Impact of Celebrity Worship on Body Image Concerns among Students: Role of Cognitive Flexibility

Najma Iqbal Malik, Maham Shahab, and Irsa Fatima Makhdoom

University of Sargodha

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of celebrity worship on body image concerns and the role of cognitive flexibility among Students. A sample of N = 300 males (*n* = 150) and females (*n* = 150) young adults was recruited. The sample age ranged from 18-25 years, with intermediate a minimum education level. The research included the Celebrity Worship Scale (CWS) (Mccutcheon et al., 2002), Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI) (Littleton et al., 2005), and Cognitive Flexibility Scale (Martin & Rubin, 1995). Mediation analysis reveals that cognitive flexibility mediates between celebrity worship and body image concerns. The results explain that a significant effect can be seen between celebrity worship on body image concerns through cognitive flexibility. By virtue of the intermediary function of cognitive flexibility, interventions centered on enhancing cognitive flexibility can potentially mitigate the body image anxieties associated with celebrity adoration. The study has some limitations i.e. the sample is restricted to Sargodha division which could decrease the generalizability of the study. There is a suggestion to implicate larger sample. Moreover, the study population consists of only young adults. Future researchers should consider other age group as well.

Keywords. Celebrity worship, body image concern, cognitive flexibility, Students

With growth of celebrity culture and the media spread in the late 20th century, psychologists began to discover the impact of celebrities on their viewers. According to Brown and Tiggemann, (2016), media personalities may be effective social change agents, and the media

---

Najma Iqbal Malik, Maham Shahab, and Irsa Fatima Makhdoom, Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Najma Iqbal Malik, Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan. Email: najmamalik@gmail.com

regularly uses familiar people's interests endorsed by the public figure to impact the population. A rising amount of studies has focused on the psychological features of celebrity worshipers or those with an unhealthy affiliation towards the celebrity (Brooks, 2021; McCutcheon et al., 2016). The previous literature suggests that, people's interest in and beliefs in famous people are referred to as celebrity worship.

Celebrity worship is an excessive fan-celebrity relationship the inclusion of adverse addiction and extra affiliation (McCutcheon et al., 2002). Recently, a study focused on fans' attachments to their favourite celebrities. These generally one-sided connections are considered seriously and seen as critical to fans' identities and emotional lives (Hackley & Hackley, 2016). Celebrity may be defined as an ever-changing theatrical activity that involves maintaining a fan base, acting intimacy, authenticity, accessibility, and building a marketable persona (Marwick & Boyd 2011).

Celebrity Worship

As per the findings of Brooks (2021), the phenomenon of celebrity adulation can be understood as a profound manifestation of psychological bonding, wherein individuals prioritize their connection with admired public figures above all other aspects of their existence. It emerges from a sense of belonging and passionate devotion to the central character. It is characterized by dedication and a willingness to devote energy and resources to that individual. Celebrity worship is probably best understood as a spectrum phenomenon, ranging from admiration to psychopathology (Sansone et al., 2014).

Celebrity worship entails attempting to identify with someone who possesses characteristics that the worshipper lacks; fear of social position and ambiguity on what qualities are deserving of worship the social isolation, which leads to a desire for illusory importance in the lives of others. Feeling linked to some celebrities is associated with attraction, empathy, pain, belonging, and modeling (Redmond, 2016). Many scholars argue that pro-social connections with celebrities should be viewed as an extension of regular social contact, just as genuine relationships and attachment to famous people should be viewed as a common element of developing closeness and passion (Greenwood et al., 2018).

Youth and Celebrity Worship

Many celebrity fans are children who have reached youth and look up to the Celebrity's lifestyle. Content uploaded by idol

celebrities has the potential to influence youth's lifestyles (Monanda, 2017) significantly. Fans frequently spend significant money to participate in or collect idol celebrity products to get the Celebrity's attention (Pradiri & Hartini, 2020). Children who spend time and money collecting fan goods perform worse in school and conflict with their parents (Willson, 2015). Inspiration from a celebrity is connected to the youngster's significant developmental activity, which is the search for identity (Zastrow et al., 2019).

Absorption Addiction Model

Celebrity worship can be explained in the manner presented by McCutcheon et al. (2002) in the Absorption-Addiction model. According to this paradigm, psychological immersion with a celebrity to develop an identity and a sense of satisfaction is facilitated by a damaged identity structure in specific individuals. It's possible to create an addiction to the assertions of the motivating factors that able to instigator absorption by Maintaining the satisfaction of the people with the para-social association resulted in increasingly harsh and perhaps delusory behaviors.

According to this theory, people with a confused sense of identity strive to achieve fulfillment and identity by becoming fascinated with a celebrity. Absorption is the effortless concentration of one's attention on a celebrity. Higher degrees of celebrity worship have a weak boundary structure and may mistakenly feel they have a particular relationship or link with a star (Houran et al., 2005). According to related studies, obsessive fixation with public people is associated with absorption and detachment (Sheridan et al., 2006). The addictive components of celebrity worship emerge when people become accustomed to their degree of immersion and want even more confirmation of their belief in the Celebrity's imagined link with them. This urge can reinforce false assumptions about the relationship and encourage even more severe dissociative behavior.

A hypothesis generated by McCutcheon et al. (2002) which is celebrity worshipers' introversion and lack of meaningful connections promote psychological absorption in an attempt to construct an identification which is proper with a sense of satisfaction. It also contends that the state of the motivating impulses instigate the level of absorption are similar to those of addiction. In this example, absorption is the effortless focus of undivided attention on a beloved celebrity. It causes a heightened feeling of realism, which is claimed to promote false assumptions that the celebrity worshipper and the

object of their attention have a special relationship. The worshipper may then engage in increasingly extreme activities to deepen their understanding of and emotions of proximity to the celebrity.

