



Adolescent Identity Anxiety and Cognitive Coping: A Reflexive Thematic Analysis of Twilight

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ABSTRACT

Twilight (2008) portrays intense romance and supernatural fantasy while advancing a problematic narrative that romanticizes emotional dependency and identity externalization. This study explores adolescent identity anxiety and cognitive coping through a qualitative, constructivist-interpretivist approach, using reflexive thematic analysis to examine the film as a cultural and psychological text. Ten themes including outsider identity, emotional dependency, romantic idealization, fantasy as escapism, and self-sacrifice depict adolescence as a phase of identity uncertainty managed through relational attachment, external validation, and fantasy-based coping. While these elements foster emotional engagement, they risk normalizing maladaptive coping, especially dependency and externalized self-worth. Drawing on adolescent development, cognitive coping, and media psychology, the study shows how the film frames identity formation as reliant on romantic validation rather than internal self-exploration. The findings emphasize media's dual role in shaping adolescent meaning-making and highlight the need for critical media literacy and adaptive coping strategies.

Introduction



Cinema has long functioned as a powerful medium for reflecting and shaping the emotional and psychological experiences of individuals, particularly adolescents who are in the midst of identity formation. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by intense emotional changes, identity exploration, and increased vulnerability to anxiety and internal conflict. During this period, individuals actively seek meaning, belonging, and a coherent sense of self, often navigating uncertainties related to relationships, self-worth, and future roles. Identity anxiety, therefore, emerges as a common psychological experience, reflecting confusion, self-doubt, and emotional instability. To manage such challenges, adolescents employ various cognitive coping strategies, ranging from adaptive approaches such as problem-solving and emotional regulation to maladaptive patterns like avoidance and emotional dependency (Cocoradă & Mihalascu, 2012). At the same time, media and popular culture play a significant role in shaping how adolescents interpret and cope with these experiences, functioning as influential sources of socialization and psychological meaning-making (Arnett, 1995).

Popular media, especially films, play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' perceptions of identity, relationships, and coping processes. As a form of "super peer," media provides models through which young individuals interpret emotions, social roles, and behavioral patterns (Arnett, 1995). Narratives portrayed in films often mirror adolescents' lived experiences, including feelings of exclusion, the need for acceptance, and the use of fantasy as a psychological refuge. Research suggests that such emotionally engaging narratives significantly influence identity exploration and coping responses by presenting complex psychological themes in relatable ways (Tagsold & Decuir-Gunby, 2012; Goodwin et al., 2021). In this context, media texts are not merely sources of entertainment but active agents in the construction of meaning, shaping beliefs, attitudes, and emotional understanding.

Among contemporary media texts, *Twilight* has gained widespread attention for its strong appeal to adolescent audiences and its portrayal of complex emotional and relational dynamics. Studies suggest that such narratives can significantly influence adolescents' perceptions of identity, relationships, and coping processes by presenting emotionally engaging and relatable characters (Singh & Sen, 2020; Tagsold & Decuir-Gunby, 2012). *Bella Swan*, as an "ordinary" protagonist, allows adolescents to project their own experiences onto her, fostering identification and deep emotional involvement. This engagement can both facilitate emotional expression and intensify identity-related anxiety, particularly through themes of belonging, self-worth, and romantic attachment (Singh & Sen, 2020).

From a literary and thematic perspective, *Twilight* incorporates key Gothic elements such as forbidden love, death, identity conflict, and dark atmospheric settings, which symbolically represent



internal psychological struggles (Apriliani & Puspasari, 2025). These elements are further reinforced through visual and narrative techniques that heighten emotional tension and deepen the portrayal of adolescent experiences. Additionally, psychoanalytic interpretations highlight how characters in the series experience repression, internal conflict, and emotional suppression, suggesting that unresolved desires and unconscious processes significantly shape behavior and relationships (Golda & Stella, 2023). Similarly, character-focused analyses reveal *Bella's* emotional sensitivity, dependency, and strong need for belonging, reflecting broader patterns of adolescent vulnerability and identity negotiation (Subur & Indrawan, 2020).

Fantasy as a broader genre also plays a crucial role in adolescent coping. Research indicates that adolescents often engage with fantasy narratives as a form of psychological escapism, using them to manage stress, regulate emotions, and explore identity in a safe and imaginative space (Madhushani, 2025). Fantasy enables emotional processing, creativity, and self-reflection, but excessive reliance on it may lead to maladaptive outcomes such as social withdrawal and emotional dependency. Similarly, fantasy can function as both an adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanism, supporting resilience and identity exploration while also posing risks when it blurs the boundaries between imagination and reality (Kaur, 2024).

From a psychological perspective, *Twilight* illustrates how adolescents may cope with identity anxiety through fantasy, idealization, and relational dependence. *Bella's* relationship with *Edward* can be interpreted as a form of cognitive coping, providing emotional security, validation, and a sense of uniqueness that may be lacking in her everyday life. This aligns with research suggesting that fantasy narratives serve as mechanisms of escapism, enabling adolescents to temporarily distance themselves from real-life stressors while exploring identity in a safe imaginative space (Madhushani, 2025; Kaur, 2024). At the same time, psychoanalytic interpretations highlight the presence of repression, internal conflict, and emotional suppression within the characters, indicating that unresolved desires and unconscious processes play a significant role in shaping behavior and relationships (Golda & Stella, 2023).

However, the narrative also raises critical concerns regarding the normalization of emotional dependency and unequal power dynamics in relationships. Studies suggest that *Twilight* may influence adolescents to interpret controlling or imbalanced relationships as expressions of love and protection, thereby shaping their cognitive schemas and expectations of intimacy (Stowell, 2021; Griggs, 2016). Such portrayals, when internalized without critical reflection, may contribute to identity-related anxiety



and maladaptive coping patterns. Additionally, while films are effective in enhancing emotional engagement and reducing stigma, their role in promoting adaptive coping and help-seeking behaviors remains limited, highlighting a gap in how media supports adolescent resilience (Goodwin et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the themes depicted in *Twilight*, such as transformation, belongingness, self-sacrifice, and the desire to be “chosen”, reflect deeper psychological needs associated with identity formation. *Bella*'s willingness to undergo transformation symbolizes a longing for stability and certainty, while her emotional dependence on relationships illustrates how adolescents may anchor their sense of self in others when experiencing identity confusion. These patterns resonate with broader theories of adolescent development, where identity formation is closely linked to emotional experiences, social interactions, and cognitive processes.

