UNDERSTANDING PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS FORMED VIA SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES WITH OLYMPIC ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT

The relationship will be explored between parasocial relationships, or parasocial interaction (PSI), with Olympic celebrity athletes and the use of different media. Participants can form strong feelings with well-known Olympic athletes and a seemingly existing relationship could be the result of increase social media, social networking site (SNS) activity with the athlete. This relationship is an important topic to research since many consumers are using social media for purchasing behavior. Celebrity athletes have such strong online presences that it allows them to market their corporate sponsors through the relationships developed with fans. Research questions that will be asked are: Does the strength of parasocial relationships vary with gender or type of celebrity? Does the media used to follow celebrities vary with gender or celebrity type? Does the intensity of the PSI effect increase with the intensity of different media use? Does the influence of media use on PSI vary between celebrity type?

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The power social networking sites (SNS) have over users and their level of influence has acted as motivation for this study. When SNS first surfaced during the researcher's 2005 sophomore year of college, he had no idea the magnitude and traction this media outlet would take on. Predictions of social media lasting only temporarily as a trend or phase were wrong. Early skepticism on the researcher's behalf prolonged the trial of SNS. After finally immersing himself in the platforms, watching them evolve, witnessing new platforms gain popularity, and others simply fizzle out due to competition, the researcher has gained a respect and interest in SNS. Social media has not only had an effect on the researcher's life, but on the American culture holistically.

Social media use has become an everyday part of the American media consumption. Pew Research found 72 percent of adults use social networking sites while online (Brenner, 2013). Social networking sites have been evolving with new platforms championing different niches of the social space. More seasoned social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn add to their existing list of features to become more appealing and avoid loss to up-and-coming platforms. Where there is a niche to be filled newer social networking platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and Snapchat are created to fill the space. Social networking sites even compete with each other and adopt similar features from each other to stay relevant. Of the 72 percent of social networking site

users, 13 percent claim to use Instagram, 15 percent use Pinterest, 18 percent use Twitter, 20 percent use LinkedIn, and 67 percent use Facebook (Brenner, 2013).

Social media use has increased dramatically over the past 13 years since some of the earlier platforms surfaced. Use of SNS by the 18 – 29 year old age group jumped 80 percent from February 2005 to May 2013 (Brenner, 2013). While the percentage of use declines as age increases, 43 percent of the 65+ age group still claim to use social media. That is a considerable portion of the age demographic, especially when noting it was the smallest usage across all age brackets.

The use of social media has been growing and shows no sign of slowing down. Unfortunately, academic research on the topic hasn't been able to keep up with the continuously evolving SNS and worldwide use of the platforms (Men & Tsai, 2012). With the increase in users comes an increase in reach. The substantial reach, frequency of posts, and immediacy offered from SNS platforms adds an additional layer of complexity (Goldys, 2013). The platforms are now being used as tools for entertainment, public relations, advertising, protests, philanthropy, and even disaster response.

Some social networking sites are more successful than others and have even incorporated advertising space into the user interface to help monetize the business. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Foursquare, Yelp, and more recently Instagram and Pinterest have built in advertising opportunities. However, there is resistance from some SNS users to such advertising. Some users have taken the dramatic measures of commenting negatively and even boycotting further use of the SNS supporting the ads. The resistance to traditional advertising on these SNS will keep introducing new challenges to marketers.

Since advertising is a passion of the researcher, he was naturally intrigued in new ways to build connections between brands and consumers. With a culture that is considered oversaturated with advertising by many, new tactics are needed to reach the audience and build emotional connects to brands. The field of communications offers an array of theories, some of which could be used to better explain the effects of media on advertising. Of those theories, parasocial interaction is a non-existent relationship where an individual thinks there is a two-way connection when there in fact is not.

While the theory of parasocial interaction has historically studied the relationships formed through more traditional media like television (Auter & Moore, 1993; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985), only more recently have researchers looked at the relationship with new media (Ballantine & Martin, 2005; Colliander & Dalhen, 2011; Lee & Jang, 2013; Men & Tsai, 2013). Researchers have suggested that television is often one of the only media fans have to view the lives of athletes (Earnheardt & Haridkis, 2009). New media outlets, and social networking sites in particular, are opening up new avenues for media users to not only form parasocial interactions, but also to giving them more control ultimately strengthening the parasocial relationship. One of the key elements of PSI is repeat exposure to a media character (Colliander & Dalhen, 2011) and SNS offer the user the control to maintain or even increase the exposure. Researchers may be missing out on strong influences from parasocial relationships formed through SNS.