Categories of Celebrity Worship

Celebrity worship is divided into one or two major categories, each with its traits:

1. Fantasy. The non-pathological types of celebrity worship, such as fan clubs, tend to appeal to introverts and intuitive Celebrity worship. It is linked to people reporting fewer personal friendships than before becoming a fan.
2. Possible Pathology. On the other hand, severe degrees of celebrity adoration, such as erotomania, stalking (obsessional following), and improper contact with celebrities (leets et al., 1995), including worries about trust and a faulty capacity to build and sustain connections, maybe pathological.

Individual Differences in Celebrity Worship

According to Brooks (2021), findings on gender variations in celebrity worship levels are contradictory. Some research indicated that women admire celebrities more than males (Swami et al., 2014), whereas others found no gender difference (Maltby & Day, 2011). Furthermore, a few studies have found that males had higher degrees of celebrity adoration (McCutcheon et al., 2016).

In relation to age, research has continuously shown that the degree of celebrity admiration tends to decrease slightly as individuals get older (Brooks, 2021). Lin and Lin (2007) noted that the phenomenon of idolizing celebrities mostly found between the teenagers and children, with those who are mesmerized by the attraction of a celeb of the opposite gender displaying heightened levels of adoration. Recent studies conducted by Greenwood et al. (2018) and Collisson et al. (2020) further endorsement of this concept. Women are more inclined than men to choose a favourite celebrity of opposite gender.

According to the moderation analysis, there is a negative relationship found between celebrity worship and self-esteem which was significantly higher in females than males. The association between admiration of famous individuals and self-reported fatigue during the daytime exhibited a slightly more pronounced correlation

among individuals in their youth compared to those who are older. Although gender and age were incredibly ineffective moderators, these findings highlight some possible individual variances when evaluating relationships between celebrity worship and several elements of mental health (Zsila et al., 2021).

Body Image Concerns. Sparhawk (2003) described body image as an individual's perception, imagination, emotions, and physical feelings of and around the body. The perception may either be towards the self or the ideal body. Body-image dynamic is affected by mood, environment, and physical experience changes. Discrepancies in the body image of an individual stem from a contrast between how he views himself, his actual self, and society's view of the ideal body or what the individual wants to become, his ought self (Helm, 2009).

Furthermore, Higgins (1989b) explained that there are three domains to the self the actual, the ideal, and the ought self. The actual self is the current self and how the individual perceives his attributes. The ideal self is what society or the individual would like, whereas the ought self-determines the characteristics the individual must have. In line with this, studies reveal that a more significant discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal or ought self is associated with a more significant negative effect (Halliwell & Dittmar, 2006).

Factors Associated with Body Image Concern. Furthermore, Cash and Fleming (2002) argued that multiple factors affect an individual's body image, such as media, familial, and interpersonal influences that lead to body dissatisfaction. Traditionally, women have been the focus of concern about body image (Stout & Frame, 2004). The media pressure women to obtain the ideal thin body.

Body Image Concern and Celebrity Worship. Celebrity worshipers would model themselves on their heroes, even mimicking celebrities' bodily images, because celebrities promote themselves as role models. Body image is a multidimensional construct that includes self-perceptions and attitudes about physical attractiveness. Littleton et al. (2005) explain dysmorphic concerns about perceived imperfections in one's appearance emerge as frequent checking, concealing flaws, social withdrawal, and consolation seeking.

Research shows that body image concerns are positively associated with CW (Alanzalon, 2011; North et al., 2007). Adolescents who are very personal celebrity worshipers are likely to have negative body views and will go to great lengths to acquire their ideal body images. Similarly, male teenagers who were classified as

celebrity worshipers had more excellent rates of eating problems (Ang & Chan, 2018). According to Aruguete et al. (2014), there is no correlation between celebrity worship and an identity measure meant to determine how much attention people put on their physical appearance. On the other hand, celebrity worship was positively connected to sexualization, particularly in men.

According to Scharf and Levy (2015), there is a link between celebrity worship and bad body image. There was a significant positive link between intense-personal and body image concerns in female teenagers.   Borderline pathology was also significantly connected with both. In multiple regressions, only intense-personal remained a predictor. Swami et al. (2011) discovered a high link between body dissatisfaction and entertainment-social and intense-personal factors. In multiple regressions, intense-personal remained a significant predictor.

Cognitive Flexibility. Cognitive flexibility is a person's awareness of options and alternatives available in any given event and the desire to be flexible and adapt to the situation (Çelikkaleli, 2014). Cognitively adaptable people are also more interpersonally competent (Zhou et al., 2020). People with more cognitive flexibility are likely to have lower levels of celebrity adoration. Maltby et al. (2004) and Martin et al. (2003) explain that cognitive flexibility was inversely associated with intensely personal and borderline-pathological characteristics of CW. Cognitive flexibility can be considered valid and meditating in the association between CW and body image problems.

According to Shabahang et al. (2019) findings, cognitive flexibility substantially predicts celebrity worship. Using programs and interventions to enhance cognitive flexibility can help lessen celebrity worship, which has been linked to various medical and psychological problems and harmful social and cultural effects. According to the research findings by Shabahang and Besharat (2019), cognitive flexibility is a significant element in celebrity worship. Improving cognitive flexibility ability can result in less excessive connection with beloved celebrities.

