

Parasocial Relationships:
A Study Concerning Adolescents Media Engagement
and Interaction
Word Count: 4,770

I. **Introduction**

In today's society, people are constantly engaging through various forms of online media. This type of interaction can often lead towards relationships that resemble face-to-face interaction, but are known as parasocial. Parasocial interactions are most widely defined as symbolic, one-sided quasi-interactions that "give the illusion of face-to-face relationships" (Horton and Wohl). Quasi-interactions being a fundamental asymmetry between the producer and receiver of the online relationship. A relationship is initially formed due to the investment of the viewer in the relationship while the media persona is unaware of the individual's existence. However, a number of factors are involved, such as interest and identification (Auter and Palmgreen). Adolescents' parasocial engagement with celebrities is often a way to ease into their developmental shift and cope with the changes happening in their lives (Theran et al.). These parasocial interactions are simply an alternate form of communicative interaction used to obtain something through the formation of such relationships (Schiappa et al.). Although seemingly normal, the formation can cause erosion in social cohesion and result in social consequences (Baek et al.).

Limitations that arise in this area of study are the specific intensity of each relationship not being measured as well as admittance to engagement, seen in the lack of extreme responses (Baek et al). The implications that can be drawn from parasocial relationship formation is that although a part of development, they can have an impact on interpersonal communication. Many professors who have studied this area of research have found that this part of development is primary to female as well as college students (Gentzler). However, with the increasing use of social media in high school, the gap in this study will be rooted from a variety of students at

GHC, due to its plentiful diversity. This will aid in the exploration of teenage involvement in parasocial relationships and the effects on their development. With teenagers typically coming into contact with social media at this crucial stage of growth, the increasing popularity of social networking sites will aid in the formation of parasocial interactions and highlight the embodiment of independence versus attachment. Researchers in the field have found that early life experiences involving attachment often help shape an individual's expectations about close relationships later in life (Cohen).

With this population in mind and the connection between interpersonal cognitive capabilities and parasocial interactions (Perse and Rubin), the research conducted will focus on the following question: How does engagement in parasocial interactions with media figures influence high school students' emotional interpersonal capabilities? Due to conclusions of past reports, as a hypothesis for this research, it is believed that engagement in parasocial interactions are heavily relied on and are positively correlated to attachment, causing individuals to rely less on interpersonal interaction, thus these in person capabilities are detrimented.

II. **Literature Review**

With the rise of social media, the impact of internet usage on social connectivity, as seen through parasocial relationships, has become increasingly common in our society (Zhao). These interactions are especially prevalent in social network sites (SNSs), which seem to mark one of the most prominent changes in the “ever-evolving media landscape” (Lee, Jang and Tsay, Schwartz). Derrick, Gabriel and Tippin, professors at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York and Detroit, define parasocial relationships as “one-sided relationships, where one person extends energy, interest, and time, and the other party, the persona, is completely unaware

of the other's existence". This focus of inquiry narrows down to how adolescent engagement in these parasocial relationships impacts their emotional interpersonal capabilities, such as communicating with others. The significance of this topic lies in the high rates of online participation within teenagers and the investment placed on interaction with media influencers. According to David C. Giles and John Maltby, Professors at the School of Health & Sciences and School of Psychology, the number of people who have been able to have an influence over young adults has swelled in the last few years. However, the effects of influence in high school students is primarily unexplored. It is important to review these relationships because of widespread investment in new media within adolescence.

Horton and Wohl, Researchers at the Universities of Yale and Harvard, produced the foundation for the history of parasocial interaction research. Their focus is centered on the illusion of a real connection being formed and the manipulation induced by performers in order to evoke a certain response from the audience. Parasocial relationships are voluntary, however once involved, the framework constructed allows for fantasy (Horton and Wohl). The "persona" is characterized as somewhat of an exploiter, taking advantage of the influence they have over large masses of people to imitate a mere shadow of intimacy with their audience. The persona can also accommodate to many different roles in an individual's life, making them convenient (Horton and Wohl). The audience is juxtaposed as maintaining their actual identity, which is seemingly complementary to that of the media figures. Individuals take online situations and conform them to mirror "natural" ones. Then, once invested, the audience remains faithful (Horton and Wohl). While parasocial relationships have not completely rid society of

interpersonal connections, they have increasingly integrated into the matrix of social activity, as outlined.

Edward Schiappa, Mike Allen, and Peter B. Gregg further discuss parasocial relationships in their peer reviewed academic journal article, "Parasocial Relationships and Television: A Meta-analysis of the Effects". With parasocial relations becoming more prevalent, the central questions offered are why these unique relationships are being formed, as well as, what the viewer and media persona obtain from them (Schiappa et al.). As parasocial interaction is unidirectional, there are various motives responsible for engagement. Because of a possible deficiency in interpersonal communication, forming a relationship with a media representative allows an individual to simulate a relationship without having to worry about the other person (Schiappa et al.) . In Schiappa, Allen, and Gregg's study, it was concluded that person's who consume more media are more likely to become involved parasocially, thus providing a connection to the adolescent community. Although many different types of people are involved in such relationships, it was also found that persons reporting "higher degrees of loneliness and shyness" are more likely to become involved with media characters (Schiappa et al.) . Thus, exposing the intention for individuals taking part in these unreciprocated relationships with celebrities.

Furthermore, there has been some research in the adolescent realm of non reciprocated relationships in the media observing only females. Theran, Newberg, and Gleason, from Wellesley College Psychology, offer that parasocial relationships are part of developmental changes, however, are often relied on to help cope. The study suggests that parasocial engagement may be an attractive idea for teenage girls because of their process of forming their

identity, looking for people to model off of. With celebrities, they are able to imagine total acceptance (Theran et al.). The reason for research focusing solely on girls is because female interaction with media figures is more concerning, in terms of emulating lifestyle choices to mimic those of their favorite media persona. Going off this idea with their methods, Theran and her fellow authors propose that adolescent engagement with celebrities seems to be a part of normative development, although some depicted higher amount of emotional intensity (Theran et al.). Preoccupied attachment style aided in predicting intensity, as girls who were more prone to cling and trust others used media relations as a way of avoiding rejection, finding comfort in the risk-free relationships. It is important to note that measures of self-report are not always accurate indicators of emotion because participants may be nervous to disclose how they really feel. Majority of other research about parasocial relationships concerns young to middle aged adults, however the teenage mind varies and should be evaluated on a separate basis (Theran et al.). Although normal during this stage of change, involving oneself in parasocial interaction may bring temporary positive feelings but may also have later effects of being let down, as the interactions are not acknowledged by the media representative.