The researcher has taken an interest in celebrity athletes and the influence they have on the status quo from personal experience. He has always had an interest in professional athletes and would follow his favorites both on and off the field in effort to

emulate their lifestyle. From first-hand experience he was able to respect and understand the potential influence celebrity athletes could have on our American culture.

Twenty-five percent of surveyed SNS users claimed their motivation in participating involved interest in following celebrities, athletes, or politicians (Smith, 2011). It has become status quo for celebrity athletes to have their own SNS profiles for a number of reasons. The SNS is a tool for professional athletes to build credibility (Barbarisi, 2010), become ambassadors of their sport (Caponiti, 2010), and to simply communicate with their fans (Pedersen, Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2010). Professional athletes across all sports, such as Cristiano Ronaldo (soccer), Kobe Bryant (basketball), Rafael Nadal (tennis), Russell Wilson (football), Jenson Button, (Formula 1), and Michael Phelps (swimming), have built up SNS followings in the millions (Kritsch, 2013). As athletes build a large foundation of fans through their SNS profiles, they are able to promote the products and services of their sponsors. Major sports leagues like the Major League Baseball and National Hockey League have even established SNS profiles (Twitter) to partake in the marketing potential (Witkemper, Choong, & Waldburger, 2012). SNS have now become a must to help engage fans with athletes, sports' teams, and sports leagues.

Parasocial interaction exists within all genres of celebrities, including celebrity athletes. Media serves as a tool for fans to develop relationships with the celebrity athletes (Earnheardt & Haridkis, 2009). However, few studies have focused on the parasocial relationships formed within the athletic realm of celebrities. Earnheardt and Haridkis (2009) point out that this is an important area of study since it could provide insight to the influence athletes have on fans and media viewers. Past studies looking at

celebrity athletes have focused on the parasocial relationship formed through traditional forms of media like television and print (Brown & de Matviuk, 2010; Earnheardt & Haridkis, 2009). Kassing and Sanderson's (2009) research looking at PSI with celebrity athlete Floyd Landis through the athlete's personal website was one of the closest studies to SNS media platforms. However, Internet websites are a separate category from SNS.

There is still a gap in the current state of research when looking at PSI formed with celebrity athletes through SNS. Social networking sites offer the control and access to celebrity athletes necessary to build and maintain parasocial relationships. Research shows that both athletes and fans use the SNS profiles and benefit from their marketing potential. The results of this study could help support athlete and corporate marketing practices by better understanding the potential of PSI. On the other end of the spectrum, fans could benefit by understanding the potential risk of forming parasocial relationships with celebrity athletes and the influence it may have over them. Several precautions set through rules and regulations exist when it comes to social media use by celebrity athletes. But knowledge on the influence of athletes through PSI may help better understand potential threats on SNS.

Conceptualization

To better understand this study, the variables being examined and researched must be defined. Parasocial relationships, social media, and celebrity athletes must be defined to avoid any confusion among other interpretations of these variables.

Parasocial relationships were defined early on as "a one-sided interpersonal relationship that television viewers establish with media characters" (Rubin & McHugh, 1987, p. 280). However, the definition has evolved over time and will not be limited to

television viewers specifically when referring to this study. While social media may be defined in a number of ways, this study will refer to one definition. Campbell (2010) defined "social media" as a site where the user generates significant portions of content with heavy interaction between the communities of users. The term "celebrity athletes" will be used throughout this study referring to athletes covered through media, more specifically to Olympic athletes. This term 'celebrity' has been described as commonly recognized individuals with a high degree of media coverage (Mccracken, 1989; Miller & Laczniak, 2011). So for this study, the celebrity athlete will be a well-known athlete who receives more than the average amount of media coverage.

Statement of Purpose

The goal of this study is to explore the relationships formed with celebrity athletes' social presence through social media use. An athlete's social presence can bring about the feeling of an interpersonal relationship with mediated others (Biocca, Harms, & Burgoon, 2003). More specifically, this research seeks to examine if a parasocial relationship can be brought into fruition with celebrity Olympic athletes through the use of social networking sites.