Maltby et al. (2004) and Martin et al. (2003) revealed that cognitive flexibility was adversely related to intensely personal, maybe pathological, emotions. In a later study, all degrees of celebrity worship were related to blurring boundaries between the past, present, and future. Fantasy proneness was associated with openness to child-like emotions (Houran et al., 2005).

Role of Cognitive Flexibility. Shabahang et al. (2020) state that celebrity worship strongly influences body image concerns via cognitive flexibility. This study's findings emphasized the significance of cognitive flexibility in the relationship between CW and worries about body image. Because cognitive flexibility has a mediating function, it is possible to reduce the body image issues contributing to celebrity worship by using cognitive flexibility development therapies.

Several factors may influence the relationship between CW and body image, and this relationship cannot be considered simple. Several studies have discovered a correlation between specifically characterized accumulation and celebrity worship (Maltby et al., 2004).

Celebrity worship should be researched as a pervasive, complicated, and diverse phenomenon with several negative implications, as well as its relationship with essential characteristics such as body image concern and cognitive flexibility. According to Shabahang et al. (2020), it should also be investigated if cognitive flexibility can play a mediation role in the association between celebrity adoration and body image concern.

As a result, this study aims to look at the link between celebrity worship and body image concerns, with cognitive flexibility acting as a mediator.

Rationale

The present study aims to identify the impact of celebrity worship on body image concerns among Pakistani youth. Further, it aimed to explore the role of cognitive flexibility. Celebrity worship is a global phenomenon that has received substantial attention (mainly in Western nations). Adolescent identity formation may be influenced by the presence of idealized images of celebrities, as some teenagers tend to attach themselves to these figures and imitate their behaviors, as proposed by Greene and Adams-Price (1990). As a result, further investigation of this phenomenon and its origins and ramifications in our Pakistani society is essential. Compared to older individuals, teens and young adults are more prone to celebrity worship (Ashe & McCutcheon, 2001). Celebrities may assume the role of a model adult figure, serving as a platform for adolescents to navigate their sense of self, encompassing their goals and perception of achievement (Mendick et al., 2015). Celebrities are now visible on many media channels because of technological improvements. Young people in modern Western countries are more 'tethered to the internet' (Turkle, 2011), and as a result, celebrity culture has become incorporated into

their daily lives. Celebrities' popularity elevates them to a pedestal of widespread adoration, granting them a higher status in society (Marshal, 2010).

To be recognized as modern socialites, most celebrities appear to promote everything and everything that undermines conventional values. It would be pretty unfair to place the entire burden of blame on the children. Cultural customs and religious beliefs are becoming obsolete today, leaving one to wonder where we are headed.

Lastly, this study answers this question: The Absorption-Addiction Model (McCutcheon et al., 2002) proposes that individuals gravitate toward superstars to compensate for shortcomings in their life. However, the outcome of the resulting para-social relationship with celebrities is unknown. Do para-social connections with stars provide social support to vulnerable followers, or do they result in more significant deficits because the fan obtains a new set of demands linked with celebrity adulation (e.g., body image concerns).

In this context, it is imperative to analyze celebrity adoration as a prevalent, intricate, and diverse occurrence with a multitude of adverse effects, alongside its correlation with significant factors like body image apprehension and cognitive adaptability. Shabahang et al., (2020) investigate and explain the relationship between these variables. However, this research is being conducted on the Iranian population. Although Iran and Pakistan share the same religion, their cultural contexts are very different. It is recommended by Shabahang et al. (2020) that the findings be replicated on a different population. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of these variables on Pakistani youth. It should also be investigated whether cognitive flexibility can act as a mediator in the relationship between celebrity worship and body image concerns.

Operational Definitions

The variables used in the study are operationally defined below:

Celebrity Worship

Celebrity worship is a phenomenon in which person blindly follow and manifest celebrity in his/her personal and professional life (Sansone et al., 2014). Celebrity Worship is measured through the scale developed by Mccutcheon et al. (2002) among youth in the current study. Higher scores indicate a high level of worship and vice versa.

Body Image Concern

Body image is an intricate concept that comprises self-perceptions and attitudes about one's physical attractiveness (Tomas-Aragones & Marron, 2016). The Body, Image Concern Inventory created by Littleton et al. (2005) was used in this study to assess dysmorphic concerns in youth. Higher scores indicate a high level of dysmorphic respect and vice versa.

Cognitive Flexibility

Cognitive flexibility refers to the capacity for humans to alter cognitive processing processes in accordance with novel and unforeseen situations (Portoghese et al., 2020). The Cognitive Flexibility Scale established by Martin and Rubin (1995) was used to test cognitive flexibility among youth in the current investigation. Higher scores suggest greater mental flexibility and vice versa.

Objectives

1. To investigate the impact of celebrity worship on body image concerns among Pakistani youth.
2. To study the impact of cognitive flexibility in mediating the relationship between predictors and outcomes.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated to achieve the objectives mentioned above:

1. Celebrity worship will positively predict body image concerns among youth.
2. Celebrity worship will positively predict cognitive flexibility among youth.
3. Cognitive flexibility will mediate the relationship between celebrity worship and body image concerns among youth.

Method

The present investigation has been split into two portions. The pilot study was the first component, and the major study was the second. The experiment was carried undertaken as the initial part of the current investigation.

Research Design

The cross sectional correlation survey research design was applied in this study. The research was conducted in two studies: The first was a pilot study in which all psychometric properties and inter-correlations among study variables were assured in a small sample, allowing us to get a clear picture of the study's model.