In the realm of relationships, David C. Giles and John Maltby observe the different patterns in attachment to media persona. Described as “secondary attachments”, parasocial relationships are thought of as having both social and emotional functions (Giles and Maltby). Time that teenagers often spend being alone in their bedrooms can lead to isolation, and this void is possible to be filled by interacting with social media celebrities. Media figures also offer a variety of selves for a young person to embody. This journal articles explores adolescent autonomy and attachment to celebrities, due to the possibly conflicting ideas. Celebrities interest

was stratified into social/entertainment function and intense/personal function, in order to show the different levels of teenage attachment (Giles and Maltby). Through the study, the authors revealed that autonomy and attachment to celebrities was positively correlated. They found that attachment to media figures started out in the innocent entertainment stage, but if kindled by a shift of idealization from parents to celebrities, it entered the intense and personal stage (Giles, Maltby). Intense focus on a single celebrity is suggested as a problematic idea, because such behavior might make becoming a more independent individual difficult, and facing the reality that the media persona is not actually aware of that individual's existence might cause a mental break. When looking at the results, although the authors also made the point that it was normal, they disagreed with other articles in believing the effects were only negative. They chronicled that social media allows a group of pseudo-friends to be formed during a time when an individual needs it (Giles and Maltby). Overall, making a step towards both the positives and negatives in the task of understanding parasocial relationships.

Expanding on the role of parasocial relationships, there are various aspects that make the influence on people yield a positive effect. In "Parasocial Relationships and Self-Discrepancies: Faux Relationships Have Benefits for Low Self-esteem Individuals", Derrick, Gabriel, & Tippin begin with exploring that fascination with celebrities has become an inherent part of society. They acknowledge that investing in celebrities might take away from interpersonal or "real" communication in relationships, but establish that there are many important benefits offered from them. Reflecting on the "safety" of parasocial relationships, many researchers suggest social deficits, however, chronic loneliness is claimed not a reliable predictor of parasocial interaction (Derrick et al.). Interpersonal relationships are so gravely sought for because of the reduction of

self-discrepancies, so people become closer with people they are more similar to. However, people with low self-esteem are unable to gain this benefit because they are hesitant to become close with someone in fear of judgements. Because of this, parasocial relations with admired celebrities allow for self-discrepancies to be low for people who have issues becoming close with others in real life due to issues of trust (Derrick et al.). These people can connect with celebrities and feel similar to them, providing a sense of connection (Derrick et al.). Although, this article takes a step in a different direction, elaborating on the benefits of engaging in parasocial relationships rather than the costs, it still fits in the conversation. It is demonstrated that there is a common theme in using relationships, interpersonal and parasocial, as a way of self-assurance and affirming belonging. While parasocial relationships are unidirectional, Derrick rhetorically questions that there is no actual judge of which relationships are “fake”, and which are “real”. Additionally, although parasocial relationships are held by a select crowd, people should not have to choose between interpersonal and parasocial interactions. Thus, the studies conducted on college students can be applied to high school students, and the role of parasocial relationships can display its effects on the adolescent community through their tendencies and communication.

More broadly, Lee and Jang, studied perceived authenticity and reciprocity when people came into contact with celebrity figures. Factors in the study include that people attempt to form emotional connections with media personas but their characters are still rehearsed and often scripted to come off a certain way, and thus disingenuous. The asymmetrical nature of the interactions results in dissatisfaction on both sides, yet the relationship continues. With the revolutionary assistance of SNSs, relationships have the ability to develop past unidirectional, however, this role is not traditionally explored (Lee and Jang).

Overall, parasocial interactions are becoming increasingly relevant as influencers continue to grow in popularity, especially with the rise of social media, because of the omnipresent fascination with celebrities (Derrick et al.). Even simply tweeting about a media persona or talking about a celebrity with friends is engaging in contact-seeking behavior and introduces a parasocial interaction. Hence, current research partially addresses the question on the basis of parasocial relationships impact on interpersonal abilities, but the gap still lies within adolescence. Teenagers are a crucial group to study in assuming they make up a significant portion of social media users and are henceforth exposed to media personalities on a consistent basis. The findings will be able to illustrate how parasocial communication can result in near abandonment of interpersonal interaction, when it should not be altogether lost. Showing that the concept of parasocial interactions is a necessary construct to research (Giles).

III. **Methods**

The goal of this research is to identify the impact of parasocial relationships on high school students' emotional interpersonal capabilities, while observing interaction, emotional intensity, relationships, and communication tendencies. This study most closely aligns with the work of Theran, using a stratified questionnaire in order to cover the elements that involve parasocial interactions as well as analyze correlation to preoccupied attachment styles through emotional and relationship reliance. The foundational work of Schiappa, Allen, and Gregg's was also a large contributor, as it involves the communication aspect into the research field. Survey questions were extracted from the ideas in these two foundational sources and modified in order to adapt to the high school audience. An observational study, in this case a survey, was essential in analyzing parasocial relationships due to the varying aspects that have an impact on

interacting para socially. Thus, the survey allows each elements to be observed separately and compiled together.

A. Population

The population consisted of students who attend a diverse public high school located in suburban Southern California. This school, GHC, is both academically and ethnically diverse, with a student body of about 4,750 students. Located in a Title 1, middle income area, the population is diverse in income, with an inclusive vast minority in the enrollment. Over half of the students (53%) qualify for free/ reduced lunch, showcasing the area to not be heavily weighted in specifically high or low income levels. These diverse characteristics will allow the sample to be a good representation for a multitude of other high schools located around the area. Further, the high school offering a vast selection of social and academic needs fosters students involvement, aiding in the versatility of my study. Although past studies have focused on females and college attendees, this study will be co-ed, evaluating both males and females, as well as in grades ranging from freshman to seniors.

B. Instrumental Design

After demographic information such as gender, ethnic identification, and grade was surveyed, participants answered questions based on their involvement online and on social networking sites in order to understand the degree of their ability to engage in parasocial interactions. Four questions were asked. The first categorical question asked “How many hours do you spend on media (social networking sites, streaming services, television) in a typical day?” The second question asked time spent on traditional forms

of media such as television versus on a phone. The next, surveyed which social media sites they were present on, and the last asked “Is there at least one media figure of TV personality that you look up to?”. All participants identified engagement with media, allowing all data to be included for analyses. Following this, four subheadings of questions were surveyed mainly stemming from Theran, Newberg, and Gleason’s, “Adolescent Girls’ Parasocial Interactions With Media Figures”.

The questions asked were based on interaction, emotional intensity, relationships, and communication scales to analyze the respondents.

Quantitative Questions	Measurement Scale	Source
<p>Interaction- Question 9 “Most of the time media accurately portrays media figure's personalities” Question 10 “I view my favorite media personality as a natural, genuine person” Question 11 “I feel sorry for my favorite media person when they make a mistake” Question 12 “I think of my favorite media personality as somewhat of a friend” Question 13 “I look forward to watching my favorite media personality on television” Question 14 “When my favorite media personality is interviewed, he or she seems to understand the kind of things I want to know” Question 15 “I find my favorite media figure attractive” Question 16 “I would like to meet my favorite media personality in person”</p>	<p>5 point Likert Scale (1- Strongly disagree, 2- Mildly disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Mildly agree, 5- Strongly agree)</p>	<p>Theran, Sally A., Emily M. Newberg, and Tracy R. Gleason. "Adolescent Girls' Parasocial Interactions With Media Figures." <i>The Journal of Genetic Psychology</i> 171.3 (2010): 270-77. <i>Academic Search Premier [EBSCO]</i>. Web. 2017.</p>
<p>Emotional- Question 17 “Do you feel your favorite media figure is perfect?”</p>	<p>5 point Likert Scale (1- Not at all to 5- Very much)</p>	<p>Theran, Sally A., Emily M. Newberg, and Tracy R.</p>

