



PSYCHOSOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF CELEBRITY WORSHIP SYNDROME IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

The current research aimed to investigate the psychosocial predictors of Celebrity Worship Syndrome in adolescents. The sample comprised 323 participants (M = 122, F = 201), aged 17 to 24 years, with reference to Lancet Child and Adolescent Health. A cross-sectional research design was employed, using convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Tools included the Celebrity Attachment Scale (McCutcheon *et al.*, 2010), Celebrity Persona Parasocial Interaction Scale (Bocamea, 2006), Peer Pressure Questionnaire-Revised (Saini, 2010), and Big Five Inventory-2 (Soto & John, 2017). SPSS Version 21 was used for analysis. Celebrity worship showed a positive correlation with peer pressure, parasocial interaction, and extroversion, and a negative correlation with age and education level. Education, peer pressure, and parasocial interaction were found to be significant predictors. For entertainment-social worship, education and parasocial interaction emerged as strong predictors; for intense-personal worship, peer pressure and parasocial interaction; and for borderline pathology, all three were significant. These findings are theoretically grounded in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), suggesting that unmet psychological needs may lead adolescents to form parasocial attachments. Additionally, Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) supports the idea that adolescents may model celebrity behaviour under peer influence and media exposure. No significant differences were observed across gender, family system, socioeconomic status, or internet usage. However, a significant difference emerged across education levels, with intermediate students reporting higher levels of celebrity worship than bachelor students.

Keywords

Celebrity Worship Syndrome, Personality Traits, Parasocial Interaction, Peer Pressure, Adolescents, Psychosocial Determinants.



1. Introduction

Celebrity fan hood has become a quotidian theme in today's world. People of all ages have their favorite celebrities and they express their likeness towards them through various means i.e. having their posters, autographs, photos, music collection, fan pages etc. It is completely normal to have favorite actors, singers, poets etc. however, when this fandom becomes an obsession where an individual idolizes his favorite celebrity to an extent that it develops unsafe for both the individual himself and the celebrity. This subject therefore, needs a psychological investigation on a deeper level. Adolescence is termed as the age where an individual goes through various physical, emotional and cognitive changes. This transition from childhood to adolescence marks changes in different interests and opinions. The age range for this phase of life is roughly between 10 to 24 years (Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne, & Patton, 2018).

1.1 Celebrity Worship syndrome (CWS)

A celebrity is defined as amassing of center of interest. A celebrity can be an individual or a social group like a cricket team, dance group, music band etc. Based on individualized personalities, these are divided into three types. These celebrities create a persona which is liked by the audience and their fans develop emotional connections with them, which may or may not later develop into serious worshipping and obsession. (Rojek, 2015). The term Celebrity Worship Syndrome was first used by James Champan in the year 2003 in an article titled "Do you worship Celebrities?" In this article celebrity worship syndrome (CWS) was explained as a phenomenon in which a fan becomes overly involved in the life of his favorite celebrity and becomes obsessed with the minor details. According to the researchers, people become obsess over many T.V., films, sports, stars and one thing common among all these stars is that they are famous in the

eye of general public (Griffith *et al*, 2013). The earliest of the evidences related to fame and star struck dates back roughly to the ice age, approximately twenty-one thousand years ago when man used to hunt animals and lived in caves. Humans used to copy others who were successful and famous for their hunting skills. Those who had proper skills for hunting were nourished and strong while other who lacked those skills were weak used to admire and tried to observe and mimic the skilled ones. Today, however, with evolution and development, man does not hunt anymore but the mechanism of observing and admiring the famous individuals is still embedded in our minds. This admiration leads to the thoughts that people who are famous should be copied. This mimicking and admiration of the successful was once the need for survival but today it has become a trend and has many moral and psychological dilemmas. Today internet has made it very convenient for us to see and mimic behaviors of celebrities, a trait only found in humans (choi, Ju & Ron, 2009).

1.1.1 Absorption Addiction Model

In 2002, McCutcheon and colleagues presented a theoretical model called Absorption-Addiction Model to explain Celebrity Worship. According to this model, people who have fragile identities and do not have meaningful relations try to stabilize and strengthen their identities by associating themselves with famous personalities or celebrities. They become emotionally absorbed in their favorite celebrities. The model further suggests that the driving force in this kind of association with a superstar is like the one found among addicts, i.e. fans may become tolerant towards the behaviors sufficing the needs of their weak identity edifices. McCutcheon and the co-researchers provided three stages of Celebrity Worship. The first phase of the worship called the 'entertainment-social' is characterized with attraction

towards the favorite celebrity based on their face-value and media appearances and fans talk about them in social circle and try to get information related to their personal lives. The second level is an intensified form of the fanbase and is called intense-personal stage; in this stage the individual becomes more absorbed in the life of their favorite celebrity and start to identify themselves with the traits of the star. The third and the most extreme level of the fanhood is of pathological dimension including delusions and fantasies about favorite celebs. However, there is a fourth dimension which was suggested by North (2005) and Hargreaves (2006), where an individual gets involved in the criminal acts being obsessed with the celebrity (Griffith *et al*, 2013).

1.1.2 Celebrity Attachment and Internet Use

Celebrity admiration or worship is also associated with excessive use of internet and fantasizing among the individuals. A similar study was conducted by Zsila, McCutcheon and Demetrovics in 2018. They studied how celebrity attachment was associated with time spent using internet, fantasizing and desire to become renowned among adolescents and adults of Hungary. A cross-sectional research was conducted with 437 individuals and the questionnaires were filled through online surveys. Through Regression, it was observed that celebrity worship was one of the strong predictors of excessive internet use, maladaptive woolgathering and desire to become famous. It was also studied that women were more prone to be obsessed with stars and celebs than men (Zsila, McCutcheon & Demetrovics, 2018).

1.2 Para-social Interaction

The notion of parasocial interaction has been a part of media and communication for many decades. This concept was originally presented by Horton and Wohl in 1956 in their article titled, "Mass communication and Parasocial Interaction" (Stever, 2019). Wohl and Horton were interested in radio broadcasting and in their broadcasts they

said that the listeners had fallen into the illusion of attachment with the radio broadcasters and may have believed that the broadcasters used to address them on personal level. In order to prove their point, they had mentioned an example of a female broadcaster in U.S. who used to talk in seductive manner with her listeners and would call them her lover. It was observed that many young boys were enthralled by her and she had received hundreds of love letters full of marriage proposals. Horton and Wohl claimed that it was basic social need of humans which was reintroduced through a new medium of communication. They had suggested further in-depth research phenomenon from a social psychology perspective. In 1970s, Mark Levy constructed a scale to measure parasocial interaction between the television viewers and bulletin casters. Later the scale was studied by a research team in Kent State University in 1980s and, after further refinement, developed it into a standardized tool namely Parasocial interaction scale (Giles, 2010).

