participant observation, the normalization and integration of digital tools in romantic practices emerge as central themes in the coaches' guidance. Icarus highlights the use of dating apps and social media as routine aspects of modern relationships, showing how these platforms facilitate both the initiation and maintenance of connections. Participants describe their experiences, such as meeting partners on Tinder or using social media as a subtle tool to gauge interest and commitment through actions like viewing stories or liking posts.

Echo and Hades emphasize Instagram's strategic role in shaping online personas to align with romantic goals. Observations reveal how participants are guided to present themselves intentionally, creating approachable and attractive profiles that support meaningful connections. Hades distinguishes Instagram from casual platforms like Tinder, framing it as a tool to project values and attract compatible partners. These insights underscore the role of social media in transforming and sustaining romantic practices in contemporary digital environments.

As digital tools redefine romantic practices, individuals must adapt their expectations, strategies, and routines to navigate the complexities of online dating. These adjustments range from managing app usage to recognizing patterns in potential matches. Through their experiences, participants reveal the evolving nature of their dating behaviors as they adapt to the fast-paced and often superficial environment of digital dating platforms. Several participants shared their experiences of behavioral adaptation and the contrasts between digital and traditional dating:

"I use it, and I kind of like it... Ah, I mean, I do like it! [Laughs]... When I'm on the apps, I get anxious and keep checking all the time... like, to see if there are messages and likes... [Laughs]... So I stopped for a while... I'm back on Tinder now... Now I'm... I'm figuring out how to handle it because it's a pain... I've been back for about four days, but now I'm more conscious, so I'm limiting myself to checking at certain times. I turned off all notifications, you know?" Elizabeth

"I use it, but I don't like it. You know, I just joined Bumble now, and I just left it now, now. And it made me tired, you know? I don't have the patience for having to be the one to message the guy, you know? Because I already have so much to do, and then I have to go there and say hi to the guy, then if the guy doesn't respond in 24 hours, the connection disappears, and that irritates me. It's the guy who should be messaging me, you know? I can send a hi and he responds, or I can like something, but he should be the one to start talking to me." Priscilla

"I don't really like any of them, to be honest, right? But, like, I use Bumble and Tinder. I even tried Inner Circle, but... I couldn't even try it out because it's all paid. And that's it, those were the only apps. I'm leaving Bumble now because, well, I feel like the guys I found there, they're not on the same wavelength as me anymore." Suzanna

Participants offered diverse insights into how digital dating has influenced their romantic routines. Some expressed frustration with the repetitive and often monotonous nature of interactions on dating apps, while others emphasized the importance of setting boundaries, such as limiting time spent on these platforms to manage stress and anxiety. The process of adapting to digital dating is not always straightforward, with many participants voicing dissatisfaction over the superficiality of connections and the mechanics of online engagement, including the frustration of waiting for responses or the transient nature of matches.

Dating apps introduce unique dynamics that require users to adapt their routines and expectations. Coaches like Icarus and Athena provide guidance on managing these challenges, particularly when it comes to regulating emotions and handling anxiety that can arise from digital communication.

Icarus highlights the importance of patience in online dating, warning that anxious behaviors—such as obsessively checking for messages—can undermine a woman's efforts to build a genuine connection. He stresses the need for emotional control and recommends that women seek professional support if they struggle with anxiety. Athena adds that online interactions can present difficulties in communicating feelings effectively, particularly around sensitive issues like jealousy or disrespect. She suggests using assertive but non-judgmental communication, allowing space for thoughtful responses rather than confrontations. This approach, Athena explains, helps to maintain emotional balance and fosters a healthier dynamic, even in digital contexts.

Faust's approach to adapting to digital dating emphasizes the need for strategic communication, particularly when flirting or building tension through messaging. He advises women to avoid falling into the trap of generic responses and instead to engage in meaningful, captivating conversations that maintain interest and encourage deeper connections. His course

is designed to help women develop creative messaging techniques, including storytelling and playful assumption-based dialogue, to keep the interaction engaging while respecting boundaries.

These platforms, which often prioritize convenience and quick connections, have shifted expectations in the dating landscape, leading many users to adapt to or resist the norms associated with casual relationships, as in the participants speech, tinder has contributed to the normalization of casual encounters and shaped new relationship patterns Several participants shared their frustrations with how Tinder and similar apps seem to foster fleeting, non-committal interactions rather than meaningful, long-term relationships. Through their experiences, they highlight how the casual nature of these platforms can clash with the desire for deeper connections, underscoring the growing gap between digital dating culture and personal expectations. As per some quotes bellow:

"So, I joined Tinder, stayed for two days, and found it really weird because it felt much more promiscuous. I got the impression that... that people there are mostly looking for sex, you know? Of course, there were some who proposed really strange things to me too, like threesomes or just casual sex, but I was like, no... But Tinder, I went there, and I found it kind of weird. There were guys who said things like, 'I'm married, looking for an affair.' Then there were guys who seemed like they were gigolos. It was all just... I don't know, it felt like I was in a brothel, so I left, didn't like it..." Talitha

"I had Tinder, used it... It was through Tinder that I met the father of my child... But I'll tell you... That place is a scam. I'll never use Tinder again! It's just... full of useless people, no one there wants anything serious, no!" Leah

"My thoughts., ok? And if you really think about it, how many people do I know who got married through an app, honestly, I think their husbands... are weak, you know? There's no one who met a guy on an app and I thought: Wow, what a man, huh? What a guy... I've never seen it... My friends married guys that I think are interesting, who I think are good guys, hardworking guys, and it wasn't through an app... On the app, I think there are a lot of unavailable people, you know?" Priscilla

These reflections reveal how dating apps have contributed to the stabilization of casual romantic practices. Many users enter platforms like Tinder expecting casual encounters, creating a cultural norm where long-term, meaningful relationships are less common. In this manner, routines and repeated behaviors create stable social structures, even when those behaviors lead to dissatisfaction or frustration.

The repeated use of dating platforms has contributed to the normalization of casual, non-committal relationships. Digital platforms have reshaped romantic norms, often fostering expectations of casual interactions rather than long-term commitments. Coaches like Circe and

Medea address this issue directly, helping women navigate the complexities of casual relationships on dating apps.

Circe discusses the frustration many women feel when they find themselves attracting men who are only interested in casual encounters. She advises that the way a woman presents herself on her dating profile can influence the type of men she attracts. If her photos and bio suggest a focus on casual, party-oriented activities, she may draw men looking for the same. Circe encourages women to be confident in their use of dating apps, owning their desires and curating profiles that reflect their true relationship goals.

Medea expands on this idea by highlighting the importance of managing expectations on different dating platforms. She suggests that apps like Tinder are more geared toward casual encounters, while other platforms, such as "Par Perfeito," might be more suitable for women seeking deeper connections. Medea shares her personal experience of almost missing out on meaningful relationships due to preconceived notions about physical preferences. She emphasizes the importance of staying open-minded and recognizing that meaningful connections may not always align with initial expectations.

Together, these insights from the coaches underscore the adaptability required in the world of online dating. Women are encouraged to approach dating apps with confidence and self-awareness, curating their profiles thoughtfully while remaining realistic about the potential for casual encounters and mismatches. By embracing flexibility and aligning their online presence with their true desires, women can better navigate both casual and serious relationships on these platforms.

The integration of digital tools into romantic practices has become a normalized part of modern dating, requiring a strategic and thoughtful approach. The coaches emphasize the importance of authenticity, emotional regulation, and adaptability when engaging with these platforms. Whether navigating the challenges of casual relationships or managing expectations on dating apps, the key lies in understanding the dynamics of online interaction while staying true to one's values and relationship goals. Through this balanced approach, digital tools can be harnessed effectively to foster meaningful connections and personal growth in the romantic sphere.

This is indicative of the wider changes within which digital tools are being increasingly integrated into romantic practices, where the everyday interactions via Tinder, Bumble, and

Instagram have become banal aspects of contemporary dating. It is conceptualized as a routinized social practice that is produced in cultural conventions and reproduced in repetition. Their reliance on dating apps and social media upholds the ways in which such platforms shape romantic expectations and redefine traditional dating structures. It is through curated profiles, strategic interactions, and deliberate digital presence that people interact with these tools to navigate the challenges of making and maintaining relationships today.

Coaches emphasize the importance of intentionality and alignment with personal values when engaging with digital tools. They guide participants to manage their online self, regulate emotions, and approach platforms strategically to attract compatible partners while maintaining authenticity. Participants, in turn, adapt these teachings by curating profiles, setting boundaries on app usage, and balancing the pursuit of meaningful connections with the casual norms prevalent in online dating. The repetition of these practices stabilizes and normalizes digital dating routines, making them integral to the evolving structures of romantic relationships. This interplay between cultural norms, digital tools, and individual actions highlights how modern romantic practices are deeply embedded in societal structures yet remain open to change through reflection and adaptation.

The concept of structure plays a major role in configuring the consumption practices of romantic relationships, especially within the digital era. Digital tools, such as dating apps and social media platforms, have become an integrated part of romantic practices, smoothly mixed into everyday life. The normalization of these technologies allows people to explore connections beyond traditional social circles, redefining how relationships are started and continued. Repetitive actions is central to sustaining social practices and stabilizing structures over time.

In the digital context, however, challenges such as these also include changes in behavior and strategies that users must make. For instance, managing online interactions often involves developing novel routines and skills to manage specific dynamics of online platforms, such as profile composition or reading online communication cues. From this perspective, the adjustments show the dynamic nature of structures, hence societal changes of routines when there is disruption or new technologies.

The habitual use of digital tools has also created social norms regarding love relationships. Digital dating has provided a conduit for normalizing casual, non-committal interaction by fostering new relational patterns. This evolution illustrates how routinized

interactions within these platforms contribute to the establishment of new social norms, emphasizing the pivotal role of routine reproduction and transformation in shaping and sustaining social structures.

These mechanisms-normalization, adaptation, and norm formation-are the means whereby structures are not only shaping but also constantly reshaping by the interplay between individual practices and broader technological and cultural changes. This shows the interlinkage of digital tools, romantic consumption practices, and changing social frameworks that underpin modern relationships.

4.9 Sociability

In the research, the centrality of social interaction in the lives of the interviewees became evident. Participation in support groups and communities provided an environment of belonging and constant exchange of experiences, strengthening collective learning and mutual support. The exchange of experiences in these spaces is essential to validate and reinforce the practices adopted, creating a cycle of encouragement and growth. Positive feedback from friends and mentors played a crucial role in the continuity of these practices, shaping behaviors and choices over time. Sociability also influenced how the interviewees interacted with objects and applied the knowledge gained, from online courses to social media, enriching the learning process and the implementation of physical and mental self-care activities. Thus, social interactions emerge as a key element in maintaining and strengthening everyday practices.

Support networks and friendships are frequently established through participation in online courses and communities, especially those focused on self-development or improving romantic relationships. In these spaces, emotional support and peer validation become essential elements that reinforce individual practices. By sharing their experiences, participants foster a deep sense of community, allowing them to learn from one another while building lasting bonds that extend far beyond the initial goals of the course. These connections provide not only emotional reinforcement but also help reduce feelings of isolation, offering a shared sense of understanding and belonging as women navigate the complexities of relationships. As participants testify:

"I love it, right? Laughs... It's funny because, I don't know... it seems like some people understand each other better... more than the people close by. Not that I don't have people close by that I can talk to, but with this friend of mine, I can talk to her without being judged, right?." Dinah

"It's something that... that we're all looking for in our process... which is... having a support network, right? You know? Because it's really lonely... Like, our mind goes, 'My God, I'm doing everything, going crazy. Am I right? Am I wrong? Am I imagining things? Am I losing it?' Our mind gets really crazy. So when you have a support network, it's like you have a consciousness outside of yourself, giving you some clarity, calmly, like they say, this isn't how it is! Giving you a different perspective, right? And we feel less crazy in the process. So I think... I think this is really important. I had a lot of that need, you know? Joana

“So, I feel it’s really about respect, admiration, you know? For understanding the greatness of the group, which is a wonderful group for sharing, and it helps me. I think people share with respect; I think the girls are empathetic. At least I’ve never felt... Well, sometimes I feel offended by something, but I understand those are my own issues, and I don’t stop expressing myself. Sometimes I get stressed out too, say something silly, but that’s what’s cool about it, there’s no fuss, it’s really nice. A group that’s been just as enriching, you know? Wow, I think the value of that group is way more than the value of the course!” It’s way, way more valuable. It’s great, right?” Suzanna

In the courses offered by Faust, Pandora, Circe, Nyx, and Icarus, all the coaches have established groups either on WhatsApp or Instagram. In courses involving Daily Challenges, such as those by Faust, Circe, and Nyx, participants are encouraged to share the challenges they completed and how they felt during the tasks. In contrast, the courses by Icarus and Pandora do not involve challenges but still encourage participants to exchange experiences in the WhatsApp group.

Each of these courses includes an inaugural lesson, where the coaches emphasize the importance of this collective exchange for joint learning, reinforcing content, and motivating participants to continue with the tasks. In this context, sociability is seen as a powerful tool for building self-awareness and support, helping participants to emotionally prepare and strengthen their path toward meaningful romantic relationships.

During the participant observation, the concepts of sociability and the development of support networks consistently surface as prominent themes within mentorship sessions, with each coach underscoring their significance in promoting emotional healing and individual development.

Icarus points out the importance of support networks cultivated during mentorships, where the participants are motivated to interact with each other. He commends the collaborative engagement and mutual support that has been displayed in the group, emphasizing the important role these connections play in emotional recovery and resilience. In this course setting, the

networks established provide the participants with a safe environment to share experiences and offer mutual support to one another, fostering belongingness and camaraderie.

Echo emphasizes the importance of intentionally creating support networks both within and outside the context of mentorship. He advises participants to actively take part in group activities that will enable them to meet potential partners and get in touch with like-minded individuals. Such networks are presented as indispensable not only for emotional support but also for personal growth and relational enrichment, which expands the impact of mentorship beyond the realm of romantic relationships.

Prometheus discusses sociability from a spiritual and relational perspective, suggesting that people involve themselves with supportive social contexts that align with their spiritual and relational goals. While he does not focus much on the nature of friendships, his sessions bring into relief the importance of developing relations with people of similar values so as to create an environment that supports growth and meaningful relationships.

Personal transformations, such as separations or changes in romantic status, often lead to changes in social circles, influencing both social and consumption practices. As women navigate new life stages, their social environments adjust, reflecting a need for support that aligns with their evolving identities and personal circumstances. This reconfiguration of social networks naturally influences their daily practices, including how they engage in consumption, such as participating in new communities, purchasing self-development courses, or seeking experiences that resonate with their changed priorities. The reshaping of these social and consumption practices highlights the dynamic relationship between individual transformation and the social spaces they occupy.

"Talking and trying to vent with the girls, you know? What happens is, most of my friends are... all married and such, living their lives. After all, I was married too, right? I had a 20-year marriage, three kids, and... when you're married... your environment is different, right? You frequent certain places. Friendships also tend to follow that same pattern, along with your age group and everything... So... I tried exploring other sides, other environments, made new friendships, single friends and all....." Aquila

"Yeah, and it bothers me, I don't like it. I also don't like it because sometimes I don't want to talk about married stuff. For example, I went to my friend's birthday party, and I was the only single one there, just the girls. But all of them were married with small children, and I wasn't. And then I was just there, not knowing what to say because the topics were, 'Oh, when did yours stop wearing diapers?' 'At what age did yours potty train?' 'Which school did yours go to?' or 'Oh, my husband...' Like, I don't have those kinds of things to talk about, you know? So, in a way, it bothers me. I put up with it

because they've been my friends for many years, and I like them a lot. I know they care about me, I know it's not on purpose, but I don't like it. After that birthday party, I got home and was like, 'Oh, boy...'" Pricilla

"What else can I say... Ah, there's something else I don't know... it happens... I fought with my best friend... So, I started to realize that she began judging my choices. You know? I started to be bold, posting some more sensual photos. I began to notice, and I kept realizing how toxic it was. The problem is that I also lost a lot of money in that relationship, right?" –Debra

The redefinition of social circles, prompted by personal changes, underscores the fluid nature of social and consumption practices. As old friendships and familiar environments lose their relevance, women seek out new communities that provide the emotional and practical support necessary for their personal growth. These new environments not only shape their social interactions but also influence their consumption habits, integrating new routines and practices that align with their evolving identities. This adjustment process is crucial in helping women adapt to their new realities, fostering both social and consumption practices that support their pursuit of relationships, self-discovery, and personal fulfillment.

Sociability is also perceived as a tool for self-knowledge and is not only about forming bonds but also about fostering self-discovery and personal growth. In these social environments, especially within online courses and virtual communities, women find spaces that encourage introspection and the validation of personal experiences. The feedback and shared experiences of others provide the context for women to explore their emotions and gain a better understanding of themselves, reinforcing the idea that self-knowledge is often a collective process.

"And I learn a lot, I think we learn a lot from experiences. Such and such happened. I did a course with P. M., and we created a very safe environment during the pandemic. We formed a group. But we would do what we called 'infinite live,' so we would do lives, like, log in just like we're here. And I remember I had a lot of emotional breakthroughs there, one person talking to another, like, 'One day I was forgotten, someone else was betrayed.' And I had many breakthroughs because each person was sharing, and I think things started clicking into place. Therapy is about releasing emotions. That's what... from all the things I've done, it's the emotions that are stuck there... So this exchange is an emotional release, right? So I think that... we learn when someone shares a situation, and we say, 'Oh, wow, this happened to me too, I've had the same reaction.' When they share their stories. What I write, what I'm feeling... I'm someone who works a lot with emotions because I had many issues talking about emotions in my life, in my upbringing." Sapphira

“Ah, yes! It’s one of the positive aspects that I find. Today I have friends... *laughs*... I have friends that I consider true friends, whom I made through these courses, and for me, it’s one of the highlights... I think it’s the most positive point, right? I did another in-person course as well... and today I have people I interact with, hang out with, talk to, and who have also become friends. We’ve even done business together... *laughs*... We talk, we listen to each other, right? We hear things... we exchange ideas, and we end up being influenced by our friends, right? There’s no way around it, you know? Sometime different from your friends... And some things I feel I learned from other friends who have gone through similar situations. And then I try to listen and sometimes even test it out...” Elizabeth

Through these social exchanges, women can reframe their experiences, making room for personal growth and the integration of new behaviors into their daily routines. Sociability becomes a tool not just for support but for achieving deeper insights into their own emotions and behaviors, allowing them to enter relationships with clearer expectations and a stronger sense of self.

. Individuals often discover new ways of thinking and behaving through course content, which they then share with friends and family, creating a ripple effect of influence. This sharing extends beyond the individual, inspiring others to reflect on their own behaviors and choices. Through this process, sociability extends its reach, shaping both personal practices and the social environments around the individual, further reinforcing the interconnectedness between personal growth and external social influence. It is possible to understand that by this quote:

“I have a friend who bought a course after me... Then she bought it, but she got a cheaper one. It’s by a gay guy who talks about sex. *Laugh*. Oh, and she had my passwords. We access each other's stuff and talk a lot... like, she called the next day to avoid seeming too emotional, so she wouldn’t be sending messages all the time. Waiting, you know? That’s how we talk, chat... one helps the other to keep things going... “Débora.

“This friend of mine, I haven’t quite managed to help yet because she’s very much in her masculine energy, which is why I made her to buy the course, and she did... but she’s still not quite there yet. But we exchanged a lot of thoughts, though it’s mostly me talking to her. One day, I took her phone, and I said, “Let’s change that Tinder bio right now...” Suzanna

“So, you know, I know that my change inspires my friends, you know? I know, I see it in practice. There are many things they sometimes come to talk about, that they open up to receive, but sometimes the timing is very different in a relationship that’s already very close, and we feel a bit awkward going into that space of... I think there are two things. We feel a bit guilty about taking a path that’s... that’s different, you know? Like, we end up feeling different... There’s this sense of belonging, of not feeling like you belong to that anymore, and at the same time, the... the guilt we

feel about being happy, about realizing that this path is changing, that we're opening up new possibilities. It's about sometimes looking at the person who's there, close to you. They're in the same place, living the same stories, going through the same challenges, without trying to do anything, you know? So, I think I see it a lot like this mix of these things. "Joanna

In this context, sociability is an element of consumptive practice on the part of women seeking a love relationship, where personal transformation is sought and created through shared relational growth. Sociality within online classroom settings, within communities, or groups generates emotional connections of feeling appreciated or recognized, producing a sense of belonging and mutual support. These connections solidify routinized practices, where the participants are constantly engaging in shared habits and discussions that strengthen their learning and emotional resilience, fitting well with the notion of the collective and repeated as central to maintaining social practices.