<p>Question 18 “How much do you want to be like your favorite media personality?”</p> <p>Question 19 “Do you feel connected to your favorite media figure?”</p> <p>Question 20 “How well do you feel you know the media figure?”</p> <p>Question 21 “In regards to your favorite character on television: What is the extent to which the media figure and character they play share endorsed admirable qualities?”</p> <p>Question 22 “Do you view your favorite media personality as similar to yourself?”</p> <p>Question 23 “How often do you engage in contact-seeking behaviors with a favorite media figure? (social media, talking with friends, watching them on television)”</p>	<p>4 point Likert Scale (1- Once a week to 4- Several times a day)</p>	<p>Gleason. "Adolescent Girls' Parasocial Interactions With Media Figures." <i>The Journal of Genetic Psychology</i> 171.3 (2010): 270-77. <i>Academic Search Premier [EBSCO]</i>. Web. 2017.</p>
<p>Relationships-</p> <p>Question 25 “In terms of your relationship with your parents or guardian figures: How independent are you?”</p> <p>Question 26 “In terms of your relationship with your parents or guardian figures: You have a close relationship”</p>	<p>5 point Likert Scale (1- Not at all to 5- Very much)</p>	<p>Inspired by: Schiappa, Edward, Mike Allen, and Peter B. Gregg. "Parasocial relationships and television: A meta-analysis of the effects." <i>Mass media effects research: Advances through meta-analysis</i> (2007): 301-314.</p> <p>Self-drafted</p>
<p>Communication-</p> <p>Question 27 “Do you have apprehension about communication in general?”</p> <p>Question 28 “Do you get anxiety in social situations?”</p> <p>Question 29 “Would you define yourself as somewhat shy?”</p> <p>Question 30 “How often do you use technology to communicate? (social media, texting, emailing)”</p> <p>Question 31 “How often do you choose to communicate in person rather than using technology?”</p> <p>Question 32 “When I am alone, I seek interaction through social media”</p>	<p>5 point Likert Scale (1- Not at all to 5- Very much)</p> <p>5 point Likert Scale (1- Never to 5- All of the time)</p> <p>5 point Likert Scale (1- Strongly disagree to 5- Strongly agree)</p>	<p>Inspired by: Schiappa, Edward, Mike Allen, and Peter B. Gregg. "Parasocial relationships and television: A meta-analysis of the effects." <i>Mass media effects research: Advances through meta-analysis</i> (2007): 301-314.</p> <p>Self-drafted</p>

C. Sample Selection

A stratified random sample was used in participant selection in order to collect data from the representative sample of students equally. The strata chosen was the seven different gates located at various areas on the campus that students use to enter the school. Over a series of weeks, I.D.s were collected in order to send out the survey through school email to students who entered between the times of 7:25 and 8:00 in the morning. This timing is when most students enter campus, allowing for maximum participation. This sampling method allowed for all members of the targeted population to be equally as likely to be chosen to take the survey. Through this, n=100 students were identified to participate, sufficient enough to perform analysis.

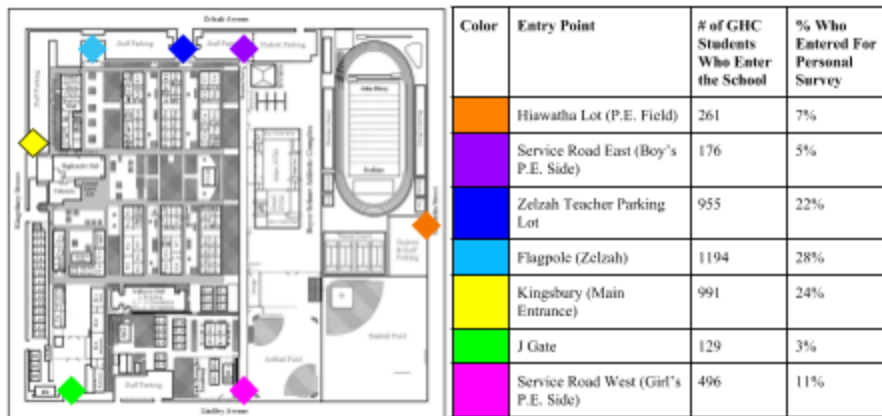


Figure 1 (Sourced from GHC Website)

D. Implementation of Study Details

The survey was implemented in the natural setting of the suburban high school. Using mechanical collection, it was distributed through the use of chromebooks, which all GHC students are issued at the beginning of the year. Collecting I.D.s from all participants, the survey ensured anonymity in an attempt to avoid bias and pressure. The Google Forms survey was sent out to the 100 participants and allowed them to complete

it on their own time. Responses were then organized and the data was transferred into Microsoft Excel where it was processed and analyzed using tool packs including: histogram construction, data calculations, and p-value determination.

IV. **Findings**

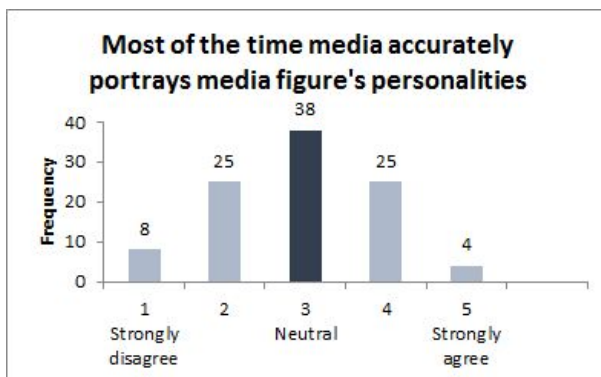
A. *Data Summary Table*

Quantitative Question	Male mean	Female mean	P-value
Question 9 Most of the time media accurately portrays media figure's personalities	2.84	2.98	0.25
Question 10 I view my favorite media personality as a natural, genuine person	3.82	4.09	0.08
Question 11 I feel sorry for my favorite media person when they make a mistake	2.96	3.29	1.66
Question 12 I think of my favorite media personality as somewhat of a friend	2.82	2.72	0.35
Question 13 I look forward to watching my favorite media personality on television	3.87	3.84	0.45
Question 14 When my favorite media personality is interviewed, he or she seems to understand the kind of things I want to know	3.24	3.53	0.11
Question 15 I find my favorite media figure attractive	2.47	3.69	7.66 E-07
Question 16 I would like to meet my favorite media personality in person	4.24	4.38	0.243
Question 17 Do you feel your favorite media figure is perfect?	2.44	2.44	0.49
Question 18 How much do you want to be like your favorite media personality?	3.09	3.15	0.40
Question 19 Do you feel connected to your favorite media figure?	2.75	3.05	0.09
Question 20 How well do you feel you know the media figure?	2.73	2.89	0.24
Question 21 In regards to your favorite character on television: What is the extent to which the media figure and character they play share endorsed admirable qualities?	2.95	3.29	0.05

