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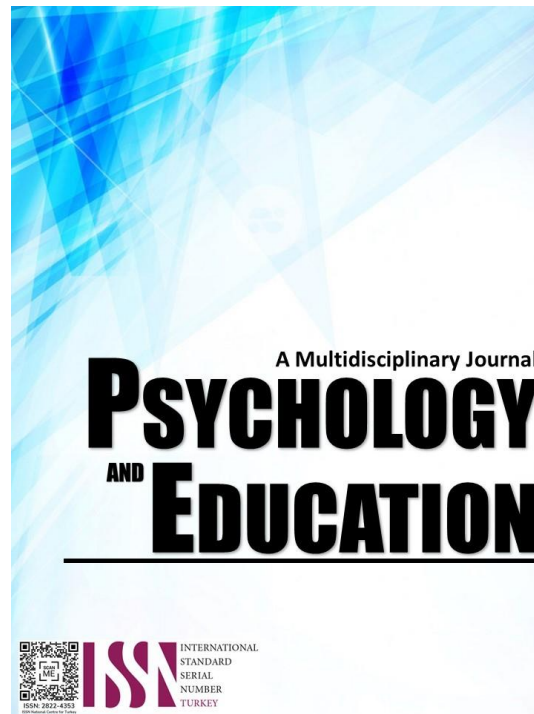
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Celebrity Admiration and Its Relationship to the Self-Esteem of Filipino Male Teenagers

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Abstract

Fan culture has grown immensely over the past few years. People are constantly looking up to celebrities and personalities as role models for their fashion, identity, and success. During the stage of adolescence, it is normal for teenagers to admire well-known people and form fan attachments as part of their identity formation. However, this admiration of a specific media figure can be associated with one's personality, cognitive processes, and psychological well-being. Thus, the current study aims to investigate the correlation between celebrity admiration and the self-esteem of 238 Filipino male teenagers. The research instruments, namely Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) were both utilized through google forms. Results have shown high scores on celebrity admiration and the normal range of self-esteem of the participants. Using Pearson's r correlation coefficient, it was found that celebrity admiration and self-esteem of Filipino male teenagers have a significant relationship that exists in a negative direction.

Keywords: *self-esteem, role models, celebrity admiration, male teenagers, Philippines*

Introduction

Fan culture has grown immensely over the past few years. Due to the isolation brought by the COVID-19, the time spent on streaming platforms, television, and social media is continuously increasing. The pandemic has impacted, causing change in the perception of fandoms and fan base. With the internet providing an easy access to practice fanaticism, following, and idolizing, celebrity admiration became increasingly broad (Swaminathan, 2020). People are constantly looking up to well-known celebrities and personalities as role models for their fashion, identity, and success. However, when this fascination with a celebrity becomes the center of one's life, this may impact their personality, cognitive processes, and psychological well-being (Maltby, Houran, & McCutcheon, 2003, as cited in Mandli & Zsila 2022).

Self-esteem is a person's subjective sense of personal worth or value (Cherry, 2022). The level of an individual's self-esteem can be based on their own self-evaluation and perception. Whenever adolescents evaluate their personality to their current ability on a number of functions, this conceptualization arises. The contrast between the perceived self and the ideal self is crucial, particularly during adolescence, because teenagers face a variety of developmental tasks and problems unique to their age group (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2004, as cited in Aryana, 2018). Moreover, several studies have shown that self-esteem can be influenced by different factors such as body image, achievement, self-concept, and social relationships (O'Dea, 2012; Abouserie, 2006; Casino-García,

Llopis-Bueno, & Llinares-Insa 2021).

During the stage of adolescence, it is normal for teenagers to admire well-known people and form fan attachments as part of their identity formation. Celebrity admiration occurs when a person forms a parasocial relationship (i.e., a one-sided or a nonreciprocal connection wherein a person imagines having a relationship with another person who does not know their existence) with his or her favorite media figure. Simply put, this type of relationship may develop into over-identification, unhealthy connection, obsession, and toxic traits. This may also cause hyperbolic praise, obsession with anything associated with the idol, strong reactions to criticism, and blind appreciation for everything the icon does (Santos, 2021). McCutcheon, Lange, and Houran (2002) identified this phenomenon as celebrity worship. It is an existing psychological construct that ranges from customary admiration to psychopathological and dysfunctional behavior caused by an extreme feeling of attachment towards a celebrity.