In other ways, the change in the composition of social networks mirrors personal change, such as separation or a change in identity, again pointing at the dynamic character of sociability. The women rearrange their social networks by including others that better reflect new notions of the self and goals for life, and routines are reshaped. This process rhymes with the perspective that social change is about transforming practices into emergent contexts and needs. Sociability becomes a medium of self-knowledge also since, through it, the participants reflect upon their thinking and get mutual feedback in social settings. Women thus develop much better self-realization and modify their journeys of personal growth. This agrees with the role of practice as a mediator of reflection and learning and shows how shared experiences take shape both at a personal and shared knowledge level.

Consumption of courses and participation in self-development communities change people and expand their impact on others in the group. Such interactions allow for the diffusion and reproduction of practices, where participants share learning and examples, shaping collective behaviors, while sociability enables the sustainability and evolution of practices within a shared social context.

4.10 Spirituality

The relationship between culture, consumption, and religiosity is marked by a dynamic of mutual influences and adaptations. Consumption is not merely a material act; it often intertwines with spiritual dimensions, becoming a way of expressing values, identity, and

meaning. Religiosity and spirituality not only shape consumption habits but also adapt to cultural demands, creating new ways to experience the sacred. The search for connection, well-being, and personal validation often manifests in consumption practices that transcend the mere acquisition of goods, carrying symbols and rituals that reflect contemporary spirituality.

Spirituality becomes a pathway to overcoming crises and personal separations. Many women report that, when facing moments of pain, illness, or emotional challenges, they turned to spirituality as a source of strength and renewal. This spiritual pursuit can involve the resumption of religious practices, such as prayer and reading sacred texts, as well as engaging in rituals that provide comfort and meaning.

There are accounts of women who, upon feeling emotionally lost, embark on a process of spiritual rediscovery, often re-evaluating their beliefs and returning to previously abandoned practices. Religious or spiritual books and content serve as tools for reflection and self-knowledge, offering guidance to cope with negative feelings and find inner peace.

Moreover, spirituality is perceived to achieve emotional balance. Even after a period of isolation or intense emotions, spiritual practice helps re-establish a healthy routine, promoting the understanding that life must be lived in a balance between the moment of feeling and the need to move forward. The process of returning to or intensifying this spiritual connection is, for many, a vital aspect of rebuilding one's identity and finding the strength to overcome personal adversities. Below are some statements that represent this subcategory.

Within this context, spirituality, which had not been considered an initial category, emerged significantly in the field research on consumption practices among women seeking relationship, thus a dimension on practices of women searching a love relationship. During the investigation, spirituality revealed itself as an important tool for personal development, allowing women to face crises and pursue a life more aligned with their values. Additionally, a relationship between spiritual connection and the expression of femininity emerged, which many women associate with building healthy relationships.

"After I got divorced, I came out of a cave. You know that book by Father Fábio, *Quem me sequestrou de mim?* I highly recommend it. He says that when we are 'kidnapped,' we start to see things from the perspective of the kidnapper. When you go back to seeing the light, the light blinds you. Yes. So, it was quite a process. Feminine, radiant feminine, something like that. It was like opening up a whole new universe because I finally realized I was caught up in this frenzy of 'I need what I need,' without believing that the universe flows. I don't know what you believe in, but... I believe the universe

flows. And I couldn't see that before. I was in a very difficult scarcity mindset, and for me, the courses were an eye-opener." Thabitha

"So... when I got... because I got sick, right? I was like a living dead... Then I started to get books, I started to get books and I was reading... reading, like... Some of them were in PDF, I don't remember the names very well, but I started reading... But I have three here... that I really loved. The first is Café com Deus Pai, I read it every day... Then there's The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fck*, and the other one... it's about religion, but I don't remember the name now... it's in the bedroom. I was raised Catholic, right? But... I was... kind of distant, you know? Then, I suffered a lot... A lot... And I started to cling to it, you know? Only God... really... I started going to mass... I'm going every week, and reading Café com Deus Pai... It's a devotional, right? You have to read one page a day. I liked this book, I liked it, I really did!" Eunice

"I... I have always been a Christian, right? Because for a while I went to church and all... but then I stopped... And it's like this, I left religion, I left religion and just... left it. The religion I used to go to... made you feel very guilty about many things, you know? And then I distanced myself a little... Now I am trying to return, to make it part of my routine, you know? The habit course I took... explains it like this... Ah... This question of blessing my own life... For myself... for my needs and also for the relationship aspect, to give me that inner peace, you understand?" Mary Magdalene

Participants reflected that a spiritual connection not only promotes personal development but also enhances the expression of femininity, positively influencing the pursuit of healthy relationships. From this perspective, many women believe that by placing spirituality at the center of their lives, they become more aware of their own essence and femininity, which in turn attracts partners who are more compatible and aligned with their values.

This aspect highlights how spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation, and the adoption of sacred routines, are seen as ways to strengthen feminine energy. Spirituality is associated with a state of balance and well-being, which is reflected in attitudes, self-confidence, and how these women position themselves in relation to love and relationships. The belief that a connection with the divine can bring clarity and attract the right partner is central here, leading to the idea that the development of genuine spirituality transforms not only the individual but also the quality of the relationships they establish.

By incorporating these practices into their daily lives, many women report a change in how they perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. They understand that cultivating their spirituality allows them to express a fuller, more sensitive, and receptive form of femininity. This deep connection with themselves, mediated by spirituality, is seen as the key to attracting and building healthier and more authentic relationships.

"Climbing these steps of consciousness is very easy for me now, obviously... There are weeks when we don't want to do anything, but I still do it, you know? It's like, I can

negotiate less with myself in this regard because I have a lot of motivation... It's that thing Prometheus says: first, your relationship with God, then with yourself... And lastly, others... So, this constancy and awareness, you know? It was after Prometheus's course..." Joanna

"I also follow a prophet I discovered... He's evangelical, but he's angelic, universal... And he makes prophecies and all that. But then, girl... I started following him, and he really teaches this connection with God, you know? I even took workshops with him... Wow, it was so, so good... So now I'm very connected to spirituality. I always was, you know? I'm Catholic, but... it's this thing of improvement... I intensified this connection, you know? And I think that... it removes all this anxiety, you know? I am... I used to be... very anxious, you know? It removes that... it goes... it really enters... this connection with God, with Christ, you know? With the 'I Am.' I am passionate about Jesus Christ, very passionate. But it's not that... that religious thing, no! It's about... true spirituality... And I draw all my strength from this." Hagar

."Then there's Prometheus; he talks a lot about spirituality. There are other coaches too; it's not just them. They have the Body, Mind, and Spirit pillar, and they focus a lot on relationships and finding a partner. Ari talks less about God, but that's her methodology. One thing I found very interesting, Mel, is that when I started studying relationships, I realized how much it's connected to the relationship with God. The other day, to decide if I really wanted to commit or not, I made a list of pros and cons, and I saw that the difficulty I have with my boyfriend is the same difficulty I have with God—being able to let go and allow things to happen in His way. And many things... we could really trust in the guidance of the person, I mean of the man..." Rebecca

In the documentary analysis, spirituality emerged with prominence, exploring how spiritual connection is used to express femininity and attract healthy relationships. The courses and eBooks frequently emphasize that this spiritual connection allows women to access a deeper, more authentic energy, directly influencing how they perceive themselves and how they behave in romantic interactions.

For instance, before a date, Faust advises women not only to prepare physically but also energetically. He suggests choosing an outfit that enhances a sense of power and sensuality, accompanied by listening to music that elevates personal energy. According to him, this ensures that a woman enters a date with confidence and positivity. Additionally, breathing exercises and meditation are recommended to help control anxiety and maintain focus on the present, creating a more stable and receptive emotional presence during the encounter.

Circe, in turn, connects spirituality to ancestral legacy. She encourages women to reflect on the efforts of their ancestors, reminding them that their achievements were made to provide a lighter life for future generations. For her, honoring this legacy is a way to cultivate spirituality in everyday life, bringing a more fluid and calm approach to modern life experiences, especially in relationships.

In a similar vein, Athena links spirituality to accepting one's ancestors and personal history. She argues that to achieve a full sense of individuality and self-esteem, one must recognize and accept family history. For Athena, this process of individuation, which includes acceptance of one's parents and their influences, is crucial for personal development and the creation of healthier, more conscious relationships.

Nyx reinforces the importance of spirituality to reconnect with femininity. She suggests that women spend time dedicated to spirituality, whether through meditation, prayer, reading, or contemplation, which strengthens the connection to their feminine essence. For her, this spiritual connection is a central element in accessing internal power and using it effectively in personal and romantic interactions.

Medea, on the other hand, highlights the role of the subconscious in spiritual practices. She believes that prayers, mantras of gratitude, forgiveness, and love can be powerful tools for reprogramming the mind and, consequently, attracting more positive relationships. Medea teaches that working with the subconscious mind through meditations and mantras before sleep prepares women for a healthier and more satisfying love life. Additionally, in her courses, Medea offers guided meditations aimed at healing the inner masculine, activating the feminine, and releasing limiting beliefs, emphasizing that these spiritual practices help promote emotional and mental balance.

Hermes focuses on the importance of self-forgiveness and acceptance as part of the spiritual journey. He encourages the practice of meditation to embrace and understand one's emotions, especially those related to guilt or shame. For him, meditation is a powerful tool for emotional transformation, helping women improve their self-image and, thus, positively influence their relationships.

Spirituality, as addressed by the coaches, is viewed as a central force for strengthening femininity, improving self-image, and promoting more meaningful relationships. Whether through meditation practices, mantras, ancestral connection, or emotional control, spirituality is consistently mentioned as a powerful tool to access the feminine essence and positively impact love life.

In the participant observation of Prometheus' mentorship sessions, spirituality emerges as a central theme, framed as a vital tool for personal development and relational harmony. Prometheus underscores the importance of spiritual devotion, such as maintaining a routine of

prayer and cultivating a connection with God, as foundational practices for women aspiring to become matriarchs. He presents spirituality as a means for self-reflection, fostering resilience, and aligning with personal values, enabling women to navigate emotional challenges and relational difficulties with greater grace and purpose.

Prometheus also emphasizes the interplay between spirituality and femininity, suggesting that a deep spiritual connection enhances a woman's natural feminine energy—characterized by traits like nurturing, grace, and emotional intelligence. He advocates that prioritizing spirituality helps women maintain emotional balance and avoid overinvesting in unreciprocated relationships, instead fostering connections rooted in mutual respect and reciprocity. By integrating spiritual practices into daily routines, women are encouraged to embody the role of matriarchs—figures of maturity, self-awareness, and relational wisdom—positioning themselves to build meaningful, balanced relationships aligned with their spiritual and personal aspirations.

Spirituality is a dimension in personal development and the dynamics of relationships. It acts as a seminal tool in self-reflection, emotional resilience, and alignment towards personal values. The discussed practices in prayer, meditation, and the connection with a higher power prove crucial in overcoming emotional problems, understanding the self, and meeting life transitions with balance.

Spiritual practices integrated into daily routines build up nurturing qualities, emotional intelligence, and inner harmony that add to personal fulfillment and lay a better foundation for meaningful relationships. Spirituality shapes perceptions of femininity and relational dynamics, enabling women to align their inner sense of self with external expressions of confidence and authenticity. Rituals and meditative exercises become potent tools in balancing emotional energies and attracting healthy connections. In these two ways, spirituality plays both the role of a coping strategy and influences transformation to shape one's self-identity and relational outcome. Spirituality melds into the mundane practices of daily life; as such, its role vis-a-vis broader social-relational contexts must be regarded as active-agency-in-exchange.

4.11 Emotions

Emotions are not merely reflections of cognitive dispositions or isolated drivers of behavior; instead, they are embedded within the broader nexus of elements that shape, sustain, and adapt social practices. Emotions influence how routines are enacted, serving as modulators

that interact with knowledge, material elements, and social contexts. In the interviews conducted, emotions emerge as deeply intertwined with practices, functioning as both responses to and reinforcers of the dynamics within relational and consumption practices.

The documentary analyses also demonstrate that the pursuit of self-development courses on relationships is deeply embedded with emotions like desire, need, distress, and anxiety. These emotions, within the wider schema of practices, interact with knowledge, social norms, and material tools in motivating individuals to seek answers for emotional and romantic challenges. Participation in programs and therapies promising increased self-awareness and relational betterment illustrates how emotions are situated in both routines and cultural contexts that shape and, in turn, are reshaped by these consumption practices.

In relationship-oriented courses and eBooks, emotions are consistently engaged as part of the personal development process and romantic encounter. These materials guide women in managing their emotional experience by incorporating emotional awareness into general routines of self-reflection and behavioral adjustment. Participants are also encouraged to practice emotional balance through activities such as keeping themselves in check to avoid desperation and becoming aware of their emotional cycles that may link to unresolved psychological issues. Through this, they better understand themselves within a wider context of the preparation for an ultimate relationship.

According to Practice Theory, the agent is conceptualized as an intersection of body, mind, and social practices. The women of this research show how consumption of self-help courses is implicated in past relational experiences of heartbreak, rejection, or emotional manipulation. Such experiences are filled with emotional injuries, like hurt, disappointment, and insecurity that make them approach external tools and frameworks for self-healing and relational growth. They seek to understand relational patterns and emotional vulnerabilities through the courses. In these interviews, it becomes clear that participants have a great desire to reflect on the past, transform emotional responses, and be validated, and this illustrates how emotional experiences inform their engagement with practices of consumption and self-development.

Following Reckwitz (2002), agents are carriers of social practices, and emotions are embedded in these practices as interconnected elements of routines, actions, and shared meanings. In such a context, it is believed that the search for self-help courses by agents seeking

to overcome trauma in the past represents how emotional experiences can never be isolated forces but always intertwined within acts of performance and reproduction of consumption practices. Personal and social narratives cultivate states of anxiety and desperation that turn individuals into easy prey to the repeated consumption of self-help courses. This can be reproduced via marketing that appeals to such emotions, framing such courses as a response to romantic struggles and offering their promise of dramatic breakthroughs. These are affective states of uncertainty and hope negotiated within broader routines and social contact rather than primary driving forces, in a way that reinforces the engagement of the agents with these consumption practices, reflecting the greater cultural context of romantic success.

Body within Practice Theory illustrates how embodied practices, encompassing physical and mental activities, are central to social life. The body is not merely a passive entity but an active participant in the execution and reproduction of social practices, integrating routines, meanings, and motivations (Reckwitz, 2002). Emotions, as part of this embodied experience, are expressed and experienced through the body, influencing practices such as self-care, self-esteem cultivation, and body performance. For the women in this study, physical activities and routines are shaped by broader social and cultural narratives, which include emotional expressions like joy, anxiety, or confidence. Rather than acting as standalone forces, emotions are embedded within these embodied practices, reinforcing how self-perception and physical routines are negotiated within the cultural context of romantic and social expectations.

The pursuit of self-esteem and confidence shapes practices of physical care, from undergoing aesthetic treatments such as Botox to maintaining skincare routines. These practices are not simply emotionally driven but are situated within wider social practices that link appearance with self-worth and social acceptance. Positive feelings of attractiveness may reinforce these practices, while dissatisfaction may lead to the adoption of new habits. Rather than theorizing the emotions as autonomous drivers, this perspective emphasizes their embedment in practice and demonstrates how bodily habits and self-awareness are constituted by the interplay between cultural narratives, social norms, and personal desires.

Objects, as revealed in the interviews, play a central role in facilitating physical and cognitive actions while being embedded in the broader emotional and social context of practices. Interactions with objects, such as clothing, accessories, or makeup, reflect and reinforce behaviors tied to cultural norms of femininity and self-expression. For instance,

purchasing these items is not solely a functional or stylistic choice but part of practices that align self-presentation with societal expectations. Similarly, self-development courses are more than educational tools; they are integrated into routines that contribute to self-awareness and relational aspirations. This perspective highlights how emotions are intertwined with objects and practices, supporting identity construction and the perpetuation of culturally informed behaviors.

In this research, knowledge manifests as practical skills, relational strategies, and insights gained through courses, personal experiences, and social interactions. It is embedded in routines and shared within social contexts, shaping how individuals behave and connect with others. Emotions interact with knowledge, influencing how individuals internalize and apply what they learn. For instance, self-improvement courses provide tools to navigate relational dynamics, where emotional readiness complements the practical application of new behaviors.

Knowledge in the context of developing relationships is an active force in reshaping identity and behavior. Thus, study participants identified that relational knowledge is acquired in a course, book, and group learning that helped them adjust to the ever-changing personal and social contexts. Emotions like motivation or the urge to grow often characterize the process of learning and stimulate reflection and integration of strategies in everyday life. This interplay is underlined to show how emotions may enrich, yet do not constitute, the transformation of the self. Discourse analysis of participants' narratives points to the function of discourse in structuring social practices and belonging in learning contexts, such as courses and support groups. Participants use discourse to share experiences, get advice, and manage relational difficulties by opening up spaces for social norms to be reaffirmed, questioned, or adapted. While emotions play a supporting role, in these discursive practices they are integrated as participants express vulnerabilities and gain validation to develop mutual understanding and collective learning.

Participants also discuss how their language varies through such interactions, especially that they are more assertive and reflective in communicating. Courses and group processes focus on ways of articulating emotions and dealing with conflicts in a way that helps the shift from spontaneity to thoughtful and reflective communication. Such a shift in discourse will help interpersonal relationships move toward clarity, empathy, and congruence with social and

relational contexts. Emotions, while present, act like a secondary layer, enriching the discursive process rather than defining it.

The analysis of structure in romantic practices, drawn from Practice Theory, highlights how repetitive routines shape interactions and social norms. Romantic engagement on digital platforms like Tinder and Bumble exemplifies the habitual nature of human action, where repeated behaviors are shaped by cultural expectations and social structures. The normalization of digital tools in romantic pursuits reflects the routinization central to Practice Theory, demonstrating how daily actions contribute to the stability and evolution of social frameworks.

These routines, however, are not static and often confront users' expectations, particularly when platforms prioritize casual interactions over meaningful connections. This misalignment can lead to a reevaluation of strategies and behaviors as individuals navigate the dynamics of online dating. Adaptations, such as balancing superficial interactions with the search for deeper relationships, illustrate Practice Theory's concept of structural rupture, where established routines are challenged and reconfigured.

While emotions may accompany these adaptations, they serve as contextual elements rather than central drivers. The process of reevaluating and adjusting routines highlights the flexibility of social structures and their ability to evolve in response to changing practices and external influences. Digital dating platforms exemplify how structural routines stabilize romantic practices, while disruptions prompt innovation and adaptation, ensuring the continuous transformation of social structures in response to broader cultural and technological shifts.

The mind, within the framework of Practice Theory, serves as a critical component of social practices, operating alongside bodily activities and shaping human behavior through tacit knowledge, motivations, and emotions (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014). It manifests itself in routine actions—such as understanding, desire, and practical know-how—guiding behaviors in a largely automatic and socially embedded manner. Knowledge, motivations, and emotions do not exist in isolation; they are intertwined and co-constitutive, operating within shared social and cultural contexts.

While it is true that Practice Theory does acknowledge the power of emotions within mental processes, on many occasions, Practice Theory seems to subsume emotions under cognitive or motivational dimensions of human conduct. Yet emotions are more than supporting

elements; they can become dynamic in social practice, shaping habits and behavior in ways that cannot be reduced to rational or merely cognitive dimensions. "This becomes particularly evident within processes such as identity construction and in cultural idealizations."

Identity formation is developed in the interaction between reflective cognitive practices and emotional impulses. As much as the mind provides the reflective capacity to identify and articulate desires, values, and goals, emotions often serve as the very motor of such identification—that is, the emotional urge to be validated, appreciated, and accepted. In the same vein, cultural idealizations are themselves not just cognitive but are suffused with emotional subcurrents that inform and guide perceptions of what ideal relationships are like and should be.

These examples illustrate how emotions are inextricably linked with, yet irreducible to, cognitive and motivational forces. Rather, emotions are autonomous, integrated elements that catalyze and mediate the transformation of practices. Indeed, changes in the estimation of one's identity and relational expectations often first arise from emotional experiences, which may then be followed by a cognitive reflection and adjustment. Thus, emotions might well be seen as a key toward the initiation and perpetuation of change within social practices.

While knowledge proceeds via accumulation and application, emotions are immediate, embodied responses to social and personal contexts. They form part of the flow of social practices and participate in sustaining or disrupting routines. Approaching emotions as an integral dimension of social practices can help us understand how individuals navigate and change their behaviors through knowledge and norms but also through their emotional engagements with the world.

Recognizing this interplay in this dynamic most definitely overshadows one in the attempt to unravel dynamics of construction of social practices. It means that an effective approach will seek to contextualize emotions not as primary motivators but rather continuous and fluid powers that interact with beliefs, norms, and habits continuously rewriting practice in concern to social and personal contexts.