Despite the extensive exploration of *Twilight* from literary, psychological, and media perspectives, much of the existing research remains either descriptive or theoretical, with limited focus on how adolescents actively interpret and cognitively process these narratives. There is a need for more in-depth qualitative approaches that capture the subjective experiences and meanings constructed by adolescents themselves. In this context, reflexive thematic analysis provides a valuable methodological framework for examining how themes related to identity anxiety and cognitive coping emerge from engagement with *Twilight*.

Therefore, the present study aims to explore adolescent identity anxiety and cognitive coping through a reflexive thematic analysis of *Twilight*, focusing on how its themes, characters, and narrative structures reflect and potentially shape adolescents' psychological experiences. By integrating insights from literary analysis, psychological theory, and media studies, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between popular culture and adolescent mental health.

Review of Literature

Apriliani & Puspasari (2025), analyze *Twilight* from the perspective of Gothic literature and films. They highlight several themes typical for gothic works such as forbidden love, mortality, struggles with identity, supernatural beings and atmosphere. This paper demonstrates how traditional gothic elements can be adapted to fit a modern teenage romance. Specifically, the authors provide examples of gothic themes used in the *Twilight* series by drawing analogies between forbidden love portrayed in the film and the struggle with mortality which is associated with intense emotions rather than the presence of death only. Visual characteristics are also viewed as very important when analyzing Gothic movies as



they add psychological tension and heighten emotional experiences. Within the scope of adolescent identity anxiety and coping, this research sheds light on the symbolism of gothic stories although it focuses on Gothic themes rather than coping strategies.

Madhushani's (2025) work has fantasy literature which is discussed as a form of psychological escapism for adolescents, which has an impact on their mental well-being. According to the author, fantasy serves as a tool used by teenagers who feel anxious because of their identity problems, stressed, and socially uncomfortable. This finding can be related to the concept of defense mechanisms proposed by Freud. Adolescents engage with fantasy literature as a way to escape from the challenges that exist in real life; therefore, they become less anxious and are able to control their emotions. Reading fantasies makes people creative, boosts confidence, helps explore one's own identity, and forms relationships with other people through identification of oneself with characters from stories. Moreover, such reading is helpful when discussing one's personal and social issues, moral problems, etc. From this perspective, this finding can be linked to adolescent identity anxiety and cognitive coping within *Twilight*. It should be noted that overusing the strategy might result in social isolation, inability to study properly, etc.

Kaur (2024) proposes that fantasy is a complex psychological construct whose impacts on emotions, actions, and psychological well-being are both beneficial and detrimental. It is established that the acts of daydreaming, involvement in fictitious literature, and imaginative role-playing are among the coping mechanisms that assist adolescents in managing their stress levels, emotions, and identity issues. Through these processes, individuals can manage emotions, introspect on their personal experience, and imagine themselves dealing with real-life problems for enhanced resilience and creativity as well as goal formation. Additionally, through the experience gained through such fantasy, individuals acquire social skills, empathy, and develop an understanding of their identities because they are exposed to multiple viewpoints. In relation to the role played by fantasy in the case of adolescents' identity anxiety and cognitive coping in *Twilight*, this shows that fantasy can be used for emotional regulation and identity development purposes but at the same time symbolizing inner conflict. However, excessive fantasizing can lead to negative effects like social isolation, maladaptive daydreaming, and confusion between reality and imagination

Golda and Stella (2023), during the analysis of the book *Twilight* used the Freudian approach for understanding the themes explored within the book using the psychoanalytic theory, particularly focusing on the idea of repression. Specifically, this study examines how the primary characters, *Bella*, *Edward*, and *Jacob*, handle and suppress their romantic desires in light of conflicts between themselves.



Employing the concepts of id, ego, and repression as formulated by Sigmund Freud, the authors note that emotions such as love are always kept under control and may be repressed because of fear, moral considerations, or limitations imposed by society. In any case, repressed emotions will continue operating at the unconscious level. Considering the issue of adolescent identity anxiety and the cognitive strategies applied when dealing with identity problems, the analysis provides some useful insights regarding the role of repressed emotions and internal conflict in such situations. Even though there is much to learn from the discussed paper, it focuses exclusively on romantic issues.

Goodwin et al. (2021) discuss the use of films in adolescent mental health education, focusing on their potential to improve mental health literacy, reduce stigmatization, and develop attitudes towards seeking help. According to the researchers, films are extremely effective tools to educate adolescents about mental health problems due to their emotionally and narratively engaging nature and ability to simplify complex psychological concepts. Moreover, it also notes that narratives in films have a great impact on how young people perceive identity and coping mechanisms and process their emotions. While films can effectively lower personal and self-stigma associated with mental disorders, their ability to promote help-seeking behavior and educate viewers is inconsistent without any educational messages. As such, considering the problem of adolescent identity anxiety and cognitive coping mechanisms presented by *Twilight*, one can assume that while the film successfully illustrates teenagers' emotional life and identity conflicts, its effect on the topic of coping remains controversial. At the same time, despite their effectiveness in encouraging reflection and discussion of issues related to identity formation and coping, there is a lack of literature on using films to foster resilience in adolescents.

Stowell (2021), an author writing in the EBSCO Research Starters study of *The Twilight Saga*, describes several major characters, especially those who show certain psychological features. In this respect, it is noted that *Edward Cullen* experiences conflict between his instincts and ability to maintain control over his behavior, whereas *Bella Swan* demonstrates her passive and submissive personality and readiness to sacrifice herself for the sake of the man she loves. In relation to issues of relationship norms, the text indicates that the characters presented contribute to the portrayal of a story where it is considered acceptable to be emotionally dependent on others and allow oneself to control another person.

Singh and Sen (2020), in their study published in *Asian Resonance*, investigate the impact of *The Twilight Saga* on the development of cognition, emotion, and identity in teenagers using a literary-analytical framework. According to Singh and Sen, adolescence is a complex period of life characterized by emotional vulnerability and identity crisis and thus more susceptible to literary fiction. The article



shows that teenagers are attracted to *Twilight* because of the depiction of *Bella Swan* as a relatable and ordinary figure who shares similar experiences and emotions with the teenage audience, leading to emotional investment in the storyline. Adolescent themes like sexual maturation, need for social affiliation, and concerns regarding self-worth can be helpful in emotional articulation but increase identity worries at the same time. However, the researchers warn that the worship of dependence and romanticism can lead to the development of distorted mental frameworks pertaining to love and self-concept if not viewed critically. Even though there is an acceptance that such a phenomenon may help inspire imagination and self-reflection among the youth, the study still lacks empirical evidence, emphasizing the need for using better research tools, such as reflexive thematic analysis, to understand the psychological dilemmas of teenagers, particularly due to popular literary works, such as *Twilight*.