Many of today's generation experiences celebrity admiration, in which everyone has one or more celebrities with whom they are genuinely enamored. A celebrity fanatic is someone well-versed in the life of their idol. However, a pathological type of fan is the infatuated loner who enters into a fantasy connection with a celebrity figure. In a study conducted by Newport Academy (2018), celebrities contribute to this issue by documenting their extreme diets or using language that may be triggering for people with eating disorders. Celebrities who minimize the severity of eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia or promote

the use of unhealthy foods to satisfy hunger are mimicking dysfunction. As a result, teens are taught that their value is based on how they look. This circumstance is superficial, distressing, and even lethal for those who suffer from life-threatening eating disorders. It is not just teen females who are affected. Young males who consume media pictures experience body dissatisfaction and melancholy. This body dissatisfaction in male youths might lead to harmful and excessive activity.

The implication behind admiring celebrities was also connected to various fields of psychology such as social psychology and clinical psychology. Barnes (2022) defined fandom as a self-identified collective of individuals who are highly emotionally and imaginatively invested in a media property. Henri Tajfel, the proponent of social identity theory, explained that people who are part of a fandom become deeply invested in this social group as it increases the person's sense of identity and belongingness. Additionally, in the field of clinical psychology, recent research has suggested that the type of interactions between individuals and the celebrities they worship may have important consequences for aspects of mental health. Celebrity worship syndrome involves one person dedicating a lot of time and care to a connection with someone, in this example, a celebrity who is often oblivious of the admirer's existence. Even though it is not a clinically recognized diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V), a study conducted by Brook (2018) concluded that celebrity worship syndrome has been described as an obsessive-addictive condition. Fans who follow their idols avidly also exhibit stalking behavior. Sansone and Sansone (2014) explained that because of the intense obsession with minor details about a particular celebrity, they are most likely to condone stalking and criminal tendencies. Mental illness is often at the root of stalking behavior, with the public being blamed vehemently for delusional persecution. In some instances, stalking is a criminal activity that can cause psychological harm to both the offender and the victim (Wilson, Dempsey, Farnham, Manze, & Taylor, 2018).

Moreover, one of the reasons why individuals worship their favorite celebrities is because of the lack of real social relationships in their lives. This can happen to individuals with unhealthy self-esteem. Sitasari, Rozali, Arumsari, and Setyawan, (2019) reported that there is a significant relationship between celebrity admiration and self-esteem. The relationship is in a negative direction wherein if the respondents had high

self-esteem, they would be able to evaluate themselves, so they would love their idol naturally, or it can be said that these individuals have a low score on the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS). However, those who had low self-esteem had a high score on CAS indicating that the celebrity admiration of these people was formed as compensation for their personal shortcomings. On the contrary, Kusuma and Yuliawati (2013) claimed that there is no significant relationship found between self-esteem and celebrity worship. The celebrity admiration of teenagers served as an extrinsic motivation for them to achieve their dreams and to be better role models to other people. Similarly to this, Ang and Chang (2016) stated that the celebrity admiration experience of adolescents has no negative impact. But rather, it demonstrates how well-known personalities have positively influenced new generations.

This study aims to determine whether there is a significant relationship between celebrity admiration and the self-esteem of male teenagers. While it is important to note that this will not imply causation, the results of this study will help examine the possible existence of influence between the two variables. The connection between celebrity admiration on different variables such as self-esteem has been widely investigated. Ashe, Maltby, and McCutcheon (2005, as cited in Zsila, Gabor, McCutcheon, Demetrovics, 2020) found no gender difference in the celebrity admiration level of teenagers. Oppositely, Swami, Chamoro-Premuzic, Mastor, Siran, Mohsien, Said, Jaafar, Sinniah, and Pillai (2011) stated that women tend to express a higher level of celebrity admiration than men. Due to this, previous studies recommended taking an in-depth look at this matter. Hence, this study will contribute to the various shortcomings and gaps in addressing the celebrity admiration and self-esteem of male teenagers. This study will also contribute to the small but growing literature on celebrity worship. It will expand the scope of investigation on the psychological aspects by exploring its association with self-esteem. Moreover, it will also lay the foundation for understanding celebrity admiration in the field of clinical psychology and how it can be differentiated or associated with other conditions in the DSM-V that have obsessive symptoms.