5 RESEARCH REVELATIONS

*“I wanna know what love is
I want you to show me
I wanna feel what love is
I know you can show me...”*

I Want to Know What Love Is - Foreigner

In the chapter, the analysis of the results obtained will be conducted, guided by the specific objectives outlined throughout this study. The first focus will be on identifying the symbolic significance attributed by women to the experience of being in a romantic relationship, aiming to understand how this relationship is perceived as a social and personal marker, with implications for self-image and expectations of personal success.

Next, the analysis will describe the components that constitute the consumption practices of these women, focusing on body, mind, objects, knowledge, discourse, structure, and agent. Each of these components will be addressed individually, highlighting their essential role in the consumption behavior related to the search for romantic relationships, particularly in the context of acquiring info products.

Subsequently, the section will emphasize how these elements intertwine to shape consumption practices in an interdependent manner. It will explore how all the components interact among them influencing how women navigate the search for solutions to their relationships through courses and digital products.

Finally, an analysis will be conducted on the dynamics of production and reproduction of these consumption practices, examining how women not only consume info products but also how their practices are continuously adjusted and reinforced over time. This will allow for a deeper understanding of how consumption evolves over time and how it is linked to the cultural narratives and social structures that guide these practices.

5.1 Identifying the symbolic significance, for women, of being in a romantic relationship

Consumption is conceived as a set of meanings, where the consumer constructs their narrative from everyday practices, pluralities, and symbols (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). This understanding of consumption as a symbolic process allows for an analysis of the cultural and social dynamics that influence consumption practices and choices, including those related to the search for romantic relationships.

Romantic relationships hold significant symbolic aspects, characterized by cultural and social expectations, public validation, gender roles, financial stability, and the alignment of values and lifestyles. These elements illustrate how relationships transcend the personal realm, being influenced by broader social, cultural, and economic factors. The pressure of forming and maintaining relationships is a strong feature of social dynamics, where cultural expectations equate personal and social success with being in a relationship. The romantic relationship tends to be the pivot on which identity construction rests, while the absence of a relationship is perceived as a void or a sign of incompleteness. This is the pressure of strong social norms that treasure conformity to standards regarding marriage and partnerships, ascribing achievement or accomplishment status to being in a relationship.

This seems incomplete, even when these women are very successful in every other aspect of their lives. The social dynamics more often grant a higher status to married women over unmarried or divorced ones, that marriage completes a woman, and gives her more social dignity. This has resulted in extreme pressure from society to persist in relationships, even abusive, for the sake of being seen as stable and fulfilled.

Family and social networks further amplify these expectations, often linking personal worth and success to being in a committed relationship. This creates internal conflicts as individuals struggle to balance personal aspirations with external pressures. The expectation to prioritize marriage or partnerships can lead to feelings of inadequacy when such goals do not align with individual desires, fostering frustration and tension in navigating these societal norms.

Another recurring theme that has been there is the aspect of public acknowledgment to be a marker of commitment. In digital times, being publicly known about one's relationships, especially through social media, has become symbolic of trusting, loyal, and validating your partner. The visibility of a relationship to the public often serves as proof of its viability and stability and interlinks personal validation with social recognition in contemporary romantic dynamics.

Traditional rituals, such as wedding ceremonies, hold profound symbolic value, extending beyond personal milestones to serve as markers of recognition and respect in broader social and professional contexts. The formal acknowledgment of a relationship through these rituals underscores their role as public affirmations of commitment and security. Elements like

the exchange of rings function as enduring symbols of dedication, emphasizing the societal validation and protection that such traditions confer on relationships.

The formalization of relationships through explicit gestures, such as proposals, carries significant symbolic importance. It provides emotional reassurance and serves as a clear affirmation of commitment. The absence of such formal gestures often creates uncertainty and disappointment, reflecting the value placed on explicit acknowledgments in romantic relationships. Traditional gender expectations continue to shape relationship dynamics, perpetuating roles that assign caregiving and nurturing responsibilities to women while positioning men as primary providers and decision-makers. These norms contribute to imbalances in both domestic and professional spheres, where women often face challenges to their authority and recognition, further reinforcing existing disparities.

Expectations surrounding financial provision and stability often play a significant role in partner selection, reflecting enduring cultural norms that associate financial security with relational stability. While not necessarily seeking wealth, individuals frequently value partners who can contribute financially and provide a sense of stability within the relationship.

Educational level and social status are also perceived as important factors in fostering compatibility and shared interests. These aspects are often linked to the ability to engage in meaningful interactions and to ensure a sense of alignment in long-term partnerships. Lifestyle compatibility further emerges as a critical element in sustaining harmony within relationships. Shared habits, routines, and values, particularly in areas like health, well-being, and daily activities, are viewed as essential for maintaining balance and fostering enduring compatibility. Differences in lifestyle, by contrast, are seen as potential sources of conflict, highlighting the importance of alignment in this area.

My research revealed the deeply symbolic nature of romantic relationships and how they are shaped by sociocultural and economic factors. The pursuit of the relationship is not just driven by personal desires but are also linked to broader societal meanings and symbols. Romantic relationships serve as a form of social capital, reinforcing or challenging cultural expectations and norms, particularly concerning gender roles, social status, and public validation. Table 11 explains the symbolics aspects of the pursuit of love relationships.

Table 11 – Description of the Symbolic Aspects on the pursuit of a relationship

Symbolic Aspect	Description
Social Pressure to Form and Maintain Relationships	Being in a relationship is seen as a personal and social achievement. Female success is linked to stability in a relationship.
Public Validation on social media	The importance of being publicly recognized, especially on social media, to legitimize and consolidate the relationship.
Preservation of Traditional Gender Roles	Men should assume leadership and provider roles, while women are encouraged to adopt supportive roles, following traditional gender expectations.
Expectations of Financial Provision	The expectation that men should be financial providers, women seek financially stable partners for security.
Compatibility in Lifestyle and Values	Compatibility in terms of health, routines, and lifestyle is seen as essential for relationship harmony b, with a focus on shared habits and values.

Source: Information from the research.

5.2 Description of the elements that are integral to the consumption practices of women seeking romantic relationships through the consumption of info products.

The consumption practices of women seeking romantic relationships through information products (such as courses, eBooks, and coaching) can be analyzed using the elements of Practice Theory: body, mind, objects, knowledge, discourse, structure, and agent (Reckwitz, 2002). This framework provides an understanding of how women engage with self-development materials to improve their romantic lives, illustrating how these practices are shaped by the interplay of physical actions, mental processes, material objects, and social norms. I describe those elements, and Sociability, that are integral to the consumption practices of women seeking romantic relationships through the consumption of info products. Emotions and spirituality play a different role when analyzing women's practice. They are rather dimensions in practices at this specific context.

5.2.1 Agent

Agents not only reproduce practices but actively adapt to changing materials, skills, and meanings (Shove, et al, 2012). It means the agents are not isolated from the structures around them, but instead are embedded within them, constantly engaging with and reshaping these structures (Warde, 2014; Warde, 2017; Shove et al. 2012). The agent is thus shaped both by practices and an active force that reshapes them through repeated engagement, reflecting a constant negotiation between individual behavior and broader social systems (Shove et al, 2012).

Agents are not simply rational actors or passive receivers of social norms but are carriers of practices that are deeply rooted in both bodily and mental activities. This view emphasizes that agents are repositories of cultural knowledge, emotions, desires, and skills, all of which are enacted and reproduced through social practices. (Reckwitz, 2002). Agents operating within a network of practices, but he underscores that these practices are shaped by collective symbolic structures that give meaning to individual actions (Warde, 2014; Warde, 2017; Shove et al. 2012; Reckwitz, 2002). In this sense, agents are always negotiating between their own individual competencies and the broader cultural systems that shape their actions.

Women, as agents, use consumption practices as part of an emotional healing process. Women seek self-development info-products to deal with past traumas, specifically related to failed love relationships. This behavior aligns with the idea that the agent is not an autonomous actor but is shaped by their social context and past experiences (Warde, 2014). In this context, the consumption of these info-products is not merely an individual choice but part of a broader set of social practices aimed at healing and personal growth, where traumas become catalysts for new practices.

This search for emotional healing is intensified by the marketing strategies employed by coaches, who exploit the emotional vulnerabilities of these women. Agents are deeply immersed in social structures, and marketing acts as an external force influencing these practices (Shove et al, 2012). By using marketing as an emotional trigger, women are driven to continue consuming these products and courses, perpetuating a cycle of consumption directly linked to the promise of romantic success. This demonstrates that agents' actions are shaped not only by their traumas but also by external forces that reinforce consumption patterns through social and cultural pressures.

Women engage in self-development practices that initially aim to improve their romantic prospects but evolve into a broader focus on personal growth. This demonstrates that agents are in constant adaptation (Warde, 2014; Shove et al., 2012), and this adaptation is evidenced when women begin to focus less on romantic success and more on enhancing their self-esteem and self-worth. As they engage in these courses, they are not only seeking partners but also transforming their perception of themselves. Thus, agents are carriers of practices rooted in both bodily and mental activities, with these practices both shaping and being shaped by their identities and self-assessments (Reckwitz, 2002).

The process of continuous evolution, where women transition from basic courses to more advanced programs, committing to a cycle of continuous learning, highlights how agents are always integrating new behaviors and skills into their lives, demonstrating the adaptability and fluidity of social practices. For Reckwitz (2002), this shows that the agent is not just an executive of practices but also a repository of knowledge and skills, evolving as new cultural and social elements are incorporated

As agents adapt their practices, their goals often shift from achieving romantic success to broader personal fulfillment. This ongoing transformation reflects their flexibility and commitment to self-improvement, as they progress through varying levels of self-help programs. By internalizing cultural knowledge, emotional awareness, and relational skills, agents refine their daily practices, demonstrating the dynamic interplay between personal growth and social expectations. Together, these elements showcase how agents are both products of their social environments and active participants in reshaping their pathways toward personal and relational success. Figure 3 demonstrates the Agent elements.

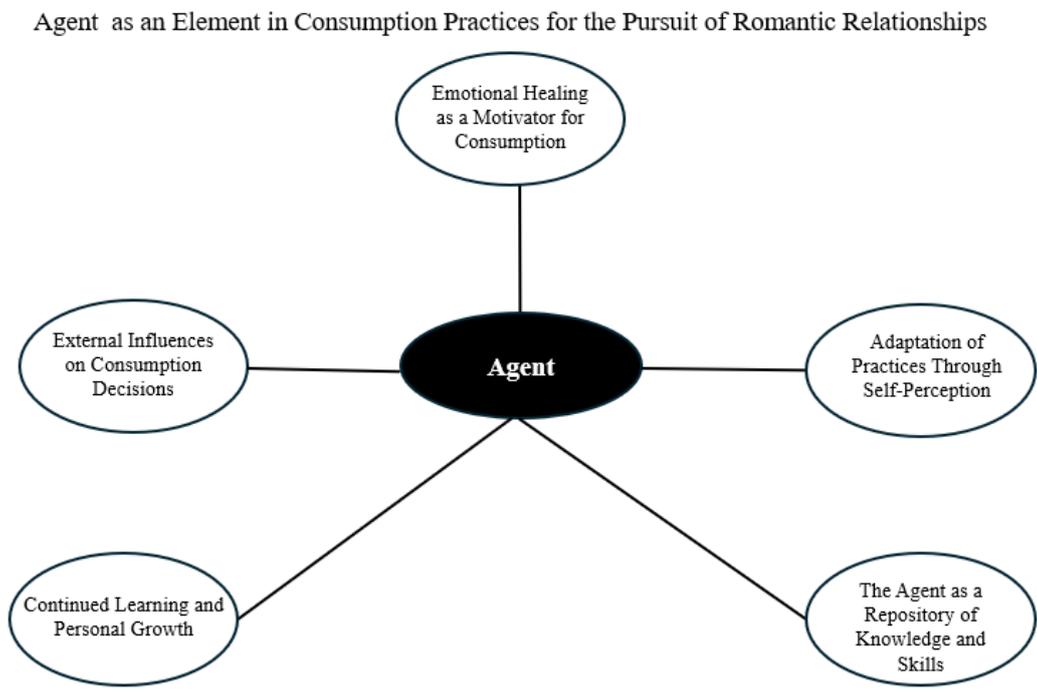


Figure 3 – Agent Elements

Source: Information from the research

5.2.2 Body

In the context of Practice Theory, the body emerges as a central element in the reproduction and performance of social practices, though different theorists highlight distinct aspects of this role. Shove et al. (2012) position the body as both an object and an active performer in social practices, where materials like beauty products and fitness equipment, along with the necessary competences to use them, shape and transform the body. These practices revolve around societal expectations, continuously reshaping the body through interactions with objects and societal meanings, such as attractiveness or health.

Warde (2014), on the other hand, emphasizes the habitual nature of bodily actions, where the body becomes a site of practical knowledge. In his view, routines like cooking or exercising are not the result of deliberate decisions but are embedded in everyday behavior, with the body serving as a vehicle for maintaining social order through its participation in these practices. Reckwitz (2002) takes this further by framing the body as not just a performer but a repository of social and cultural knowledge.

In my empirical research, the body emerges as an essential tool for the construction and expression of identity, self-confidence, and conformity with social norms. Women engage in these bodily practices with the clear objective of forming love relationships, using their bodies as a means of attractiveness and alignment with widely accepted societal standards of aesthetics and health.

Physical Care, through practices such as the use of skincare products, aesthetic procedures, and wardrobe choices, appears as a determining factor in building self-esteem and confidence. These physical routines are essential for women to feel more attractive, molding themselves according to cultural standards that value physical appearance and health. According to Reckwitz (2002), these practices are performative routines, in which the body actively works to meet social expectations of beauty.

In addition to appearance care, Mental and Emotional Health Practices also play a crucial role in maintaining self-esteem. Mental well-being is seen as an integral part of the search for a partner, with routines of gratitude and "emotional detox" contributing to emotional regulation and the strengthening of self-confidence. For Shove et al. (2012), these practices connect acquired competencies and symbolic meanings of emotional balance, demonstrating how the body mediates emotional transformation and self-care.

Engagement in pleasurable activities, such as dancing, sports, and hobbies, also contributes to self-esteem and confidence. These physical activities foster a positive connection with the body and are seen as forms of self-expression and personal fulfillment. Alan Warde (2014) highlights that these are routine practices that reflect acquired skills, with the body serving as an active means of social integration and expression of individuality. Women use these activities both to care for their bodies and to display an attractive and active identity. Physical Exercise is an essential practice for building an attractive and healthy body. Women report that exercising improves their self-esteem, aligning their bodies with social norms of health and fitness. Exercise, therefore, serves to adapt to both internal well-being standards and external expectations of attractiveness.

Aesthetic Self-Care, including practices such as makeup, hair care, and beauty treatments, is an important means of reinforcing social identity and increasing attractiveness. For Shove et al. (2012), the use of materials like cosmetics and clothing shapes the body to fulfill its role in social interactions, reflecting cultural norms of appearance. Aesthetic self-care thus helps women present themselves according to social expectations of beauty and elegance.

Physical Transformation, such as the pursuit of weight loss or muscle gain, reflects women's commitment to improving their physical appearance to attract partners. This ongoing transformation process is a way to align the body with socially established health and beauty standards. Reckwitz (2002) states that this transformation is a routine bodily practice, where the body adapts to both personal needs and cultural expectations.

The use of the body movement as an expression of identity also plays a crucial role. Body language, movements, and posture are used by women to express femininity and individuality. Conscious choices about how to move and present themselves physically help construct and reinforce their personal identity. In this context, the body is used as a vehicle to convey delicacy, confidence, and sensuality, essential elements in the pursuit of romantic attractiveness. Therefore, body movement becomes a strategic form of communication and expression of intent in romantic interactions.

In the empirical data, it was observed that the body is a tool for transformation, expression, and adaptation in consumption practices focused on self-development and romantic relationships. Women shape their bodies through physical, aesthetic, and mental health routines, reflecting not only their own goals but also social expectations of attractiveness and personal

value. The body, in this context, is not merely a passive object but an active agent that incorporates social and cultural practices.

The role of the body underlines body-mind integration and social performance in its function as a mediator between emotional and mental health and as a tool of social interaction, continuously shaped and performed to meet both internal needs for balance and external demands for acceptance and romantic attraction. These elements reveal the body as a central axis in the construction of identity and in the search for emotional and social confirmation in the romantic context. Figure 4 demonstrates the body element.

Body as an Element in Consumption Practices for the Pursuit of Romantic Relationships

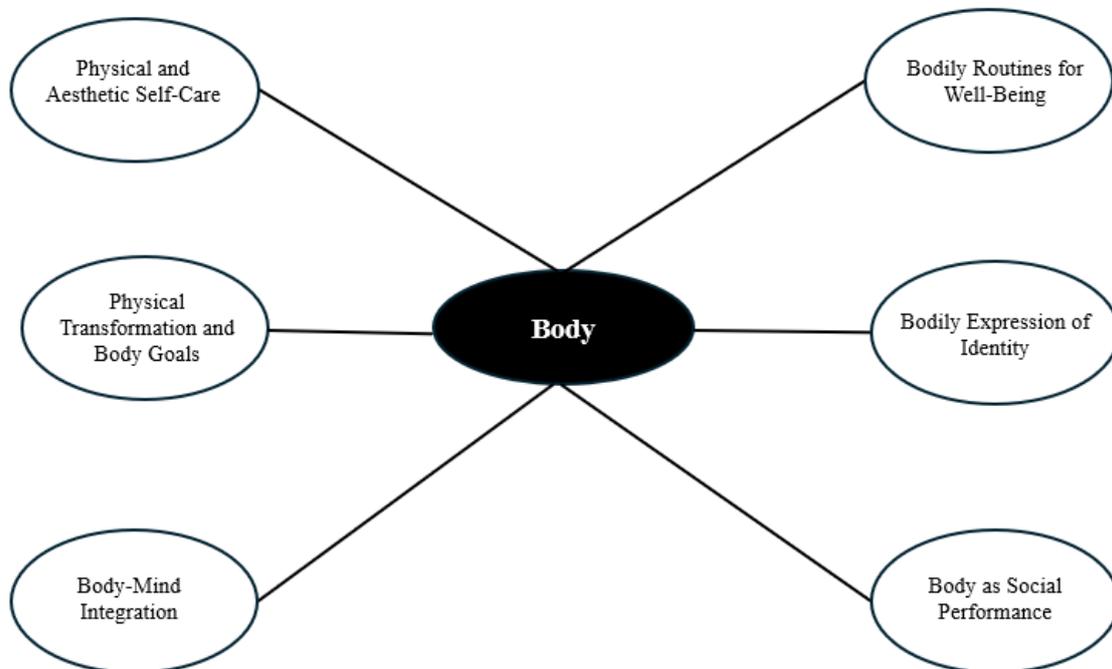


Figure 4 - Body element.

Source Information from the research

5.2.3 Discourse

Regarding discourse, practice theorists offer important insights into its integration with social practices. Discourse in shapes social and consumption practices, it is a tool for explaining how individuals internalize and reproduce social norms. Discourse also permeates cultural practices, guiding the dispositions that influence individuals' choices and behaviors, such as consumption

or engagement in cultural activities. (Warde, 2014). In this sense, discourse organizes and informs practical actions within the broader context of cultural and social norms.

Discourse as seen as embedded in the symbolic meanings that structure social practices. So, discourse is part of the "meaning" element within practices, which, along with materials and competencies, forms the foundation of social activities. The way people talk about, understand, and communicate objects or activities shapes social routines and consumption practices. (Shove et al., 2012). Discourse is thus seen as an integral part of how individuals engage in and internalize practices, influenced by cultural and social factors.

Reckwitz (2002) positions discourse as a central component in the structure of social practices, emphasizing its role in shaping symbolic and cognitive interpretations of the social world. He argues that discourse is not limited to spoken language but is a deeper component that influences how individuals perceive and assign meaning to their actions and social interactions. This author views discourse as part of a "shared knowledge" that collectively shapes the way people interpret and give meaning to the world, making it a fundamental element in the reproduction of everyday social practices.

The empirical findings on discourse illustrate how communication operates as a core social practice, shaping and being shaped by the routines and interactions of women in romantic and social contexts. Reckwitz, Warde, and Shove et al. all emphasize the role of discourse in constructing, maintaining, and transforming social practices. These theoretical concepts align with the ways participants in relationship courses adapt language strategies, manage interactions, and express emotions in various contexts, particularly within romantic pursuits.

In the context of the pursuit of romantic relationships, discourse emerges as a key tool in social interactions and consumption practices, especially in the dynamics related to romantic relationships. According to Warde (2014), discourse plays a role in transmitting and reinforcing social norms, and this is visible in how course participants discuss their experiences in groups. Discursive interactions allow women to reinforce or challenge the content learned, creating an environment where discourse mediates the internalization of knowledge and the adaptation of social practices. The exchange of advice and experiences in the groups also reinforces the idea that discourse is a vehicle for the construction of collective meanings and the adjustment of cultural norms in social practices (Shove et al., 2012).