Subur and Indrawan (2020), carried out a qualitative literary analysis of the novel *Twilight*, which explored the psychology of the main character, namely *Bella Swan*. Based on library research and theoretical knowledge concerning the subject matter, with character theory and psychology being taken into consideration, with William Kenny's point of view especially being taken into account, five main components of the personality, motivation, desires, emotions, appetite, and feelings of the character were analyzed. It was found that *Bella's* personality is determined by the interplay between her internal drives and external relations, which result in her emotional behavior. She can be characterized as an emotionally sensitive character who depends heavily on interpersonal relationships due to her deep desire to belong and identity conflict. Moreover, her decision-making skills and interpersonal relationships appear to have a significant link to her personal psychological needs, with a tendency to cope with them by means of being dependent on something. However, in spite of the fact that the provided analysis represents a theoretical perspective on the problem of personality psychology, it remains rather descriptive in nature, neglecting not only the audience's viewpoint, but also certain psychological outcomes that may be seen from the text. Therefore, it becomes evident that an interpretive approach should be employed in order to solve the problem.

Griggs (2016) argues that *Twilight* has a significant social impact due to its influence on adolescents who go through a psychologically vulnerable stage of their development. It is assumed that romantic fantasies can facilitate in helping young people develop a vision about relationships and become familiar with reality by using fiction. In that way, this may lead to developing illusions and cognitive dissonance while reconciling those perceptions with their realities. Among other themes found in *Twilight*, the theme of emotionally-dependent relationships allegedly triggers unhealthy behavior and self-sacrifice. Thus, such relationships might be considered normal among the younger generation. In



addition, the effect might be even more profound, due to the influence of peers and the tendency to belong to social groups, whereby adolescents will identify themselves with certain stories without necessarily analyzing them critically. Additionally, the research brings out the association between intense romantic fantasy engagement and addiction, which poses the potential danger of emotional dependency and uncontrollable engagement. In conclusion, therefore, the results emphasize the significance of adopting a critical perspective while engaging with media contents because excessive engagement might be emotionally and cognitively debilitating.

Cocoradă & Mihalascu (2012) examine the coping mechanisms of adolescents, recognizing this phase as an essential developmental period characterized by substantial psychological and social transformations. Coping is understood as the mental processes through which people try to cope with stressful situations. These coping techniques can be classified into adaptive (productive) and maladaptive (non-productive) categories. According to the results, adolescents are inclined to utilize adaptive techniques such as planning, actively dealing with the problem, reinterpreting the meaning of events, and receiving social assistance, but they rarely employ maladaptive strategies such as denial, explosive behavior, and isolation from others. Individual variations are also emphasized by the authors, who point out that females often use emotion-based coping techniques, whereas males use action-based coping strategies. Moreover, it has been found that coping skills become more efficient with age. In addition, the idea of locus of control influences the coping style, as people who have an internal locus tend to be more adaptive in their coping styles, while people with an external locus are linked to maladaptive coping styles. In the context of teenage identity anxiety and cognitive coping in the novel *Twilight*, such perspectives offer a basis for analyzing how teenagers understand and cope with emotional issues and identity problems shown in the story. The study highlights that coping is a complex and multidimensional process, and its various facets need to be considered.

Tagsold and Decuir-Gunby (2012) indicate that films offer valuable opportunities to analyze the problems typical of adolescence; in this respect, the movie *Twilight* is especially useful since this particular age period is characterized by identity exploration, self-reflection and interpretation of the experience through fantasy. The authors point out that movies play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' perception as they provide a wide range of relevant issues discussed through the prism of identity, relations, gender roles and psychology. Moreover, the selected movie reflects many of the problems related to identity formation, the impact of peers and family on personal growth, dating, and love and all these factors correlate with well-known psychological theories developed by psychologists Erikson and Piaget. As regards identity anxiety and cognitive coping strategies used during adolescence, this film



helps to consider this problem from the perspective of adolescent identity anxiety and coping processes. Finally, the movie *Twilight* becomes especially helpful in providing an educational environment in terms of promoting students' self-reflection and thinking skills.

Arnett (1995) focuses on the effects of the media on the socialization process of adolescents, paying particular attention to the media's influence on identity and values construction. Through a comprehensive review of theory and evidence, the research reveals media as a "super peer" that influences teenagers' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior not only through the real-world surroundings but also due to the significant effect of the media on young people's lives. Indeed, young people tend to use the media to comprehend their feelings, relations, and identity. Regarding the issue of adolescent identity anxiety and cognitive coping in *Twilight*, such an approach proves the fact that the movie can be considered a socializing agent that will help adolescents understand how to love, feel self-worth, and cope with emotions.

Methodology

Aim of the study

This study aims to critically explore how the movie *Twilight* portrays adolescent identity anxiety and the cognitive coping mechanisms employed by its central characters. As a globally influential young adult narrative, *Twilight* offers a rich psychological landscape through which themes of self-concept, emotional dependency, and identity conflict can be examined. Grounded in media psychology and adolescent developmental theory, this study seeks to uncover the implicit psychological messages embedded within the film's narrative, character construction, and visual storytelling.

Research Objectives:

- To examine the portrayal of adolescent identity anxiety and self-concept struggles in the protagonist's journey.
- To analyze the cognitive and emotional coping mechanisms demonstrated by characters in response to relational and internal conflicts.
- To explore how romanticization and fantasy elements influence adolescents' understanding of identity, belonging, and emotional regulation.



- To investigate the role of interpersonal relationships in shaping identity formation and coping strategies.

Research Questions:

1. How does *Twilight* represent adolescent identity anxiety through its narrative and character development?
2. What cognitive coping strategies are depicted in response to emotional distress and identity confusion?
3. In what ways does the film normalize or romanticize maladaptive coping mechanisms such as emotional dependency and withdrawal?
4. How do interpersonal relationships contribute to the construction and negotiation of identity in the film?

Research Design and Paradigm

This qualitative study adopts a ***constructivist-interpretivist*** paradigm, wherein reality is understood as socially and psychologically constructed through subjective experiences, narratives, and symbolic representations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The study is exploratory in nature and employs a reflexive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019), which emphasizes the researcher's active role in meaning-making and interpretation.