Sample

A convenient sampling technique is used to collect the sample from the population for this study. A sample of 300 (150 men and 150 women) young adults were recruited for the present study, and the sample was collected from different educational background. Data for the present study were collected through a conveniently drawn sample of 18-25 years with a minimum intermediate education level.

Table 1: *Frequency and Percentage of Participants for Main Study (N = 300)*

Demographic variables	*f*	%
Gender		
Male	150	50
Female	150	50
Education		
Bachelors	153	51
Masters	134	45
M.Phil	13	4
Education system		
Private	81	27
Government	219	73
Source of income		
Self	18	6
Parents	282	94
Social status		
lower class (10000-40000)	77	26
Lower middle class (41000-60000)	115	38
Middle class (61000-100000)	77	26
Upper class (more than 100000)	31	10
*Personal monthly income		
0-20000	288	96
21000-40000	5	2
41000-70000	7	2
Residential area		
Rural	136	45
Urban	164	55

Continued…

Demographic variables		f	%
Family system			
	Nuclear	185	62
	Joint	115	38
Marital status			
	Single	274	91
	Engaged	18	6
	Married	8	3
No. of friends			
	0-5	216	72
	6-10	84	28
Sources of internet			
	Mobile data	172	57
	Wifi	118	39
	Devices	10	3
No. of social media accounts			
	Less than 3	195	65
	Less than 7	105	35
Hours spent on social media			
	Less than 5hrs	218	73
	Less than 10hrs	63	21
	Less than 15hrs	19	6
Celebrity followers			
	Yes	274	91
	No	26	9
Duration of following the celebrity			
	Less than 5 years	263	88
	Less than 10 years	37	12
Made a fan page for your celebrity			
	Yes	91	30
	No	209	70
Duration of fan page			
	0-2yrs	267	89
	3-5yrs	33	11
Active member of fan club of celebrity			
	Yes	77	26
	No	223	74
Duration of membership in fan club of celebrity			
	0-2 yrs	279	93
	3-5 yrs	16	5
	6-9 yrs	5	2
Involve in promoting your favorite celebrity			
	Yes	160	53
	No	140	47

Note. [*]Personal monthly income = those who are employed and are earning their own money.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria were the student having minimum qualification intermediate, following any celebrity, and having at least one social media account. The individual who did not have any social media accounts were excluded.

Measures

The survey-based questionnaires will be distributed among Pakistani youth. The following scales were used in the pilot and the main study to determine the current study's results.

Celebrity Worship Scale

This instrument was developed by Mccutcheon et al. (2002) consists of 17 items that measure fantasy (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) and possible pathology (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17) associated with celebrity worship on a 5-point Likert type scale with response option: 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was used. There is no reverse-scored item on the scale. A higher score indicated respondents have a higher level of celebrity worship. Scores ranged from 17 – 85. The overall reliability of the instrument ranged from .71 to .96 (Mccutcheon et al., 2002).

Body Image Concern Inventory

Littleton et al. (2005) created a body image worry inventory that was used to assess dysmorphic concerns in kids. On a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = always), respondents indicate how frequently they experience the specified sensation or do the described activity for each of the 19 questions in the BICI. The scale has two components: Dysmorphic appearance concerns (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17) and interference in functioning caused by appearance concerns (3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 18, 19). Internal reliability for all subscales is high (α = .92 for dysmorphic appearance worries, α = .76 for hindrance in functioning owing to appearance concerns). BICI has overall reliability of .93 (Littleton et al., 2005).

Cognitive Flexibility Scale

The 12-item scale was developed by Martin and Rubin (1995). 4 items were reverse coded (2, 3, 5, 10). The scale is reliable with α = .83. A 6-point Likert response format (strongly agree to disagree strongly) was used. The scores ranged from 1- 60. Higher the score, the greater the person's flexibility.

Procedure

Initially, the topic of the present study was approved by the Board of Studies at the University of Sargodha. The authors granted permission to use the scale. A letter of authorization from the Department of Psychology verifying the researcher's institutional affiliation is required to confirm. Data was collected from university students through both online mode and paper pencils. Individual participants were contacted, and a strong relationship was established.

They were told about the theme and purpose of the study before gathering data. They were told that their data would only be used for study purposes. The participant's data were collected from a demographic sheet before administering the scales. The rankings had no time restriction, and participants were urged to react freely. Participation was free and confidential, and participants were not provided with rewards. In the end, participants were thanked for their support after completing the questionnaires.

Results

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Reliabilities for all Study Variables (N = 300)*

Variables	k	M	SD	α
Celebrity worship	17	55.34	14.64	.93
Fantasy	7	24.22	6.80	.89
Pathology	10	31.13	9.09	.89
Body image concerns	19	44.68	14.15	.89
Dysmorphic	12	28.64	8.95	.83
Functioning	7	16.04	5.99	.79
Cognitive flexibility	12	42.49	8.91	.78

Table 2 shows the psychometric characteristics of the study variables. The reliability analysis shows that the reliability coefficient of the Celebrity Worship Scale (CW), Body Image Concern (BIC), and Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS) is .93, .89 .78 respectively which indicates good internal consistency. The reliability coefficients for subscales of Celebrity worship are .89 (Fantasy) and .89 (Pathology). The reliability coefficients for subscales of body image concern are .83 (Dysmorphic concerns) and .79 (Functioning Concerns). Univariate normality analysis confirmed that all the scores were normally distributed, i.e., the value of skewness and kurtosis is less than 2.