Language adapts to context through its strategic use as an embodied, emotionally connected practice." According to Reckwitz (2002), discourse is part of the "embodied knowledge" that guides daily practices, and this is observed in the empirical research, where women develop new ways of expressing their feelings and managing conflicts. Initially, communication may be more reserved, but as they participate in the courses, there is a transition to a more open and assertive language, especially in emotional and romantic contexts. The expression of feelings becomes clearer and more connected, reflecting Reckwitz's (2002) idea that discourse is embodied in emotional and physical routines, integrating into daily interactions. Furthermore, conflict management through more assertive communication illustrates how discourse is adapted as a tool to mediate and transform social interactions. Discourse is continuously shaped by social and practical needs (Shove et al., 2012), and this is evident in the communication strategies learned in the courses and applied in romantic interactions, such as the use of emojis and specific phrases to maintain emotional connection.

Changes in Communication Styles show how discourse operates in the Participants' communication, reflecting broader shifts in social norms and interpersonal relationships. Through courses and support groups, they learn to be more assertive while balancing empathy and emotional sensitivity. This transformation in discourse highlights their adaptation to changing social expectations, as they refine their communication to reflect greater care, thoughtfulness, and connection. Thus, discourse is a means of adapting and disseminating social practices, reinforcing and challenging pre-existing social norms (Shove et al., 2012).

The factors of the discourse element demonstrate how discourse deeply influences the formation and transformation of social practices. The reinforcement and challenge of social norms reflects how discourse in learning contexts can both consolidate and question established standards, allowing for the continuous negotiation of cultural norms. The strategic adaptation of language shows how discourse is adjusted for different social contexts, especially in emotional and relational settings, where language is shaped to meet the needs of the moment. These factors reveal the flexibility of discourse, which continuously shapes and is shaped by everyday social interactions and practices. Figure 5 shows the description of Discourses element.

Discourse as an Element in Consumption Practices for the Pursuit of Romantic Relationships

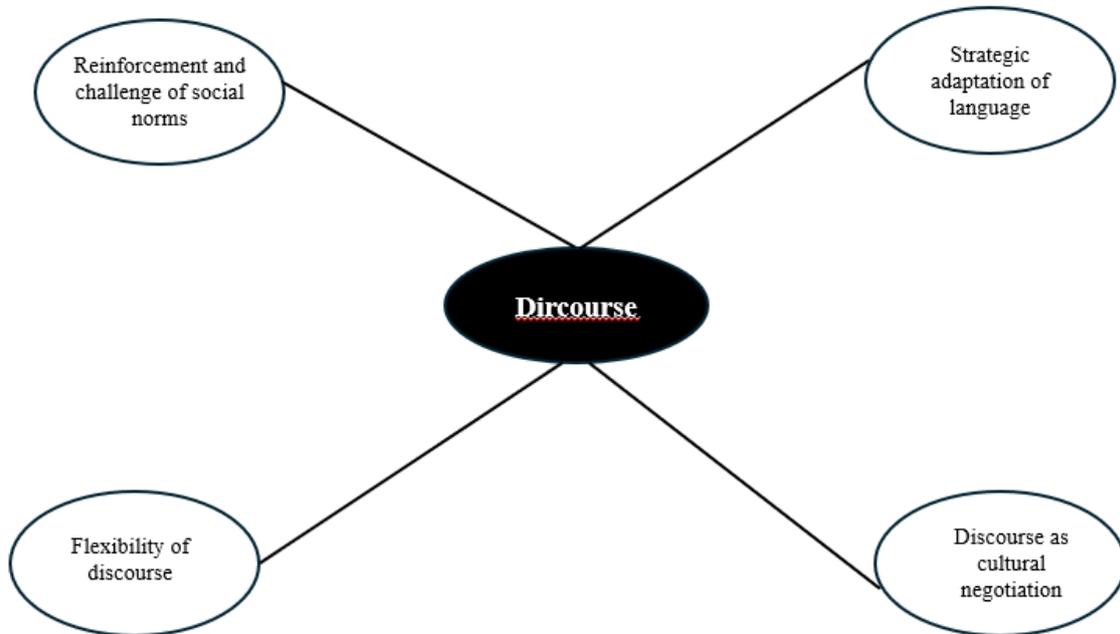


Figure 5 – Discourses Element

Source: Information of the research

5.2.3 Knowledge

In discussing knowledge Shove et al. (2012) emphasize that knowledge is a core component of practices, alongside materials and meanings. Knowledge is essential for the competent execution of practices, as it involves the skills, techniques, and know-how that individuals must acquire to engage practice effectively. In this view, knowledge is not static but dynamically integrated with material objects and meanings, shaping and being shaped by social practices.

Knowledge is situated as one of the central elements in the reproduction of social practices. Practical consciousness, rather than deliberate, reflective thought, governs much of human action. Knowledge is thus embedded in routines and habitual behaviors, where individuals rely on a kind of "know-how" to navigate everyday practices. (Warde, 2014; Warde, 2017). This knowledge is not purely cognitive but embodied, influencing both mental and physical actions.

Reckwitz (2002), in his interpretation of Practice Theory, highlights the symbolic structures of knowledge that shape how individuals interpret and engage with the world. Knowledge is an essential component of social practices, encompassing both tacit knowledge (embedded in bodily movements and routines) and explicit knowledge (shaped by cultural meanings and norms). Individuals are repositories of this knowledge, which manifests in their bodily and mental activities, and through their interaction with objects and social structures. (Reckwitz, 2002). Knowledge, in this sense, is integral to the reproduction of social practices, contributing to the formation of shared social orders.

In line with Shove et al. (2012), knowledge is not static but dynamic, constantly evolving as individuals integrate it into their daily practices. This aligns with findings showing that the knowledge women gain from courses on emotional intelligence, dating strategies, communication skills, and self-care is continuously applied in daily interactions. Rather than being passively acquired, this knowledge is actively integrated into their social routines, shaping their relational practices."

The embedded nature of knowledge in routine behaviors, emphasizing practical consciousness over reflective thought (Warde, 2014; Warde, 2017). This is reflected in findings showing that relational competence is not rigid but evolves through social experiences, feedback, and repeated practice. For example, understanding dating dynamics or emotional management becomes more nuanced as women apply this knowledge in real-world romantic settings, aligning with Warde's idea that knowledge is embodied in habitual actions.

Reckwitz (2002) underscores that knowledge is part of a broader cultural and symbolic structure, shaping how individuals interpret their world. The Collective Application of Knowledge emphasizes that women often engage in shared learning environments, exchanging ideas and supporting one another in applying relational knowledge. This collective dimension reinforces the idea that knowledge is socially constructed, shaped through interactions with peers and social groups. This also ties into the challenges of learning, , as individuals must navigate the complexities of adapting theoretical knowledge to specific social and personal contexts.

In the context of women's consumption practices aimed at improving romantic relationships, the role of knowledge is crucial. Knowledge is not static but evolves through active engagement and integration into daily routines, such as emotional intelligence, dating

strategies, and communication skills. These forms of knowledge transform over time as women apply them in real-world contexts, adjusting their relational competence based on feedback and experiences. Additionally, knowledge is often shared collectively in social settings, where women exchange ideas and support one another, reinforcing the socially constructed nature of knowledge. Challenges arise when adapting theoretical knowledge to specific personal and social contexts, highlighting the complexities involved in applying relational knowledge effectively. Moreover, the ability to apply strategies in romantic dynamics is key to navigating changing social norms and personal contexts. Figure 6 demonstrates the Knowledge element.

Knowledge as an Element in Consumption Practices for the Pursuit of Romantic Relationships

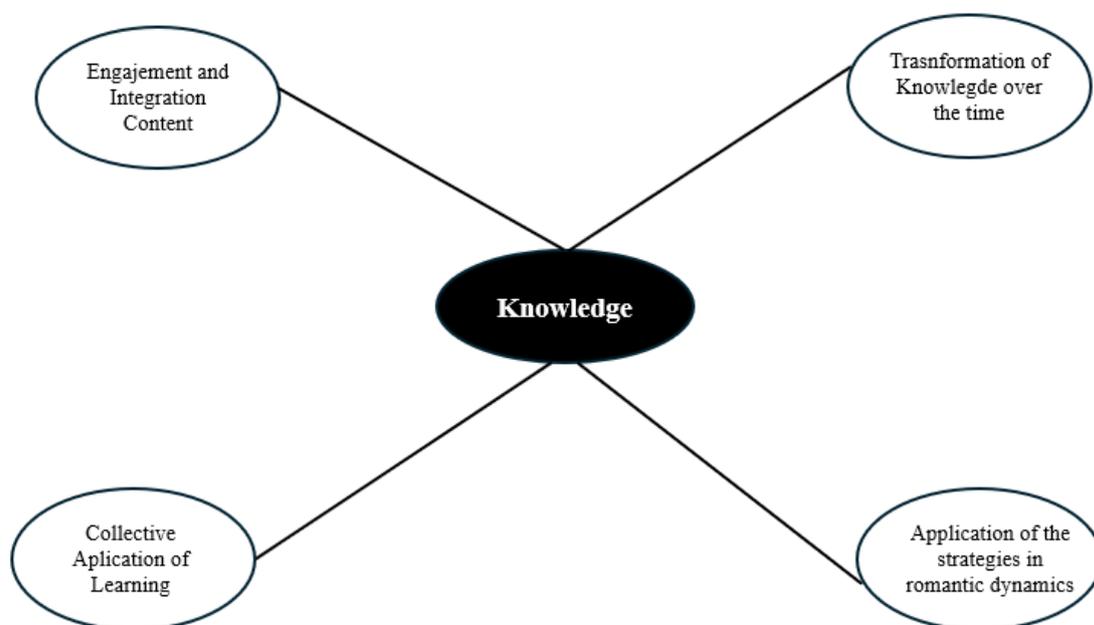


Figure 6 – Knowledge Element

Source: Information of the research

5.2.5 Mind

In the context of Practice Theory, the mind plays an essential role in shaping and sustaining social practices, though its function is often seen as embedded within routines and behaviors rather than operating autonomously. Practices are not primarily governed by conscious, deliberate decisions, but by habitual behaviors, people act through ingrained dispositions rather than through constant mental reflection (Warde, 2014). The mind, in this sense, operates more

through automatic responses developed over time rather than through active decision-making, as individuals perform routine tasks that reflect their learned competences.

Similarly, Shove et al. (2012) place the mind within their conceptualization of competence, one of the three elements that constitute practices, alongside materials and meanings. Competence refers to the skills, techniques, and knowledge necessary to perform practices effectively. The mind is, therefore, critical in acquiring and applying these competencies. In this way meanings - the symbolic and motivational aspects of practices - are mentally constructed, contributing to the way individuals engage with social norms and expectations. (Shove et al., 2012). Thus, the mind is not isolated from the material world but works in tandem with physical objects and social meanings to sustain practices.

Finally, Reckwitz (2002) provides a comprehensive view of the mind's role in practice theory by positioning it as one of the interconnected elements that define routine behavior. The mind is not separate from bodily activities or the use of objects, but rather a fundamental part of how individuals internalize and reproduce social practices. Mental activities, such as know-how, emotional states, and motivations, are deeply embedded in practices and are integral to how individuals understand and engage with the world (Reckwitz, 2002). So, the mind operates within a collective cognitive framework, where shared symbolic structures shape individuals' interpretations and behaviors, making the mind a key part of the broader social order. Therefore, while Warde (2014) and Shove et al. (2012) stress the mind's role as part of habitual action and competence in performing social practices, Reckwitz (2002) takes a broader view, integrating mental activities into the very fabric of social practices, aligning the mind with body, objects, and cultural meanings.

In the context of the empirical data on the consumption of information products aimed at romantic relationship pursuits, the *mind* emerges as a component that influences how women engage with these practices. This involvement of the mind aligns with the theoretical perspectives provided by Reckwitz (2002), how mental activities shape and are shaped by social practices. Reaffirmation of Personal Worth, Reevaluation of Relationships and Cultural Idealizations of Relationships highlight how cognitive processes, emotions, and social norms intertwine influence behavior in the pursuit of love.

The Reaffirmation of Personal Worth shows how the mind is integral to the process of regulating emotions and shaping personal perceptions of worth. As Reckwitz (2002) describes,

cognitive processes are embedded in everyday practices, and through habitual engagement, individuals form a sense of self-worth. Women engaged in self-help practices for romantic success often experience shifts in their personal identity as they navigate social expectations of worthiness and desirability. In this case, personal development—fueled by the mental reevaluation of behaviors and self-concept—becomes a continuous process, structured by repetitive practices and routines (Warde, 2014). Thus, the mind drives women’s self-growth and motivates behavioral change as they internalize and adapt to the norms of attractiveness and relationship success.

In the realm of Cultural Idealizations of Relationships, the mind shapes how individuals internalize cultural narratives of ideal romantic relationships. This internalization process is critical in how women perceive their romantic endeavors, as mental activities such as interpreting social norms guide their relational priorities. Reckwitz (2002) argues that mental frameworks structure the understanding of cultural and symbolic meanings, and through these, individuals form an idealized view of relationships. Women, through the consumption of the info products, learn to align their expectations of love with socially shared ideals, shaping their behavior to conform to these relational standards.

The mind, as explored in my empirical findings, is a pivotal element in the practices women engage in when seeking romantic relationships through the consumption of info products. It governs the construction of identity, enables reflection on past relationships, and mediates the internalization of cultural ideals of love. It becomes clear that mental activities are deeply entwined with social practices, shaping how women perceive themselves and their relational goals in the broader context of societal expectations.

The factors that influence women's consumption practices in the pursuit of romantic relationships highlight the interconnection between identity construction, self-reflection, and cultural norms. Identity construction, for example, is directly related to the consumption of self-development courses and products, which reinforce self-esteem and self-confidence. The process of self-awareness and critical reflection allows women to reassess past behaviors and relationships, adjusting their future actions. Additionally, consumption is shaped by the adaptation to cultural norms, with women adjusting their practices to meet social expectations. Emotional management also plays an important role, with products and services that help reevaluate emotions and shape romantic interactions. Finally, cognitive self-regulation

strategies involve using knowledge to adjust emotional and behavioral responses, both in relationships and in other areas of life. Together, these factors shape the mind element in the context of seeking romantic relationships. Figure 7 is an scheme of the mind element.

Mind as an Element in Consumption Practices for the Pursuit of Romantic Relationships

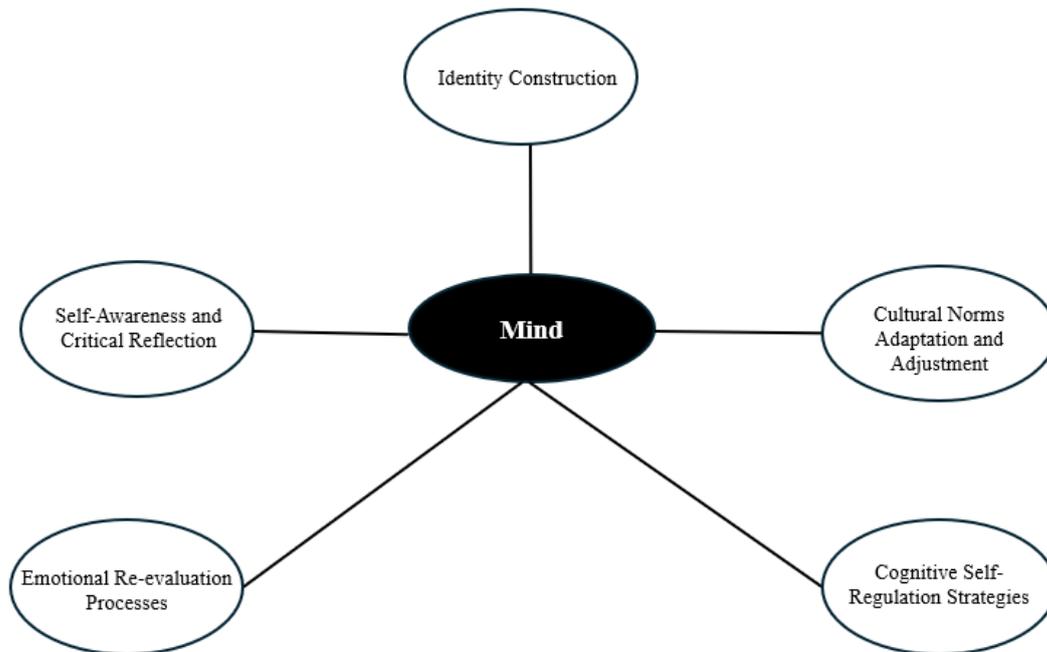


Figure 7 - Mind Element

Source: Information from the research

5.2.6. Objects

Objects are integral to the flow of routine behaviors, particularly in the context of consumption and they are not mere tools or accessories but central to how people engage in and reproduce everyday activities. The use of objects helps to stabilize social practices, making them habitual and part of everyday life. For instance, the way individuals use kitchen appliances or fitness equipment is central to their cooking or exercise routines, demonstrating how material objects shape not only actions but the structure of daily life (Warde, 2014; Warde, 2017).

Shove et al. (2012) take this further by breaking down the role of objects into a framework consisting of three key elements: materials, competencies, and meanings. In their analysis, objects are the "materials" necessary for practices to occur, intertwined with the skills and symbolic meanings required to use them. The dynamic relationship between objects and

practices, noting that objects like household technologies do more than facilitate activities—they also shape the form and meaning of those activities (Shove et al., 2012).

Reckwitz (2002) provides a broader and more philosophical view on the role of objects in practice theory. Objects are deeply embedded in the fabric of practices, forming a material base that interacts with human bodily and mental activities. He argues that objects are not simply passive tools but active participants in the enactment of social practices. Through repetitive manipulation and engagement with objects, individuals reinforce both the social norms and the physical realities that govern everyday life. Objects, in Reckwitz's framework, serve as mediators that embody cultural meanings and facilitate the reproduction of social orders.

Courses and eBooks emerge as tools that women use to acquire knowledge and skills, aiming to transform their romantic lives. These objects serve not only as repositories of knowledge but also as means of reorganizing their daily routines around personal growth. In alignment with Warde's (2014) theory, objects like these courses become ingrained in everyday practices, allowing individuals to develop new competencies and incorporate them into their search for romantic fulfillment. The acquisition of these courses is not just about gaining knowledge but also about actively participating in a wider social practice of self-improvement and relationship success. As women engage with these materials, they express to navigate through layers of personal transformation, which reflect a broader cultural norm that ties personal growth to romantic achievement.

Clothing, accessories, and makeup play a pivotal role in shaping self-presentation. In line with Shove et al.'s (2012) focus on materials, competencies, and meanings, these objects are intricately woven into women's strategies for expressing femininity and conforming to cultural standards of beauty. Clothing and beauty products function as tools for performing femininity, helping women align with societal ideals of attractiveness. The process of selecting outfits or applying makeup is not limited to preparation for a date; it is part of a daily routine aimed at constructing a desirable social identity. These material objects enable women to embody societal ideals, presenting themselves in ways that communicate confidence, health, and beauty—qualities often seen as key to achieving romantic success.

The home environment also plays a significant role in these consumption practices. Objects like flowers, candles, and carefully selected home décor contribute to creating an

atmosphere of care and well-being, affecting how women perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. These objects are not just ornamental; they shape the emotional and psychological atmosphere in which women prepare for social and romantic interactions. The organization of these material objects reflects a desire for control and harmony, which is then projected outward, aligning with cultural expectations of an attractive and well-maintained personal space. This connection between the home environment and personal identity shows how even inanimate objects influence emotional well-being and self-esteem, which, in turn, affects romantic engagement.

In relation to romantic practices, all these objects—whether digital courses, beauty products or home décor—act as strategic tools that help women enhance their self-image and align with societal expectations of attractiveness and desirability. As Reckwitz (2002) points out, social practices are routinized, involving the use of objects as key elements in the performance of identity. Women engage with these objects to communicate their readiness for romantic relationships, to demonstrate that they conform to societal norms, and to position themselves as attractive, successful individuals in both physical and digital spaces.

Thus, the objects encountered in this research—ranging from self-development courses to fashion items and digital platforms—serve not only as passive elements in women's lives but as active participants in the construction of their romantic identities. By incorporating these objects into their routines, women transform their personal and relational lives, engaging in practices that reinforce both internal goals and external societal expectations. Through these interactions with objects, women strategically shape their identities and position themselves in ways that enhance their prospects for romantic relationships, demonstrating the interdependence of material and symbolic elements in social practices.