Rationale

The Evolution of PSI Research

Purchasing mementos, collecting magazine clippings, writing letters, joining fan clubs, and buying celebrity-related products were past efforts to form connections with celebrity characters (Caughey, 1985; Leets & De Becker, 1995). Forming a parasocial relationship through media is another avenue to connecting with the celebrity emotionally. When the PSI theory first came into fruition in 1956 it did not gain

widespread acceptance (Rubin et al., 1985). Over the course of numerous studies on PSI, the theory has gained more recognition (Grant, Guthrie, & Ball-Rokeach, 1991; Perse, 1990; Perse & A. Rubin, 1988; Perse & R. Rubin, 1989; A. Rubin et al., 1985; A. Rubin, & Perse, 1987). However, between these studies, limited media outlets like television news, shopping shows, and soap operas have been researched (Auter, 1992). Studies have suggested that television along with programming featuring recurring characters have greater potential for the user to build connections compared to other media types (Ballantine & Martin, 2005). However, media outlets have evolved greatly since the early PSI studies.

PSI Contributing to SNS Research

Dei Worldwide (2008) research has shown that new media such as Internet communities and social networking sites have evolved into part of most Americans' consumption habits. Researchers have been increasingly studying our culture's interaction with SNS since the growth of new media technology (Hartman, 2008). In more recent research, studies have looked into social networking sites in correlation to PSI. Ballantine and Martin (2005) explained that parasocial interaction could contribute to the theoretical understanding of how online community members who don't participate may process the information posted from other active online members. These authors show that PSI can help explain some of the user behavior when looking at social media participation habits.

PSI with Celebrity Athletes via SNS

Celebrities of all genres use the social media networking platforms. McKelvy and Masteralexis (2011) explain in their research how it is now very common for professional

athletes to be active on at least one social media platform. The social presence of these athletes opens up an outlet for fans to build parasocial relationships. While some fans form PSI with the athletes through traditional media like television, they may be using social media to help strengthen the relationship (Earnheardt & Haridkis, 2009). The authors continue by explaining that these possible connections could surface the athlete's influence on the fans. While some studies have touched on social media's use by professional and celebrity athletes, the research hasn't looked into the PSI from the new media with the athlete. This is important because many consumers are using social media to influence their behavior.

The Influence of PSI with Celebrity Athletes via SNS

The formation of consistent relationships with a professional athlete, like PSI, improves the possibility of increasing the potential for advertising opportunities (Schiappa, Allen, & Gregg, 2007). Development of a parasocial relationship is especially important since it could be a new tactic for athletes to promote and advertise their sponsors. Gritten (2007) pointed out how consumers are more capable of avoiding both uninteresting and advertising-related content when they become more comfortable with technology, like SNS. Social networking site users have also expressed skepticism with advertising when they feel the experience is going to be negative, the message is irrelevant, or the medium used is intrusive (Kelly, Kerr, & Drennan, 2010). PSI with a trusted celebrity athlete could disguise promotional efforts from the athlete. The future of athletic sponsorship advertising is uncertain; however, the increase in use of the PSI theory may prove to be a beneficial tactic.

While there are gaps in the current state of research, studies will continue to benefit companies trying to gain insight on consumerism. Companies are always looking to better understand the methods consumers use to decide what products or services to purchase and how they do so (Kozinets, 1999). If celebrity athletes use their social presence to build parasocial relationships with fans, they could disguise potential advertising efforts by their sponsors. This is an important topic to investigate that will add to the current state of knowledge in parasocial relationships, social media, and celebrity athletes.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parasocial Relationships

Early Research

The definition of parasocial interaction first came into fruition in 1956 by researchers Donald Horton and Richard Wohl. They described the theory as a superficial relationship between a mediated character and viewer. In more detail, they called it "one-sided, nondialectical, controlled by the performer, and not susceptible of mutual development" (p. 215). Horton and Strauss (1957) described PSI as "immediate, personal, and reciprocal, but these qualities are illusory and are presumably not shared by the speaker" (p. 580). They continued by explaining how the mediated character must imitate the appearance of intimacy to help foster the parasocial interaction. Horton and Wohl also suggested that the media persona should maintain consistency in his or her presentation to help build parasocial interaction. Rubin and McHugh (1987) limited the PSI to television characters when they defined it as "a one-sided interpersonal relationship that television viewers establish with media characters" (p. 280). The theory has since been expanded beyond the television medium. The characters could range from non-fictional people in traditional mass media to fictional characters in new media (Hartman, 2008). Hoerner studied PSI with a fictional character mediated through a new

platform, a company website (1999). The type of character doesn't have any effect on the intensity or possibility of forming PSI (Cohen, 1997).