Question 22 Do you view your favorite media personality as similar to yourself?	2.55	3.18	0.001
Question 23 How often do you engage in contact-seeking behaviors with a favorite media figure? (engaging on social media, talking with friends, watching them on television)	2	2.24	0.12
Question 25 In terms of your relationship with your parents or guardian figures: How independent are you?	3.51	3.42	0.30
Question 26 In terms of your relationship with your parents or guardian figures: You have a close relationship	4.16	4.4	0.079
Question 27 Do you have apprehension about communication in general?	3.11	3.07	0.44
Question 28 Do you get anxiety in social situations?	2.55	2.89	0.11
Question 29 Would you define yourself as somewhat shy?	2.93	2.96	0.45
Question 30 How often do you use technology to communicate?(social media, texting)	3.97	4.27	0.05
Question 31 How often do you choose to communicate in person rather than using technology?	3.47	3.35	0.245
Question 32 When I am alone, I seek interaction through social media	3.41	3.51	0.36

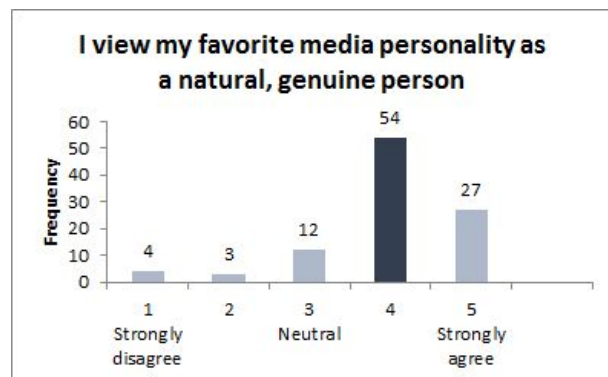
B. Histograms and Correlation

Question 9



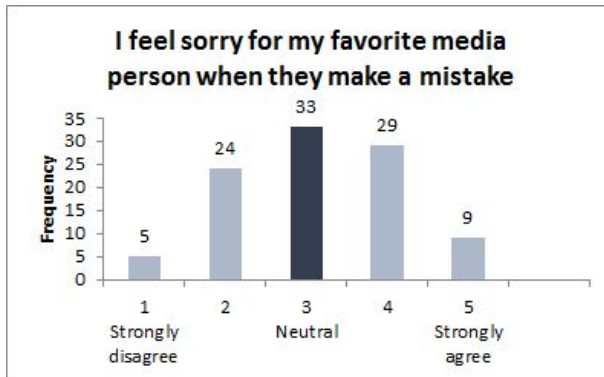
Majority of people believe media neutrally portrays media figure's personalities accurately.

Question 10



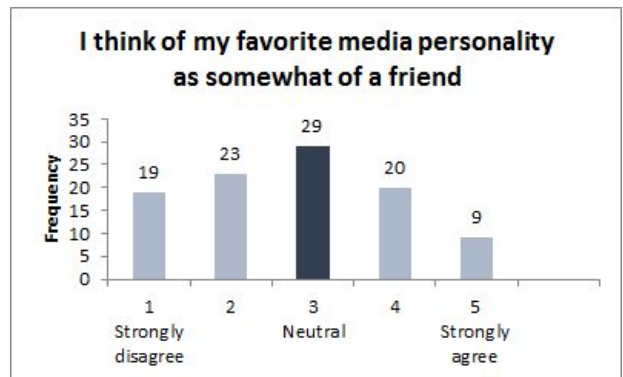
Majority agree their favorite media is a natural, genuine person. Skewed left.

Question 11



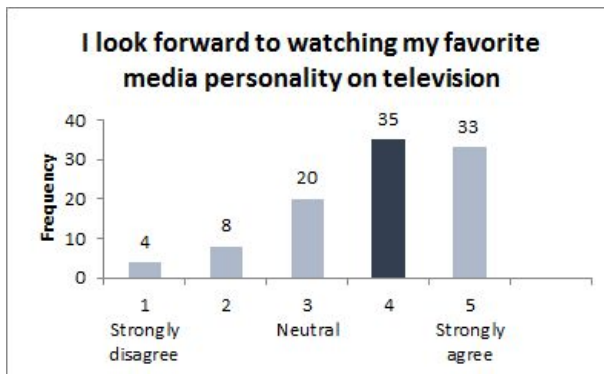
Majority feel neutral when it comes to feeling empathy towards their favorite media person.

Question 12



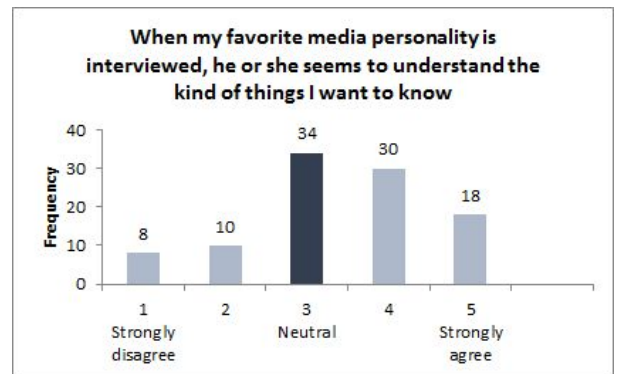
Majority fell in the neutral area for relating the media person to a friend.

Question 13



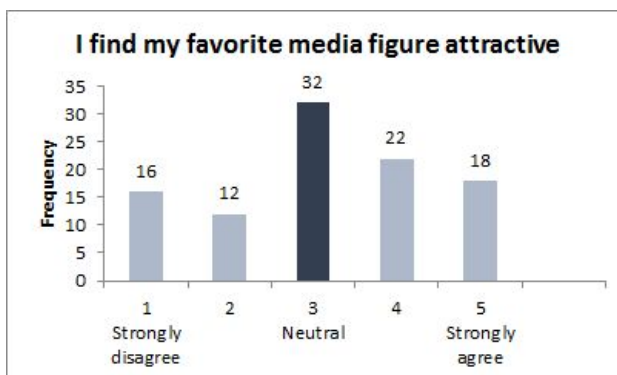
Majority agree that they look forward to watching their favorite media figure on TV. Strong skew left.

Question 14



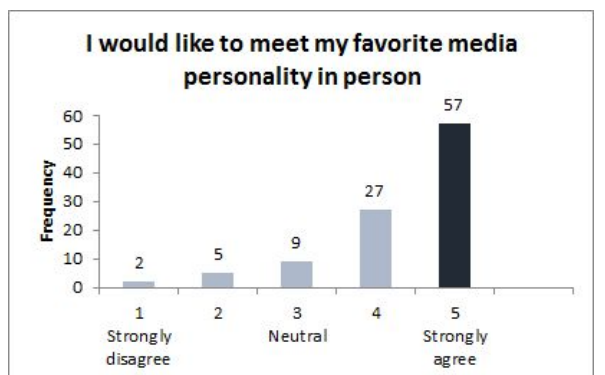
Majority feel neutral that their favorite media figure understands the kind of things they want to know, and almost half agree to strongly agree.