Research Questions

This study aims to examine the relationship between celebrity admiration and the self-esteem of male teenagers. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may celebrity admiration of the respondents be described?
2. How may the self-esteem of the respondents be described?
3. Is there a significant relationship between celebrity admiration and the self-esteem of the respondents?

Methodology

This section features the research method, population and sampling techniques, research instruments, data gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data that were utilized to generate the results of this study.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research method to describe the celebrity admiration and self-esteem of male teenagers; then eventually determine the relationship between the two variables. According to Lau (2018), correlational research aims to observe two variables using statistical analysis without the occurrence of manipulation of any variable.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The respondents of this study are 238 male teenagers. Each respondent is a member of a particular fandom of media figures from television, film, music, or sport. Slovin's formula and convenience sampling technique were both utilized in acquiring the participants of the current study. Lavrakas (2008) stated that it is a type of non-probability sampling wherein the needed sample size will be collected from a conveniently available pool of respondents. The convenience sampling technique is also considered to be uncomplicated and time-efficient.

Research Instruments

This study utilized two standardized instruments in gathering the statistical data. The instruments are described as follows:

Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS). This instrument was designed by McCutcheon, Lange, and Houran (2002) containing a 34-items questionnaire that will measure the respondent's attitude toward their favorite

celebrity. It identifies individuals who are overly absorbed or addicted to their interest in a celebrity. However, it does not intend to categorize if the respondent belongs to entertainment/social, intense/personal, or borderline/pathological. CAS is available in a 22-item, 23-item, and 34-item version that have a Likert-scale response format. This study used the 34-item version because it has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 (Kusuma & Yuliawati 2020), which implies excellent internal consistency and reliability. The analysis of CAS scores of the respondents will be done by adding the scores of items in each level then, followed by adding the score of each level to obtain the total CAS score.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. This instrument was designed by Morris Rosenberg that measures self-esteem by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. It consists of 10 statements related to overall feelings of self-worth or self-acceptance. The scale presented high ratings in reliability areas; internal consistency was 0.77, minimum coefficient of reproducibility was at least 0.90 (Kusuma & Yuliawati 2020). The scale is believed to be unidimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert's scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Data Gathering Procedures

The whole data collection process of this study was done online. Primarily, the call for the respondents was posted on a Facebook fan group. Afterward, a secured Google form was developed and given out to male participants who are willing to participate. To avoid uncertainties, the respondents have read the consent and instructions thoroughly before starting the assessment. For the first part, the respondents answered the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale within more or less two (3) minutes. In measuring celebrity admiration, the respondents started answering the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) that took fifteen (15) minutes on average. Following the ethical standards, confidentiality was assured throughout the process. The individual scores of the respondents were not given to anyone and were used for academic purposes only.

Results and Discussion

This section answers the questions that were specified in the statement of the problem. This part of the study also summarizes the statistical results and the findings out of the gathered data. It contains analysis,



interpretation, and implications of the current study. In addition to this, this section answers specific questions concerning the relationship of celebrity admiration and self-esteem of Filipino male teenagers that were stated in the statement of the problem.

The Celebrity Admiration of Filipino Male Teenagers

Based on the analysis of the celebrity admiration of 238 Filipino male teenagers, Table 1 indicates the summation of CAS scores in the three domains namely entertainment/social, intense/personal, and borderline pathological.

Table 1. *Celebrity Admiration Scores*

<i>Domains</i>	\bar{x}	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
Entertainment/Social	25	High
Intense/Personal	50	Moderate
Borderline/Pathological	21	High
CAS Total	96	High

The scores on the intense/personal domain have a mean average of 50 indicating a moderate range of celebrity admiration. However, both entertainment/social and borderline/pathological domains obtained a total mean score of 25 and 21 respectively implying that the level of celebrity admiration is high.