1.2.1 Parasocial interactions Vs Parasocial Relationships

Para-social interaction is defined as a one-sided relationship between audience and media person or celebrity. These interactions are non-reciprocated by the celebrities and exist in the perceptions of the viewer. The interaction can be emotional, behavioral and cognitive. Para-social interaction is often confused with para-social relationship and the two terms are very often used interchangeably. However, in reality these two terms are different. In the year 2008, Schramm and Hartmann, described parasocial interactions (PSI) and argued that PSIs are developed while exposing to the media which means these interactions are experienced by the audience when they are watching their favorite celebrity on any media (t. v., social media etc.) while the parasocial relationship is long term phenomenon which generally extends the post media exposure. These

kinds of relationships remain and grow with the viewer even if he or she is not exposed to the media. Here, it can also be concluded that parasocial interactions may lead to parasocial relationships in the long run (Jones, 2013).

1.2.2 Parasocial Interaction and Social Interactions

Many researches have been done in order to understand how these parasocial interactions are related to normal social interactions. The early work in this regard dates back in 1987 when Robin and McHugh studies the value of societal, work and physical attraction in the development of parasocial infatuations. The sample of the study was taken from undergraduate students. It was observed that social attraction i.e. the desire to become friends with the famous celebrity was the major motivation behind developing such fantasized interactions. In 1993, a concept of homophily was introduced in association with parasocial interactions. According to Turner, people develop PSI towards the celebrities with whom they feel close resemblance in terms of attitudes, appearance, background etc. of all these factors, attitude was considered to be the strongest homophily component in order to establish parasocial interaction (Giles, 2002). Parasocial interactions are also studied in relation to the social learning theory by Bandura. Suggesting children learn from their favorite television celebs. Cynthia Hoffner stated that mostly the children of age range 7-12 associate their gender with the gender of their favorite celebrities. It was also mentioned that while selecting favorite celebrity, boys' choice is mostly based on intelligence while girls choose on the basis of attractiveness. Development of PSI during the age of adolescence is motivated by their wish of autonomy from parents as they find an ideal model to follow (Gleason, Theran& Newberg, 2017). However, in spite of the similarities between the social and parasocial interactions, the status of the later shall remain doubtful under the microscope of long established relationships. As said by

Hinde that there is a difference in the probability of future connections between known participants and completely strangers. As in case of parasocial relationships the user of media is completely stranger and therefore in case of in depth research in this dimension requires redefining general relationships (Giles, 2002).

1.2.3 Development of Parasocial Interaction

It is important to know that in addition to the evolution of parasocial interaction across time and culture, it has also developed across the life span of an individual. Study of Parasocial interactions in childhood and adolescence is quite neglected by the researchers. The impact of media exposure and celebrity attachment among children and adolescents shall add crucial contribution in the literature of parasocial interaction. There are some researches in which children's perception of T.V. characters have been studied. In a research conducted by Reeves and Greenberg multidimensional scaling was utilized to exhibit how children of age 7 to 11 years assess T.V characters on the basis of personality dimension of humans. In 1996, Hoffner studied the phenomenon of parasocial interaction among children of age 12 years of with reference to their favorite television characters. It was observed that sex-stereotypes were predictive of parasocial interaction among children. In a qualitative research by Giles and long in 1998, it was explored that children of age 5-6 years selected favorite characters based on identification while in the older children of age 10-11 years, the selection is based on parasocial interaction as they consider their favorite character as their friend (Giles, 2002). Among adolescents, the research on parasocial interaction suggests that anxiety has been observed among young girls when they are influenced by their celebrities. In the year 1999, Cohen studied the phenomenon of parasocial interaction among Arab and Jewish teenagers in reference to a soap opera. He observed that among adolescents their favorite characters

are perceived as their friends rather than a figure to be idolized. Now days, it has been observed that parasocial interaction with radio jockey influences the listeners' attitudes and behaviors (Giles, 2002). Cohen had defined parasocial interaction in terms of a role relationship with a T.V, personality. In the year 1975, Feilitzen and Linne differentiated between identification, wishful identification, and affinity. In the identification category, it was stated that a person shares the perspective with the television persona and is generally called as similarity identification. In the second category of wishful identification, in which the audience desires to imitate the character they like in real life. It is different from parasocial interaction as in this situation the person may or may not desire to copy the favorite figure, as often due to the fear of parents. In the third category of Affinity, is a type where the audience actually develops likeness for the media personality but still not identifying with them (Giles, 2002). It has also been theorized that the duration and the media platforms on which celebrity aired is very important in developing parasocial interaction. Now days it has been observed that film and television stars make appearances on various shows, interviews, newspapers and ceremonies other than a specific drama or film. Additionally, repeated airing of shows on television, online websites etc. further increase the chances of developing parasocial interaction among the fans (Giles, 2002).

1.3 Peer Pressure

Peers play an important role in the societal and emotional growth of an individual. This influence starts generally in the childhood and increases during the early adolescence. It is completely normal for children to have friends and depend on them as they become mature. Peer pressure or influence can be positive or negative for the individuals. In terms of positive peer influence, people may learn new skills, engage in healthy behaviors and succeed in their

lives. In case of negative peer influence, individuals get involved in harmful behaviors like crimes, immoral activities and drugs etc (AACAP, 2018).

1.3.1 Peer pressure and Adolescents

Adolescents are more prone to peer pressure as they are at the developmental stage where they need to fit in their social groups and get accepted. As in this age generally adolescents are getting out of their parents' influence and are preparing to enter into the world of adults, they first stop is their peers. In order to get accepted by their social groups, they develop conformity in their values, styles and interests. For the sake of social acceptance, these adolescents may involve in the actions and behaviors which are not the best reflection of their own personalities (Hartney, 2020). New researches on neuro-level also suggest that in this stage, the brain of an adolescent undergoes changes in such a way that he becomes more receptive towards the opinion of his peers. However, among the teenagers, proneness towards peer influence also varies. Some youngsters are more susceptible than others. The factors which influence this variation include age, gender, response towards the influence and relationship dynamics. According to researches performed on peer pressure among adolescents, it has been observed that during the age of 10 to 14 years, the influence of the peers is at its peak, furthermore, boys are more prone to the peer influence than girls involving in the risky behaviors, for instance doing drugs and involving in crimes. The degree to get pressurized by the peers also depends on how much an individual gets influenced by the actions of his peers and what type of relationship they have with their peers (Hour, 2016). Erik Erickson in his theory of psychosocial development stated that during adolescence, the individual strives to acquire his sense of identity and tries to overcome his identity diffusion. Erick emphasized that in this stage the role of parents goes in background and they lost their importance as a primary

support. While these sources of value and support is replaced with peers of the individual. In a social perspective, peer pressure is observed as challenges and dares which can be viewed as a test to prove one's affiliation with a certain peer group (Warner-Czyz, Loy, Roland, Tong, & Tobey, 2009).

1.3.2 Self-determination Theory

According to the self-determination theory, the motivation of an individual depends on three psychological desires; independence, connectedness and competency. As humans, we get motivated to fulfill these needs. This theory has its implications in many fields like education, parenting, and culture and peer influence. There are two needs according to this theory which play a crucial role in peer pressure. First is connectedness, that is, the need to feel associated and close to people. According to this theory, humans have a basic drive to feel accepted by others and for that they show conformity and get influenced by the peers, in this way relationships are established and the need to be related is fulfilled. The second need is independence or autonomy. Although it may appear opposite to idea of peer relationship, but in actual it means that in order to get independence from parental control, adolescents often bear the influence from their peer to get accepted in their groups (Cherry, 2019).