Question 15



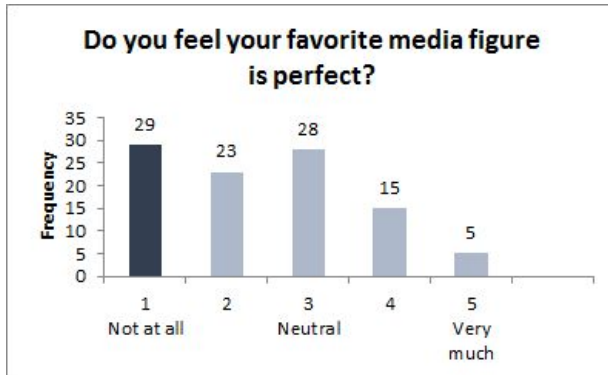
Majority people feel neutrally when identifying their favorite media figure as attractive.

Question 16



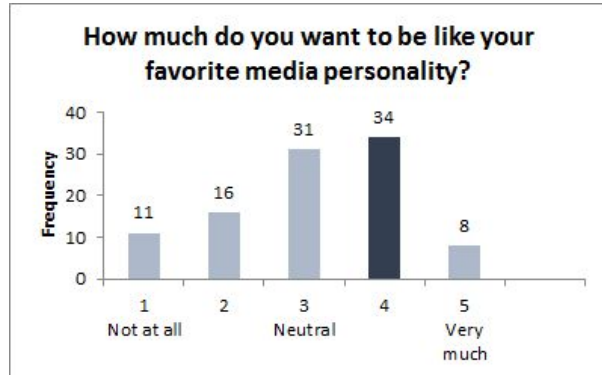
The majority, over half, strongly agree that they want to meet their favorite media persona in person.

Question 17



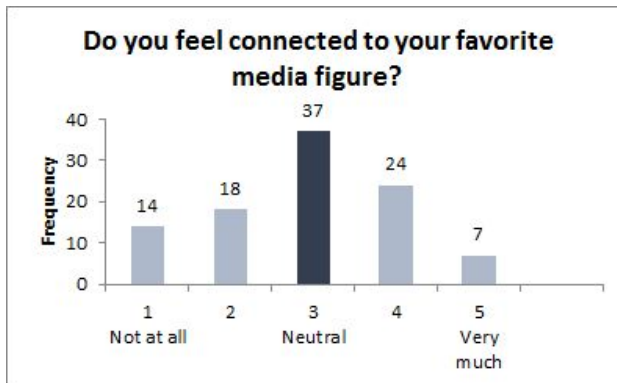
Majority feel that their favorite media figures are not perfect at all. Neutral is a close second choice.

Question 18



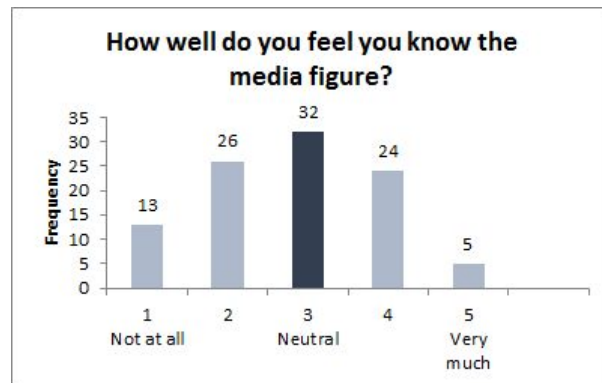
Majority of people do want to be like their favorite media personality.

Question 19



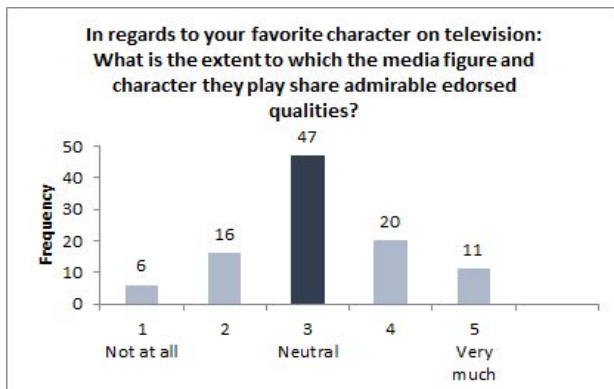
Majority of people feel neutrally connected to their favorite media figure.

Question 20



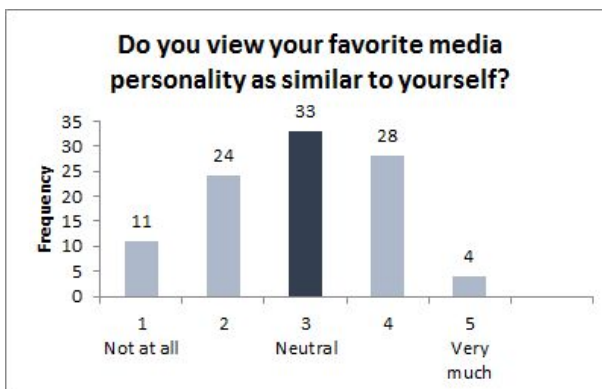
Majority feel neutrally that they know their favorite media persona well.

Question 21



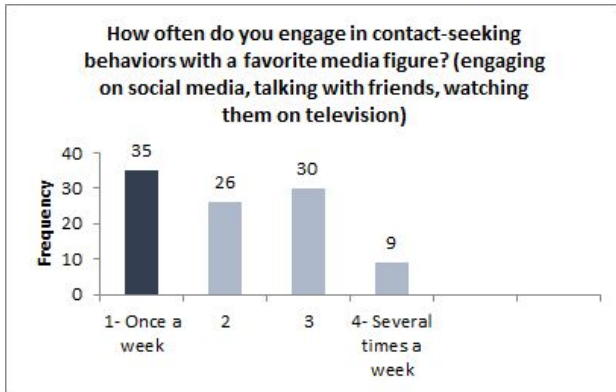
Majority of people fell in the neutral category for the media figure sharing qualities with their character.

Question 22



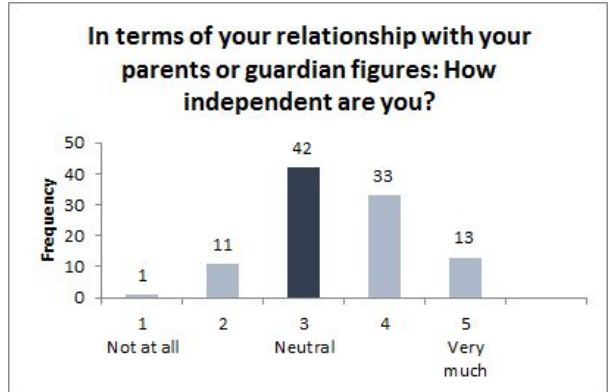
Majority of people feel neutral that their favorite media personality is similar to themselves.

Question 23



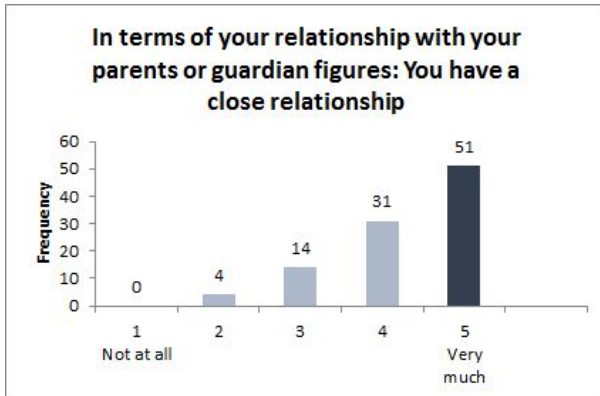
Most people feel they engage once a week. Close second is often during a week.