In this context, the factors describing the category of Object can be derived to understand the role of objects in consumption practices, particularly in relation to the pursuit of romantic relationships. First, objects as tools for personal transformation refer to courses, eBooks, and other self-development materials that serve as means to reorganize daily routines and enhance skills related to romantic success. Second, objects as extensions of self-presentation include clothing, accessories, and beauty products that function as tools to express femininity and meet cultural expectations of attractiveness, becoming integral to daily routines of self-construction. Third, domestic environments as reflections of identity and well-being

encompass decorative items such as flowers, candles, and home organization, which shape the emotional and psychological atmosphere, influencing how women perceive themselves and are perceived in social and romantic contexts. Lastly, objects as mediators of social norms refer to the use of both material and digital objects that help women align their practices with cultural expectations of success and attractiveness, shaping behaviors and strategies in the romantic field. These factors highlight how objects function as active participants in consumption practices, contributing to the construction of identities and the alignment with social norms, particularly in the context of romantic relationships. Figure 8 summarizes the factor on Object element.

Object as an Element in Consumption Practices for the Pursuit of Romantic Relationships

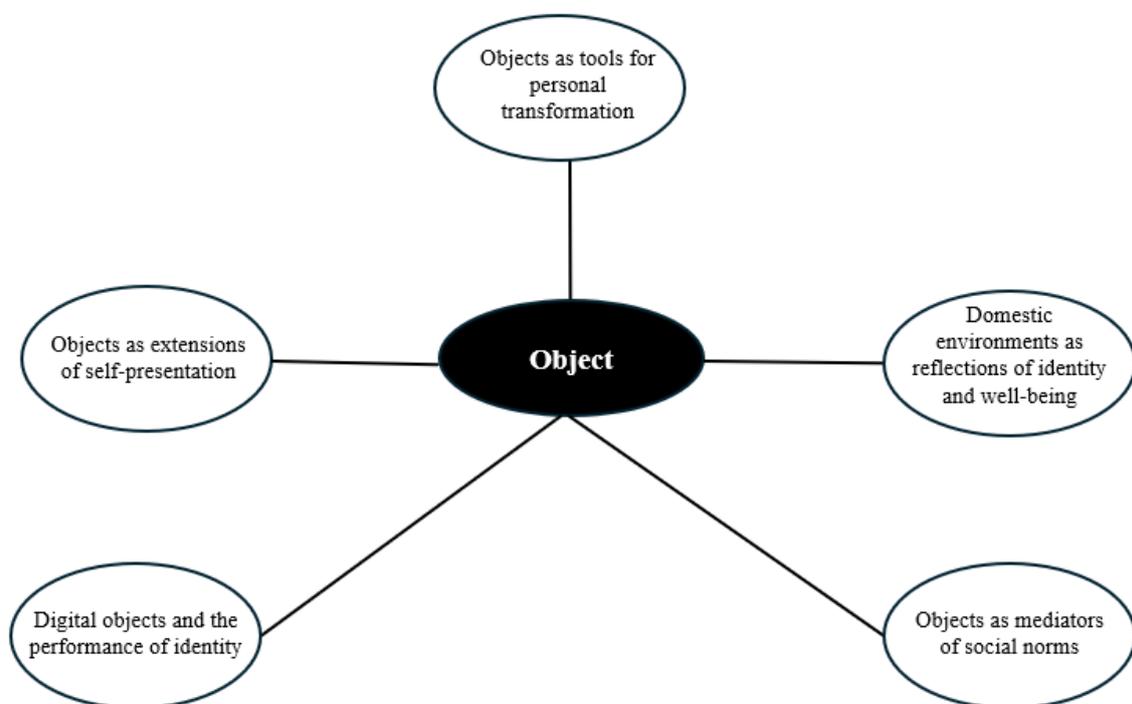


Figure 8 – Object Elements

Source: Information from the research

5.2.7 Structure

Practices are deeply embedded in routines, which individuals repeat as part of their daily lives. These routines, such as consumption habits, are not isolated actions but interconnected behaviors that collectively form larger social structures. Structure is sustained through the flow and repetition of these behaviors, reflecting societal norms and values. The interdependence of

practices is critical, as each practice is linked to others within larger configurations, such as economic or cultural systems (Warde, 2014). Structure as a dynamic process, continuously reshaped through the interaction of material objects, human skills, and social meanings (Shove et al., 2012).

Social structures are embodied through routines and everyday actions, where individuals enact shared cultural meanings. These structures are maintained through habitual behaviors, which internalize societal norms and values. However, there is a fluidity of structure, noting that it is continuously reproduced and transformed as individuals engage with and reinterpret these practices in their daily lives (Reckwitz, 2002). In this sense, social structure is not fixed but constantly evolving, shaped by the repeated actions of individuals within cultural and material contexts. The empirical findings of the research, the role of structure emerges shaping the romantic practices of women, particularly through the integration of digital tools like dating apps and social media.

The normalization and integration of digital tools in romantic practices aligns directly with the idea of dynamic structure (Shove et al., 2012; Warde, 2014). The use of dating apps, for example, has become normalized and is now routine practice that redefines how relationships are initiated. These digital platforms shape the way people connect, create routines, and establish new meanings, transforming social practices in response to new material objects (Shove et al., 2012), in this case, dating apps. Additionally, social media reinforces this idea, as the continuous use of platforms like Instagram and Facebook in romantic interactions connects relationship practices to broader social norms. Now, digital presence is seen as an integral part of romantic dynamics. These practices, once internalized, stabilize new forms of interaction (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012); practices are not isolated but influenced by technologies and changes in the social context. Social structure is, therefore, constantly shaped and reinforced by these technological and social changes.

On the other hand, challenges and adaptations in online romantic practices illustrates the fluidity of social structure (Reckwitz, 2002). Users' behavioral adaptations to dating apps demonstrate how the repetition of digital actions leads to the transformation of romantic practices over time. The comparison between in-person and digital encounters reflects a reconfiguration of expectations and norms, showing how digital practices, although initially disruptive, are eventually incorporated into existing social patterns, creating new meanings and behaviors. Social structure is in a constant process of adaptation (Shove et al., 2012), and the

new forms of romantic interaction that emerge with dating apps exemplify this evolution. The emergence of new norms around casual relationships on apps reflects how repetitive practices stabilize social norms (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014). This creates a structure of expectations in romantic interactions, where digital technology plays a central role in mediating social practices and shaping new relationship dynamics.

The factors of the structure element highlight how digital tools have become deeply integrated into romantic practices, reshaping social norms and behaviors. The normalization of dating apps and social media as routine tools for romantic interactions demonstrates how these platforms have stabilized new social norms. As individuals continuously engage with these digital tools, the repetition of their use reinforces and stabilizes norms related to dating and relationships. Moreover, users exhibit behavioral adaptations as they interact with these platforms over time, illustrating how social practices evolve in response to technological changes. This leads to a reconfiguration of expectations, where traditional in-person encounters are compared with digital interactions, further shaping the structure of romantic norms. Ultimately, digital tools play a central role in mediating social practices and forming new relationship dynamics, highlighting the dynamic interaction between technology and social structure. Figure 9 sums up the Structure element.

Structure as an Element in Consumption Practices for the Pursuit of Romantic Relationships

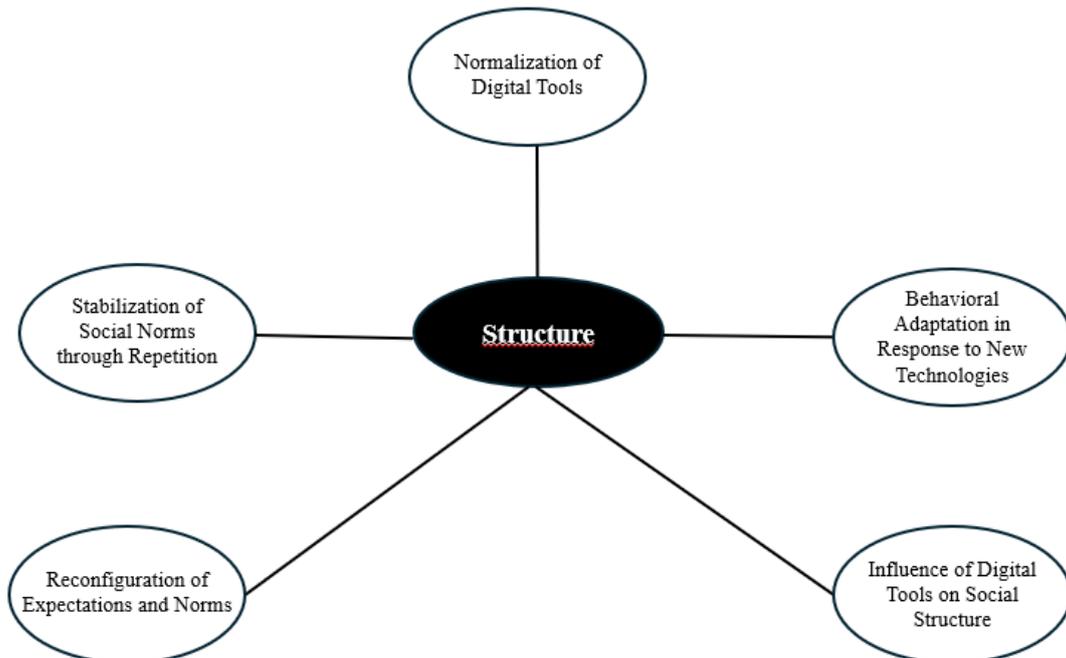


Figure 9 – Structure Element

Source: Information from the research

5.2.8 Sociability

In Practice Theory, sociability is essential to understanding how individuals engage in, reproduce, and transform social practices. Social practices are not merely individual actions but collective phenomena that rely on social networks to be sustained and repeated. Practices involve a series of interconnected elements, such as mental and bodily activities, objects, knowledge, motivations, and emotions, which are continuously reproduced through social interactions (Reckwitz, 2002). In this sense, sociability, that is, interaction between people, is fundamental to the development, maintenance, and transformation of these practices.

Social practices are shaped by collective routines, being sustained and reinforced through repeated social interactions. Practices are often more collective than individual, with social networks providing the necessary context for people to learn, share, and maintain their routines (Warde, 2014). Thus, social relations are not merely the background but a central component of practices. The practice of sociability serves to reinforce behaviors, provide emotional support, and promote the exchange of experiences, especially in personal development contexts.

Shove et al. (2012) further argue that practices are composed of three main elements: materials, competences, and meanings. Sociability fits within the "meanings" component, as social interactions help give meaning to practices through the exchange of symbolism and validation of agents' actions. Empirical research on the consumption of information products reveals that the support networks formed during these courses play a crucial role in maintaining self-development practices. The repetition of practices within social networks reinforces these meanings, while the exchange of knowledge and support within social groups helps agents acquire new competencies. In this way, sociability is a central pillar that shapes and sustains practices, facilitating the evolution and adaptation of these practices as new experiences are shared within networks of interaction.

One of the main findings of the research was the creation and maintenance of support networks through info product courses. The groups, usually formed by the coaches, take on other meanings. The participants report that support groups provide a safe environment for the exchange of experiences and emotional validation. These social networks proved to be essential for the continuity of practices, as they offer a context in which the repetition of interactions

reinforces consumption and learning habits. Sociability within these networks not only facilitates the sharing of knowledge but also provides indirect learning and emotional support that helps sustain individuals' motivation. The repetition of interactions, such as discussions and exchanges of experiences, reinforces the self-development process focused on the pursuit of romantic relationships.

The research also highlights that many women seek support in friendships when family support is absent or inadequate. Friendships serve as an emotional refuge, creating a space where participants can express their feelings without judgment. This aspect of sociability is fundamental to the acquired practices, as Shove et al. (2012) point out, practices are shaped by the social context. The emotional exchange between friends, in contrast to family relationships, allows practices to be reshaped in environments that provide more emotional freedom, without the constraints of family expectations. Often, these practices are later shared with friends who are outside the infoproduct universe.

Another important finding of the research is the tendency for women to reconfigure their social circles after undergoing personal and emotional transformations related to their marital status. Of the 30 participants, only one reported never having experienced a serious relationship, and all those who had reported social circle changes shortly after a breakup, replacing old social ties with new friendships that were more aligned with their new values and practices. This phenomenon fits with the view of Shove et al. (2012), who argue that social practices are not static but evolve as new meanings are incorporated. At first, the purchase of info products focused on relationships is already a different practice, and through the courses, participants also tend to seek new social networks that validate these practices and support their new behaviors. Thus, sociability acts as a force that facilitates the transformation of social practices, allowing individuals to adapt their routines and behaviors to new social contexts.

Based on the empirical research, sociability must be considered a central element of practices because it provides the social fabric that sustains, shapes, and validates practices over time. Practice is not an isolated phenomenon but depends on social and cultural contexts that provide the necessary environment for routines to be repeated and adapted (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014; Shove et al., 2012). Sociability allows agents to reinforce their behaviors through constant exchanges of support, knowledge, and social validation.

Moreover, sociability not only validates practices but also promotes their adaptation and transformation. When agents engage in new social networks, as observed in the research, they

begin to adopt new meanings, values, and behaviors that align with these new groups, showing that the evolution of social practices is strongly linked to interaction with other agents and the sharing of new meanings within social networks (Shove et al., 2012).

To understand the elements that emerge from the category of sociability, it is essential to explore how social practices are formed, sustained, and transformed. In this context, sociability plays a vital role in three main dimensions: as a mechanism for practical reinforcement, as a space for emotional expression and recognition, and as a critical factor in the transformation of social networks, particularly during significant personal changes.

Firstly, sociability acts as a powerful mechanism for practical reinforcement. The creation of support networks and friendships, often formed around the consumption of self-development products, plays a crucial role in sustaining these practices. Social interactions, which are repeated over time, not only accompany the process of self-development but also reinforce the practices associated with it. Through the repetition of these interactions, bonds of solidarity are formed, which, in turn, increase individuals' confidence and legitimize their new decisions and behaviors. This cycle of social reinforcement ensures the continuity of these practices, as individuals find constant validation within their support networks. The social validation that arises from these interactions is essential for maintaining a commitment to self-development and the continued consumption of courses, as argued by Warde (2014). In this way, sociability directly contributes to the maintenance of practices, providing a collective support structure that validates and propels individual behaviors.

Additionally, sociability offers a safe space for emotional expression and recognition, especially when familial support is absent or inadequate. In such cases, many individuals find refuge in friendships and support networks formed within self-development contexts, such as info product courses. These groups create environments where participants can share their vulnerabilities without fear of judgment, fostering a space for mutual support. This aspect of sociability is crucial for the development of new emotional practices and for navigating complex personal experiences. As Shove et al. (2012) note, social practices are deeply influenced by relational contexts, and in this case, the emotional support provided by these networks facilitates the internalization of new routines and behaviors. Sociability thus serves as a fertile ground where emotions can be expressed and processed collectively, promoting individual emotional growth in an environment of understanding and empathy.

Finally, the transformation of social networks is one of the most notable elements that emerges from this context. As individuals undergo personal and emotional transformations, particularly regarding changes in their relationship status or personal lives, they often reconfigure their social networks. This tendency to seek out new social connections reflects the adaptive nature of social practices. With the acquisition of new values and meanings through self-development courses, individuals tend to distance themselves from old social ties that no longer align with their new goals and instead seek to build new networks that are more aligned with their emerging practices. This transformation illustrates the idea that social practices are not static but evolve as new meanings are incorporated, as argued by Shove et al. (2012). Social networks play a crucial role in this process of adaptation, facilitating the evolution of practices as new experiences are shared and internalized.

The elements of sociability shape, sustain and transform social practices. Practical reinforcement occurs as repeated social interactions strengthen individuals' confidence and validate their new behaviors, ensuring the continuity of self-development efforts. Similarly, emotional expression and recognition provide individuals with a safe environment where they can openly share their vulnerabilities and receive support without fear of judgment, fostering emotional growth. Furthermore, the transformation of social networks is essential as individuals reconfigure their relationships in response to personal changes, seeking new connections that align with their evolving values and goals. Finally, the adaptation of practices is facilitated by these supportive social environments, where individuals integrate new experiences and shared knowledge into their daily routines. Together, these elements of sociability enable individuals to navigate personal transformations while reinforcing and evolving their social practices within collective frameworks. Figure 10 illustrates sociability elements.

Sociability as an Element in Consumption Practices for the Pursuit of Romantic Relationships

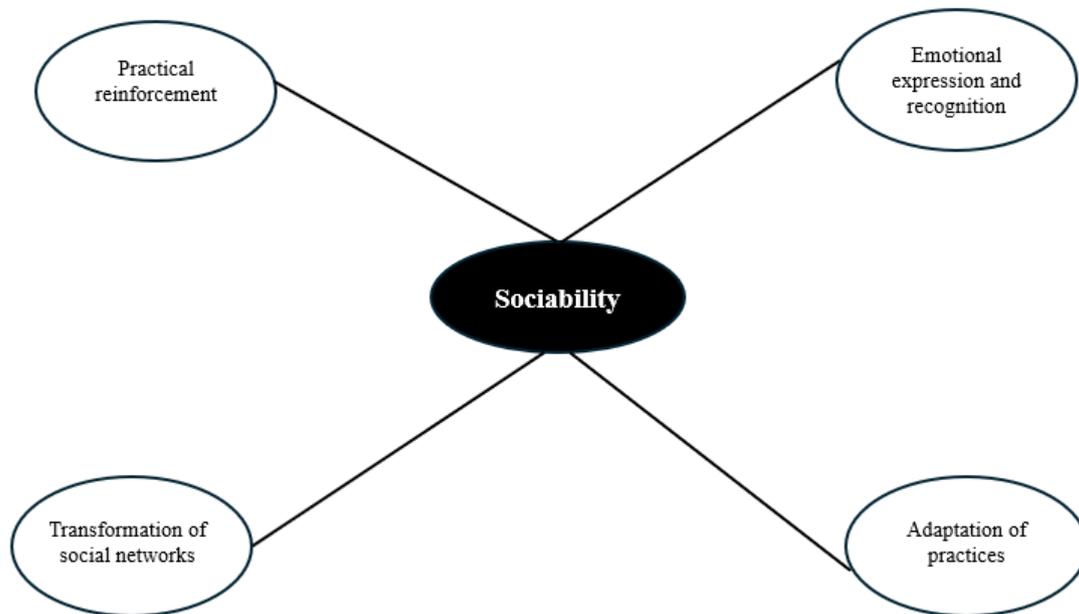


Figure 10 – Sociability Elements

Source: Information from the research

5.3 How the elements of the practices components intertwine in shaping the consumption practices of women seeking romantic relationships through info products.

5.3.1 Theoretical Contributions: Sociability in Practice Theory

Reckwitz (2002) offers framework for understanding how social practices shape individual actions. Unlike classical action models, such as homo economicus (action guided by individual interests) or homo sociologicus (action guided by social norms), the author focuses on the symbolic and cognitive structures that guide human behavior. This approach proves fruitful for analyzing consumption behaviors, particularly in situations where individuals seek to conform to social norms, as in the case of women consuming products aimed at personal development and the pursuit of love relationships.

Women engaging in info products related to love relationships, do so because they are acting within established symbolic aspects, where certain behaviors, knowledge, and expectations shape their practices. The decision to purchase self-help courses is not a purely

rational choice but is influenced by emotional experiences, societal pressures, and cultural norms surrounding romance and relationships. These emotional wounds act as powerful motivators, driving women to seek healing and guidance through info products. Their behavior aligns with the view of the agent, they are shaped by their social context (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde 2005;2014), as these past emotional traumas influence their ongoing engagement with self-help courses.

As they engage in these courses, they recognize the potential for self-transformation that extends beyond their romantic goals. This reflects agents' ability to adapt and expand their consumption practices, integrating the knowledge gained into other aspects of their lives (Warde, 2005;2014; Shove et al., 2021). Agents are drawn to promises of quick emotional relief or romantic success, which leads them to purchase more courses, even when initial expectations may not be fully met. These marketing strategies perpetuate the cycle of consumption by emphasizing the continuity of the learning journey, enticing agents with advanced modules and exclusive content. This further entrenches agents in the practice of consuming self-help products as part of their ongoing emotional and personal development.

In the context of self-help courses for romantic relationships, women transform theoretical content into practical competencies. Rather than passively consuming information, they actively integrate teaching into their daily routines, applying them to both their personal development and relationship dynamics. This process demonstrates that knowledge acquisition is not merely intellectual but an active, embodied experience that directly shapes their behaviors and decision-making.

The evolution and integration of knowledge highlight its dynamic and social nature within consumption practices. Over time, participants adapt and refine learned content to suit their unique experiences, demonstrating that knowledge is not static but evolves through repeated actions and reflections (Warde, 2005; 2014). Additionally, collective learning in support groups or mentoring communities fosters a shared environment where abstract concepts are made tangible through real-world applications. This social exchange emphasizes that learning is a collaborative practice, shaped by mutual support, shared experiences, and group dynamics (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2005).