1.3.3 Normative Social Influence Theory

Another theoretical evidence for the peer influence is based on normative social influence theory. According to this theory, humans are motivated to conform with others as a desire of being liked and accepted. In general perspective, it is believed that this kind of influence is extrinsic in nature, which suggests that these influences are not long term. In groups, the members show more conformity when they are working to achieve common goals, as they believe that if they deviate, the punishment would be more severe than if they commit a mistake collectively. Also people, who are

more concerned about other's performance, tend to show more conformity with them in public than when in private. This also suggests as to why people get influenced by their peers and show conformity (Levine, 2019).

1.4 Personality Traits

Personality is defined as a relatively stable pattern of cognitions, emotions, and actions in an individual's life span. Personality of one individual distinguishes him from another. It refers to how a person behaviorally interacts with his environment. Normal and pathological personalities are generally placed in a same theoretical frame work. Numerous theories have been developed in order to understand what personality is and how it shaped up. The discussion on nature versus nurture in terms of personality is very old and many researchers believe that personality of an individual is both inherited and developed (Kavirayani, 2018).

1.4.1 History of Personality

The earliest of the researches on personality dates back about 2000 years go in 370 BC by Hippocrates. The personality has Latin roots and is said to be derived from the word persona meaning mask. Many researches on personality have attempted to answer the philosophical questions about the formation, maintenance and change in personality. These questions were does a person has a control over his personality or it is out of his conscious control? Is personality genetic or is there an influence of environment? Do people share same personality or is it unique for every single individual? Are personalities and temperaments are developed as a result of changes in the environment (reactive) or humans do have an active participation in its development? And do humans have an optimistic role in their personality development or they remain pessimistic? (Kavirayani, 2020).

1.4.2 Psychodynamic Perspective

Psychoanalysis was founded by Sigmund Freud, a physician. He implied the method of Free association, dream analysis and analysis of errors in order to understand human psyche and presented his psychoanalytic personality theory. Freud suggested that there are three primary components of personality namely id, ego and super ego. Id works on the pleasure principle, which means it wants something and it wants now, it is unconscious and irrational. Ego is based on the principle of reality and is conscious and rational part of personality. Super ego is based on moral values and societal norms. It acts as a bridge between id and ego (Singh, 2020). Freud also presented psychosexual stages of personality to explain how a person's personality is developed over a life span of a man. These stages were as follows; Oral stage, starting from birth till 18 months of age. Second stage is anal stage starts from 18 months and lasts till the age of 3 years. Phallic stage between the ages of 4 to 6. Fourth stage is Latency stage and is often called as dormant stage where the focus shifts from sexual urges to studies, extra-curricular activities and socializing. Fifth and final stage is genital stage which starts from puberty and sexual interests are developed (Singh, 2020). Alfred Adler presented individual personality theory, suggesting that every individual was unique and had a set of characteristics different from others. Adler stated that people do what they do in order to overcome inferiority complexes (Hoffman, 2020). Erikson's theory of personality suggested that an individual's personality is developed based on his social interaction. He presented a theory of 8 stages of personality development and possible psychosocial crisis at the respective stages. These stages are as follows; infancy- basic trust versus mistrust, early childhood-autonomy versus shame, play age- initiative versus guilt, school age-industry versus inferiority, adolescence-identity versus role diffusion, young

adulthood-intimacy versus isolation, adulthood-generativity versus stagnation, old age-integrity versus despair (Kelland, 2017). Jung presented a personality theory thereby dividing people into categories based on personality patterns. He divided personality into four psychological functions; extraversion and introversion, sensation and intuition, thinking and feeling, and finally judging and perceiving. He talked about collective unconsciousness which is further divided into personality sub-types and these ancestral reminiscences are called as archetypes. These archetypes were called as self, shadow, persona, anima and animus by Jung (McLeod, 2018).

1.4.3 Humanistic Perspective

Humanistic approach of personality says that a person has complete control over what happens to him, in other words his fate is in his own hands. Secondly, they focus on the present moment more than on past or future. And finally, humanists emphasize on the personal growth and suggested that a man's desire to improve in his life derives his struggle to achieve more. Among some important humanistic theorists include Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow (Deepanshi, 2020). Abraham Maslow in 1970 presented a theory of human needs. He suggested a hierarchical design for the humans needs starting from basic physiological needs at the base, then safety, need for love and affection, self-esteem and finally self-actualization on top of the hierarchy.. In addition to study the order of human needs and how these affect human personality do, Maslow studied in detail those individuals who were psychologically fit and normal. Mentally healthy people are usually self-actualized and have attained the stage of their full potential. They accept themselves as they are, acknowledging their strengths and shortcomings (Deepanshi, 2020). Carl Rogers's theory of personality was centered on the concept of self-actualization. He agreed with Maslow on many points. According to Rogers, the

sole purpose of an individual is to attain self-actualization. He said that an individual is good and creative in nature by birth; it is the experiences and his inner potential which later make him good or bad of a person. Carl Rogers also mentioned, in his theory, the fully functioning individual. He proposed five characteristics of a fully functioning individual; openness to emotions, living in the present, trust on one's instincts, creativeness, and fulfillment in life (McLeod, 2014).

1.4.4 Trait Theory Perspective

According to the trait perspective of the personality, people possess various sets of traits and ways of behavior that are distinct from one another and these traits are a prominent aspect of an individual's personality displayed in various personal and social domains. Today a number of traits theories are being implied in order to study the personality of an individual. Like theories of Gordon Allport, Raymond Cattell, Hans Eysenck and five factor model (Cherry, 2020). Gordon Allport was one of the earliest trait theorists of modern era. He presented a personality trait theory in which he classified traits into three categories: cardinal traits, central traits and secondary traits. Allport proposed that both internal and external factors which affects a person's personality. The internal factors are termed as genotype and the external factors are called as phenotype (Cherry, 2020). Raymond presented a theory in which he stated that the mere presence or absence of a trait does not define a person's entire personality. According to him all individuals' personalities are made up of same traits, the difference lies in the degree to which each trait is exhibited. In order to study the personality of an individual in detail requires observing him in various settings. Cattell presented a 16 factor personality trait theory which included following traits abstractedness, affection, nervousness, emotional constancy, vivacity, willingness to change, precision, personal, intellect, law awareness,

worry, sympathy, social audacity, autonomy, attention, and domination. In this theory, it is not measures whether a trait is present or absent, rather a percentage of the each trait is measured over a continuous scale (Johnson, 2019). Hans Eysenck focused on the genetic factor of the personality. His work is mainly concerned of temperament of the individual. He presented three dimensions of the personality and stated that an individual's personality generally lies in these categories; extraversion or introversion, neuroticism or stability, and psychoticism or socialization (Furnham, 2018). In a five factor model, all the personality traits explained by earlier theorists have been narrowed down in five factors namely, openness, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism and it is believed that all other traits fit into these five factors. The research related to five factor personality started in 1949 by D.W. Fiske. Later, in 1980s and 1990s the research related to five factors was geared up. It showed consistent results in interviews, surveys and observations across various age groups and cultures. Today this model is the most accepted among modern theorists (Grice, 2019). A number of researches suggest that people having certain personality characteristics have been associated celebrity worshipping. For instance in the year 2004 Maltby and his colleagues conducted a study to investigate the relationship between celebrity worship, mental health and personality among UK's adult sample of 372 individuals. It was observed that higher level of neuroticism was associated with stronger celebrity attachment. Narula and Varma also studied that relationship between personality traits and celebrity worship. It was concluded that people who were more extraverted, had more intense and at personal level, the celebrity worshipping (Narula & Varma, 2017). McCutcheon and colleagues in 2016, that people who were engaged in borderline-pathological celebrity worshipping were

notably less conscientious. Swami *et al* in 2011 studied that there was a negative correlation between celebrity worshipping and openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability (Brooks, 2018).