Question 25



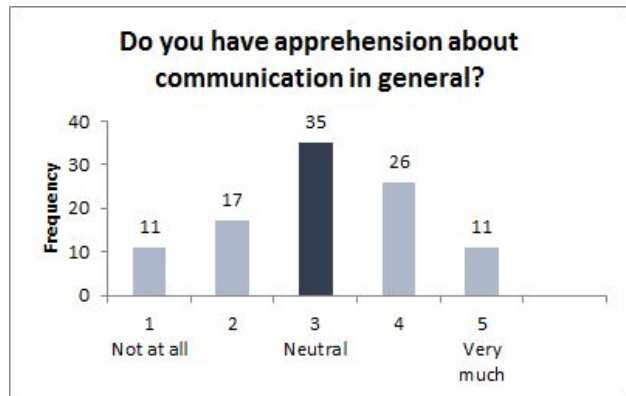
Majority feel they are neutrally independent from their parents or guardian figures.

Question 26



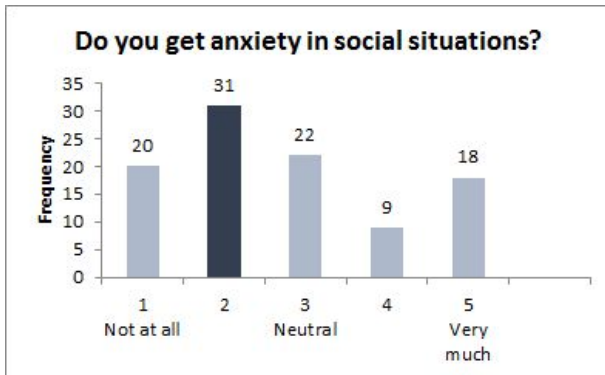
Majority of students, over half, feel they have a close relationship to their parents. Skewed left.

Question 27



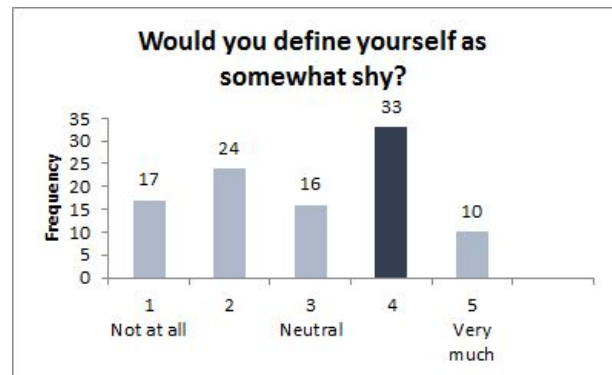
Majority feel neutrally about their apprehension toward communication.

Question 28



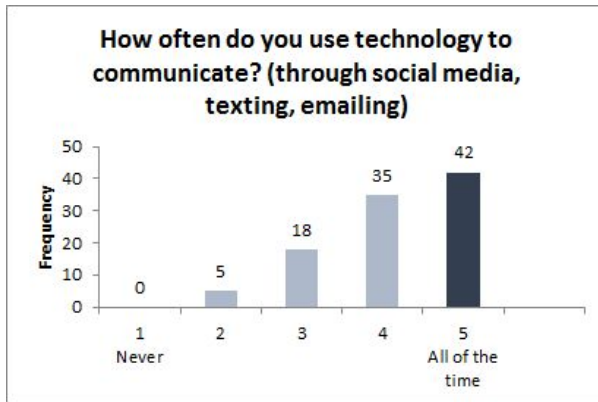
Majority do not get anxiety in social situations.

Question 29



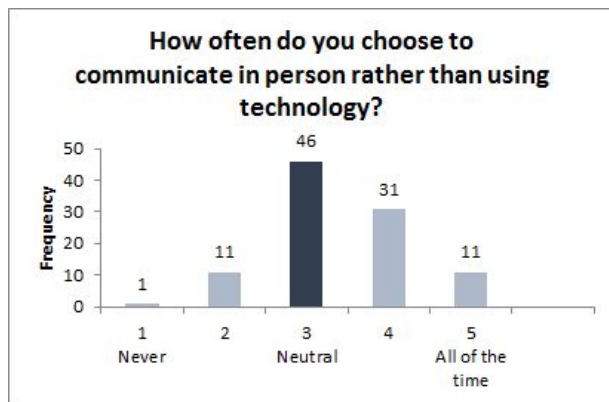
Majority do define themselves as somewhat shy.

Question 30



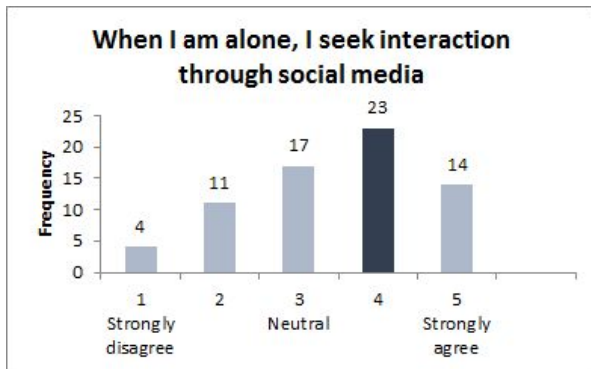
The majority relies on technology to communicate all of the time.

Question 31



Majority neutrally chooses to communicate in person rather than using technology.

Question 32



The majority does seek interaction through social media when alone.

Correlations

	Q 19	Q 26		Q 20	Q 25
Column 1	1		Column 1	1	
Column 2	0.171081	1	Column 2	0.054566	1

C. Distributions of Categorical Variables

Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Female	Asian American	Freshman	1-2 hours
55%	32%	27%	19%
Male	Hispanic/Latino	Sophomore	3-4 hours
45%	37%	23%	55%
	Caucasian	Junior	5-6 hours
	9%	22%	16%
	African American	Senior	7+ hours
	9%	28%	10%
	Middle Eastern		
	8%		
	Biracial		
	5%		

Question 6

A small fraction is spent on my phone/ computer	3%
About half my time is spend on my phone/ computer	19%
Most of my time is spent on my phone/ computer	57%
All of my time is spent on my phone/ computer	21%

Question 24

Classmate	11%
Teacher	9%
Boyfriend/ Girlfriend	3%
Friend	65%
Sibling	7%

V. Analysis of Findings

Data from the survey was analyzed to shed light on the impact of parasocial relationships on adolescents. With social networking sites providing mediated social interactions to enable parasocial relationships, (Baek et al.) findings drawn from the individuals engagement largely illustrates that high school students' interpersonal abilities are impacted by these unidirectional interactions.