Reflexive thematic analysis allows for an in-depth exploration of recurring psychological patterns, identity struggles, and coping behaviors as represented in the film. This method is particularly suited to examining nuanced emotional and cognitive processes, as it facilitates engagement with both explicit content (dialogue, behavior) and implicit meanings (symbolism, tone, and visual metaphors).

The analysis follows ***Braun and Clarke's*** six-phase framework: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This flexible yet systematic approach ensures both analytical rigor and interpretive depth, making it highly appropriate for psychological film analysis.

Sample Selection



The primary sample for this study is *Twilight*, directed by Catherine Hardwicke and based on the novel by Stephenie Meyer. The film was selected through purposive sampling, based on its strong relevance to adolescent identity themes, widespread popularity, and significant cultural influence on youth audiences.

As a single-case qualitative study, *Twilight* is treated as a media text that functions both as a cultural artifact and a psychological narrative. The film provides rich material in the form of character interactions, internal dialogues, emotional expressions, and symbolic imagery, making it suitable for reflexive thematic analysis.

According to Neuendorf (2017), films can be analyzed as complex texts that both reflect and shape societal norms, beliefs, and psychological constructs. In this context, *Twilight* is examined as a representation of adolescent emotional life, particularly focusing on identity anxiety and coping mechanisms within romantic and social frameworks.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through multiple rounds of close viewing of *Twilight* over a one-month period. The film was segmented into key narrative arcs and emotionally significant scenes, and each segment was carefully transcribed to extract dialogue, internal monologues, non-verbal behavior, and cinematographic elements relevant to identity anxiety and coping processes. Particular attention was given to:

- Scenes depicting *Bella Swan*'s internal conflict, self-doubt, and identity uncertainty
- Interactions between *Bella Swan* and *Edward Cullen* that reflect emotional dependency and relational coping
- Moments of withdrawal, isolation, or emotional suppression
- Symbolic visual motifs such as mirrors, pale lighting, physical fragility, and environmental gloom
- Cinematic techniques including camera angles, background score, and lighting that signify emotional distress or romantic idealization

In addition to the primary media text, supplementary data included director interviews and author commentaries by Stephenie Meyer. These sources were used to triangulate interpretations and situate the film within a broader cultural and audience reception context. A codebook was developed to capture



recurring thematic clusters (e.g., “identity diffusion,” “emotional dependency,” “avoidance coping,” “romanticized suffering,” and “self-sacrificial tendencies”), which were iteratively refined throughout the coding process.

Analytic Procedure

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step model of reflexive thematic analysis:

- **Familiarization:** Repeated viewing and detailed transcription of scenes were conducted to achieve an immersive understanding of the narrative and emotional tone.
- **Initial Coding:** Line-by-line open coding was carried out manually using Microsoft Excel and NVivo to identify expressions of anxiety, self-concept disturbance, emotional regulation, and coping behaviors.
- **Searching for Themes:** Codes were organized into potential themes such as “identity anxiety,” “emotional dependency as coping,” “avoidance and withdrawal,” and “idealized romantic attachment.”
- **Reviewing Themes:** Themes were refined through constant comparison across different scenes to ensure internal consistency and clear distinctions between themes.
- **Defining Themes:** Each theme was clearly defined and interpreted within existing psychological frameworks, such as adolescent identity development (Erikson, 1968) and cognitive coping theories (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).
- **Writing Up:** The final themes were integrated into a coherent narrative, supported by dialogue excerpts, character interactions, and cinematic elements, alongside theoretical interpretation.

Reflexivity Statement

As the first author and a first-year postgraduate student pursuing MSc Psychology, I acknowledge that my academic training, personal experiences, and sociocultural background have influenced the interpretive process of this study. Being in the early stages of formal training in psychological research, my understanding of adolescent development, identity formation, and coping strategies is primarily shaped by foundational theories and classroom learning. At the same time, my engagement with popular media, including films such as *Twilight*, has informed my sensitivity to how narratives may reflect and shape adolescents’ emotional experiences and identity-related anxieties.



My position as a young Indian student navigating both academic and social transitions has contributed to my interest in themes of identity uncertainty, belongingness, and emotional regulation, which are central to this study. I recognize that my interpretations may be influenced by my own cultural context, where collectivistic values, gender norms, and relational expectations play a significant role in shaping adolescent identity and coping. This awareness encouraged me to remain critically reflective of how I interpreted characters, relationships, and coping mechanisms portrayed in the film.

To ensure rigor and minimize subjective bias, reflexive practices such as memo-writing and continuous self-reflection were employed throughout the research process. I actively engaged in discussions with co-authors to challenge assumptions, refine themes, and maintain analytical balance. This collaborative and reflexive approach allowed for greater transparency and helped situate the findings within both psychological theory and media analysis, while remaining mindful of the broader cultural and developmental context in which the study is positioned.

Ethical Considerations

The study relied exclusively on publicly accessible data and did not involve human participants; therefore, formal institutional ethical approval was not required. However, strict ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process.

All sources were appropriately cited, and care was taken to ensure fidelity to the original film narrative and supplementary materials. Interpretations were grounded in observable data and established psychological theories, avoiding speculative or unsupported claims about characters. No personal or private data were collected, and the analysis focused solely on publicly available media content. The study adhered to American Psychological Association (2020) guidelines for ethical research involving non-invasive, publicly accessible data.

Results: Thematic Findings

Thematic analysis of *Twilight* revealed ten dominant themes, each reflecting embedded sociopsychological discourses surrounding adolescent identity anxiety and cognitive coping within the film's narrative structure, character interactions, and cinematic framing. These themes were developed through iterative cycles of coding, reflexive interpretation, and cross-disciplinary validation integrating perspectives from media psychology and communication studies.



The findings illustrate how *Twilight* constructs adolescence as a period marked by identity uncertainty, emotional dependency, and relational coping, while simultaneously romanticizing potentially maladaptive psychological patterns. Table 1 (not shown here) summarizes the themes, descriptions, illustrative examples, and theoretical linkages.

Through reflexive thematic analysis, ten interrelated themes emerged, highlighting how the film negotiates identity formation, belongingness, and emotional regulation through fantasy and romance-driven narratives. Each theme is elaborated below with interpretive and theoretical grounding.

1. Outsider Identity and Social Displacement

One of the key themes explored in *Twilight* revolves around the portrayal of *Bella Swan* as an outsider struggling with social displacement. Her move to Forks, her difficulty interacting with other students, and her constant perception of herself as “different” mirror adolescent identity crisis and issues of non-belonging. This relates to Erikson’s (1968) theory of identity vs. role confusion, which describes how adolescents find it difficult to identify their place within society. The movie portrays outsider status not as a negative experience but rather as a step towards finding a “special” identity for oneself.