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study draws on two important psychological theories: Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). According to Self-Determination Theory, people have three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—that drive their motivation. When these needs aren't fully met, especially during the sensitive period of adolescence, individuals may look for other ways to feel connected and understood. In this context, parasocial interactions and celebrity worship can act as ways to satisfy those unmet needs for connection and identity. On the other hand, Social Learning Theory explains how adolescents often learn behaviours and attitudes by watching and imitating others, particularly those they admire or see as popular. When teens see their peers admiring certain celebrities, or when media portrays these celebrities positively, it encourages them to invest emotionally in these figures. Peer pressure can also play a role in strengthening these attachments. Together, these theories help us understand how personal motivations and social influences combine to shape celebrity worship among young people.

1.6 Hypotheses

H1: Parasocial interaction, peer pressure, and personality traits are significantly related to celebrity worship syndrome among adolescents.

H2: Parasocial interaction, peer pressure, and personality traits significantly predict the level of celebrity worship syndrome in adolescents.

H3: There are significant differences in celebrity worship syndrome among adolescents based on demographic

factors including age, gender, education, family system, economic status, and hours spent online.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

Cross-Sectional research design was implied in the present research.

2.2 Participants

For the purpose of the study, a non-probability convenience sampling method was employed. The sample comprised 323 students ($N = 323$), including 122 males and 201 females. Participants were selected within the adolescent age group of 17–24 years, in accordance with the age range defined by The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health. The sample included individuals enrolled in intermediate/A-levels and 4-year bachelor's programs from private, government, and semi-government institutions. School-going adolescents, children below 17, and adults above 24 were excluded. Due to the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic during 2019–2020, data collection was primarily conducted through online surveys distributed via social media platforms and academic forums. In-person data collection was limited and also relied on convenience-based approaches. This strategy was chosen due to health safety concerns, lockdown restrictions, and logistical limitations during the pandemic period. Moreover, since the primary inclusion criterion was age, and the study focused broadly on adolescents without targeting specific subgroups, a convenience approach was deemed appropriate for the exploratory nature of the study.

2.2.1 Limitations of the Sampling Method

While convenience sampling allowed for timely and feasible data collection during an unprecedented global crisis, it carries certain limitations. Primarily, this sampling method restricts the generalizability of findings to the broader adolescent population. Participants self-selected into the study, which may introduce selection bias, and

those with internet access or interest in the topic may be overrepresented. Additionally, the sample may not adequately reflect the diversity in socioeconomic status, regional backgrounds, or educational experiences of all adolescents in Pakistan. Future studies are encouraged to employ probability sampling methods or stratified sampling to ensure more representative and generalizable results across different subgroups of adolescents.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Demographic Information Sheet

Demographic sheet included the questions regarding the individual's age, gender, education, family system, economic status, and hours spent online.

2.3.2 Celebrity Attachment Scale (CAS)

The scale measures how much an individual is attached emotionally attached towards his favorite celebrity. It consists of 34 items. Each item is scored over a 5-point Likert Scale, where 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree. It has the local reliability ranged from .71 to .96.

2.3.3 Celebrity Persona Para-social Interaction Scale (CPPIS)

It consists of 20 items measuring para-social interactions among the audience with prospective of media celebrities. Each item is measured against 5-point Likert Scale, where 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree. It has a reliability of .89. The same scale can be administered with first 14 and 16 items as well and provide reliable results.

2.3.4 Peer Pressure Questionnaire-Revised (PPQ-R)

The scale is used to measure the pressure experienced by the adolescents by their peers. It consists of 25 items and is measured on and it has reliability of .85.

2.3.5 The Big Five Inventory-2 extra-short (BFI-2xs)

This scale measures the personality traits of people. The scale consists of 15 items and covers five broad aspects of

personality; extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Each of the 15 items is answered over five-point scale, where 1 represents disagree strongly and 5 resents agree strongly. The reliability of BFI-2extra short ranges from .51 to .72 where as its Domain-level external validity of the BFI-2 extra short form was 0.97.

2.4 Procedure

The current research utilized a non-probability convenience sampling strategy due to the limitations posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sampling was conducted in two primary ways: online distribution and manual collection. Online sampling was carried out using convenience and snowball strategies. Online questionnaires were created using Google Forms, and permission to use the selected psychological tools was obtained from their respective authors. The questionnaire link included a participant information sheet and an informed consent section. It was distributed via social media platforms, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, and through individual messages. Participants were asked to share the link further with peers who met the inclusion criteria (aged 17–24, currently enrolled in intermediate or bachelor's programs), thus expanding the reach through snowballing. For manual data collection, the researcher approached private, semi-government, and government institutes offering intermediate and undergraduate programs. Prior permission was obtained from institutional authorities before data collection. Participants were briefed in person regarding the purpose of the study, their rights, voluntary participation, anonymity, and the estimated time to complete the questionnaire. After obtaining informed consent, participants were provided printed questionnaires, which they completed in a quiet setting. Approximately 20–25 minutes were allotted for filling the questionnaires, after which they were collected back by the researcher.

Both modes of data collection ensured that the inclusion and exclusion criteria were met. Participants outside the 17–24 age range, school-going students, or non-students were not considered. All responses were later compiled, cleaned, and coded for statistical analysis.

3. Results

The primary analysis of the research suggested that the mean age of the participants was 19.59 years. Of the total sample, N= 323, 122 were males and 201 were females. The division of students based on their education was almost equal i.e. 162 intermediate students and 161 bachelors. 89 students were from government sector, 81

from semi government and 153 from private. Based on family system, the analysis revealed that 118 participants belonged to joint families and 205 from nuclear families. Only 3 students belonged to lower class, 119 from middle, 161 from upper middle class and 40 from upper class. When asked about use of internet per day, 64 said they used internet for less than 2 hours, 114 reported to have used internet between 3 to 5 hours, 77 said they used between 6 to 9 hours and 68 claimed to use internet more than 10 hours a day. All the scales have good reliabilities and the data lies with the normal range of distribution.

Table 1: Demonstrates the Demographic Information of the Sample (Adolescents).