Table 3: *Correlation Matrix for all the Variables Used in the Study (N= 300)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Celebrity worship	-	.89***	.94***	.18**	.18**	.15**	.24***
2 Fantasy		-	.69***	.04	.06	-.00	.28***
3 Pathology			-	.26***	.25***	.25***	.17**
4 Body image concerns				-	.97***	.92***	-.13*
5 Dysmorphic					-	.79***	-.13*
6 Functioning						-	-.17*
7 Cognitive flexibility							-

***$p < .001$; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$.

Table 3 describes inter-correlations among scales and subscales for all the variables used in the study. Results revealed that Celebrity worship has significant positive correlation with their subscale, fantasy ($r = .71$, $p < .001$), and pathology ($r = .85$, $p < .001$) which shows the internal validity of the scale. Celebrity worship has significant positive relationship with body image concern ($r = .18$, $p < .01$), and cognitive flexibility ($r = .24$, $p < .001$). Body image concern has significant positive correlation with their subscale, dysmorphic concern ($r = .97$, $p < .001$), and functioning concerns ($r = .92$, $p < .001$) which shows the internal validity of the scale. Body image concerns has significant negative correlation with cognitive flexibility ($r = -.13$, $p < .05$).

Table 4: *Regression Analysis for Celebrity Worship Predicting Body Image Concerns in Young Adults (N = 300)*

Variables	B	SE	t	p	95%CI
Constant	36.65	3.05	12.03	.00	[30.65, 42.64]
Fantasy	.58	.16	3.67	.00	[.89, .27]
Pathology	.71	.12	6.02	.00	[.48, .94]

Note. CI = Confidence interval.

Table 4 depicts the impact of fantasy and pathology on young people' body image issues. The predictors explained 11% of the variation in the outcome variable ($F (2, 297) = 18.33$, $p < .001$, $R2 = .11$). The findings showed that fantasy ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$) and pathology ($\beta = .46$, $p > .001$) are both significant positive predictors of body image concern.

Table 5: *Regression Analysis for Celebrity Worship Predicting Cognitive Flexibility in Young Adults (N = 300)*

Variables	B	SE	t	p	95% CI	
Constant	36.87	1.99	18.49	.000	32.94	40.79
Fantasy	.29	.10	2.80	.005	.09	.49
Pathology	-.04	.08	-.57	.57	-.20	.11

Note. CI = Confidence interval.

Table 5 demonstrates how fantasy and pathology affect cognitive flexibility in young adults. With $F (2, 297) = 5.69$, $p < .01$, the R^2 value of .04 demonstrated that the predictors explained 4% of the variation in the resulting variable. The findings demonstrated that fantasy ($\beta = .22$, $p < .01$) is a significant positive predictor of cognitive flexibility, but pathology ($\beta = -.04$, $p > .05$) did not influence cognitive flexibility.

Table 6: *Cognitive flexibility as Mediator between Celebrity Worship and Body Image Concerns among Young Adults (N = 412)*

Paths	B	95% CI for B		p
		LL	UL	
Celebrity worship →Cognitive flexibility	.15	.02	.27	.02
Cognitive flexibility → Body image concerns	.48	-.07	.15	.33
Celebrity worship → Body image concerns	.06	.44	.52	.00
Gender → Body image concerns	.13	-.31	.05	.20
Celebrity worship → Cognitive flexibility → Body image concerns	.08	.01	.13	.02

Table 6 illustrated were the standardized coefficients pertaining to diverse direct and indirect impacts, accompanied by adjusted 95% confidence intervals through bootstrap resampling. The direct effect celebrity worship on cognitive flexibility was significant and positive, however, the direct effect of cognitive flexibility on body image concerns was non-significant. Gender was taken as the control variables and it failed in demonstrating any direct effect on body image concerns. Cognitive flexibility played a crucial role in mediating the association between admiration of celebrities and issues related to one's perception of their body. The positive and notable impact of celebrity worship on body image concerns was effectively channeled through cognitive flexibility.

Figure 1: *Mediational Model of Body Image Concerns*

Chi Square = 5.84 *Df* = 5 *P* = .323
Goodness of Fit Index = .991
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index = .974
Comparative Fit Index = .992
Normed Fit Index = .946
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation = .025
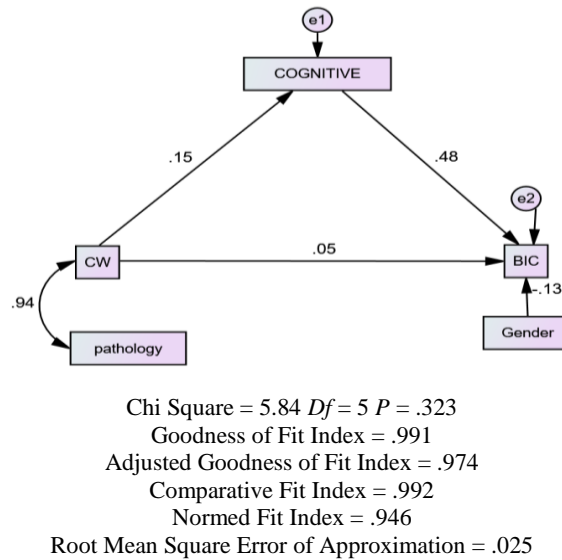
Discussion

Celebrities greatly influence how young people perceive themselves and the world, for better or worse. Celebrities may have a positive impact on young people. On the other hand, celebrities such as singers, actors, and athletes may set a bad example. Celebrity influence on the body is typically detrimental to teenage mental health. Celebrities are viewed as ideal figures that exhibit exemplary behavior and serve as symbols of modern life (Holmes & Redmond, 2006).