Parasocial interaction begins with media exposure but continues after the viewing period when viewers believe they have become close friends to the mediated character (Cohen, 2003). The viewers who build this sense of friendship sometimes try to affirm the existence of such relationship by purchasing products supported by the character, sending fan mail, and even collecting memorabilia featuring them (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Perse and Rubin's 1989 research showed how parasocial relationships mimic an actual interpersonal relationships in three ways: They are voluntary, they provide companionship, and social attraction leads to the initiation of the relationship (Perse & Rubin, 1989). However, the relationship is actually parasocial since the viewer doesn't get to disclose him or herself to the mediated character (Schiappa et al., 2007). The relationship is heavily one-way from the media character to the viewers.

Early research found that parasocial relationships could occur in in extreme gaps of status when comparing the viewer and media character (Horton & Strauss, 1957). That is, the audience could be of such a greater size relative to the media character that it would be nearly impossible to communicate with each audience member interpersonally. Originally, the theory only focused on the possibility of PSI forming with nonfictional media characters (Hartman, 2008) but has evolved to studying an array of figures like celebrities, hosts, salespeople, actors, and athletes (Auter & Moore, 1993; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Kassing & Sanderson, 2009; Rubin et al., 1985).

Motivation for PSI

Several studies have tried to explain the motivation for forming parasocial relationships. Some of the earliest research on PSI by Rubin and Rubin in 1985 proposed that loneliness would hinder some people's potential for interpersonal relationships making them turn to mass media to establish fulfilling relationships. Rubin et al. (1985) also pointed out that past research implied that the demand for social interaction was a must for humans, leading to PSI as a substitution. Both of these explanations are no longer considered accurate. Cohen and Metzger (1995) suggested that because parasocial relationships are both safe from criticism and stable, viewers might form that type of connection to compensate for difficulties in their real-life relationships. Schiappa et al. (2007) made a similar observation, suggesting viewers could potentially form parasocial relationships to make up for short-falls with their existing interpersonal relationships. The authors also suggested viewers may simply enjoy the characters featured on television and find the connection with the character pleasing.

Viewers will sometimes form parasocial relationships with a character because that character's values and tastes are what the viewer admires and hopes to strive (Schiappa et al., 2007). Other factors that help initiate PSI are the viewer's physical attraction to the character, attitudes, shared opinions, background, and similar communication styles (Cortez, 1992). Parasocial relationships can also be made stronger when the audience is given a behind-the-scenes feel to how the mediated character acts candidly (Meyrowitz, 1986). When a parasocial relationship is formed, the viewer feels the same level of intimacy and closeness to the mediated personality as with everyday friends (Ballantine & Martin, 2005). Good and Robinson (2013) found that viewers

would interact with fictional media characters about a fictional event in the same manner they would with their actual friends. Thus the viewers who form the parasocial relationships will reveal personal information about their lives believing the character actually will consume it. Because of this, the viewer will communicate to the mediated character in a way that resembles interpersonal communication (Hartman, 2008).

While the media character has more control of the interaction, the parasocial relationship is only possible if the viewer decides to initiate it (Cohen & Perse, 2003). The relationship would remain one-sided, thus not parasocial, if the viewer decided not to form the relationship. Parasocial relationships can form over a series of consistent viewing. Every time a viewer consumes a piece of media featuring a specific character, he/she will promote PSI (Perse & Rubin, 1989; Rubin & Windahl, 1982). The parasocial relationship then strengthens as exposure to the character increases and the viewer feels more confident about the persona (Auter, 1996; Perse & Rubin, 1989). Not only will increased media consumption promote stronger PSI, but also as the PSI grows the need to consume more media will intensify in order to maintain the parasocial relationship (Auter & Palmgreem, 2000; Conway & Rubin, 1991; Rubin et al., 1985). Auter and Palmgreem's (2000) study supports just that when results showed a positive correlation between PSI with adolescents and the amount of television viewing. However, it is important to note that PSI is only one of many reasons why viewers may choose specific television shows to view (Auter, 1996). The parasocial relationship also has the possibility of continuing after media consumption once the viewer experiences the character as a friend they hope to meet (Skumanich & Kintsfather, 1998).