Variables	M(SD)	f (%)
Age	19.59(2.49)	
gender		
Male		122(37.8%)
Female		201(62.2%)
Education		
Intermediate		162 (50.2%)
Bachelors		161(49.8%)
Academic year	13.39 (1.86)	
Institute sector		
Government		89(27.6%)
Semi government		81(25.1%)
Private		153(47.4%)
Family system		
Joint family		118(36.5%)
Nuclear		205(63.5%)
Socioeconomic status		
Lower class		3 (0.9%)
Middle class		119(36.8%)
Upper middle class		161(49.8%)
Upper class		40(12.4%)
Internet usage per day		
Less than or equal to 2 hours		64 (19.8%)
Between 3 to 5 hours		114(35.3%)
Between 6 to 9 hours		77(23.8%)
10 hours or more		68(21.2%)

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, f = Frequency, % = percentage

Table 2: Displays the Psychometric Properties of the Major Constructs of the Sample (N=323)

Variables	k	M	SD	a	Skewness	Kurtosis
Celebrity Attachment Scale	23	3.00	.74	.93	-.31	.36
1. Entertainment	10	3.30	.80	.87	-.55	.33

2. Intense/personal	09	2.78	.83	.85	.04	-.05
3. Pathology	04	2.68	.84	.66	.13	.05
Celebrity Persona Para-social Interaction Scale	20	3.23	.64	.88	-.64	1.53
Peer Pressure Questioner	25	2.60	.72	.90	.31	.25
Big-Five Personality Inventory	15	-	-	.60	-	-
1. Extroversion	3	3.18	.83	.33	-.10	-.14
2. Negative Emotionality	3	3.29	.93	.54	-.13	-.38
3. Open Mindedness	3	3.54	.84	.20	-.50	.04
4. Agreeableness	3	3.53	.71	.26	.02	-.09
5. Consciousness	3	3.23	.78	.34	-.04	-.20

Note: K = total number of items, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, a = Cronbach's alpha

The correlation analysis was run to test the relationship between the major constructs of the study i.e. celebrity worship, personality traits, peer pressure, celebrity persona parasocial interaction and demographics of the participants.

The analysis revealed that celebrity worship is positively

correlated to peer pressure, celebrity parasocial interaction, extroversion and negatively correlated to conscientiousness. With respect to demographics, significant negative correlation was seen with age and education of the participants.

Table 3: Shows the Correlation of Parasocial Interaction, Peer Pressure and Personality Traits with Celebrity Worship Syndrome in Adolescents.

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
MCAS	—										
Entertainment	.93***	—									
Intense	.93***	.77***	—								
Pathology	.80***	.68***	.67***	—							
MCPPPI	.83***	.83***	.72***	.66***	—						
MPPSQ	.26***	.16**	.28***	.33***	.23***	—					
Extroversion	.13*	.13*	.12*	.10	.12*	-.00	—				
Negative emotionality	.06	.08	.04	.02	.03	.09	-.33***	—			
Open mindedness	.03	.13*	-.08	.02	.17**	-.09	.14*	-.00	—		
Agreeableness	-.07	-.03	-.06	-.15**	-.04	-.28***	-.01	-.04	.20***	—	
Conscientiousness	-.13*	-.07	-.15**	-.18**	-.11	-.23***	.30***	-.33***	.10	.25***	—
M	2.99	3.30	2.78	2.68	3.23	2.60	3.18	3.29	3.54	3.53	3.23
SD	0.74	0.80	0.83	0.84	0.64	0.72	0.83	0.93	0.84	0.71	0.78

Note: MCAS = mean celebrity attachment scale, MCPPPI = mean celebrity persona parasocial interaction, MPPSQ= mean peer pressure scale questionnaire M= mean, SD= standard deviation, $p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$, $p < 0.001 = ***$

Table 4: Shows Correlation Between Among Celebrity Worship Syndrome, Peer Pressure, Personality Traits and Demographics.

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Age	—										
Gender	.04	—									
Education	.80***	.10	—								
Institution Sector	-.07	.09	-.01	—							
Family System	.01	.11*	-.02	-.04	—						
Socio-economic Status	.05	-.05	.02	-.12*	-.06	—					
Internet Usage per Day	.22***	-.01*	.28***	-.05	-.04*	.13*	—				
MCAS	-.21**	-.06	-.21	.06	-.04	-.09	.10	—			
Entertainment	-.20***	-.07	-.21	.06	-.01	-.06	-.09	.93***	—		
Intense	-.20***	-.05	-.21	.08	-.07	-.10	-.11*	-.93***	.77***	—	
Pathology	-.13*	-.06	-.15**	.03	-.01	-.07	-.04	.80***	.68**	.67***	—
M	19.59	1.62	1.50	2.20	1.63	2.74	2.46	2.99	3.30	2.79	2.68
SD	2.49	0.49	0.50	.840	0.48	.68	1.03	0.74	0.80	0.83	.837

Note: MCAS = mean celebrity attachment scale, MCPPI = mean celebrity persona parasocial interaction , MPSPQ= mean peer pressure scale questionnaire M= mean, SD= standard deviation, $p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$, $p < 0.001 = ***$

Multiple hierarchical regression analysis was administered to identify the predictors of celebrity worship syndrome and its sub-domains. In case of general celebrity worship, education (presented as dummy variable of bachelors), peer pressure and celebrity persona parasocial interaction appeared to be strong predictors. In the first model for celebrity worship syndrome, two predictors were added i.e. age and education dummy variable of bachelors. In this model a significant regression equation was generated ($R^2 = .05$, $F(2, 320) = 8.31$, $p = .00$). As for the second model, two of the personality traits i.e. extroversion and conscientiousness were added. The regression equation for this model came out as ($R^2 = .09$, $F(4, 318) = 8.29$, $p = .00$), which appeared to be significant. After the effect of age and education dummy variable of bachelors was removed from the second model, it still appeared to be

significant with the regression equation ($R^2 = .05$, $F(2, 318) = 7.91$, $p = .00$). In the third model, peer pressure was added and the regression equation for the combined effect of age, education dummy variable of bachelors, extroversion and conscientiousness along with peer pressure was significant, ($R^2 = .15$, $F(5, 317) = 11.34$, $p = .00$). When the effect of predictors from block I and Block II was excluded, the regression equation for peer pressure still appeared to be significant, ($R^2 = .06$, $F(1, 317) = 21.38$, $p = .00$). For the fourth and final model, celebrity persona parasocial interaction was added and the regression equation for the combined effect of all four models was significant i.e. ($R^2 = .72$, $F(6, 316) = 135.04$, $p = .00$). After the effect of previous models was excluded, the regression equation for the effect of celebrity persona

parasocial interaction came to be significant as ($R^2 = .57$, $F(1, 316) = 639.40$, $p = .00$).

Table 5: Represents Multiple Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis Showing Demographics, Celebrity Persona Para-Social Interaction, Peer Pressure and Personality Traits as Celebrity Worship Syndrome among Adolescents ($N=323$).