Agents, as carriers of practices, do not merely act based on isolated choices or social norms but integrate their bodily experiences into their actions. The body, rather than being a passive vessel, serves as an active agent through which social practices are performed and perpetuated

(Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012). The body, in this context, is component in the enactment of social practices, particularly those related to self-presentation and the pursuit of love relationships. The body becomes both a site of transformation and a tool for expressing identity. As agents engage with practices such as physical care, exercise, and aesthetic enhancements, their bodies are shaped to align with societal expectations of beauty and femininity. This alignment is not only a physical process but also deeply connected to the mental and emotional states of the agents (Warde, 2005). For example, the adoption of specific beauty routines, changes in posture, or the practice of slower, more deliberate movements all reflect a convergence of body and mind in the performance of femininity.

The body serves as both a medium for self-expression and an active participant in social interactions, reflecting personal identity and societal ideals (Reckwitz, 2002). Women's focus on physical transformation—through weight loss, muscle gain, or aesthetic procedures—demonstrates its strategic role in love pursuits and social practices. Beyond appearance, the body embodies tacit knowledge and competencies enacted through routine behaviors, such as dressing, skincare, and posture, which are shaped by socialization and reinforced by self-help products. This highlights the body as a repository of cultural knowledge, integral to the routines that construct social identity (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012).

The mind plays a role in shaping and sustaining social practices, particularly in the realm of the pursuit of love relationships, by functioning as an intermediary between physical actions, cultural norms, and individual agency. Social practices are not solely comprised of external actions but are deeply intertwined with mental activities such as understanding, knowledge, emotions, and desires (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014). Within the framework of romantic relationships, these mental activities—self-reflection, emotional processing, and the internalization of cultural norms—guide how individuals navigate their interactions, form their expectations, and evaluate their personal worth. This ongoing cognitive processing allows individuals to continuously reassess and adapt their behaviors, integrating new insights into their personal and romantic lives.

Reaffirming personal worth is one such mental activity that directly shapes romantic practices. By engaging in self-help products, individuals develop a sense of identity that is less reliant on external validation and more rooted in self-awareness and self-love. This process, often facilitated through relationship coaching courses, empowers individuals—particularly women—to redefine their value in relationships. As they internalize new understandings of self-

worth, they believe this helps them approach relationships with a healthier and more balanced perspective.

Similarly, the reevaluation of relationships involves a cognitive reassessment of past behaviors and social connections. As individuals reflect on their romantic histories, they become more attuned to patterns that either align or conflict with their evolving sense of self. This mental process allows for the renegotiation of social and romantic practices, helping individuals forge more authentic connections that resonate with their personal growth and aspirations.

Cultural idealizations of relationships, another critical mental component, demonstrate how the mind absorbs and reproduces societal norms and expectations. These idealizations shape romantic practices by influencing how individuals perceive the roles and behaviors expected in a relationship. Through repeated exposure to cultural narratives, individuals internalize these ideals and apply them in their romantic pursuits, shaping their interactions and decisions in ways that align with broader social norms.

Through the acquisition of knowledge, agents advance their transformation, drawing on the insights offered by self-help courses—spanning emotional intelligence to dating strategies—which provide them with practical tools to refine their behaviors and enhance their romantic prospects. This knowledge is not static but evolves over time as agents repeatedly apply and adapt it to their daily lives (Shove et al., 2012; Warde, 2014; Reckwitz, 2002). With each new experience, agents refine their understanding, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical realities in romantic interactions.

Agents, as carriers of practices, navigate discourse not only as a mode of communication but to perpetuate, challenge, and transform social norms and behaviors (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014; Shove et al., 2012). Discourse, in this sense, becomes an active element through which agents express their identity, reshape their relationships, and internalize the cultural and social norms presented in self-help courses.

Discourse extends beyond mere language use, encompassing the symbols and meanings embedded in everyday practices (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014; Shove et al., 2012). Agents engage with discourse in individual interactions and collective settings, such as support groups or social media communities formed around self-help courses. Within these spaces, discourse reinforces social norms while providing opportunities to share experiences, seek advice, and

validate behaviors, allowing agents to navigate and sometimes challenge societal expectations related to gender roles, relationships, and identity.

Participation in self-help courses enables agents to adapt their language to various contexts, enhancing their emotional expression, conflict management, and self-awareness. This shift in communication styles reflects the integration of discursive practices into daily interactions, fostering more sensitive and assertive approaches in romantic and social situations.

The narratives and language within self-help products also shape agents' understanding of relationships and self-worth. Repeated exposure to these discourses allows agents to internalize or revise the patterns presented by coaches and mentors, influencing their behaviors and reinforcing or transforming social practices. This dynamic interaction highlights how discourse serves as both a medium for reproducing norms and a tool for personal and relational development.

Objects play a central role in mediating agents' engagement with the world, facilitating routines and shaping social practices (Shove et al., 2012; Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2005). For women seeking self-improvement and romantic relationships, objects such as self-development courses, e-books, clothing, accessories, and elements of the domestic environment become pivotal. These objects not only support everyday practices but also influence self-perception and social interactions.

Self-development courses and digital tools act as facilitators for acquiring knowledge and competencies, enabling agents to integrate teachings into their routines and apply new behaviors in personal and romantic contexts. Similarly, clothing, accessories, and makeup transcend their functional use, becoming symbols of transformation and identity. By engaging with these objects, women redefine their self-expression and position themselves more confidently in social and romantic interactions.

The domestic environment also emerges as a significant space for personal transformation, where objects like décor, scented candles, and organizational tools nurture emotional well-being and support self-care practices. These elements actively contribute to routines of self-development, reinforcing identity and creating a sanctuary for growth. Small acts, such as organizing a workspace or adding decorative touches, are linked to improved emotional well-being and a sense of control, preparing women for social and romantic engagements.

Structure, according to Reckwitz (2002), is sustained by the repetitive nature of social practices. These practices encompass tacit knowledge, shared understandings, and routines that guide individual behavior. For example, agents participating in modern romantic practices often rely on digital platforms like dating apps and social media to navigate their relationships. These technologies are now integral to the structural framework that governs romantic practices, providing a new context in which relationships are initiated, developed, and sometimes sustained.

For the agent, engaging with these digital platforms means adapting to the structures that these platforms create. Dating apps and social media platforms have established new norms and routines for romantic interactions. Agents, through their participation in these platforms, contribute to the reinforcement of these structures, normalizing behaviors such as swiping through potential partners, engaging in casual conversations, and developing relationships that may prioritize convenience and quick connection over deep emotional engagement.

At the same time, agents also experience the constraints and challenges imposed by these structures. The repetitive nature of digital interactions, characterized by superficial connections and casual dating norms, often leads agents to confront frustrations and adapt their behaviors to better navigate these platforms. For instance, some participants may limit their use of dating apps due to the stress and anxiety that come with constantly checking messages or feeling pressure to perform within the structured environment of online dating. This illustrates how structure both enables and constrains individual actions, guiding agents' behaviors within specific social frameworks.

Sociability is a foundational element of social practices, providing the social framework that sustains, shapes, and transforms these practices over time. Social practices are inherently collective, relying on shared interactions, mutual reinforcement, and the exchange of experiences within social networks. Sociability plays a crucial role in reinforcing practices, facilitating their adaptation, and offering emotional and practical support, particularly in contexts like self-development and romantic pursuits.

Firstly, sociability reinforces social practices through repeated interactions within support networks. These interactions create a cycle of validation and encouragement, where behaviors and routines are legitimized and strengthened. In self-development courses and related communities, participants often share experiences, provide mutual support, and validate one another's progress. This collective engagement ensures the continuity of practices, as

individuals draw confidence and motivation from their social connections. Sociability thus operates as a mechanism of practical reinforcement, making practices more resilient and enduring.

Secondly, sociability facilitates the adaptation and transformation of practices. As individuals navigate personal changes, such as shifts in identity or relationship status, sociability enables them to adopt new meanings, values, and behaviors aligned with their evolving goals. For example, women participating in self-help courses often reconfigure their social networks, seeking out connections that support their new aspirations and distancing themselves from environments that no longer resonate with their identities. These new networks foster the exchange of ideas and practices, allowing individuals to integrate and refine routines in response to changing circumstances. This process illustrates the dynamic nature of social practices and the critical role of sociability in driving their evolution.

The inclusion of sociability as a key element in Practice Theory expands Reckwitz's (2002) framework by emphasizing the relational and collective dimensions of social practices. While traditional approaches focus on individual routines, material interactions, or cognitive processes, sociability highlights how social interactions mediate the reproduction, adaptation, and evolution of practices. By embedding practices within shared cultural and social contexts, sociability underscores the role of collective engagement in shaping meanings, reinforcing norms, and sustaining practices over time. This perspective is particularly valuable for understanding how personal development, social interaction, and consumption are interconnected, illustrating that practices are not merely performed by individuals but are continuously shaped through social bonds and collective participation..

By reinforcing routines, facilitating adaptation, and providing emotional support, sociability emerges as a vital force in shaping the trajectory of social practices. It highlights how collective dynamics, rather than isolated individual actions, drive the maintenance and transformation of behaviors and routines, ensuring that social practices remain dynamic and responsive to changing social realities. Figure 11 is a scheme of transformations of women's consumption practices.

Transformation of Consumption Practices in Women Seeking Love Relationships

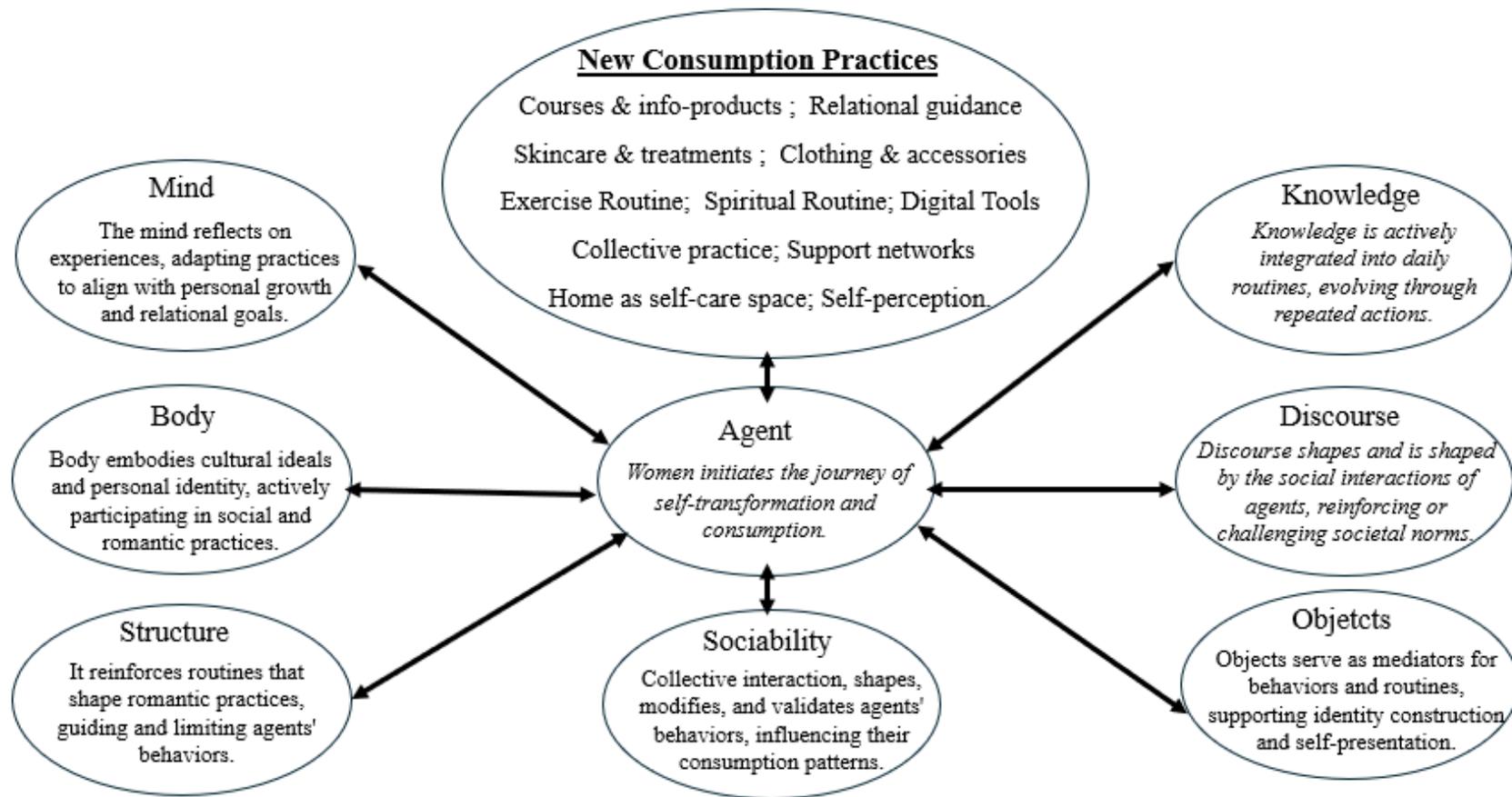


Figure 11 - Transformations of women's consumption practices.

Source: Information from the research

5.3.2 The Interplay of Emotions, Spirituality, and Consumption Practices of Women Seeking Relationships

In this study, emotions and spirituality emerged as two compelling empirical categories that deeply influence the consumption practices of women seeking love relationships. Unlike sociability, which presents itself as a central element with theoretical potential for broader applications, emotions and spirituality are distinct findings within this research context, reflecting specific dynamics of the participants' journeys. While both categories are embedded in the practices observed, they offer unique contributions to understanding the nuanced ways in which women navigate their personal and relational development through consumption.

Emotions are intricately woven into the fabric of consumption practices, particularly for women seeking romantic relationships. Far from being isolated or secondary, emotions act as dynamic forces that interact with other dimensions of social practices, including knowledge, routines, material objects, and social interactions. They serve as both catalysts, initiating engagement with self-help products, and modulators, shaping how practices evolve and adapt over time. The emotional landscape of participants—characterized by experiences of heartbreak, rejection, hope, desire, and insecurity—provides a lens through which their consumption behaviors can be understood.

Emotional distress often serves as the starting point for engaging with self-help products. Many participants report seeking these resources after experiencing heartbreak, rejection, or dissatisfaction in their romantic lives. These emotional wounds drive them to search for tools and guidance that promise emotional relief and personal transformation. However, these emotions do not operate in isolation; they are deeply embedded within a broader cultural framework that links personal worth and happiness to relational success. In this way, emotions like anxiety and insecurity become not just motivators but integral components of the broader social narrative that sustains these consumption practices.

Once women begin engaging with self-help courses, emotions play a central role in how they assimilate the teachings into their routines. For example, the desire to rebuild self-esteem or gain clarity in romantic relationships informs how participants interact with course materials and incorporate lessons into their daily lives. Emotions guide not only the consumption of these products but also their practical application. Participants adopt relational strategies and self-improvement techniques, driven by emotional goals such as overcoming fear of rejection, cultivating confidence, or fostering hope for future relationships.

This emotional engagement transforms theoretical knowledge into embodied practices. Activities such as journaling, meditating, or implementing behavioral techniques are charged with emotional significance, reflecting the participants' deep investment in reshaping their identities and relational dynamics. Rather than being static, these practices evolve as participants revisit and refine their emotional motivations in response to new experiences and insights.

Emotions also influence how women engage with material objects and digital tools. Items like clothing, makeup, and beauty products become more than functional or aesthetic choices; they are imbued with emotional significance. A new outfit may represent confidence or readiness for a romantic encounter, while makeup might symbolize self-expression or empowerment. Similarly, digital platforms and self-help courses act as emotional mediators, providing women with tools to process vulnerabilities, build resilience, and pursue relational aspirations.

The emotional dimension extends to the consumption of self-help materials, such as eBooks, guided exercises, and videos. These resources are not simply information-delivery mechanisms but are designed to evoke and channel emotions. Participants describe feelings of reassurance, motivation, and hope as they engage with content that promises relational success and emotional fulfillment. This emotional resonance sustains their engagement and reinforces the consumption cycle, as they continue seeking new products to address lingering emotional needs.

Collective settings, such as support groups and online communities linked to self-help courses, amplify the role of emotions in consumption practices. These spaces provide participants with opportunities to share their emotional experiences, seek validation, and learn from one another. Emotional exchanges within these groups often reinforce the consumption of self-help products by creating a supportive environment where participants feel understood and encouraged.

For example, participants describe how sharing stories of heartbreak or relational challenges in these groups fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity. This shared emotional engagement helps validate their feelings and decisions, strengthening their commitment to self-improvement. The mutual reinforcement of emotional experiences within these communities creates a feedback loop, where consumption practices are continuously sustained and legitimized through collective participation.

Beyond their role as motivators, emotions also act as modulators, influencing how practices are sustained, adapted, or transformed. For instance, participants' emotional satisfaction—or lack thereof—can prompt them to reevaluate their consumption choices and relational strategies. A sense of hope or progress may lead to continued engagement with self-help products, while frustration or unmet expectations might drive them to seek alternative approaches or platforms.

This dynamic highlights the interplay between emotional states and broader social structures. Cultural narratives around romance and self-worth shape participants' emotional experiences, while their emotional responses, in turn, inform how they navigate these narratives. Dissatisfaction with casual interactions on digital dating platforms often leads women to adjust their relational goals and consumption behaviors, seeking products that align more closely with their emotional and relational aspirations.

Spirituality emerges as a profound element shaping the consumption practices of women pursuing romantic relationships. Unlike emotions, which are woven into the broader fabric of practices, spirituality operates as a contextual dimension that becomes particularly influential during moments of personal transformation or crisis. It acts as a guiding framework through which participants navigate emotional challenges, realign their lives with their values, and seek deeper connections within themselves and their relationships.

For many participants, spirituality functions as a vital coping mechanism during periods of emotional distress or significant life changes, such as divorce, illness, or the end of a long-term relationship. These transitional moments often provoke a reevaluation of personal identity and relational goals, prompting women to turn to spiritual practices for guidance and resilience. Prayer, meditation, and reading sacred texts provide tools for introspection, offering a sense of stability and emotional grounding amidst upheaval.

Participants describe these spiritual practices as a means to process pain, foster hope, and regain clarity about their desires and aspirations. This spiritual engagement supports emotional healing, enabling women to rebuild their identities and approach future relationships with greater confidence and balance. In this sense, spirituality serves as a dynamic force that bridges emotional recovery and personal growth.

Spirituality is not confined to isolated moments of reflection but becomes integrated into the daily routines of participants, shaping their habits and consumption choices. Rituals

such as morning prayers, breathing exercises, or meditation are seen as pathways to inner peace and self-awareness. These practices cultivate emotional stability and a heightened sense of femininity, reinforcing participants' confidence and self-presentation in romantic and social contexts.

Women also view spirituality to align their physical and emotional states with their broader life goals. For instance, participants incorporate spiritual values into their self-care routines, using skincare, fitness, or dietary practices as ways to honor their bodies and nurture their sense of self-worth. This alignment between spiritual intentions and bodily routines highlights the holistic nature of spirituality in shaping identity and relational aspirations.

A recurring theme in the research is the connection between spirituality and femininity. Participants frequently associate spiritual practices with cultivating qualities like grace, authenticity, and emotional intelligence, which they perceive as integral to attracting and maintaining meaningful relationships. This alignment between spirituality and femininity inspires women to engage in consumption practices that emphasize personal transformation and relational harmony.

Many participants believe that a strong spiritual connection enhances their ability to express their authentic selves, fostering a sense of balance and receptivity in romantic interactions. This belief influences their decisions to invest in self-help courses, books, or workshops that integrate spiritual growth with relational strategies. By cultivating their spiritual essence, women aim to attract partners who align with their values and contribute to mutually fulfilling relationships.

Objects play a significant role in reinforcing spiritual practices and shaping consumption patterns. Participants frequently purchase spiritual books, guided meditations, or decorative items that create a sacred or meditative environment at home. These objects serve as physical manifestations of their spiritual journey, providing spaces for reflection and renewal. For example, scented candles, meaningful art, or devotional books transform domestic spaces into sanctuaries that support emotional and spiritual well-being.

The material dimension of spirituality reflects its embeddedness in daily life, as participants use objects to sustain their routines and reaffirm their spiritual intentions. These consumption practices align physical surroundings with internal goals, creating a synergy between the tangible and the intangible aspects of personal growth.

Beyond personal development, spirituality significantly shapes how women perceive and engage in relationships. Participants frequently describe spiritual alignment as a crucial factor in attracting compatible partners and fostering healthy relational dynamics. By prioritizing their spiritual connection, women report approaching relationships with greater clarity, emotional stability, and purpose.