Fostering PSI

Parasocial relationships can be fueled from the media personal in several ways. The media personalities will adjust their behavior when in front of an audience (Auter, 1992; Lang & Lang, 1953) and use casual face-to-face settings and conversational body language (Rubin et al., 1985). This is done to encourage PSI and invite responses from the audience. The media personas could use their language (verbal) and/or body language (nonverbal) to address the audience (DeVito, 2001; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011). The way the media character present him- or herself helps the viewer form an impression about that character which the viewer takes to the succeeding parasocial experiences (Auter, 1996). Using body language, the media character can consciously look directly into the camera instead of at the peripheral, creating a more enjoyable experience for the viewer (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011). These researchers found that the intensity of the PSI was positively correlated with the more attractive the media character was perceived to be. Attractiveness may cause viewers to focus on specific body parts like the face or eyes that lead to the feeling of being addressed directly (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011). Small gestures like winking, greeting, and waving to the viewers (Hartman, 2008) can also help create the feeling of a direct and personal relationship (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011).

Language style used by media characters can also have a big influence on the level of PSI (DeVito, 2001; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011; Horton & Wohl, 1956). DeVito explained how the media character can greet the viewers with language that directly calls to them like “good evening, friends” and “How are you?” They could also adjust their volume, fluctuations, and tone to influence how personal they want to sound.

Further, DeVito shared an example where when addressing children, the media character would use terminology that the children understood and heightened the tone of their voice. Language using a casual tone, asking personal questions, and noting shared qualities between the media personality and viewer are tactics that also promote PSI (Stephens, Hill, & Bergman, 1996). Goode and Robinson (2013) more recently studied how viewers responded to blog posts from television characters and suggested that viewers attempt to match language style to foster a relationship. Both the verbal and nonverbal methods of addressing the audience helps break down the "fourth wall". Auter (1996) described the fourth wall as the imaginary wall that metaphorically separates the audience from the viewers. He suggested that the fourth wall could be broken when the media characters address the viewers using the personable language and body language described above. With the media's fourth wall broken, the viewers will experience more intense PSI.

Grant et al. conducted a study in 1991 on the PSI formed with a QVC show. The authors noted the television setting was crafted to resemble the host's living room to create a more personable connection with the viewers. Stephens, et al. (1996) suggest in their study that the QVC show host consistently addresses the viewers in a way that promotes parasocial relationships in effort to use those relationships to sell more products. They pointed out that each of the show personalities hosted 12 to 16 hours of programming every week, giving the viewer more opportunity to follow consistently, potentially aiding the development of PSI. The show's hosts used the conversational language described earlier to address the audience and support parasocial relationships. Similarities with the viewers are pointed out on the show by the host, which would most

likely build feelings toward the host and foster PSI. It was then suggested that these parasocial relationships are then leveraged to help sell QVC products to viewers.

After investigating the current state of PSI research, it is apparent there are some gaps in the knowledge. Auter (1996) pointed out how most research on the PSI theory has focused on the audience perspective. Further research could look into the theory from the mediated character's perspective. The author also proposed that future research should study how the length of exposure to the media character and the degree of attention from the viewer affects the level of PSI. Rubin et al. (1985) suggested early on exploring if the PSI is consistent across other genres of television programming. This brings up a big gap in PSI research, well beyond different genres of television programming, but with the PSI across different media outlets. Other factors that could evolve PSI research further are that today's media characters can communicate with the viewers outside the restrictions of the traditionally researched television program (Robinson & Agne, 2010). Furthermore, the possibility of character extensions through web sites and blogs could foster PSI on a different level. The authors also expand on how media personas can interact with viewers while remaining in character, which would add another degree to PSI.

Social Media

History of SNS

Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn (1993) suggested the way the message is delivered is now as important as the message itself. Social media has become one of the most used media to deliver messages in today's culture. Since they surfaced in 2004, the development of SNS has been described as both 'rapid' and 'dramatic' (Vogt &

Knapman, 2008). Nielsen Online (2009) conducted media-use studies and has shown through its research that SNS have surpassed email as the most popular online activity. Not only have SNS become the most popular online activity, but it also has been a hot topic of study by academic researchers in the recent years. Social networking sites have been defined a number of ways and called a number of names. But for the purpose of this study, we will continue to refer to them as SNS.