Predictors	Celebrity Worship Syndrome	
	ΔR^2	β
Block I	0.05***	
Age		-0.10
Education (bachelors)		-0.13
Block II	0.05***	
Age		-0.08
Education (bachelors)		-0.15
Extroversion		0.19**
Conscientiousness		-0.17**
Block III	0.06***	
Age		-0.08
Education (bachelors)		-0.16
Extroversion		0.17**
Conscientiousness		-0.10
MPPSQ		0.25***
Block IV	0.57***	
Age		-0.04
Education (bachelors)		-0.14**
Extroversion		0.05
Conscientiousness		-0.03
MPPSQ		0.08*
MCPII		0.79***
Total R^2	0.85***	

Note: ΔR^2 = change in R^2 , β = standardized beta, $p < 0.05$ = *, $p < 0.01$ = **, $p < 0.001$ = ***

As for the entertainment-social celebrity worship was concerned, education and celebrity persona parasocial

interaction strongly predicted the results. In the first model for entertainment, two predictors were added i.e. age and

education dummy variable of bachelors. In this model a significant regression equation was generated ($R^2 = .05$, $F(2, 320) = 7.82$, $p = .00$). As for the second model, two of the personality traits i.e. extroversion and open mindedness were added. The regression equation for this model was ($R^2 = .08$, $F(4, 318) = 7.04$, $p = .00$), which appeared to be significant. After the effect of age and education dummy variable of bachelors was removed from the second model, it was calculated to be significant with the regression equation ($R^2 = .04$, $F(2, 318) = 6.01$, $p = .003$). In the third model, peer pressure was added and the regression equation for the combined effect of age, education dummy variable of bachelors, extroversion and open mindedness

along with peer pressure became significant, ($R^2 = .11$, $F(5, 317) = 8.08$, $p = .00$). After excluding the effect of predictors from block I and Block II, the regression equation for peer pressure still appeared to be significant, ($R^2 = .03$, $F(1, 317) = 11.33$, $p = .001$). In fourth model, celebrity persona parasocial interaction was added and the regression equation for the combined effect of all four models was significant i.e. ($R^2 = .71$, $F(6, 316) = 131.58$, $p = .00$). After the effect of previous models was excluded, the regression equation for the effect of celebrity persona parasocial interaction came to be significant as ($R^2 = .60$, $F(1, 316) = 664.58$, $p = .00$).

Table: 6 Illustrates Multiple Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis showing demographics, Celebrity Persona Para-Social Interaction, Peer Pressure and Personality traits as predictors of entertainment based celebrity worship among adolescents (N=323)

Predictors	ΔR^2	β
Block I	0.05***	
Age		-0.11
Education (bachelors)		-0.12
Block II	0.04***	
Age		-0.14
Education (bachelors)		-0.11
Extroversion		0.12*
Open mindedness		0.13*
Block III	0.03***	
Age		-0.13
Education (bachelors)		-0.12
Extroversion		-0.12*
Open mindedness		0.15**
MPPSQ		0.18**
Block IV	0.60***	
Age		-0.06
Education (bachelors)		-0.11*
Extroversion		0.34
Conscientiousness		-0.01
MPPSQ		-0.03
MCPI		
		0.82***
Total R^2	0.71***	

Note: ΔR^2 = change in R^2 , β = standardized beta, $p < 0.05$ = *, $p < 0.01$ = **, $p < 0.001$ = ***

For intense personal celebrity worship, peer pressure and celebrity persona parasocial interaction were two strong predictors. In the first model for intense celebrity attachment, two predictors were added i.e. age and

education dummy variable of bachelors. In this model a significant regression equation was generated ($R^2 = .05$, $F(2, 320) = 8.01$, $p = .00$). As for the second model, three of dummy variables of internet usage i.e. internet usage up to

2 hours, between 3 and 5 hours, and between 6 to 9 hours were added. The regression equation for this model was ($R^2 = .06$, $F(5, 317) = 3.76$, $p = .003$), which appeared to be significant. After the effect of age and education dummy variable of bachelors was removed from the second model, it was calculated to be non-significant with the regression equation ($R^2 = .01$, $F(3, 317) = .93$, $p = .43$). In the third model, personality traits i.e. extroversion and conscientiousness were added and the regression equation for the combined effect of age, education dummy variable of dummy variables of internet usage per day, extroversion and conscientiousness became significant, ($R^2 = .11$, $F(7, 315) = 5.26$, $p = .00$). After excluding the effect of predictors from block I and Block II, the regression

equation for peer pressure still appeared to be significant, ($R^2 = .05$, $F(2, 315) = 8.54$, $p = .00$). In fourth model, peer pressure was added and the regression equation for the combined effect of all four models was significant i.e. ($R^2 = .18$, $F(8, 314) = 8.37$, $p = .00$). After the effect of previous models was excluded, the regression equation for the effect of pressure came to be significant as ($R^2 = .07$, $F(1, 314) = 27.12$, $p = .00$). In the fifth model, celebrity persona parasocial interaction was added as predictor, the collective regression equation for all the five models is significant, ($R^2 = .57$, $F(9, 313) = 46.31$, $p = .00$). After excluding the effect of all the predictors from previous four models, the regression equation for fifth model is significant, ($R^2 = .40$, $F(1, 313) = 288.55$, $p = .00$).

Table: 7 Shows Multiple Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis showing demographics, Celebrity Persona Para-Social Interaction, Peer Pressure and Personality traits as predictors of intense/personal celebrity worship among adolescents (N=323)

Predictors	Celebrity Worship Syndrome	
	ΔR^2	β
Block I	0.05***	
Age		-.10
Education (bachelors)		-.13
Block II	0.01**	
Age		-.11
Education (bachelors)		-.10
Internet use up to 2 hours		.10
Internet use between 3 and 5 hours		.02
Internet use between 6 and 9 hours		.07
Block III	0.05***	
Age		-.08
Education (bachelors)		-.12
Internet use up to 2 hours		.11
Internet use between 3 and 5 hours		.02
Internet use between 6 and 9 hours		.09
Extroversion		.18**
Conscientiousness		-.19**
Block IV	0.07***	
Age		-.08
Education (bachelors)		-.12
Internet use up to 2 hours		.15*
Internet use between 3 and 5 hours		.03
Internet use between 6 and 9 hours		.07
Extroversion		.16**
Conscientiousness		-.12*

MPPSQ		.28***
Block V	0.40***	
Age		-.04
Education (bachelors)		-.12
Internet use up to 2 hours		.06
Internet use between 3 and 5 hours		-.04
Internet use between 6 and 9 hours		-.01
Extroversion		.06
Conscientiousness		-.05
MPPSQ		.14**
MCPI		.66***
Total R²	0.57***	

Note: ΔR^2 = change in R^2 , β = standardized beta, $p < 0.05$ = *, $p < 0.01$ = **, $p < 0.001$ = ***

And for the border line pathology, education, peer pressure and celebrity persona parasocial interaction were the strongest predictors. In the first model for intense celebrity attachment, two predictors were added i.e. age and education dummy variable of bachelors and a significant regression equation was generated ($R^2 = .02$, $F(2, 320) = 3.81$, $p = .02$). As for the second model, agreeableness and conscientiousness personality traits were added. The regression equation for this model was ($R^2 = .06$, $F(4, 318) = 5.38$, $p = .00$), which appeared to be significant. After the effect of age and education dummy variable of bachelors was removed from the second model, a significant equation developed ($R^2 = .04$, $F(2, 318) = 6.80$, $p = .001$). In the

third model, peer pressure was added and the regression equation for the combined effect of all three models was significant i.e. ($R^2 = .14$, $F(5, 317) = 8.37$, $p = .00$). After the effect of previous models was excluded, the regression equation for the effect of pressure came to be significant as well, ($R^2 = .08$, $F(1, 317) = 29.75$, $p = .00$). In the fourth model, celebrity persona parasocial interaction was added as predictor, the collective regression equation for all the four models is found significant, ($R^2 = .50$, $F(6, 316) = 51.65$, $p = .00$). After excluding the effect of all the predictors from previous three models, the regression equation for fourth model is also significant, ($R^2 = .35$, $F(1, 316) = 219.93$, $p = .00$).