A. *Engagement Analysis*

Initial review of the findings identified highlight the emotional intensity and communication aspect in contributing to the impact of parasocial relationships. In analyzing the statistical significance of questions, the emotional inquiry question on the extent to which the media figure and the character they portray over media share endorsed admirable qualities, can prove impact. The calculated mean value was 3.14 and the confidence was 0.201. The comparable mean value from the academic journal article "Adolescent Girls' Parasocial Interactions With Media Figures", is 3.75. There is a statistically significant difference between the results of my population and theirs because $3.75 - 3.14 > 2(.201)$. Conclusions point to respondents seeing the actual media figure and the character they portray as similarly admirable. Thus, not only having a parasocial interaction with the media persona, but their scripted character as well, demonstrating the extent of being involved. For another question in the emotional section, being whether the respondent felt their favorite media figure was perfect on a

5-point Likert scale, there was a yielded mean value for both genders of 2.44. Findings exemplified that most individuals trust their favorite media personas to be natural, genuine people, rather than perfect, thus motivating them to engage in parasocial relationships online. This demonstrates the students interacting in order to fulfill a friendship-like role. Lastly, in the communication inquiry question, “How often do you choose to communicate in person rather than using technology?”, the average means were 3.47 and 3.45. Findings correlate to foundational sources as most people involved use technology to communicate more often, thus becoming more prone to allow parasocial relationships to affect them. This is significant in that it points out the individual's perception of how often they may take part in parasocial relationships.

The results yielded from this research overall has shown that the population studied is not as engaged as expected, as many of the questions mean landed in the neutral area, being choice 3 on the 5-point Likert Scales. This largely neutral response is a result of peer pressures, thus posing itself as a limitation. However despite the limitation, the study still demonstrates that students do use technology all the time to communicate online making them more susceptible to parasocial involvement. In the categorical Question 24, asking which relationship participants felt their media figure was most analogous to, most also chose friend, exemplifying the high school population's emotional interpersonal capabilities to be affected because adolescents often turn to social media in order to seek a friendly relationship, causing a social deficit in creating real life connections.

Correlation between emotional intensity and relationship was studied in order to examine whether there was a preoccupied attachment style as a leading cause for parasocial relationships to view if this could create a possible impact. The correlations yielded weak and positive, unlike

the strong positive ones in Theran, Newburg, and Gleason's survey. This portrays that adolescence attachment to media figures is not a result of attachment to parents. As independence is indicated in the survey responses, adolescents turn to online platforms for interaction not for need of attachment, but more for a need of connection, as Schiappa, Allen, and Gregg discuss in their peer reviewed journal article.

After reviewing the findings, it is clear that parasocial relationships are invested in by adolescents and although not for the exact causes of young adult populations, still affect interpersonal capabilities. Reliance on social networking to communicate illuminates the confirmation of the hypothesis that the adolescents' emotional interpersonal capabilities are affected in that more time is invested in these non reciprocal interactions, exposed in responses such as extreme hope of meeting celebrities in person and looking forward to watching them on television. Further, the weak positive correlation of preoccupied attachment style exemplifies that parasocial relationships are not the result of attachment to guardian figures. As adolescents are going through major changes in the high school atmosphere, these interactions seem to be a "normal part of adolescent development", and a result of coping with self insecurities and the possibility of rejection (Theran et al.). With this, the detrimental effect to interpersonal capabilities is not fully as harmful as presented in the sources that do not factor teenagers because it is incorporated into the development of these subjects.

B. Subpopulations

Initially choosing to focus on all high school students was a choice made to extend the divergent purpose in this paper. In terms of subpopulations studied, the recorded mean differences between males and females, although small, do illustrate how parasocial relationships

are not created completely equally between males and females. Foundational sources such as the work of Theran, often avoided studying males due to the belief that they would engage less, however the data yields that their engagement only falls a little short of females. The implications of this show that males and females do take on these interactions differently, however are still prevalent in both lives during high school.

C. Community of Practice

The research in this study confirms that high school students, although differently than young adults, are impacted by parasocial interactions, affecting their interpersonal connectivity. Despite limitations in intensity of each individual relationship, this study contributes valuable information regarding the development of parasocial relationships in high school students. With the growth of social media, being aware of heavy engagement in online relationships can aid in help to become less dependent and not rely on it as a tool. The study reveals adolescents relying on these relationships to fill the void of a friendship, widely feeling the media figure is a genuine person, which is why they looking forward to seeing them on media platforms. With this, the students feel as if they know the celebrities and adapt to a sense of loyalty by following them consistently on various social networking sites (Tsiotsou). However, these relationships do not fill the actual void of a friendship when relying on it for the need of connection. Cyclic in nature, involving oneself into parasocial relationships to mimic a real relationship, for example, to avoid loneliness, can result in more loneliness, as the void is not satisfied. Thus, shedding light that although parasocial relationships can be normative to adolescent development, there is detriment on their interpersonal relationships in avoiding seeking this connection to people in everyday life. Further, these findings exemplify high schoolers early involvement online. This discovery

can influence future research in possibly leading way to analyze children at even younger ages in order to see how early parasocial relationships begin to form.

VI. **Conclusion**

To conclude, this study provides a basis for illustrating the complexity of parasocial relationships in adolescence lives. While engagement in parasocial relationships is generally apart of development, the extent to which involved and reasons for interaction is subjective to the individual, adding to the range of perspectives on the issue. As the causes for engaging such as a desire for connection often result in further desire, parasocial relationships are cyclic in nature and do not completely satisfy, so there is a deficit in emotional interpersonal communication such as creating in-person connections. Overall, the study partially confirms the hypothesis of detriment on emotional interpersonal capabilities because although parasocial interaction result in teenagers avoiding in-person interactions, this behavior is viewed as a way to cope with developmental changes and therefore not completely detrimental due to its “normative” nature.

Concerning limitations in the field, the study was also not entirely random, as GHC students opinions approximately represent various other high schools. Responses could be affected by demographic and geographic area as students in this proximity might feel more prone to peer pressure and thus influencing the disclosure of responses. However, peer pressure is a common issue, and the 5-point Likert scales and anonymous nature aided in preventing this. Despite limitations, this study is able to contribute valuable information regarding the impact of parasocial relationships and how they affect emotional interpersonal capabilities, as there is a new understanding in adolescence not only creating detrimental communication tendencies but also as a part of how change is managed.

With the increasing growth of social networking sites (SNSs), becoming apart of parasocial relationships is increasingly easier, as more people are able to connect with media figures by the click of a button. Understanding parasocial relationships can aid people in seeing the impact and re evaluate the way they engage with media personalities. As found by Edward Schiappa, parasocial relationships, although common, are playing an increasing role in the lives of individuals, and this study helps close the gap by exemplifying impacts on the upcoming generation.

Word Count: 4,770

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Appendix #1
Inventory of Survey Questions

Research Topic: Parasocial relationships impact on Adolescence

Type: Stratified Random Sample

Sample Size: n=100

Categorical:

1. What gate did you enter through this morning?
2. What gender do you identify with?
3. What ethnicity do you most closely associate yourself with?
4. What grade are you in?
5. How many hours do you spend on media (social networking sites, streaming services, television) in a typical day?
6. How much of this time is spent on your phone/ computer versus your television?
7. What social media sites do you have an account on?
8. Who is your favorite media persona? (if you are not sure, answer the person that first comes to mind)
24. Which interpersonal relationship do you feel best resembles the relationship between you and the media figure?