The study aims to explain the impact of celebrity worship on body image concerns and cognitive flexibility among Pakistani youth. We carried a Regression analysis to prove the hypothesis, which state that celebrity worship will positively predict body image concerns among youth. Linear regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesis. The results of the study support the hypothesis (see Table 4). The findings revealed that fantasy and possible pathology are positive predictors of body image concern. Studies have shown that body image positively correlates with celebrity worship (Aruguete et al., 2014; Maltby et al., 2004; North et al., 2007). It is part of knowledge that the media influence body image (Cusomano & Thompson 1997). Brooks (2021) suggests that CW may be a unique factor of media impact that deserves additional consideration. Those who have a para-social relationship with a favorite celebrity tend to be

more likely to support cosmetic surgery, which might be due to the internalization of media beauty standards and a desire to look like one's favorite celebrity. Celebrity worshipers engrossed in stars idealize the physical qualities of their favorite superstars, regards to the absorption addiction paradigm (McCutcheon et al., 2002).

The next idea is that celebrity admiration increases cognitive flexibility. Regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesis. The results of the study support the hypothesis (see Table 5). The findings revealed that fantasy is a significant positive predictor of cognitive flexibility, whereas pathology has a non-significant effect on cognitive flexibility. In line with previous research, the results of the present study indicated that celebrity worship positively predicts cognitive flexibility. The current findings extend the absorption-addiction model of celebrity worship (McCutcheon et al., 2002) by clarifying many mental characteristics that correspond with an individual's disposition to become involved in celebrity worship. In general, young people did not think that their religious experiences had a negative impact. The study gave insights into how celebrities play a vital role in positively motivating the next generation (Ang & Chan, 2018). That's why celebrity worship is a source of increasing cognitive flexibility among adults.

The study explores the role of cognitive flexibility between celebrity worship and body image concerns. For this purpose, we move on to the following hypothesis: cognitive flexibility will significantly mediate the association between celebrity worship and body image concerns among youth. For this purpose, the mediation analysis was carried out. The study's results supported the previous literature (see Table 6). Model 4 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS was specified for analyzing this mediation model. Results revealed that celebrity worship had a significant positive direct effect on cognitive flexibility. Celebrity worship had a significant positive direct effect and cognitive flexibility had a significant negative impact on body image concerns. Results revealed that cognitive flexibility mediated between celebrity worship and body image concerns.

Cognitive flexibility performs a very important role between celebrity worship and body image concerns. Cognitive flexibility is the ability to adjust and adapt to the situation and when the celebrity influence on person cognitive flexibility moulds the thinking of the individuals and creates concerns related to his/her image (Shabahang et al., 2020; Brown & Tiggemann, 2016).

The significant level is at the reach of $p < .001$; the direct effect of celebrity worship upon body image concern worry was favorably

substantial. In contrast, the indirect impact of celebrity worship on body image concerns was negatively significant. It highlights the significance of celebrity worship in the body image issue due to past research and the findings presented here. Celebrity worship may substantially influence people's anxieties about their body image.

Cognitive flexibility, the ability to switch cognitive groups, aids humans in adapting to the stimulus occupied from environment (Dennis et al., 2010). The kind of adaptability may be seen in the interaction of celebrity worship and body image concerns. Martin et al. (2003) and Maltby et al. (2004) mean while the study demonstrated the implacable function of cognitive flexibility through the celebrity worship. In general, celebrity worship is linked to body image and anxieties, which may be mediated by cognitive flexibility and related issues. This adaptability helps change this connection. As a result, interventions to improve cognitive flexibility can play an essential role in lowering body image problems (Shabahang et al., 2020). The results of the current study show the significant indirect effect of celebrity worship on body image concerns through cognitive flexibility. It explains that increasing cognitive flexibility would reduce body concerns.

Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of celebrity worship on body image concerns and the role of cognitive flexibility between celebrity worship and body image concerns among Pakistani youth. The results of the study tell that celebrity worship significantly predicts body image concerns and cognitive flexibility. Mediation analysis reveals that cognitive flexibility mediates between celebrity worship and body image concerns.

Limitations and Suggestions

There are certain limitations and suggestions which are needed to focus while investigating the current study. As the sample chosen for the study was not much diverse, and it is only from the Sargodha Division, the generalization ability of the findings must be applied cautiously as the population of Sargodha is not representative of the whole population of Pakistan. For this purpose, future researchers should consider that for the results to be generalized over the entire population, the data should be collected from different people and with many samples.

The sampling techniques applied in the study were purposive, and the data was gathered from a specific population of young adults from college and university. Different sampling techniques, such as random sampling, should be used for the data collection to understand the results better.

The nature of the study is primarily a cross-sectional survey research design. It is suggested to use different research designs such as the experimental design to enhance the quality of research work. The data was collected from young adults only. For more accurate results, it is suggested that data can be collected from all age groups to get a clear picture of which age group is more vulnerable to celebrity worship.

In the current study, the data were collected using self-report inventories, so participants may have given biased responses that caused social desirability. So for better generalization, interviews are recommended to collect information or at least attach a social desirability scale so that participants who score high on social desirability will be removed.