Several studies have shown that male teenagers have high scores on the entertainment/social and borderline/pathological domains of celebrity admiration. For instance, Zsila, Urban, McCutcheon, and Demotrovis (2019) reported that male teenagers scored higher compared to female teenagers in the entertainment/social domain. The study explained that male teenagers commonly use parasocial relationships with their favorite celebrities in order to interact or socialize with their peers. In a nutshell, the celebrity admiration of male teenagers serves as a compensation for social deficits and social interactions. In congruence with this result, a study conducted by Kusuma and Yuliawati (2018) reported that the male teenagers scored higher than the average in the third domain of celebrity admiration. It was found that individuals who have worshiped their favorite celebrity to this domain may show social-pathological attitudes and behaviors. Considering that the respondents of this study are teenagers, Sulianti, Lubis, Zarah, and Hambali (2018) eloquently stated that the internet is one of the reasons why there is a high score

on the borderline/pathological domain of celebrity admiration. Due to different social media platforms, people who admire celebrities have easy access to personal lives and even pictures of their favorite celebrities. Thus, this may lead to stalking, fantasy proneness, obsession, and dissociation that includes in the borderline/pathological domain of celebrity admiration.

Based on previous research demonstrating that real interpersonal relationships can be rewarding and affirming, parasocial relationships are like personal relationships that a human has, as it is also beneficial to every individual (Tippin, Gabriel, & Jaye, 2018). However, the present study found a high score on entertainment/social and borderline/pathological. In entertainment/social, the person uses their favorite celebrity in order to socialize or open up a conversation. High scores in this domain imply that the male teenagers commonly use parasocial relationships to reduce individuality from their peers, and initiate real personal relationships. While it may sound beneficial, there is a possibility that parasocial relationships can create high standards that are too difficult to live up to in real-life relationships. On the other hand, high scores on the borderline/pathological domain of celebrity admiration have no benefits to the male teenagers at all. As established, this domain includes the high intensity of fantasy proneness, obsessional behaviors, and dissociation. This implies that male teenagers have socio-pathological attitudes towards their favorite celebrities such as stalking, wanting to know every detail in the personal life of the celebrity, and willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their favorite celebrity.

The Self-Esteem of Filipino Male Teenagers

Table 2. *Level of Self-Esteem*

<i>Variable</i>	\bar{x}	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
Self-Esteem	19.1849	Normal range

The overall mean score of the respondents in Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES) is \bar{x} =19.1849 as indicated in Table 2. This score implies that Filipino male teenagers that participated in this study have a normal level of self-esteem.

There are other factors that can be associated with self-



esteem. Different sociocultural factors are highly associated with how a person views and feels about their own characteristics and qualities. For instance, Xin (2019) indicated that self-esteem of male teenagers is highly associated by peers and social interactions. Through peer trust and perceived social support, self-esteem can have an impact on social adaptation both directly and indirectly. Teenagers with low self-esteem stated that they dislike social interactions, experience more stressful situations, and get less social support than those with strong self-esteem.

Keizer (2019) and Martinez (2020) both argued that the home environment and parental relationship of male teenagers has a bearing to their self-esteem. It was shown that the increase in self-esteem was correlated with changes in how well the mother-adolescent attachment relationship and the relationship between the teenagers' parents were judged to be. The latter study suggests that the use of strictness has a detrimental impact on self-esteem of male teenagers. Authoritarian and negligent parenting is the two parenting philosophies that are linked to low self-esteem and are both characterized by a lack of affection. This was also supported by Brendan (2020), in his book entitled *The Power of Self Esteem*, mentioned that parents have the power to encourage self-confidence and respect in their children or to egregiously obstruct the acquisition of these traits.

The Correlation of Celebrity Admiration and Self-Esteem of Filipino Male Teenagers

As shown in Table 3, there is a low negative correlation between celebrity admiration and self-esteem of Filipino male teenagers ($r=-.290$). The p-value is .0000 ($p<0.05$) indicating that the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant, leading to the decision to reject the null hypothesis. There is statistically significant relationship between celebrity admiration and self-esteem of the respondents.

Table 3. *Correlation of Celebrity Admiration and Self-Esteem of Filipino Male Teenagers*

Variables	r	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
Celebrity Admiration				
Self-Esteem	-.290	.000	Reject Ho	There is a significant relationship.