Quantitative:

9. Most of the time media accurately portrays media figure's personalities
10. I view my favorite media personality as a natural, genuine person
11. I feel sorry for my favorite media person when they make a mistake
12. I think of my favorite media personality as somewhat of a friend
13. I look forward to watching my favorite media personality on television
14. I find my favorite media figure attractive
15. I find my favorite media figure attractive
16. I would like to meet my favorite media personality in person
17. Do you feel your favorite media figure is perfect?
18. How much do you want to be like your favorite media personality?
19. Do you feel connected to your favorite media figure?

20. How well do you feel you know the media figure?
21. In regards to your favorite character on television: What is the extent to which the media figure and character they play share endorsed admirable qualities?
22. Do you view your favorite media personality as similar to yourself?
23. How often do you engage in contact-seeking behaviors with a favorite media figure? (engaging on social media, talking with friends, watching them on television)
25. In terms of your relationship with your parents or guardian figures: How independent are you?
26. In terms of your relationship with your parents or guardian figures: You have a close relationship
27. Do you have apprehension about communication in general?
28. Do you get anxiety in social situations?
29. Would you define yourself as somewhat shy?
30. How often do you use technology to communicate? (through social media, texting, emailing)
31. How often do you choose to communicate in person rather than using technology?
32. When I am alone, I seek interaction through social media

Appendix #2
Data Presented in Excel Spreadsheet

Question 9	
Mean	2.920
Standard Error	0.099
Median	3.000
Mode	3.000
Standard Deviation	0.992
Sample Variance	0.983
Kurtosis	-0.480
Skewness	-0.091
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	292.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.197

Question 10	
Mean	3.970
Standard Error	0.094
Median	4.000
Mode	4.000
Standard Deviation	0.937
Sample Variance	0.878
Kurtosis	2.441
Skewness	-1.368
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	397.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.186

Question 11	
Mean	3.13
Standard Error	0.10
Median	3.00
Mode	3.00
Standard Deviation	1.04
Sample Variance	1.08
Kurtosis	-0.64
Skewness	-0.05
Range	4.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	5.00
Sum	313.00
Count	100.00
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.21

Question 12	
Mean	2.770
Standard Error	0.123
Median	3.000
Mode	3.000
Standard Deviation	1.230
Sample Variance	1.512
Kurtosis	-0.920
Skewness	0.119
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	277.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.244

Question 13	
Mean	3.85
Standard Error	0.1095214568
Median	4
Mode	4
Standard Deviation	1.095214568
Sample Variance	1.199494949
Kurtosis	0.0828970521
Skewness	-0.825581644
Range	4
Minimum	1
Maximum	5
Sum	385
Count	100
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.2173143311

Question 14	
Mean	3.40
Standard Error	0.11
Median	3.00
Mode	3.00
Standard Deviation	1.14
Sample Variance	1.29
Kurtosis	-0.35
Skewness	-0.42
Range	4.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	5.00
Sum	340.00
Count	100.00
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.23

Question 15	
Mean	3.140
Standard Error	0.130
Median	3.000
Mode	3.000
Standard Deviation	1.303
Sample Variance	1.697
Kurtosis	-0.920
Skewness	-0.209
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	314.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.259

Question 16	
Mean	4.320
Standard Error	0.097
Median	5.000
Mode	5.000
Standard Deviation	0.973
Sample Variance	0.947
Kurtosis	2.024
Skewness	-1.558
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	432.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.193

Question 17	
Mean	2.440
Standard Error	0.120
Median	2.000
Mode	1.000
Standard Deviation	1.200
Sample Variance	1.441
Kurtosis	-0.860
Skewness	0.341
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	244.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.238

Question 18	
Mean	3.120
Standard Error	0.112
Median	3.000
Mode	4.000
Standard Deviation	1.122
Sample Variance	1.258
Kurtosis	-0.600
Skewness	-0.373
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	312.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.223

Question 19	
Mean	2.920
Standard Error	0.113
Median	3.000
Mode	3.000
Standard Deviation	1.125
Sample Variance	1.266
Kurtosis	-0.638
Skewness	-0.144
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	292.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.223

Question 20	
Mean	2.820
Standard Error	0.110
Median	3.000
Mode	3.000
Standard Deviation	1.095
Sample Variance	1.200
Kurtosis	-0.752
Skewness	-0.010
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	282.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.217

Question 21	
Mean	3.140
Standard Error	0.102
Median	3.000
Mode	3.000
Standard Deviation	1.015
Sample Variance	1.031
Kurtosis	-0.108
Skewness	0.009
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	314.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.201

Question 22	
Mean	2.90
Standard Error	0.11
Median	3.00
Mode	3.00
Standard Deviation	1.06
Sample Variance	1.12
Kurtosis	-0.72
Skewness	-0.16
Range	4.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	5.00
Sum	290.00
Count	100.00
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.21

Question 23	
Mean	2.130
Standard Error	0.100
Median	2.000
Mode	1.000
Standard Deviation	1.002
Sample Variance	1.003
Kurtosis	-1.127
Skewness	0.288
Range	3.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	4.000
Sum	213.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.199

Question 25	
Mean	3.460
Standard Error	0.089
Median	3.000
Mode	3.000
Standard Deviation	0.892
Sample Variance	0.796
Kurtosis	-0.311
Skewness	-0.008
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	346.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.177

Question 26	
Mean	4.290
Standard Error	0.086
Median	5.000
Mode	5.000
Standard Deviation	0.856
Sample Variance	0.733
Kurtosis	0.140
Skewness	-0.995
Range	3.000
Minimum	2.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	429.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.170

Question 27	
Mean	3.090
Standard Error	0.115
Median	3.000
Mode	3.000
Standard Deviation	1.147
Sample Variance	1.315
Kurtosis	-0.622
Skewness	-0.179
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	309.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.228

Question 28	
Mean	2.740
Standard Error	0.137
Median	2.000
Mode	2.000
Standard Deviation	1.368
Sample Variance	1.871
Kurtosis	-0.993
Skewness	0.436
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	274.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.271

Question 29	
Mean	2.950
Standard Error	0.129
Median	3.000
Mode	4.000
Standard Deviation	1.290
Sample Variance	1.664
Kurtosis	-1.225
Skewness	-0.107
Range	4.000
Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	295.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.256

Question 30	
Mean	4.140
Standard Error	0.089
Median	4.000
Mode	5.000
Standard Deviation	0.888
Sample Variance	0.788
Kurtosis	-0.360
Skewness	-0.722
Range	3.000
Minimum	2.000
Maximum	5.000
Sum	414.000
Count	100.000
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.176

Question 31	
Mean	3.40
Standard Error	0.09
Median	3.00
Mode	3.00
Standard Deviation	0.86
Sample Variance	0.75
Kurtosis	-0.16
Skewness	0.08
Range	4.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	5.00
Sum	340.00
Count	100.00
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.17

Question 32	
Mean	3.463768116
Standard Error	0.139386841
Median	4
Mode	4
Standard Deviation	1.15783406
Sample Variance	1.34057971
Kurtosis	-0.6474064757
Skewness	-0.4070040472
Range	4
Minimum	1
Maximum	5
Sum	239
Count	69
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.2781421107