Table: 8 Presents Multiple Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis Showing Demographics, Celebrity Persona Para-Social Interaction, Peer Pressure and Personality Traits as Predictors of Pathological Celebrity Worship Syndrome among Adolescents (N=323)

Predictors	Celebrity Worship Syndrome	
	ΔR^2	β
Block I	0.02*	
Age		-.03
Education (bachelors)		-.13
Block II	0.04***	
Age		.03
Education (bachelors)		-.16
Agreeableness		-.11
Conscientiousness		-.14*
Block III	0.08***	
Age		.01
Education (bachelors)		-.17
Agreeableness		-.04
Conscientiousness		-.09
MPPSQ		.30***
Block IV	0.35***	

Age	.04
Education (bachelors)	-.15*
Agreeableness	-.07
Conscientiousness	-.06
MPPSQ	.16*
MCPPI	.61*
Total R²	0.50***

Note: ΔR^2 = change in R^2 , β = standardized beta, $p < 0.05$ = *, $p < 0.01$ = **, $p < 0.001$ = ***

In order to study the mean differences of demographical categories of celebrity worship, independent sample t-test and one way ANOVA test were used. The outcome suggested that no significant gender, family status, socioeconomic, or internet usage per day difference in celebrity worship and its domains (entertainment-social,

intense/personal, border line pathology) were found. The only significant difference was observed in education level, suggesting that there was a significant difference between intermediate and bachelor students in celebrity worship, and its sub-domains. Intermediate students reported to have experienced this phenomenon more than bachelor students.

Table: 9 Presents the Educational Difference in Celebrity Worship Syndrome, Celebrity Persona Para-social Interaction, Peer Pressure and Personality Traits among adolescents (N=323)

Variables	<u>Intermediate</u>		<u>Bachelors</u>		<i>t</i> (323)	<i>p</i>	<u>95% CI</u>		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M1	SD 1	M2	SD2			LL	UL	
Celebrity worship syndrome	3.15	.60	2.83	.84	3.92(321)	0.00	.08	.16	0.44
Entertainment	3.46	.68	3.13	.88	3.76(321)	0.00	.09	.16	0.42
Intense/personal Pathology	2.96	.70	2.61	.92	3.86(321)	0.00	.09	.17	0.43
Celebrity persona para-social interaction	2.80	.74	2.56	.91	2.74(321)	0.01	.09	.07	0.29
Peer pressure	3.27	.53	3.20	.74	1.08(321)	0.28	.07	-.06	0.11
Extroversion	2.57	.64	2.63	.79	-.74(321)	.46	.08	-.22	0.08
Negative emotionality	3.16	.80	3.21	.86	-.53(321)	.59	.09	-.23	0.06
Open mindedness	3.37	.93	3.20	.92	1.60(320.99)	.11	.10	-.04	0.18
Agreeableness	3.50	.84	3.58	.83	.83(320.99)	.41	.09	-.26	0.10
Conscientiousness	3.49	.71	3.57	.72	.90(320.89)	.37	.08	-.23	0.11
	3.18	.78	3.28	.78	-1.15(321)	.25	.09	-.27	0.13

Note: *M*= mean, *SD*= Standard deviation, *df* = degree of freedom, *p*=significance, *LL*=lower limit, *UL*=upper limit,

$p < 0.05$ = *, $p < 0.01$ = **, $p < 0.001$ = ***

4. Discussion

Celebrity admiration and fan hood is no more an unfamiliar phenomenon in today's world. People all over the globe admire and follow famous celebrities. They like to have a sneak peak in their favorite celebrities' lives through various social media platforms and like to talk about them

with their friends. Although within a normal range, this kind of fan hood is entertaining and joyful, but when this attraction and admiration turns into obsession and pose potential threat to fan or the celebrity, it becomes a matter of concern. From the perspective of Self-Determination

Theory, such intense attachments may arise when basic psychological needs like autonomy, competence, and relatedness are not sufficiently met, leading individuals to seek alternative sources of emotional fulfilment, such as parasocial relationships with celebrities (Deci & Ryan, 1985). There can be numerous factors influencing the phenomenon of celebrity worship syndrome and the current research intended to explore these factors. In 2003, Maltby, Houran and McCutcheon conducted a research to study the clinical point of view related to attitude and behaviors related to celebrity worship. They also studied relationship between different personality traits and celebrity worship. The outcome of the research suggested that celebrity worship based on entertainment was significantly positively related to extroverted personality. McCutcheon and Lowinger in 2011, also suggesting that people who have developed entertainment based celebrity attachment have extrovert personalities. Extroversion is also observed in people with intense-personal celebrity attachment (Narula & Verma, 2018). In another research conducted in 2016 by McCutcheon, Britt and Rich over an Indian population suggested that there is a significantly negative correlation between conscientiousness and pathological celebrity worship. Also, people who scored higher on borderline pathological celebrity attachment tend to be less conscientious. These findings align with the Big Five Personality Theory, which explains how traits like extroversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness influence individual differences in behaviors, including celebrity worship. Hence the outcomes of the current study are supported in light of the previous literature that extroversion personality trait is positively correlated with celebrity worship syndrome and its domain of entertainment-based celebrity worship. Whereas, conscientiousness and agreeableness are negatively correlated with intense and pathological celebrity worship

respectively. According to Social Learning Theory, adolescents may develop these behaviours and attitudes by observing and modelling the behaviours of admired celebrities, especially when such behaviours are reinforced by peer validation and social media exposure (Bandura, 1977). Zsila, McCutcheon, and Demetrovics in 2018, used a reference of an old research done by Maltby and colleagues in 2003, suggesting that there is a weak negative relation between age and celebrity worship. Similar results were obtained from the current research that age and education level is negatively correlated with celebrity attachment, suggesting that as people grow older and become more educationally mature, their fan hood reduces. However, the use of internet per day is positively correlated with celebrity fan hood, implying that people who have indulged into celebrity worship spend more time on internet than others. As a part of secondary analysis it was explored that people who have reported to be under the pressure from their peers are significantly less agreeable and conscientious than others. Also those who have developed parasocial interaction with celebrities were more extroverted and open-minded. The relationship between personality traits and peer influence was studied in terms of delinquent behaviors by Slagt and co researchers in 2015. They revealed that those adolescents who were less agreeable and conscientious fell more frequently into delinquent behaviors due to their peers' influence (Slagt *et al.*, 2015). In line with Social Learning Theory, this highlights how peer influence can reinforce behaviours including parasocial attachments to celebrities, as adolescents model behaviours and attitudes that are rewarded or accepted within their peer groups. Shabahang, Besharat and Chirani in 2018, conducted research looking for the relationship and role as a predictor of celebrity persona para-social interaction with celebrity worship and its sub-scales (entertainment-social, intense/personal and