From previous research, some revealed similar

findings that there is a relationship between celebrity admiration and self-esteem of male teenagers. Kusuma and Yuliawati (2018) reported that there is a negative association between the two variables even though it is not causal. The previous study found that the attachment of a person to a celebrity depends on the level of their self-esteem. If a person has low self-esteem, they are more likely to follow their favorite celebrity. However, if a person has a normal or high level of self-esteem, the attachment to their favorite celebrity is low. The reason behind this was explained by Blackwell (2018) in his study suggesting that people with poor self-esteem might use parasocial connections to their favorite celebrities in order to help them feel more in line with the standards they set for themselves.

Moreover, individuals with poor self-esteem benefit from parasocial relationships in ways that real-world relationships do not. Even if this is the case, people with a strong connection to their favorite celebrities tend to have low self-esteem. As eloquently stated by Shabahang, Firoozi, Bagheri, and Sedighian (2019) fanatics tend to look at the positive attributes of their favorite celebrities and compare it to their own characteristics. For instance, a study conducted by Zapanta (2019) reported that male teenagers have a low score on body image index due to their insecurities, thinking that their physical ideals do not match their real physical appearance. In the same study, it was also reported that male teenagers obtained higher discrepancy between their perceived self and their strongly held ideal physical attributes.

People with low self-esteem have a greater tendency to be attached with celebrities who they perceived to be similar to their ideal selves more than those who they perceived to be less similar. The more perceived similarity there was between the celebrity and the ideal self, the more low self-esteem people liked and empathized with that celebrity. As this is the case, the parasocial connection between people with low self-esteem and celebrities will be stronger implying that the celebrity admiration will increase. Moreover, applying the absorption-addiction theory of parasocial relationships, the relationship between the male teenagers and their favorite celebrity is used as a compensation for poor social relationships.

The low negative correlation result between celebrity admiration and self-esteem in this study also supports the study conducted by Sitasari, Rozali, Arumsari, and Setyawan (2019). It was found that the relationship between the two variables is in a negative direction. If the respondents had high self-esteem, they would be

able to control their emotions, able to evaluate themselves, so they would love their idol naturally. In congruence with this, Indrayana and Wahyudi (2019) reported that even though there is a weak correlation between celebrity admiration and self-esteem, it can be concluded that this relationship is negative, implying that the higher celebrity admiration, the lower the individual's self-esteem.

Conclusion

In light of the aforementioned findings of the current study, the following was concluded: (1) High scores on the entertainment/social domain of celebrity admiration imply that the respondents commonly use parasocial relationships with their favorite celebrity as a way to connect with their peers and in order to reduce individuality. Moreover, high scores on the borderline/pathological domain indicate that most male teenagers are prone to having obsessional behavior towards their favorite celebrity. (2) The self-esteem of Filipino male teenagers who participated in this study is in the normal range indicating that adolescents, especially male teenagers, have a positive view of their personal worth and value. (3) The low negative correlation between celebrity admiration and self-esteem implies that as the respondents' level of celebrity admiration increases, their personal views and feelings about their own selves decrease. Conversely, male teens with normal self-esteem do not need parasocial relationships in order to perceive their own qualities and characteristics as positive implying a lower level of celebrity admiration. However, the low negative correlation between self-esteem and celebrity admiration does not imply causation. There may be an unknown factor that influences both variables similarly.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested: (1) Since one of the most important psychological influences of media is the formation of parasocial relationships with celebrities, the unrealistic and unattainable standards that are shown in the mainstream media affect the teenagers, especially as they are in the process of identity formation. Hence, Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), and other media sectors are encouraged to strictly monitor the contents of media platforms that reach male teenagers as their target audience. (2) Professionals that surround male teenagers such as teachers and guidance counselors are encouraged to facilitate activities that maintain or boost the level of self-esteem of male teenagers.

Moreover, it is also important to build a safe environment where teenagers can embrace and express themselves. (3) Although there is a low negative correlation between the two variables, the high scores on the Celebrity Attitude Scale of the respondents cannot be ignored. For male teenagers, there is a need of re-evaluating the relationship when admiring a celebrity. Admiring a role model for their characteristics and making it as the basis of one's ideal self is healthy. However, male teenagers should also be aware that the ideal self must be congruent with reality. (4) Since the current study only hypothesized the correlation between celebrity admiration and self-esteem, future studies should look into different factors that might influence the two variables. For instance, the time period of celebrity admiration should be considered as it might influence the scores of the respondents in the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS).

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