Implications of the Study

Our discoveries are of significant relevance to researchers focusing on the examination of individuals who idolize celebrities, as our results indicate deterioration in the mental and behavioral dysfunctions associated with this phenomenon from 2001 to the present time. Mental health practitioners and therapists should take note of the troubling pattern we have identified, prompting them to explore therapeutic approaches designed to modify the mindsets and actions of individuals exhibiting high levels of admiration on the Celebrity Worship Scale, particularly those at risk of potential pathology.

Further investigation into these issues could potentially produce a series of diagnostic standards for individuals who idolize celebrities, thus potentially facilitating the advancement of effective therapeutic techniques for implementation in clinical environments. The expectation for the field to directly confront the issue of celebrity adoration is deemed impractical. Nevertheless, there is a desire to gain a comprehensive understanding of the origins and evolution of this phenomenon in order to effectively address extreme cases, such as those exhibited by young individuals who are willing to harm themselves due to their one-sided relationship with a renowned musician

References

Alanzalon, S. M. (2011). *Kpopped! Understanding the Filipino Teens'* *Consumption of Korean Popular Music and Videos* (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis). Philippines: University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication.

Ang, C. S., & Chan, N. N. (2018). Adolescents' views on celebrity worship: A qualitative study. *Current Psychology*, *37*(1), 139-148. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-016-9497-0

Aruguete, M., Griffith, J., Edman, J., Green, T., & McCutcheon, L. (2014). Body Image and Celebrity Worship. *Implicit Religion, 17*(2), 223-234. https://doi.org/10.1558/imre.v17i2.223

Ashe, D. D., & McCutcheon, L. E. (2001). Shyness, loneliness, and attitude toward celebrities. *Current research in social psychology*, *6*(9), 124-133.

Brooks, S. K. (2021). FANatics: Systematic literature review of factors associated with celebrity worship and suggested directions for future research. *Current Psychology*, *40*(2), 864-886. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9978-4

Brown, Z., & Tiggemann, M. (2016). Attractive celebrity and peer images on Instagram affect women's moods and body image. *Body Image, 19,* 37-43.

Cash, T. F., & Fleming, E. C. (2002). The impact of body image experiences: Development of the body image quality of life inventory. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, *31*(4), 455-460.

Çelikkaleli, Ö. (2014). The Validity and Reliability of the Cognitive Flexibility Scale. *Education & Science*, *39*(176), 339-346

Collisson, B., McCutcheon, L. E., Edman, J., & Johnston, M. (2020). Gender, age, marital status, and selection of a favorite celebrity of the opposite gender. *Current Psychology, 41*, 1936-1942. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00715-2

Cusomano, D. L., & Thompson, J. K. (1997). Body image and body shape ideals in magazines: Exposure, awareness, and internalization. *Sex Roles*, *37*(9-10), 701-721.

Dennis, J. P., & Vander Wal, J. S. (2010). The cognitive flexibility inventory: Instrument development and estimates of reliability and validity. *Cognitive Therapy Research, 34*, 241-253. https://doi.org/10.1080/19392390903519057

Greene, A. L., & Adams-Price, C. (1990). Adolescents' secondary attachments to celebrity figures. *Sex Roles*, *23*(7), 335-347.

Greenwood, D., McCutcheon, L. E., Collisson, B., & Wong, M. (2018). What's fame got to do with it? Clarifying links among celebrity attitudes, fame appeal, and narcissistic subtypes. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *131*, 238-243.

Hackley, C., & Hackley, R. A. (2016). The iconicity of celebrity and the spiritual impulse. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, *19*(3), 269-274.

Halliwell, E., & Dittmar, H. (2006). Associations between appearance-related self-discrepancies and young women's and men's affect, body satisfaction, and emotional eating: A comparison of fixed-item and participant-generated self-discrepancies. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *32*(4), 447-458.

Helm, S. K. (2009). Body discrepancy and body satisfaction: Influence on approach and avoidance behaviors and emotions. (Master's Thesis). Auburn University, Alabama, United States.

Higgins, E. T. (1989b). Self-discrepancy theory: What patterns of self-beliefs cause people to suffer? In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 22, pp. 93-136). New York: Academic Press

Holmes, S., & Redmond, S. (2006). *Framing celebrity: New directions in celebrity culture*. Routledge.

Houran, J., Navik, S., & Zerrusen, K. (2005). Boundary functioning in celebrity worshippers. *Personality and individual differences*, *38*(1), 237-248.

Leets, L., De Becker, G., & Giles, H. (1995). Fans: Exploring expressed motivations for contacting celebrities. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *14*(1-2), 102-123.

Lin, Y. C., & Lin, C. H. (2007). Impetus for Worship: An Exploratory Study of Adolescents* Idol Adoration Behaviors. *Adolescence*, *42*(167).

Littleton, H. L., Axsom, D., & Pury, C. L. (2005). Development of the body image concern inventory. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *43*(2), 229-241.

Maltby, J., & Day, L. (2011). Celebrity worship and incidence of elective cosmetic surgery: Evidence of a link among young adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 49*, 483-489.

Maltby, J., Day, L., McCutcheon, L. E., Martin, M. M., & Cayanus, J. L. (2004). Celebrity worship, cognitive flexibility, and social complexity. *Personality and Individual Differences, 37*(7), 1475-1482.

Marshal, P. D. (2010). The promotion and presentation of the self. *Celebrity Studies Journal, 1*(1), 35-48.

Martin, M. M., & Rubin, R. B. (1995). A new measure of cognitive flexibility. *Psychological reports*, *76*(2), 623-626.