This belief drives their consumption choices toward products and courses that emphasize the integration of spiritual growth with relational success. Many participants seek resources that promise to enhance both their inner connection and their capacity to form meaningful, aligned partnerships. Spirituality, in this context, becomes a lens through which women evaluate their relational goals, shaping not only their personal transformation but also their broader pursuit of love and fulfillment.

While emotions and spirituality play a significant role in shaping the consumption practices of women in this study, they remain findings specific to the research context. In contrast, sociability emerges as a theoretical category with broader implications for understanding social practices, emphasizing the collective reinforcement and evolution of behaviors. Rather than functioning as universal dimensions, emotions and spirituality offer focused insights into how personal and relational development unfolds through consumption.

5.4 The dynamics involved in both the production and reproduction of women's consumption practices as they pursue romantic relationships

The reproduction of social practices occurs through routines that encompass both bodily and mental activities, as well as the use of objects, knowledge, emotions, and motivations. These practices are continuously repeated by agents in an almost automatic manner, sustained by tacit knowledge and the internalized symbolic structures developed over time. These practices are consolidated through the internalization of cultural norms, operating largely unconsciously and routinely in everyday life (Reckwitz, 2002). Agents are active components in the reproduction of these practices, as they not only perform them but also sustain and modify them in their daily activities. Agents act as vectors of practices, continually engaging with social and cultural norms and maintaining the material elements, such as objects and procedures, that enable the repetition and adaptation of these practices over time (Warde, 2005; 2017).

Practices can be transformed when the underlying symbolic or structural elements are challenged or altered. Transformation occurs when there are changes in symbolic knowledge

structures or cultural contexts, although these changes tend to be slow due to the strength of routines internalized by agents (Reckwitz, 2002). Practices are transformed by the reconfiguration of the relationships between three key elements: materials, competencies, and meanings. Changes in any of these components, such as the introduction of new technologies, the acquisition of new skills, or the evolution of cultural meanings, can lead to the adaptation or creation of new practices (Shove et al., 2012). The transformation of practices also depends on contextual factors, such as economic, social, or material changes, which demand adaptations in routine practices. Thus, although practices tend to be routinely reproduced, they are susceptible to transformation when social or material contexts demand it, highlighting the continuous nature of practical adaptation through the interaction between agents, contexts, and social structures (Warde, 2014).

The dynamics between the production and reproduction of consumption practices are cyclical. Women adopt new practices based on the knowledge and discourses available, using their bodies and material objects as means of expressing these practices. Simultaneously, these practices are continually reproduced and adapted through social interactions and shifts in social structures. Practices are never static; they are always evolving as social contexts change, new discourses emerge, new objects are introduced, and women reassess their positions and desires within romantic relationships (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014).

For instance, when a woman participates in a personal development course, she may learn new strategies to improve her self-esteem and enhance her ability to set boundaries in relationships. These practices are initially produced through the acquisition of knowledge and the practical application of course teachings. As she integrates these practices into her daily life, they are reproduced and reinforced through interactions with her support networks, where positive or negative feedback can lead to adjustments in the practices or the consolidation of new behaviors (Shove et al., 2012).

Over time, symbolic aspects that define gender and relationship expectations also influence how these practices are reproduced. Social norms surrounding femininity and romantic success shape expectations for how women should behave, which in turn guides the practices they reproduce. However, the reproduction of these practices can also provoke changes in social norms, as new behaviors become more accepted or common, thereby transforming the landscape of romantic relationships (Warde, 2014; Reckwitz, 2002).

To deepen the analysis of the interconnections between the categories of empirical findings and Practice Theory (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2005; 2014; Shove et al., 2012), I examine how these categories interact and transform within the dynamics of production and reproduction of consumption practices focused on romantic relationships. Each category—agent, body, mind, knowledge, discourse, sociability, objects, and structure—interacts in complex ways, and their interconnections drive the constant transformation of practices.

5.4.1 Body and Mind

Practices are not simply physical actions or mental processes occurring in isolation but rather complex routines that integrate both bodily and cognitive dimensions (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2005;2014). In the context of romantic relationships, the body and mind work together to produce and reproduce behaviors that align with societal expectations of femininity, beauty, and self-worth, demonstrating the intricate connection between internal mental processes and external physical expressions.

The body is not merely a passive entity to which practices are applied but rather an active participant in the execution of social practices (Warde, 2005). Physical routines such as self-care, grooming, posture, and movement are not purely mechanical but are imbued with cultural meanings that are internalized through mental processes. For example, when women engage in practices such as skincare, makeup, or fitness routines, these are not just personal preferences; they are actions that embody societal norms of beauty and femininity, as well as personal aspirations for self-esteem and personal value. These practices are repeated and refined over time, becoming routine behaviors that help reinforce both individual identity and social expectations (Reckwitz, 2002).

Shove et al. (2012) argue that the reproduction of practices involves the dynamic interaction of materials, competencies, and meanings. The body is a critical material element in this equation, acting as the medium through which competencies (skills such as grooming, makeup application, and physical fitness) are enacted. At the same time, these bodily practices are infused with meanings related to gender, beauty, and social status. The mind, as a cognitive agent, processes and integrates these meanings, guiding the individual's behaviors and decisions about how to present and care for their body. In this way, the body becomes both a reflection of the mind's internalized norms and a tool for expressing identity and social value within romantic and social interactions.

The mind plays an important role in the production and reproduction of practices by internalizing cultural norms and guiding the execution of these practices through cognitive processes such as self-reflection, emotional regulation, and the integration of knowledge. According to Reckwitz (2002), the mind operates within a framework of tacit knowledge and cultural expectations that shape how individuals perceive themselves and their relationships. In the context of romantic relationships, the mind is where cultural ideals of love, beauty, and success are processed and internalized, influencing the way individuals approach their physical appearance and social behavior. This internalization is not static; it evolves through continuous reflection and adaptation, as individuals reassess their self-worth, reevaluate their relationships, and adjust their behaviors in response to changing social and personal contexts.

The interplay between the body and mind is particularly evident in the practice of personal transformation, which is a central theme in the consumption of self-help products and courses aimed at romantic success. These courses often encourage women to not only focus on their physical appearance but also to engage in mental activities such as self-reflection, emotional healing, and the development of new competencies. As women integrate these teachings into their daily lives, the body and mind work together to produce new routines that align with their evolving sense of self and their aspirations for healthier, more fulfilling relationships. The body becomes a site of transformation, where mental and emotional growth is expressed through changes in appearance, behavior, and social interaction. For example, women may use makeup and clothing not just to enhance their attractiveness but to embody their newfound confidence and sense of self-worth, which are cultivated through mental practices such as self-affirmation and reflection (Shove et al., 2012).

This cyclical interaction between the body and mind highlights the adaptive nature of practices. Practices are not fixed; they are constantly evolving in response to changes in the social and material environment (Warde, 2014). In romantic practices, this evolution is driven by the continuous interaction between bodily routines and mental processes. The mind processes new information, internalizes cultural norms, and guides the body in the performance of practices that reflect these internalized meanings. Meanwhile, the body, through its physical actions, reinforces and sometimes challenges these mental processes, creating a dynamic feedback loop that allows for the transformation of practices over time.

Moreover, the body and mind are deeply intertwined in the process of identity formation. Romantic practices not merely about external behaviors aimed at attracting a partner; they are

also about the internal process of constructing and affirming one's identity. The body becomes a site where this identity is expressed, while the mind continuously shapes and reshapes this identity through reflection, learning, and adaptation. As women engage in practices such as dressing well, maintaining physical fitness, and adhering to beauty standards, they are not only performing social roles but also reinforcing their own sense of self-worth and value. These practices, therefore, serve both an individual and social function, contributing to the reproduction of societal norms while also allowing for personal transformation and growth (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014).

The interconnection between the body and mind in the reproduction and transformation of romantic practices is fundamental to understanding how individuals navigate social and personal identities. The body acts as a vessel for the physical manifestation of social norms and personal aspirations, while the mind engages in continuous cognitive processes, internalizing cultural expectations, and guiding behaviors. Through this dynamic relationship, practices are not simply repeated but adapted and transformed in response to changing contexts, both internal and external. As agents engage with their bodies and minds, they reproduce and modify routines that reflect their evolving identities and aspirations, particularly in the context of romantic relationships. This interplay emphasizes the fluid nature of social practices, where the body and mind are co-constitutive in shaping not only individual behaviors but also broader social norms. Ultimately, Practice Theory offers a framework for understanding how practices are sustained and transformed through the ongoing interaction between the mental and physical dimensions of human action (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012; Warde, 2014).

5.4.2 Knowledge and Discourse

In the context of Practice Theory, discourse and knowledge are not isolated constructs but are co-constitutive elements that shape and are shaped by social practices. Discourse, as a fundamental part of the practices, serves as a vehicle through which knowledge is expressed, shared, and reproduced. (Reckwitz, 2002) In this sense, discourse is not merely a tool for communication but a means through which cultural knowledge is enacted and circulated within social groups.

The relationship between discourse and knowledge is evident in how individuals internalize and apply cultural norms and competencies. Discourse is instrumental in sustaining social practices, as it enables individuals to articulate and transmit the tacit knowledge

embedded in their actions (Warde, 2014). This knowledge is not only intellectual but also practical, guiding individuals in how they perform practices and interpret their roles within the social structure. Thus, discourse functions as both a medium for conveying knowledge and a site where new meanings and understandings are negotiated and integrated into practice.

In the context of romantic relationships, the interplay between discourse and knowledge becomes particularly salient as women engage in practices aimed at self-development and relationship building. When women seek to improve their romantic lives, they often turn to personal development courses, coaching, or peer support groups, where discourse serves as a critical medium for the exchange and application of knowledge. These discourses are not merely informational but are deeply intertwined with cultural expectations, social norms, and personal experiences, helping to shape their behaviors and decisions in romantic contexts.

Through discourse, women acquire and internalize knowledge about romantic relationships, often focusing on topics like self-worth, communication strategies, and gender roles. This knowledge is both practical and embodied (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014) guiding their actions in relationships. For example, when women discuss their romantic challenges within a peer group, they are not only exchanging advice but are also collectively negotiating the cultural meanings of femininity, love, and partnership. These discussions allow them to reinterpret societal expectations and adapt their practices to align with their evolving sense of self and relational goals. The discursive exchanges within these settings become a mechanism for internalizing new knowledge about how to navigate the complexities of romantic relationships.

In personal development courses, discourse plays a key role in transforming abstract concepts—such as confidence, boundaries, and attraction—into practical, actionable knowledge that can be applied in romantic contexts. As women share their experiences, successes, and setbacks, they collectively develop a more nuanced understanding of how to implement strategies in their romantic lives. This process reflects the idea that knowledge is dynamic and continuously reshaped through social interaction. (Shove et al., 2012). The constant flow of discourse within these groups enables women to refine their competencies, whether that involves learning to communicate more effectively with partners, setting healthier boundaries, or cultivating self-esteem. The discourse within these groups thus acts as a catalyst for the transformation of personal knowledge, allowing women to align their behaviors with their romantic aspirations.

Moreover, discourse within these social practices reinforces the collective integration of knowledge. As women engage in group discussions or reflect on their experiences in coaching sessions, they contribute to a shared body of knowledge about relationships. This collective wisdom is distributed across the social body and is integral to the reproduction of social practices (Recwitz, 2012). For instance, women in these groups often share scripts or models of behavior that are deemed successful in attracting or maintaining romantic relationships. These scripts are informed by cultural narratives about gender and romance, but they are also subject to reinterpretation and modification as women tailor them to their own needs and experiences. Discourse, in this sense, becomes the conduit through which collective knowledge is articulated, shared, and continuously refined in the pursuit of romantic success.

The interconnectedness of discourse and knowledge in the pursuit of romantic relationships also highlights the transformative potential of these practices. As women engage in discourse, they are not simply reproducing the dominant narratives about romance; they are also challenging and reshaping them based on their lived experiences. For instance, as women discuss the challenges they face in relationships—such as societal pressures around appearance or traditional gender roles—they collectively begin to question and renegotiate these norms. This process of discursive negotiation allows for the emergence of new knowledge that better reflects their personal values and desires, thereby transforming the practices of courtship and romantic engagement.

In this context, discourse serves not only to reinforce existing norms but also to create space for new interpretations and practices to emerge. The continuous exchange of ideas, reflections, and advice within these social settings allows women to adapt their romantic practices to better align with their evolving identities and relational goals. This dynamic interplay between discourse and knowledge ultimately drives both the reproduction and transformation of social practices related to romantic relationships, illustrating the power of collective engagement in shaping personal and social outcomes.

In summary, within the context of women seeking romantic relationships, discourse and knowledge are deeply intertwined in ways that shape both the reproduction of existing social practices and the creation of new ones. Through discourse, women exchange knowledge about romance, challenge cultural norms, and collectively develop strategies that help them navigate the complex landscape of modern relationships. As they engage in these discursive practices, they not only reinforce what they have learned but also contribute to the ongoing transformation

of their romantic lives, illustrating the dynamic nature of social practices (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014; Shove et al., 2012).

5.4.3 Sociability and Discourse

Discourse and sociability emerge as interconnected and mutually reinforcing elements that play a significant role in the reproduction and transformation of social practices, particularly in the pursuit of romantic relationships and personal development. Discourse is not merely a vehicle for communication but a medium through which cultural knowledge, social norms, and competencies are circulated, enacted, and reshaped within social groups (Reckwitz, 2002). Similarly, sociability is integral to these processes as it provides the social environment in which discourse is produced, shared, and sustained through collective interactions (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014).

Discourse serves as the means through which individuals express and transmit the tacit knowledge that guides their actions within romantic relationships and self-development practices. The conversations and interactions that occur within support networks, personal development courses, and social media groups are fundamental to how women internalize, adapt, and apply the knowledge they gain from these environments. For example, when women share their experiences and strategies for navigating relationships in these groups, discourse becomes a critical tool for reinforcing or challenging social norms, such as those related to gender roles, emotional expression, and relationship dynamics (Warde, 2014). In turn, this discursive exchange not only helps individuals process and understand the knowledge they acquire but also enables them to experiment with new behaviors in their relationships, thereby contributing to the reproduction and evolution of social practices.

Sociability, on the other hand, acts as the social context in which discourse takes place. It provides the framework for these exchanges, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support among individuals who are navigating similar challenges in their romantic and personal lives. As evidenced in the research, support networks and friendships formed in these social environments play a crucial role in validating and reinforcing the practices women adopt. These relationships allow for the continuous exchange of knowledge and feedback, creating a cycle of encouragement and growth that is essential to the ongoing reproduction of practices. The mutual validation and shared experiences that emerge from these social interactions contribute

to a collective learning process, where individuals co-construct their understanding of social practices and refine their approaches to relationships and self-development (Shove et al., 2012).

Moreover, the interconnection between discourse and sociability facilitates the adaptation of practices over time. As women engage in ongoing conversations within their social circles, they are exposed to new perspectives and ideas that challenge their existing beliefs and behaviors. This dynamic interaction enables them to refine their understanding of cultural norms and personal competencies, leading to the gradual transformation of their practices. For instance, women who participate in discourse within these support networks may begin to shift their communication styles, becoming more assertive or empathetic as they learn from the feedback and experiences of others. This process of adaptation is not static but continuously evolves as individuals respond to changing social contexts and personal circumstances (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014).

In romantic relationships, the interrelationship between discourse and sociability is particularly evident. The discourse generated in support groups and social networks provides a platform for women to discuss and reflect on their romantic experiences, offering them a space to reevaluate their approaches to relationships. Through these interactions, women gain insights into how they can improve their communication, set boundaries, and navigate emotional challenges, which in turn informs their behavior in future relationships. Sociability thus acts as the medium through which these discursive insights are integrated into everyday practices, reinforcing the reproduction of certain behaviors while allowing for the gradual transformation of others (Warde, 2014).

Furthermore, the collective nature of sociability amplifies the impact of discourse on knowledge reproduction and transformation. As women share their experiences and advice within these social environments, they collectively contribute to the development of new forms of knowledge that are more attuned to their evolving social realities. This collaborative process highlights the importance of sociability in shaping the trajectory of knowledge within social practices. By engaging in discourse within these social networks, women not only reinforce existing practices but also create opportunities for innovation and change, as new ideas and strategies are introduced and integrated into their routines (Shove et al., 2012).

Ultimately, the interplay between discourse and sociability underscores the dynamic nature of social practices. Discourse provides the language and framework for articulating and sharing knowledge, while sociability offers the social context in which this knowledge is

enacted and sustained. Together, these elements enable individuals to navigate the complexities of romantic relationships and personal growth by continuously refining and adapting their practices in response to their social interactions and experiences. This dynamic interplay reflects the broader processes of reproduction and transformation that characterize social practices (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014; Shove et al., 2012). Through this lens, we can see how the ongoing exchange of discourse within social networks plays a crucial role in both maintaining the continuity of social practices and facilitating their evolution over time.

5.4.4 Objects and Sociability

The interplay between sociability and objects within the framework of Practice Theory reveals a complex mechanism through which both elements co-constitute the reproduction and transformation of practices. Rather than existing in isolation, sociability and objects interact as dynamic forces, continuously shaping and being shaped by social and material environments. This interaction is crucial in understanding how practices evolve, particularly within the context of self-development and romantic relationships.

From a Practice Theory perspective (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012), objects are not merely passive tools but active elements within the routines and performances of social life. They shape and are shaped by the practices they are part of, carrying symbolic meanings that contribute to the maintenance of social order. Likewise, sociability is embedded in routinized social interactions that sustain practices through shared knowledge and mutual reinforcement (Warde, 2014). When these two dimensions—objects and sociability—interact, they create the conditions for the stabilization or transformation of practices.

In the research context, sociability is deeply intertwined with objects, as seen in the ways women engage with self-development courses, clothing, accessories, and domestic environments. The presence of sociability within these object-related practices allows for the reproduction of existing routines while simultaneously opening pathways for transformation. For example, online communities and support networks enable women to share their experiences with self-development courses, which in turn facilitates the reinforcement of those practices. Objects such as e-books, coaching tools, and digital content become central to these interactions, reinforcing not only individual practices but also collective identities.

This interconnection exemplifies how objects serve as nodes within a larger network of social relations. The symbolic meanings of these objects are negotiated and reaffirmed through

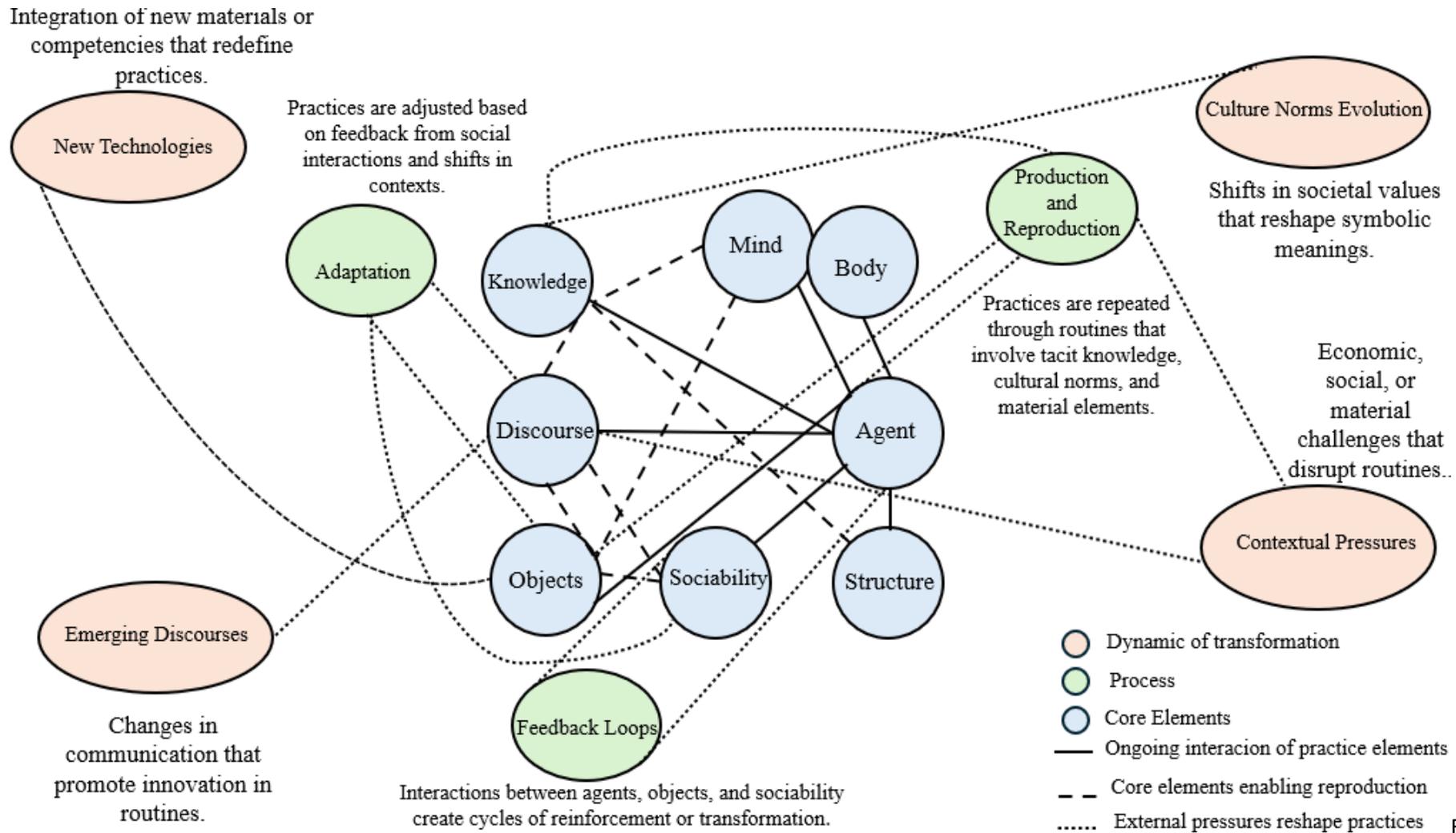
sociable interactions, which help stabilize certain behaviors while allowing for the incorporation of new ones. For instance, practices around personal care and romantic relationships are not only guided by the content of the courses but also shaped by the feedback loops of sociability within the support networks. The shared use of these objects leads to a collective transformation in the way practices are performed, as participants draw on the experiences and insights of others to refine their own routines.