boarder line pathology). For this purpose, they selected 88 students from Giallen University and administered celebrity persona-parasocial interaction scale and celebrity attachment scale. The outcome of the research suggested that celebrity para-social interaction has a strong correlation with all the subscales of celebrity worship and it also plays an important role as a strong positive predictor of celebrity worship and its all sub-domain i.e. entertainment-social, intense/personal and boarder line pathology (Shabahang, Besharat & Chirani, 2018). Ang and Neechan in 2016 performed a phenomenological research on adolescents' point of view about celebrity worship and extracted various factors which influence a person to become a celebrity fan or worshiper like celebrity productions, their personality, and peer pressure. Some adolescents said that the songs, movies etc. produced by the celebrities have persuaded them to become their worshipers' others said that personal traits of the celebrities have made them attractive and loveable. Some of the participants stated that their peers or friends influenced their likeness towards their favourite celebrity. According to the researchers, peer influence is the least studied factor of celebrity worship although it is already known that friends are crucial socializing agents in this age. Based on the early research it was also studied that in adolescence age most of the likenesses and preferences of people are influenced by their friends. The result of the current research is also supporting the same theme as it suggested that peer pressure is a strong predictor of celebrity worship and its two sub-domains (intense and boarder line pathology). As for now no previous literature is available to support the role of education being negative predictor of celebrity worship, however, from the results of the previous literature citing education being negatively correlated with celebrity attachment may suggest its importance as a predictor. Also as it has already been validated that para social interaction is positively correlated

with celebrity worship, and in a research conducted by Claessens and Bulck in 2015, education appeared to be a negative predictor suggesting that higher level of education resulted in lesser parasocial interaction. Thus, from this it can be indirectly inferred that education can negatively predict celebrity worship. The collective effect of all the predictors i.e. age, education, personality traits, peer pressure and celebrity persona para social interaction, was 85% of variance in celebrity worship syndrome among the adolescents. Education level appeared to be a strong negative predictor of celebrity attachment whereas peer pressure and para-social interaction turned out to be strong positive predictors. In case of entertainment based celebrity attachment, it was explored that the overall variance produced by predictors was calculated to be 71% with education level and parasocial interaction being the strongest predictors. 57% total variance was recorded as the effect of predictors on intense celebrity worship, in this case peer pressure and celebrity persona parasocial interaction appeared to be the strongest predictors. Finally, for the pathological celebrity worship syndrome revealed that the predictors had produced a total of 50% variance and here peer pressure and parasocial interaction were emerged as the strongest predictors as well. Previous researches have proven that there has been no gender difference in celebrity worship. Dardis, 2017 conducted a research to explore gender difference in celebrity attitude and life satisfaction and did not find any significant gender difference. Similarly Zsila, McCutcheon and Demetrovics in 2018 conducted a research and also did not report any gender difference. The result in the current research is also supported by the previous literature as no significant gender difference is observed. In the year 2016, McCutcheon and colleagues studied the demographic variables in relation to celebrity worship. It was recorded in the research and as it supports the current study that there is no significant socioeconomic

status difference in terms of developing celebrity attachment. However, in terms of education, it was studied that intermediate (lower level) students were significantly more celebrity worshipers than the bachelors (higher level) students. This can be supported with previous researches as in 2002 a research lead by McCutcheon education was negatively correlated with celebrity worship also in another similar research done by Maltby and co-researchers, a negative correlation was recorded between education and celebrity attachment (McCutcheon *et al.*, 2016). The current research also reported no socioeconomic difference in celebrity worship. Whereas it suggests that intermediate students reported to have higher tendency of developing celebrity worship than those enrolled in bachelors program. McCoy and colleagues in 2019 collected previous literature regarding peer pressure and made a thorough research to explore whether gender plays any role in peer influence regarding deviant behavior. Their study revealed that two major categories of literature were available regarding this subject. One suggested that men are more influenced by the peer pressure than women, and the other category suggested that there is no gender difference in this regard. However, majority of the literature suggested that there is a gender difference and that men are more sensitive towards gender difference than women (McCoy *et al.*, 2019). The current study also supports the majority of the literature. Bunnett, (2020) conducted a research to study the gender difference in various perceived traits in males and females. She reported that female are more agreeable than women and they were also scored higher on extroversion, openness and conscientiousness. This literature supports the current findings in the secondary analyses of gender difference in personality traits.

4.1 Conclusion

The present study examined the psychosocial predictors of Celebrity Worship Syndrome in adolescents, with a focus

on how peer pressure, parasocial interaction, and certain personality traits influence this behavior. Findings showed that adolescents with higher peer influence and stronger parasocial bonds were more likely to engage in celebrity worship, while personality traits such as extroversion also played a role. Education level was also significant, with intermediate students showing higher levels of worship than bachelor students. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, the study suggests that when adolescents' psychological needs—like connection, autonomy, or self-worth—go unmet, they may turn to celebrities as symbolic sources of comfort or identity. Social Learning Theory further supports how peer modeling and media exposure may shape such behavior, especially during a vulnerable developmental stage. These results highlight the need for supportive environments that nurture healthy self-concept and emotional well-being. Encouraging critical media engagement and stronger peer and family support could help adolescents form more grounded identities, reducing the tendency to seek connection through celebrity figures.

4.2 Limitations and Recommendations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection relied on a non-probability convenience sampling strategy, which limits the generalizability of the findings. The sample comprised only students enrolled in intermediate and bachelor's programs, and thus the results may not reflect the experiences of other groups, such as working individuals, school-going adolescents, or those not pursuing formal education. Additionally, the use of self-reported questionnaires makes the data susceptible to response biases, such as social desirability or inaccuracies in self-perception. Since celebrity worship remains an underexplored area in our sociocultural context, future research is essential to expand on the present findings. Longitudinal studies could examine how celebrity attachment influences long-term psychological

development, including aspects like self-concept, emotional well-being, and decision-making. Moreover, qualitative approaches would be particularly useful in uncovering culturally unique expressions of celebrity worship among individuals living in South Asia. A mixed-methods framework is also recommended to capture both the measurable and subjective dimensions of this phenomenon in greater depth.

4.3 Implementations

The outcomes of the current research can be used to support psychological counseling for adolescents who form intense or unhealthy attachments to celebrities, especially when such attachments begin to interfere with their self-image, relationships, or academic focus. Counselors, parents, and educators can benefit from recognizing the psychosocial factors—such as peer pressure and parasocial interaction—that make certain adolescents more vulnerable to celebrity worship. Educational institutions can utilize these findings to design awareness campaigns or modules that help students critically evaluate media influence, develop self-awareness, and build resilience against peer-driven trends. Schools and colleges can also integrate discussions on media literacy and identity formation into their guidance and well-being programs, helping students form balanced perceptions of celebrities, fame, and real-world achievement.

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