Martin, M. M., Cayanus, J. L., McCutcheon, L. E., & Maltby, J. (2003). Celebrity worship and cognitive flexibility. *North American Journal of Psychology, 5*, 75-80.

Marwick, A. E., & Boyd, D. (2011). I tweet honestly and passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *New media & society*, *13*(1), 114-133.

McCutcheon, L. E., Lange, R., & Houran, J. (2002). Conceptualization and measurement of celebrity worship. *British Journal of Psychology, 93*, 67-87. https://doi.org/10.1348/000712602162454

McCutcheon, L. E., Maltby, J., Houran, J., Lange, R., & Ashe, D. (2002). Thou shalt worship no other gods—unless they are celebrities: The relationship between celebrity worship and religious orientation. *Personality and individual differences*, *32*(7), 1157-1172.

McCutcheon, L., Aruguete, M. S., Jenkins, W., McCarley, N., & Yockey, R. (2016). An investigation of demographic correlates of the Celebrity Attitude Scale. *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, *10*(2), 161-170.

Mendick, H., Allen, K., & Harvey, L. (2015). 'We can get everything we want if we try hard': Young people, celebrity, hard work. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *63*(2), 161-178.

Monanda, R. (2017). PENGARUH MEDIA SOSIAL INSTAGRAM@ AWKARIN TERHADAP GAYA HIDUP HEDONIS DI KALANGAN FOLLOWERS REMAJA. *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa (JOM) Bidang Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik*, *4*(2), 1-12.

North, A. C., Sheridan, L., Maltby, J., & Gillett, R. (2007). Attributional style, self-esteem, and celebrity worship. *Media Psychology, 9*(2), 291-308.

Portoghese, I., Lasio, M., Conti, R., Mascia, M. L., Hitchcott, P., Agus, M., ... & Penna, M. P. (2020). Cognitive Flexibility Inventory: Factor structure, invariance, reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity among Italian university students. *PsyCh Journal*, *9*(6), 934-941.

Pradiri, A. P., & Hartini, N. (2020). Entertainment-social Celebrity Worship Syndrome of Female Adolescents using Social-media in Indonesia. *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Psychology in Health, Educational, Social, and Organizational Settings (ICP-HESOS 2018) - Improving Mental Health and Harmony in Global Community*, 19-25. https://doi.org/10.5220/0008584700190025

Redmond, S. (2016). The passion plays of celebrity culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *19*(3), 234-249.

Sansone, C., Funder, D. C., Levine, J. M., Mackie, D. M., Morf, C. C., Vazire, S., & West, S. G. (2014). Improving the dependability of research in personality and social psychology: Recommendations for research and educational practice. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *18*(1), 3-12.

Scharf, M., & Levy, M. (2015). The contribution of familial characteristics and idolization to children's body and eating attitudes. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *24*(7), 1943-1954.

Shabahang, R., & Besharat, M. A. (2019). Comparison of Cognitive Flexibility and Parasocial Interaction in Celebrity Worshipers and Non-worshipers. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *11*(2), 1-12.

Shabahang, R., Besharat, M. A., Hosseinkhanzadeh, A. A., & Rezaei, S. (2020). Celebrity Worship and Body Image Concern: Mediating Role of Cognitive Flexibility. *International Journal of Psychology (IPA)*, *14*(1), 35-58.

Shabahang, R., Besharat, M. A., Nikoogoftar, M., & Bagheri Sheykhangafshe, F. (2019). Role of Cognitive Flexibility and Emotional Regulation Problems in Prediction of Celebrity Worship among University Students. *Knowledge & Research in Applied Psychology*, *20*(1), 13-25.

Sheridan, L., Malbty, J., & Gillett, R. (2006). Pathological public figure preoccupation: Its relationship with dissociation and absorption. *Personality and Individual Differences, 41*, 525-535. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2006.02.010

Sparhawk, J. M. (2003). *Body image and the media: The media's influence on body image* (Unpublished Master's Thesis). The Graduate College University of Wisconsin-Stout Menomonie, WI 54751

Stout, E. J., & Frame, M. W. (2004). Body image disorder in adolescent males: Strategies for school counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, *8*(2) 176-181.

Swami, V., Barron, D., Morgan, K., Towell, T., & Altemeyer, B. (2014). Associations between schizotypy and belief in conspiracist ideation. *Personality and individual differences*, *70*, 156-159.

Swami, V., Taylor, R., & Carvalho, C. (2011). Body dissatisfaction assessed by the Photographic Figure Rating Scale is associated with sociocultural, personality, and media influences. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *52*(1), 57-63.

Tomas-Aragones, L., & Marron, S. E. (2016). Body image and body dysmorphic concerns. *Acta dermato-venereologica*, *96*, 47-50.

Turkle, S. (2011). The tethered self: Technology reinvents intimacy and solitude. *Continuing higher education review*, *75*, 28-31.

Willson, M. (2015). Social games as partial platforms for identity co-creation. *Media International Australia*, *154*(1), 15-24.

Zastrow, C., Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hessenauer, S. L. (2019). *Empowerment series: Understanding human behavior and the social environment*. Cengage Learning.

Zhou, H., Lu, S., Chen, J., Wei, N., Wang, D., Lyu, H., ... & Hu, S. (2020). The landscape of cognitive function in recovered COVID-19 patients. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, *129*, 98-102.

Zsila, Á., Orosz, G., McCutcheon, L. E., & Demetrovics, Z. (2021). Individual differences in the association between celebrity worship and subjective well-being: The moderating role of gender and age. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 651067.