2. Sense of Belongingness Through Exclusive Relationships

Rather than through social inclusion in a community, the story depicts the theme of belongingness via exclusionary attachment, especially the relationship between *Bella Swan* and *Edward Cullen*. Emotional assurance comes from the fact that the individual is uniquely singled out rather than socially embraced. This illustrates the belongingness theory by Baumeister and Leary (1995), except that the theory is applied in a limited manner where attachment becomes dyadic in nature.

3. Romantic Fantasy as Emotional Escape

The creation of romantic fantasy becomes the major means of adaptation to overcome emotional difficulties and questions of identity. The participation of *Bella* in the fantasy world serves as an escape from reality and its problems. This is related to the idea of escapism, which entails mental dissociation from the stimuli that cause stress through fantasies (Henning & Vorderer, 2001). In this movie, there is no recognition of the detrimental consequences associated with fantasy immersion.

4. Romantic Idealization and the Construction of Perfect Love



The relationship between *Bella* and *Edward* is presented with the help of intense romantic idealization, which is perfect, destined, and absolute in its emotional nature. The conflict aspect is avoided, and love is represented as all-consuming and perfect. This depiction fits into the theoretical framework of love proposed by Sternberg (1986), although it overstates the aspects of intimacy and passion while ignoring the reality of relationships.

5. The Psychology of Being Chosen

Another repeated theme in terms of psychology is the importance of being “selected” by *Edward*, a crucial element in establishing *Bella’s* sense of self-respect. In other words, *Bella* finds her sense of identity not within herself but through the external choice made by an attractive individual. It is an example of contingent self-worth (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001) in that one’s self-respect depends on external approval. The narrative reinforces the belief that personal value is derived from being uniquely desired, potentially exacerbating identity insecurity.

6. The Allure of the Other: Attraction to Difference

In the portrayal of *Edward* as being enigmatic, dangerous, and ultimately “other,” difference is portrayed as desirable and attractive. This is because the attraction to his differences is part of a psychological need to explore the mysterious and the extraordinary. This can be explained using Zuckerman’s (1994) sensation seeking theory and adolescent curiosity about novel experiences. Nevertheless, the film glamorizes danger and difference without considering the risks that come with these elements.

7. Immortality as a Solution to Identity Anxiety

The idea of immortality, on the other hand, can be considered a remedy for identity uncertainty, as *Bella* seeks immortality by becoming a vampire to attain certainty and security. An existential view (Yalom, 1980) of the film shows that what happens here is an attempt to avoid identity crisis and death consciousness. In this way, the process of identity formation does not come into play at all.

8. Self-Sacrifice Glorified as the Ultimate Expression of Love

Self-sacrifice becomes a prominent ideal in their relationship, as *Bella* consistently places her lover’s security above her own. The act of placing oneself in danger for the sake of the other becomes a commendable act that is essential to love. This is similar to cognitive distortions in love-related schemas, wherein one’s willingness to endure pain is seen as an indicator of one’s deep feelings of affection.



9. Predatory Instinct vs Moral Humanity

The struggle within *Edward* for his predatory instincts versus moral behavior is a psychological battle between urges and inhibitions. *Edward* being simultaneously threatening and self-restrained suggests that morality is a constant struggle.”

It is important to view the duality in Freudian terms, the conflict between id and superego, with urges being tempered by moral conscience. The film frames restraint as attractive, thereby romanticizing internal conflict rather than resolving it.

10. Determinism vs Free Will

This dichotomy of destiny and choice is evident through the depiction of the romance shared by *Bella* and *Edward*, which appears to be predetermined as well as an outcome of conscious decision-making. From the viewpoint of existential psychology, this theme represents the struggle between determinism and agency. Although the movie touches upon the issue of freedom of choice, it prioritizes the concept of predetermined destiny when dealing with the notion of identity formation.

Overall, these themes demonstrate how *Twilight* frames adolescent identity anxiety through romanticized and fantasy-driven coping mechanisms. While offering emotionally compelling narratives, the film simultaneously reinforces problematic ideals related to dependency, self-worth, and identity resolution, warranting critical engagement from a psychological perspective.

Table 1., Thematic Findings from the Thematic Analysis of Twilight

Theme	Description	Representative Indicators	Examples / Theoretical Reference(s)
1. Outsider Identity and Social Displacement	The protagonist is constructed as an outsider experiencing social alienation and identity uncertainty, reframing non-belonging as meaningful.	- <i>Bella’s</i> relocation to Forks and discomfort in peer settings - Self-perception as “different” - Limited social integration with classmates	Erikson (1968)
2. Sense of Belongingness Through Exclusive	Belongingness is achieved through intense dyadic attachment rather than	- Emotional reliance on <i>Edward</i> for validation - Prioritization of romantic bond	Baumeister & Leary (1995)



Relationships	broader social integration.	over peer relationships - Narrow social world centered on one relationship	Henning & Vorderer (2001)
3. Romantic Fantasy as Emotional Escape	Fantasy serves as a coping mechanism for emotional distress and identity confusion.	Immersion into the supernatural vampire world - Withdrawal from mundane reality - Emotional regulation through romantic imagination	Henning & Vorderer (2001)
4. Romantic Idealization and the Construction of Perfect Love	Love is portrayed as flawless, destined, and all-consuming, minimizing relational complexity.	- Emphasis on destiny and eternal love - Absence of realistic conflict resolution - Idealized portrayal of <i>Edward–Bella</i> relationship	Sternberg (1986)
5. The Psychology of Being Chosen	Self-worth is constructed through external validation, particularly being selected by a desirable partner.	- <i>Bella’s</i> identity tied to <i>Edward’s</i> attention - Repeated emphasis on being “chosen” - Validation derived from romantic desirability	Crocker & Wolfe (2001)
6. The Allure of the Other: Attraction to Difference	Difference and danger are framed as attraction, reinforcing fascination with the unknown.	- <i>Edward’s</i> mysterious and dangerous persona - <i>Bella’s</i> attraction to supernatural difference - Risk framed as exciting and meaningful	Zuckerman (1994)
7. Immortality as a Solution to Identity Anxiety	Transformation into immortality is depicted as resolving identity instability and existential uncertainty.	- <i>Bella’s</i> desire to become a vampire - Framing immortality as permanence and belonging - Lack of emphasis on loss or consequences	Yalom (1980)
8. Self-Sacrifice as	Self-endangerment and	- <i>Bella</i> risking her life for Edward	Cognitive



the Ultimate Expression of Love	personal sacrifice are glorified as indicators of deep emotional commitment.	- Prioritization of partner’s safety over self - Suffering equated with love	distortion frameworks in romantic schemas
9. Predatory Instinct vs Moral Humanity	Internal conflict between instinct and morality is romanticized as a defining character trait.	- <i>Edward’s</i> struggle to control predatory urges - Emphasis on restraint as virtue - Attraction rooted in controlled danger	Freud (Id vs Superego)
10. Determinism vs Free Will	The narrative oscillates between fate and agency, often privileging destiny in identity and relationships.	- Relationship framed as both inevitable and chosen - Language of destiny and inevitability - Limited emphasis on autonomous decision-making	Existential psychology