Social networking sites have an influence on how individuals communicate, collect, and disperse information (Gray, 2011). However, research studying SNS and the connections formed through the platforms have yet to be explored completely (Frederick, Choong, Clavio, & Walsh, 2012). Looking at the current state of research, great insight has surfaced through data collected thus far. In contrast to traditional media, SNS are largely controlled by users, who act as media gatekeepers and content creators (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). The individuals using the SNS have the power to shape the reputation of a profile through their social engagements. The community of users who hold the power to use measurements such as 'likes,' 'shares,' and 'comments' also control the popularity of SNS. The creators of the SNS profiles cannot force users to engage with their content, but can encourage them to do so through promotional efforts or paid exposure. Another limitation of SNS comes from aesthetics. Most SNS cannot be manipulated visually, remaining the same as the default look (Yan, 2011). This means branding and visual persuasion is limited to the confines of the SNS interface. However, this works to the SNS platform's favor, creating a recognizable look to the user base.

Media viewers sometimes judge the credibility of a medium's information based on the 'believability or trustworthiness' of the medium itself (Moore & Rodgers, 2005).

Because the community of users heavily controls them, SNS are generally viewed as more credible when compared to traditional media (Kelly et al., 2010). Because of this, research has suggested that people prefer the use of SNS as an information resource rather than the official company website (Dei Worldwide, 2008). Some audiences even went as far as claiming to use the Facebook SNS as their main source of online information (Zickuhr, 2010). Colliander and Dalhen pointed out in their 2011 study that SNS bloggers have a reputation from their audience as being candid. Their audience sees them as being honest and looking out for them, only reporting the truth.

Social networking sites are evolving into the main trusted hub for news information because of the exceptional access to information allowing news to travel fast (Scott, 2012). The researcher also suggested that the quick traveling news through SNS has resulted in users looking to their platforms first instead of a traditional online source. The medium for information collection matters for some users more than others (Lee & Jang, 2013). The authors describe how SNS have been used strategically to reach out to less social individuals to foster relationships that imitate intimacy. Social networking sites have started with only casual networking purposes and have since evolved to a tool for marketing, philanthropy, and even for emergency aid.

SNS and PSI

Norlund suggested in his 1978 research that the potential for PSI could vary based on content and media channel. Social networking sites contain the qualities needed to initiate and foster such a relationship. The platforms allow mediated characters to communicate on a consistent base to the viewers, allowing a potential parasocial relationship to form. The audience has the capability to be an active processor of

mediated information and form any kind of relationship they please (Austin & Meili, 1994). Kozinets (1999) pointed out how the longer a user spends online, the more likely he/she is to pull towards one specific area or community of users online. Increased use of Internet sites will have a degree of influence on the viewers, which could evolve to PSI. Studies have also hinted that media users can equate an online social presence to a human-like presence (Gong, 2008; Lee & Nass, 2002; Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976). This is important to note since a viewer could form a relationship to a strictly online or SNS persona.

The immediacy of SNS may also create a level of transparency. Lee and Jang explain in their 2013 study how SNS platforms feature thread-style conversation, which appears to be unfolding in real-time. The authors suggested that a celebrity's Twitter page could create the perception that SNS users were actually having interpersonal two-way dialogue. The researchers also pointed out how SNS may have become an outlet for a mediated characters' less immediate news: "Practically, however, such interaction is most likely to be asymmetrical in nature, with the vast majority of "followers" or "friends" silently listening to the profile owner's personal reports that are often too trivial, controversial, and/or self-promotional to draw the attention of the mainstream media" (p. 47). The trivial, controversial, and self-promotional content is exactly the kind of behind-the-scenes type posting that could lead to PSI.

Ballantine and Martin (2005) describe in their study how SNS engagement has high potential for PSI. In their study, users are exposed to how corporate representatives communicate with their SNS visitors and how the users become familiar with the rep's online persona or character through post language. The familiarity and consistency of the

rep's SNS persona may foster PSI. Ballantine and Martin also point out that corporate SNS profile managers will imitate the personality of a friend to inspire the SNS audience to "like" or "follow" their profile. Addressing the SNS users in a friend-like manner may also be to encourage more engagement. Social networking site users are considered better consumers of information (Men & Tsai, 2013). Specific SNS parasocial examples have been cited in research where the relationship developed after repeat exposure to a blog (Colliander & Dalhen, 2011). The authors explained how the perceived intimacy through the blogger's language led to the readers feeling like the blogger was their actual friend. They suggested that the blogs promote the journalists as the faces of the media, thus increasing the likelihood that SNS viewers will form a more intimate relationship though PSI.