Furthermore, objects take on a performative role within the social structure of practices. They become symbols of identity and agency, influencing how women perceive themselves and are perceived by others. Clothing and makeup, for instance, are not merely functional items but representations of feminine identity, shaped and reshaped through interactions with others in both physical and digital spaces. Here, the materiality of objects interlocks with sociability, as the collective validation of certain styles and aesthetics reinforces their place within the social order. Yet, these same objects also provide opportunities for the transformation of practices, as individuals experiment with new identities and self-presentations in response to evolving social dynamics.

The domestic environment serves as another example of this interconnection. Objects like candles, decor, and plants play a dual role: they are both the material anchors of self-care routines and the symbolic representations of personal transformation. The transformation of these spaces reflects the broader transformation of the individual's practices, with sociability acting as the catalyst for such changes. Interactions with others—whether through support groups or online communities—reinforce the value of creating a nurturing domestic environment, which in turn sustains the practices associated with self-care and emotional well-being.

In essence, the interconnection between sociability and objects reflects the dual forces of continuity and change within practices. While sociability helps reproduce established routines through collective reinforcement, objects provide the material and symbolic means for those practices to be performed and potentially transformed. As women engage with both sociability and objects in their self-development journeys, they negotiate the balance between maintaining familiar practices and exploring new ways of being and relating. This continuous negotiation is central to the reproduction and transformation of practices, as the material and social worlds intersect to create dynamic pathways of practice evolution. Figure 12 is a visual

scheme of the dynamics involved in both the production and reproduction of women's consumption practices as they pursue romantic relationships.



Figure

12 - The dynamics involved in both the production and reproduction of women's consumption practices as they pursue romantic relationships.

Source: Information from the research

6. FINAL THOUGHTS

*"It's something unpredictable,
but in the end, it's right.
I hope you had the time of your life."*

Good Riddance (Time of Your Life) – Green Day

6.1 Highlighting the Research's Impact

The primary objective of this research is to explore how consumption practices influence and shape women's pursuit of romantic relationships. This study seeks to identify the symbolic significance that women attribute to being in a romantic relationship and to describe the elements involved in their consumption practices when seeking such relationships through info products. Additionally, it highlights how these elements intertwine to shape these consumption practices, offering insights into their interconnected nature. Finally, the research analyzes the dynamics underlying both the production and reproduction of these practices, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intersections between consumption and women's romantic aspirations, along with their symbolic and social implications.

The research revealed the deep symbolic meaning women associate with romantic relationships. These relationships often serve as indicators of social and personal success, closely connected to societal expectations, cultural standards, and gender roles. The study emphasized that relationships go beyond personal desires, functioning within a broader framework that links relational stability to personal satisfaction, and frequently identifies romantic success as a key component of female identity. This symbolic importance creates pressures that influence women's goals, their buying habits, and how they view themselves.

The study also identified and described the elements integral to women's consumption practices. By employing Practice Theory, the research examined components such as agent, body, discourse, knowledge, mind, object and structure. Each element was analyzed in its contribution to practices like self-care, aesthetic enhancement, emotional healing, and skill acquisition. These elements were not merely examined in isolation but were also contextualized within a broader network of routines and cultural norms, demonstrating their interconnectedness in driving consumption.

The findings highlighted the complex interaction between these elements, focusing on how they work together to shape consumption patterns. The research illustrated the partnership

between body and mind in reinforcing societal standards, while social interactions and communication offer spaces for collectively negotiating and adapting norms. Material items, such as self-help courses and beauty products, were found to play a role in bridging personal growth and adherence to societal expectations. This blend of elements revealed a fluid and evolving structure of consumption behaviors, closely tied to relational aspirations.

The dynamics of production and reproduction were explored, demonstrating how women's practices are perpetuated and transformed over time. The research highlighted the cyclical nature of these practices, where repeated engagement with symbolic structures, material tools, and social interactions reinforces routines while allowing for adaptation to changing personal and cultural contexts. Sociability emerged as a central force, enabling the reinforcement of behaviors through collective validation and the creation of support networks that sustain these practices. At the same time, the transformative potential of these practices was evidenced in how women internalize and challenge cultural narratives, fostering new identities and relational approaches.

The study offered a comprehensive view of how women navigate the pursuit of romantic relationships by blending symbolic, material, and social aspects. It placed these efforts within a larger context of cultural norms, personal choices, and collective influences. This thoughtful perspective highlights how consumption serves as both a mirror of societal values and a catalyst for personal and social transformation.

6.2 The Research's Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This research advances the theoretical framework of *Practice Theory* (Reckwitz, 2002) by deepening the understanding of how social practices shape individual actions within the context of consumption and love relationships. By exploring the symbolic dimensions of consumption practices, this research demonstrates how emotional experiences, societal pressures, and cultural norms influence women's engagement with self-help products aimed at personal development and romantic success. The findings reveal that these practices are not merely individual choices but are deeply rooted in symbolic structures that shape perceptions of identity, self-worth, and relational aspirations.

The study introduces sociability as a central element in the reproduction and transformation of social practices. Sociability reinforces practices through collective interactions, such as support networks and shared experiences, enabling individuals to adapt

and refine their behaviors in response to evolving personal and social dynamics. This emphasis on relational and collective dimensions enhances the explanatory power of Practice Theory in understanding contemporary consumption patterns.

Empirically, this research provides a detailed examination of the lived experiences of women engaging in consumption practices tied to self-development and romantic pursuits. The findings shed light on how theoretical content from self-help courses is actively transformed into embodied competencies that shape daily routines, personal identities, and relational behaviors. The study reveals that women's consumption of self-help products is driven by a complex interplay of motivations, including emotional healing, social pressures, and aspirations for self-improvement. These practices are deeply embedded in cultural narratives that associate romantic success with personal worth, illustrating how symbolic meanings and societal expectations guide consumption behaviors.

One of the most compelling empirical findings is the role of emotions in shaping consumption practices. Emotional experiences such as heartbreak, rejection, and hope act as catalysts for engagement with self-help products, while emotional regulation and growth sustain these practices over time. The integration of emotional and cognitive processes into daily routines highlights the embodied nature of learning and transformation in consumption.

Similarly, the role of spirituality in personal and relational development emerges as a significant empirical insight. Spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, and the use of symbolic objects create a foundation for emotional resilience and self-awareness, aligning physical and emotional states with broader life goals. This connection between spirituality and consumption offers a perspective on how women navigate personal transformation through holistic practices.

The research also provides valuable insights into the material and social dimensions of consumption. Objects such as self-development courses, beauty products, and home decor are shown to act as mediators of identity and self-expression, while sociability fosters the collective validation and adaptation of practices. The interplay between material objects, symbolic meanings, and social interactions underscores the dynamic and iterative nature of consumption practices. Together, the theoretical and empirical contributions of this research offer a nuanced understanding of how consumption practices are shaped, reproduced, and transformed within the context of personal development and romantic relationships.

The managerial contributions of this research are particularly relevant to the female market, where consumption is deeply tied to identity formation, emotional well-being, and cultural narratives. By uncovering the symbolic and emotional dimensions of consumption practices, this study provides insights into how women engage with products, services, and experiences that align with their personal and relational aspirations.

The findings highlight the importance of designing offerings that resonate with women's needs for self-expression, empowerment, and connection. This includes creating products and experiences that not only fulfill functional desires but also support emotional growth, authenticity, and alignment with societal values. The emphasis on sociability as a critical factor underscores the potential for fostering communities that encourage shared experiences and mutual support, which are central to the female consumer journey.

Moreover, the research underscores the need to consider how symbolic elements—such as aesthetics, rituals, and narratives—shape women's consumption behaviors and influence their perceptions of value and identity. By addressing these dimensions, organizations can create strategies that inspire loyalty, trust, and deeper emotional engagement, making their offerings more meaningful and impactful in the context of women's lives.

This study provides valuable insights into consumption practices tied to the pursuit of romantic relationships, but it also has certain limitations that warrant consideration. These limitations help frame the findings and highlight directions for future research. For example, a longitudinal approach could have revealed more profound changes in consumption behaviors over time, offering a richer and more dynamic understanding of participants' actions. Additionally, the sample largely consisted of women who voluntarily participated in self-development courses and consumed informational products. This specific demographic may restrict the applicability of the findings to women who do not engage with these products or who live in different cultural, social, or economic settings. The results are closely tied to the cultural and social context in which the study was conducted, potentially limiting their applicability to regions or cultures with differing norms and values. Future research conducted in diverse cultural settings could provide a broader and comparative perspective on consumption practices.

The focus on informational products and self-development courses excluded other types of consumption that may also be related to the pursuit of love relationships, such as physical goods or experiential services. Future research could adopt a more comprehensive approach to

explore how various categories of consumption intersect and influence these practices. Additionally, the study did not deeply examine external factors, such as technological changes or socio-economic crises, which may impact consumption behaviors. Incorporating these elements could provide a more holistic view of the dynamics shaping consumer practices.

Acknowledging these limitations reflects the complexity of the subject matter and underscores the need for complementary approaches in future research. Despite these constraints, this study lays a strong foundation for theoretical and practical discussions, offering valuable insights into female consumption and its relationship with symbolic and emotional values in the context of romantic relationships. Table 12 summarizes the study contributions.

Table 12 - Theoretical, Empirical, and Managerial Contributions of the Study

Aspect	Findings
Theoretical	- Advances Practice Theory by exploring how social practices shape individual actions in the context of consumption and love relationships.
	- Highlights the role of sociability in reinforcing and transforming social practices.
Empirical	- Details women's lived experiences with self-help products for personal development and romantic pursuits.
	- Shows how theoretical content is transformed into embodied competencies affecting routines, identities, and relational behaviors.
	- Emotional experiences (e.g., heartbreak, hope) act as catalysts for engaging in these practices.
	- Spirituality (e.g., meditation, prayer) supports emotional resilience and self-awareness.
	- Material objects mediate identity and self-expression, emphasizing the dynamic interplay of objects, symbols, and social interactions.
Managerial	- Emphasizes the need for offerings that align with women's needs for self-expression, empowerment, and connection.
	- Recommends designing products and experiences that support emotional growth and societal alignment.
	- Highlights the importance of fostering communities for shared experiences and mutual support.
	- Suggests strategies incorporating symbolic elements (e.g., aesthetics, rituals) to inspire loyalty and emotional engagement.

	- Addresses the relevance of emotional well-being and cultural narratives in marketing to women.
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Source: Information from the research

6.3 Pathways for Future Research

From a theoretical perspective, the concept of sociability as a central element in shaping consumption practices presents significant opportunities for further exploration. Future studies could examine how sociability operates across different contexts, such as professional environments, educational settings, or community-building initiatives, to understand how collective interactions shape and transform individual behaviors and consumption patterns. Investigating the interdependence between sociability and other elements of practice, such as knowledge, discourse, and materiality, is another promising direction. For instance, researchers could explore how social interactions mediate the adoption and adaptation of new practices, especially in contexts of rapid cultural or technological change, providing insights into how sociability facilitates the diffusion of new consumption behaviors and cultural norms.

Another promising direction for theoretical exploration lies in examining how sociability operates in digital spaces. The increasing influence of social media, online communities, and virtual support networks on consumption patterns calls for further investigation. Future studies could delve into questions such as how virtual interactions contribute to the perpetuation of practices and how digital sociability compares to in-person interactions in shaping shared norms. Additionally, exploring how power dynamics and social hierarchies within groups affect sociability and its role in reinforcing or challenging practices could offer a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between sociability and consumption. This research could illuminate how collective practices are upheld or contested within various social frameworks.

This research lays the groundwork for further exploration of consumption practices across different demographics and relational contexts. For example, future studies could examine how men engage with symbolic and emotional consumption in their efforts to build relationships, pursue self-development, or shape their identities, providing a comparative lens to findings focused on women. Additionally, research could expand to include LGBTQ+ communities, investigating the practices of same-sex couples or individuals and exploring how cultural norms, consumption behaviors, and relational goals intersect within these contexts

. Another important empirical direction involves studying women who consciously opt out of pursuing romantic relationships. Examining their consumption practices could reveal how consumption contributes to identity formation and personal fulfillment outside traditional relational narratives. Additionally, cross-cultural studies would provide valuable insights by comparing consumption patterns across different cultural settings, identifying universal versus context-specific trends.

Longitudinal research could provide deeper insights by examining how consumption practices and symbolic meanings change over time, particularly in response to major life transitions, societal shifts, or evolving cultural norms. Additionally, exploring non-traditional relationship models, such as polyamory or open relationships, could shed light on how individuals construct and negotiate their identities within these emerging relational frameworks.

By pursuing these avenues, future research can build on the foundational insights of this study, contributing to a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the intricate relationship between consumption, sociability, and relational aspirations. Such investigations would not only enhance theoretical frameworks but also offer detailed empirical evidence to enrich academic discussions and inform practical applications.

6.4 Reflections on the Research Journey

When I began this research, I approached the subject with a significant amount of frustration and skepticism. I viewed the women who invested in these types of services with judgment, perceiving them as overly focused on the pursuit of romantic relationships. I thought they were misguided for basing so much of their lives on the desire for a partner. However, as I entered the field and immersed myself in their routines, my perspective began to shift profoundly.

Over two years, I engaged with five different WhatsApp groups, some of which I remain part of to this day. These groups became a space of genuine exchange—of confidence, reflections, and mutual support among the participants. Being part of their world as a researcher, I was welcomed in ways I had not anticipated. The women were always aware of my role as a researcher, yet they shared their time, thoughts, and experiences with me openly. In many cases, they even sought my advice, perhaps if my study of romantic relationships made me an expert

in navigating them. Though we had never met in person, the trust they placed in me through our interviews and exchanges felt deeply meaningful.

Through this journey, I came to understand a fundamental truth: no one is “silly” or “foolish” for wanting to be happy. These women are simply trying to do their best to lead fulfilling lives. Their pursuit of love, though sometimes shaped by societal expectations, is ultimately rooted in a desire for connection, intimacy, and meaning.

As I reach the conclusion of this process, I feel an overwhelming sense of fulfillment. Beyond the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study, my greatest aspiration is to leave something meaningful for the women who are on this journey. I want them to know that it is okay to want a romantic relationship, to seek love, and to value the idea of building a family or a serious partnership. These are worthy and legitimate aspirations.

However, I also hope to remind them that life need not revolve entirely around this pursuit. They can live vibrant, fulfilling lives—traveling, spending time with friends, cherishing family connections, building careers, and embracing the multitude of experiences the world has to offer—without making marriage the goal. If a relationship comes, that is wonderful. But if it doesn't, there are countless other ways to experience life in its fullness.

This research has transformed not only my understanding of these women but also my empathy and respect for their journeys. It is my hope that they, too, come to see the vast possibilities for joy and fulfillment that extend beyond any singular goal, including the pursuit of a romantic relationship.

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Appendix a: semi-structured interview guide

1. Have you been in a romantic relationship before?
2. Could you describe your ideal relationship?
3. In your view, how would your life change if you were to find a partner?
4. What does the pursuit of a loving relationship mean to you personally?
5. How do you perceive the role of love and relationships in your overall life journey?
6. What does being in a romantic relationship symbolize for you personally?
7. How do you think others perceive your relationship status, and how does that perception influence your self-image?
8. Can you describe your daily routine, from waking up to going to bed?
9. Have there been any changes in your routine, such as health, diet, consumption patterns, or interests, after enrolling in this course?
10. Building on the previous question, have your perspectives shifted regarding health, diet, consumption patterns, or interests due to the course?
11. What are the main takeaways you've gained from this course?
12. What aspects of the course content resonate with you the most?
13. Do you believe that the content in this course aligns with your aspirations for a romantic relationship?
14. Have you been applying the knowledge and practices you've learned in the course?
15. Do you typically invest in self-help or coaching products from other coaches as well?
16. Do you often share images of your relationship-related journey on social media?
17. Do you have any friends or acquaintances who are also consumers of similar products?
18. Do you engage with other participants in the course or have interactions with friends about the content?
19. Do you believe your communication has shifted following your engagement with this course? If so, in what manner?
20. Do your friends seek dating advice as well?
21. Are you often the go-to person among your friends for dating advice?
22. Can you recount an event or experience that stands out to you since you began consuming this course content?
23. Are you a social media user?

24. Do you often capture and share these processes through photographs on social media?
25. Which social media platforms do you primarily use?
26. Do you use dating apps?
27. How long have you been a student of coach X?
28. What motivated you to choose and enroll in this specific course?
29. Is this your first time purchasing a course of this nature?
30. Can you share a specific moment or experience in the course that deepened your understanding of the symbolic meaning of relationships?

Appendix b: observation guide

Class Structure and Content

- What is the primary focus or theme of the class?
- How is the content delivered (lecture, Q&A, interactive discussions)?
- Are there specific topics related to body image, social media presentation, or romantic relationships?
- What materials, tools, or resources are referenced during the session?

Interaction Between Coach and Participants

- How does the coach engage with the participants?
- Is the interaction predominantly one-way (coach to participants) or is it more interactive (two-way discussions)?
- How do participants respond to the coach's advice or questions?
- Are there any notable differences in the way participants interact with each other versus the coach?
- How does the coach encourage participation (direct questions, calling on individuals, etc.)?

Participant Behavior and Reactions

- What are the observable attitudes of participants during the session (enthusiastic, passive, critical)?
- Are there any recurring themes or concerns participants express during the discussions?
- Do participants share personal experiences, and how are they received by the group?
- Are there noticeable trends in how participants present themselves (e.g., confidence, hesitation, etc.)?

Platform and Technical Dynamics

- What platform is used for the live sessions (e.g., Zoom, Instagram Live, etc.)?
- Are there any platform-related issues that affect the flow of the class (e.g., connectivity issues, platform features like chat or polls)?
- How does the platform influence interaction between the coach and participant

Documenting Observations

- Immediately after each class, record detailed notes in a Word document.
- Organize notes by class, noting the date, coach, and key observations for each session.
- Focus on both the content delivered and the social dynamics at play in each session.

Appendix c: consent form

Termo de Consentimento

Declaro, por meio deste termo, que aceitei, por livre e espontânea vontade, ser entrevistada na pesquisa de campo, com objetivo de contribuir à tese de doutorado desenvolvida por Melissa Rizzo Sperandio. Fui informada que Melissa é orientada pelo Prof. Dr. Francisco Giovanni David Viera, o qual eu posso contatar em qualquer momento que julgar oportuno e necessário, via Email: fgdvieira@uem.br.

Atesto que estou concedendo essa entrevista sem receber qualquer incentivo financeiro ou ter qualquer ônus. Confirmando ainda, que a minha participação é exclusivamente com o intuito de colaborar com a pesquisa, na qual fui informada que o objetivo geral é identificar práticas de consumo em mulheres que buscam um relacionamento amoroso.

Estou ciente que minha participação será de forma anônima e que a entrevista poderá ser gravada, caso eu permita, e o acesso dos dados será realizado somente pela pesquisadora e seu orientador. Adicionalmente, fui devidamente informada que eu posso me retirar dessa pesquisa a qualquer momento, sem que minha desistência cause algum ônus à minha pessoa.

Melissa Rizzo Sperandio

Pesquisadora

Participante