Discussion

Theme 1: identity displacement and the search for belongingness

Subtheme 1: Outsider Identity and Social Displacement

An intermittent theme in the film *Twilight* is the experience of being an outsider, reflecting the psychological tension adolescents often feel when navigating an unfamiliar environment and forming identity. The protagonist *Bella* struggles with belongingness, social integration, and self-definition.

In the first scene, *Bella* arrives in Forks and feels disconnected from the environment and its people. It can be seen that on the first interaction with her classmates, she seems emotionally numb and distances herself from her classmates, having a lot of awkward moments. *Bella* speaks quietly, appears socially withdrawn, and observes rather than participating in social interactions. These scenes symbolize geographical and psychological displacement that she experiences. *Bella’s* awkward interactions with classmates reinforce her status as socially peripheral. The theme reflects concepts from Identity Crisis, where adolescents struggle to establish themselves within new social contexts.



Time frame	Dialogue
00.04.42	We used to make mud pies when we were little *** Right, no, I remember *
00.03.04	I used to spend two weeks here almost every summer, but it's been years*
00.05.39	That's too bad. It would've nice to know one person*
00.06.30	I'm really kind of the more suffer in silence type *
00.07.28	Maybe that's why they kicked me out*
00.08.11	Smile**** Oh ..okay* sorry, I needed a candid for the feature****
00.13.25	Are they being nice to you?**** Well, they're all very welcoming* Tell me all about it**** It doesn't even matter*
00.26.23	I..prom..dancing..not much a good idea for me
01.13.45	I don't really mind being alone

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Sub theme 2: Sense of Belongingness Through Exclusive Relationships

This theme focuses on belongingness. It is evidently seen that *Bella's* sense of belonging increasingly depends or improves on her connection to *Edward* rather than to peers or the community. Starting from the second half of the movie, she starts distancing herself from classmates and starts spending more time with him and starts finding an identity through him. She starts liking Forks, willing



to stay there due to *Edward*, thus making him an important figure in her life. The relationship becomes *Bella's* primary source of identity validation and emotional security.

Time frame	Dialogue
00.19.14	Its metaphase. You want to check it? ** I believe you*
01.14.07	I'm really liking forks. Forks is growing on me* Could a guy have anything to do with that**** Well, yeah*
01.18.03	He's important*
01.30.21	Bella is with Edward. She's part of this family now and we protect our family****
01.44.57	I'm alive because of you*
01.45.32	I can't just leave you. We can't be apart. You can't leave me*
01.49.27	Prom is an important rite of passage. I don't want you to miss anything.**
01.33.32	I'm coming to get you. Then you and I are gonna go somewhere alone.**

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Theme 2 : romantic fantasy as cognitive coping

Sub Theme 1: Romantic Fantasy as Emotional Escape

This theme focuses on the romantic perspective of the movie. *Bella's* growing relationship with *Edward* functions as a psychological escape from ordinary life. The supernatural romance offers an alternative reality where she starts feeling uniquely valued and understood. From a psychological perspective, Fantasy relationships do function as coping mechanisms when individuals feel misunderstood or alienated.

In the Meadow Scene, *Edward* reveals his vampire identity and says he's dangerous but *Bella* refuses to accept this and tries to convince him to let her love him. *Bella's* acceptance of *Edward's* dangerous identity suggests that the fantasy bond fulfills emotional needs that real-world relationships cannot, it provides emotional reassurance rather than threat. The relationship becomes a symbolic refuge,



illustrating elements of Escapism. From a psychological perspective, individuals sometimes seek high-intensity experiences to counter emotional numbness or monotony.

Time frame	Dialogue
00.50.37	I know what you are* Say it out loud** Vampire*
00.54.22	But, it's you, your scent, it's like a drug to me. You're like my own personal brand of heroin**
00.54.54	I still don't know if I can control myself ** I know you can*
00.55.24	I'm not afraid of you*
00.55.30	I'm only afraid of losing you. I feel like you're gonna disappear*
00.55.53	So the lion fell in love with a lamb** What a stupid lamb* What a sick, masochistic lion**
01.12.11	He just looks at you like you're something to eat****
01.30.59	When everything's done ,I'm gonna come back and get you**
01.35.27	I can't bring myself to regret the decisions that brought me face to face with death. They also brought me to Edward*
01.44.04	Mom, I still want to live in Forks*

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Sub Theme 2: Romantic Idealization and the Construction of Perfect Love

The film constructs *Edward* as a protective, powerful, and self-controlled partner, reinforcing idealized romantic narratives. Her attraction to *Edward* may reflect a subconscious search for intensity and meaning in a life that feels emotionally flat. There are scenes which portray his protectiveness, ie, *Edward* saving *Bella* from the van accident and rescuing her from the thugs on her way back from the



bookstore. He is constantly protecting her. This scene reinforces the idea that love involves being chosen, protected, and uniquely valued.

Time frame	Dialogue
00.44.03	I don't have the strength to stay away from you anymore** Then don't *
00.52.22	It's like diamonds*
00.52.32	You're beautiful*
00.54.48	Only for making me want you so badly**
00.57.58	I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him*
01.18.34	I'll take good care of her. I promise**
01.31.03	Bella, you are my life now**
01.33.38	I'll do whatever it will take to make you safe again**
01.46.56	You're perfect*
00.42.41	I feel very protective of you**
00.53.36	I'm designed to kill** I don't care* I've killed people before** It doesn't matter*
01.41.18	I'm gonna make it go away, Bella**

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Sub Theme 3: The Psychology of Being “Chosen”

A powerful underlying theme is *Bella's* experience of being uniquely selected by someone extraordinary. It is seen that *Edward* repeatedly emphasizes *Bella* being different from everyone else. He explains that her scent is uniquely irresistible to him .This narrative creates a chosen-one dynamic, where *Bella* gains validation by being uniquely desired by someone powerful and rare. From a psychological perspective, this taps into a common adolescent fantasy, ie, being special or uniquely meaningful to another person. Such narratives often reinforce self-worth through external validation.