Similar to early PSI research focusing on fictional media characters, SNS users often imitate someone they are not since the viewers cannot see who's on the other side of the profile. Kirkpatrick (2009) shared how Twitter hosted a profile claiming to be then-Senator Barack Obama, but the truth later surfaced that the tweets were actually from his campaign team. Though some personalities behind the SNS may be fictional, some corporate SNS profile managers are actually who they claim to be. Engeseth (2005) pointed out that both Michael Dell (Dell Computers) and Ingvar Kamprad (founder of Ikea) invest a considerable portion of their time dealing with the audience directly.

SNS as a Marketing Tool

With the growing popularity of SNS, marketers are using the platforms as a tool to reach consumers. In a culture oversaturated with advertisements, marketers must find new ways to connect with the consumer audience. Sashi (2012) emphasizes the

increasing importance of SNS as a tool to engage consumers to help maintain consumer relationships. Morrisey (2010) suggested brands are investing more into digital strategies that incorporate the use of SNS. Major companies have recognized this importance and have been using SNS in addition to their more traditional press coverage (Colliander & Dalhen, 2011). Sixty-two percent of consumers answered they would rather interact with a brand that has a social presence (Decker, 2013). Two-thirds of surveyed consumers claimed their perceptions of a brand are influenced by SNS recommendations, suggesting the candid use of SNS may sway their ultimate purchase decisions (Dei Worldwide, 2008). Consumers show appreciation for the unbiased nature of SNS since the information published is more user-generated than 'corporate-sponsored' generated content (Allsop & Bassett, 2007). However, the lines can become blurred and the connection less obvious between SNS profile manager and advertiser when it comes to social media (McKelvey & Masteralexis, 2013). Data like this show the use of SNS for both marketing and purchasing decisions has become the status quo in today's consumer culture.

Since the source of SNS information is considered to be mainly the common, everyday person, users expect the posts on the platforms to represent the truth. Because of this, conversation occurs about brands outside their control. This could either be a blessing or a curse, but by creating their own SNS profile, brands have the opportunity to take part in the conversation they wouldn't have been a part of otherwise (Decker, 2013). Kelly et al. explain why advertising through SNS should be on advertiser's radar (2010). They explain that SNS could be used to target communities that fit into desired interests or geographic locations. Social networking sites will need to figure out ways to make

their platforms ad-friendly, in a way that would encourage interaction and limit resistance to the advertisements. Furthermore, SNS allow business communicators to foster more personal relationships with users because of the collective community nature. Krishnamurthy and Willis pointed out in their 2009 workshop that the SNS Facebook has evolved into a more commercialized site in efforts to gain profits through advertising space. Brands can use SNS as a tool to project the organization's voice to the user audience.

Businesses have established SNS profiles as a tool to connect with existing and potential consumers around the world. The SNS corporate pages have developed into hubs for the audience to interact with the companies directly (Men & Tsai, 2012). The authors have even suggested SNS are 'revolutionizing' the communication between the general public and businesses or organizations. Yan (2011) suggested that the concise posts featured on SNS have become a part of the branding strategy since the consumer audience has short attention spans. Results from Men and Tsai's 2013 study suggest that SNS are being used to humanize brands, which foster PSI, ultimately engaging the audience.

Because of the continuous growth and constant evolution of SNS, academic research has had a difficult time staying relevant (Men & Tsai, 2012). Kelly et al. (2010) claim there has not been enough research on the advertising efforts and effects through SNS. The authors also pointed out in their 2010 study that advertisements through SNS will be avoided if the viewer expects a negative experience. Because of this, PSI could be used as a tool to connect the SNS user with a brand in an indirect way. Parasocial

relationships formed with celebrities could be used to leverage relationships to disguise promotion of a sponsored good or service.

Celebrity Athletes

Celebrities and PSI

Traditional media such as tabloids, periodicals, and the press have been used as media outlets to follow favorite celebrities (Fowles, 1992). New media, such as SNS, have more recently offered additional outlets to connect users to their favorite athletes. The media acts as an aid in developing fan-athlete relationships (Earnheardt & Haridkis, 2009). Higher levels of fandom through media have been positively correlated with increased parasocial relationships. The more viewers enjoy consuming sports on television, the higher the degree of PSI that could be formed with a celebrity athlete. However, interaction with athletes could evolve past the definition of PSI to actual interpersonal communication. Earnheardt and Haridkis point out that athletes often make appearances outside the normal competition venues to meet with fans. This encounter would qualify as an actual interpersonal relationship and end the parasocial relationship. Once the athlete partakes in two-way dialogue with the fan, the interaction evolves from parasocial to interpersonal.