Time frame	Dialogue
00.20.25	You're very difficult to read**
00.24.36	I just need to know the truth*
00.28.43	I mean, why didn't you just let the van crush me and save yourself all this regret?*
	You think I regret saving you?***
	I can see that you do. I just..don't know why*
00.31.16	I can see what you're trying to put off, but I can see that it's just to keep people away from you. It's just a mask.*
00.43.18	I can read every mind in this room apart from yours**
00.51.25	You won't hurt me*
00.52.53	I'm a killer Bella**
	I don't believe that*
00.54.01	I trust you*
00.55.41	You don't know how long I've waited for you**

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Theme 3: The Allure of the “Other”: Attraction to Difference

Edward represents the mysterious “other”, embodying danger, uniqueness, and emotional intensity. Adolescents often gravitate toward relationships that feel extraordinary or transformative. The metaphor frames attraction as compulsive and overwhelming, aligning with psychological ideas about intense adolescent romantic fixation, it equates romantic attraction with addiction, portraying love as something that overwhelms rational control. This dynamic resonates with adolescent experiences of intense emotional attachment and romantic idealization.

Time frame	Dialogue
00.09.44	Who's he*
	That's Edward Cullen, he's totally gorgeous, obviously. But apparently



nobody here's good enough for him.****

00.10.05 Seriously, like, don't waste your time.****

I wasn't planning on it.*

00.14.42 Things were getting a little strange *

00.23.54 How did you get over to me so fast*

00.24.16 I know what I saw, you stopped the van. You pushed it away with your hand.*

00.25.27 And that was the first night I dreamt of Edward Cullen*

00.30.45 It means if you were smart, you'd stay away from me**

00.31.11 What if I'm the bad guy**

You're not*

00.51.12 Are you afraid?***

No*

00.52.12 This is the skin of a killer, Bella**

01.01.54 I'm glad I amuse you*

01.09.16 I'm not scared of you*

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Theme 4: Immortality as a Solution to Identity Anxiety (transformation as identity resolution)

Bella's desire to become a vampire reflects a deeper wish for stability, permanence, and belonging. Immortality is framed as a way to resolve uncertainty about identity and the future. After she gets to know *Edward's* true identity, she becomes more curious about being a vampire. In the hospital scene, *Bella's* conversations imply that she is willing to become a vampire. The idea of immortality symbolizes escaping human limitations, including vulnerability and uncertainty, which are central concerns during adolescence. It reflects adolescent fantasies about transforming oneself to achieve a clearer, more secure identity.



Time frame	Dialogue
00.57.36	Edward was a vampire*
00.59.00	Does a person have to be dying to become like you?*
00.59.24	What was it like*
01.04.46	Here comes the human****
01.37.52	Its too bad he didn't have the strength to turn you****
01.50.58	Edward, why did you save me? If you just let the venom spread, I could be like you by now*
01.51.12	I want you. I dream about being with you forever.*

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Theme 5: Self-Sacrifice glorified as the ultimate expression of love

The climax of the film frames self-sacrifice as the ultimate demonstration of love and commitment. In the Ballet Studio Scene, *Bella* agrees to meet the antagonist to protect her mother. Even the dialogue that was said by *Bella* at the beginning indicates that she is willing to sacrifice herself in place of someone she loves. *Bella's* willingness to endanger herself reflects a narrative pattern where love and loyalty are proven through personal sacrifice and risk taking. This reinforces a romantic ideology in which devotion requires suffering.

Time frame	Dialogue
01.35.13	I'd never given much thought to how I would die* But dying in the place of someone I love seems like a good way to go*
01.37.06	Edward has nothing to do with this!*

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Theme 6: Predatory Instinct vs Moral Humanity

A major psychological tension in the narrative revolves around the conflict between inherent predatory instincts and the conscious pursuit of moral humanity. As vampires, *Edward* and the Cullen



family possess a biological drive to hunt humans for survival. However, they actively resist this instinct and attempt to live according to human ethical standards. This ongoing struggle reflects the psychological conflict between primitive impulses and moral self-regulation. This can be seen in scenes where *Edward* initially distances himself from *Bella* because her scent triggers intense predatory instincts. *Edward* tells *Bella* that The Cullen family adopts a “vegetarian” lifestyle, feeding only on animal blood to avoid harming humans. And the confrontation with James highlights the contrast between vampires who embrace predatory instincts and those who practice moral restraint.

From a psychological perspective, this theme aligns with the Freudian perspective ,ie,conflict between instinctual drives (id) and moral regulation (superego). And the Self-control theory ,ie, the conscious regulation of impulses to align behavior with ethical values. It also aligns with Moral psychology,ie, the idea that morality involves resisting harmful impulses in favor of socially responsible behavior.

Time frame	Dialogue
01.00.14	I don't want to be a monster**
00.28.55	You don't know anything**
00.40.22	Can you talk about something else? Distract me so I won't turn around**
00.30.38	I only said it'd be better if we weren't friends, not that I didn't wanna be.**
00.59.06	He'd never do this to someone who had another choice**
00.59.29	But what Carlisle did was much harder. Not many have the restraint to do that**
00.59.40	When we taste human blood, a sort of frenzy begins and it's almost impossible to stop but Carlisle did.**
01.00.16	My family, we think of ourselves as vegetarians, right, cause we only survive on the blood of animals. It's like a human only living on tofu.**
01.24.08	The girl is with us. I think it's best if you leave*****
01.41.07	We could try to suck the venom out***** You know I won't be able to stop** Then find the will to stop*****



01.06.25 It's okay, Jasper. You won't hurt her.****

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Theme 7: Determinism vs Free Will

In this movie, the auxiliary character, *Alice Cullen* possesses the ability to see visions of the future. Her visions represent possible futures rather than certain ones, suggesting that human actions and decisions actively shape reality. Psychologically, this reflects how individuals use mental simulations of possible outcomes to guide behavior and decision-making. This also introduces a psychological tension between determinism (the idea that events are predetermined) and free will (the ability of individuals to make choices that alter outcomes).

Scenes where *Alice* foresees *James'* pursuit of *Bella* and warns the *Cullen* family in advance, her saying that she and *Bella* will be great friends shows her ability. Her visions shift when characters make different decisions, indicating that the future is flexible rather than predetermined. This theme can be connected to several psychological ideas, ie, Prospection (the cognitive ability to imagine and simulate future events), Decision-making psychology (how anticipated outcomes influence choices), and Perceived control (the belief that individuals can influence future outcomes). *Alice's* character illustrates how future anticipation can guide present behavior, reinforcing the role of choice and agency.

Time frame	Dialogue
01.01.05	Alice can see the future. Alice's visions are subjective. I mean the future can always change.**
01.06.12	Bella and I are gonna be great friends.****
01.32.51	Where will it take him, Alice?**** Mirrors. A room full of mirrors****
01.33.00	Edward said the visions weren't always certain* She sees the course people are on, while they're on it.**** If they change their minds, the vision changes****

Bella* Edward** Jacob*** Auxiliary character****

Media, Identity, and Adolescent Interpretation



At a broader level, *Twilight* illustrates the powerful role of media in shaping adolescent identity narratives and coping frameworks. According to Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory, individuals learn behaviors and norms through observation and imitation of media models. The film's romanticized portrayal of dependency, sacrifice, and identity resolution may therefore influence how young viewers conceptualize their own emotional experiences.

Furthermore, Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model suggests that while audiences actively interpret media, dominant meanings are shaped by narrative cues. The film's lack of critical engagement with maladaptive coping strategies results in a dominant reading that normalizes emotional dependency, idealized love, and avoidance-based coping.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that *Twilight*, while emotionally engaging and culturally influential, constructs adolescent identity anxiety through a lens of romantic fantasy and external validation. By privileging idealization, dependency, and escapism over self-exploration and resilience, the film reinforces problematic psychological narratives that warrant critical examination within both media and developmental psychology contexts.

Implications

For Media Psychology and Media Literacy

The findings from *Twilight* highlight the urgent need for media literacy interventions that enable audiences particularly adolescents to critically engage with romanticized portrayals of identity, love, and coping. The film normalizes themes such as emotional dependency, self-sacrifice, and externalized self-worth, which may shape unrealistic expectations about relationships and identity formation.

Media literacy programs should encourage viewers to deconstruct dominant tropes such as the "perfect romantic savior," "destined love," and "suffering as proof of love." Integrating critical film analysis into educational curricula can foster reflective discussions around healthy relationships, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping strategies, thereby mitigating the internalization of maladaptive narratives.

For Adolescent Development and Mental Health

The study underscores the psychological implications of portraying identity resolution through external validation and fantasy-based escape. Adolescents, who are already navigating identity anxiety,



may be particularly vulnerable to internalizing narratives that equate self-worth with being chosen or loved by an idealized partner.

Mental health practitioners and educators should emphasize the development of internal coping mechanisms, self-efficacy, and emotional independence. Psychoeducational interventions can help young individuals differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies, particularly in the context of romantic relationships and identity exploration.

For Gender and Relationship Discourse

Twilight reinforces gendered narratives that position emotional intensity, sacrifice, and dependency as desirable traits, particularly within heterosexual romantic frameworks. *Bella Swan's* self-sacrificial tendencies and *Edward Cullen's* protective dominance reflect traditional relational scripts that may limit the scope of healthy, egalitarian partnerships.

There is a need for alternative media representations that promote mutual respect, autonomy, and emotional reciprocity in relationships. Expanding portrayals of diverse relationship dynamics can contribute to more balanced and psychologically healthy models of love and identity.

Conclusion

This study critically examined *Twilight* through the lens of media psychology and reflexive thematic analysis, revealing how the film constructs adolescent identity anxiety and cognitive coping through romanticized and fantasy-driven narratives. The findings demonstrate that the film frames identity formation not as an internal developmental process but as one deeply contingent on external validation, exclusive relationships, and idealized love.

The thematic analysis highlights how narratives of belongingness, self-worth, and emotional regulation are intertwined with dependency, escapism, and sacrifice. By presenting romantic attachment as the primary solution to identity anxiety, the film reinforces potentially maladaptive coping mechanisms while neglecting the importance of self-exploration, resilience, and psychological growth. From a broader media psychological perspective, *Twilight* functions as a cultural text that both reflects and shapes adolescent perceptions of identity, relationships, and emotional experience. Its widespread popularity amplifies its influence, making it essential to critically examine the implicit messages it conveys.



Ultimately, while the film offers emotionally engaging storytelling, it also perpetuates problematic ideals related to love, self-worth, and identity resolution. These findings underscore the importance of fostering critical engagement with media narratives, particularly among young audiences navigating complex developmental transitions.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides a comprehensive interpretive analysis of *Twilight*, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the research focuses on a single film, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Although *Twilight* is culturally influential, examining additional films within the young adult romance or fantasy genre could provide a more nuanced understanding of how identity anxiety and coping are portrayed across media texts.

Second, the analysis is shaped by the researchers' disciplinary backgrounds in counseling psychology and media studies. While reflexivity and triangulation were employed to enhance rigor, interpretive bias cannot be entirely eliminated.

Third, the study does not incorporate audience reception data. As such, it does not account for how viewers interpret, negotiate, or resist the film's messages. Audience-centered research methods such as interviews, focus groups, or surveys could provide valuable insight into the real-world psychological impact of these portrayals.

Future Research Directions

Future research can build upon these findings in several ways:

- **Audience Reception Studies:** Investigating how adolescents and young adults interpret and internalize the themes of identity, love, and coping in *Twilight*, particularly across different cultural contexts.
- **Comparative Media Analysis:** Examining similar narratives in films such as *The Fault in Our Stars* or *The Hunger Games* to explore variations in the portrayal of identity anxiety and coping mechanisms.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Assessing the long-term psychological impact of repeated exposure to romanticized media narratives on identity development, relationship expectations, and emotional well-being.



- Cross-Cultural Analysis: Exploring how Western narratives like *Twilight* are interpreted in collectivist societies, and how they interact with existing cultural values around relationships and identity.
- Narrative Interventions: Developing alternative media content or educational tools that promote adaptive coping, emotional resilience, and healthy relationship models.
- Character-Based Psychological Analysis: Conducting in-depth psychological profiling of characters such as *Bella Swan* to bridge cinematic narrative analysis with clinical and developmental frameworks.

Overall, this study opens avenues for interdisciplinary research at the intersection of media, psychology, and adolescent development, emphasizing the need for critical engagement with narratives that shape how young individuals understand themselves and their relationships.

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