Weiss suggested in 1982 that individuals make efforts to become closer to their character of interest. Some individuals even make connections to brands or celebrities they aren't familiar with, but do so because they find them 'cool' (Utz, 2009). These relationships desired from the fan should be of importance to the sports organizations that capitalize from fandom. Sports fans may seek to develop relationships with athletes and seek advice, the opportunity to meet them, and feel they are part of the athlete's life

(Rubin et al., 1985). Sports organizations should concentrate on long-term relationships with consumers to increase interest and maintain interest (Bee & Kahle, 2006).

Research has looked at the influence celebrity endorsers have on audiences (Basil, 1996). Celebrities may use SNS as a tool to build connections with the fan audience and further influence them. Celebrities have used SNS profiles as a method to interact with fan followers and ultimately create a perception that they are friendly and welcoming (Utz, 2009). The opportunity to communicate with a celebrity could create a feeling that an actual interpersonal relationship is possible. Kassing and Sanderson (2010) point out how the Twitter SNS give fans the opportunity to interact more personally with an athlete. Social networking sites, like Twitter, are becoming a more common practice for athlete's to communicate with fans (Pedersen, Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2010). Frederick et al. (2012) explain how SNS users will feel they are interacting in a normal social relationship with an athlete when that athlete acts in a social way via Twitter. This example of communication, between fan and celebrity athletes, has been leveraged for marketing initiatives.

Celebrities and SNS

With so many outlets of information on the Internet, SNS have become a popular outlet for promoting endorsement deals with celebrity athletes (McKelvy & Masteralexis, 2011). Before the existence of SNS, companies and athletes reached the fans through traditional advertising media. The sponsoring company would leverage the celebrity's popularity through traditional media like print, billboards, television, and radio. Furthermore, the researchers suggested the middleman (traditional media) could be replaced with SNS, which showcases the fan base instantaneously and directly within the

SNS platform. Because of this, the companies and brands sponsoring the athlete are more efficiently able to reach out to the athlete's fan base and endorse their products. The authors point out how SNS profiles have been a great tool for promoting athlete's and their sponsors, but the profiles are sometimes created and maintained by the athlete's representing firm. Despite the SNS profile potentially being run by someone other then whom it says, viewers typically expect the SNS posts are coming directly from the source the profile implies (Levison, 2011). There is a risk when one of the most important aspects to successful athlete brand management is assuring authenticity of the profile (Barbarisi, 2010).

When athletes maintain SNS profiles themselves, they use these platforms as outlets to communicate with their fan base in a candid and intimate way (Hambrick, Simmons, Breehalgh, & Greenwall, 2010). Thus, the fans that consume the posts from the athletes believe they are being given their authentic thoughts, feelings, and opinions, which ultimately give them the feeling that they have a closer relationship to the athlete. The researchers credited the effect described as the reason for the popularity of the Twitter SNS platform. Other researchers have also credited Twitter as a popular tool for fandom (Highfield, Harrington, & Bruns, 2013). Fandom can be used to promote endorsement deals supported by the athlete. These endorsement deals have gained significant exposure through popular SNS platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube and become an ideal tool for both marketers and athletes (McKelvey & Masteralexis, 2013).

Morrissey (2010) shared how SNS can be used to stir up conversation around a sport game if money is invested. Social networking sites have proven to be useful when

marketing sports from a holistic perspective. Teams, as opposed to individual athletes, have taken advantage of the marketing potential SNS provides (Witkemper et al., 2012). The authors explain how direct links to the SNS platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube can be found on team websites. The interlinking of such SNS will increase brand strength of a sports team. Increasing amounts of celebrity athletes and their teams are earning global reach through media, which is evolving the sports marketer's strategies (Rowe, 2005).

The use of SNS by athletes, sports teams, and whole sports leagues has been evident in our culture. Witkemper et al. point out in their 2012 research that organizations like the NFL and NHL have incorporated Twitter accounts into their marketing efforts. More specifically, the Major League Baseball organization crafted the website section "Connect with the (team name)," so fans can connect with their favorite team through SNS. Strategies like this allow fans to build and maintain close relationships with the players. This technique could also bring great marketing insight by listening to the fan conversation and discovering new ideas to promote fandom. Witkemper et al. (2012) described how American soccer goalkeeper Hope Solo uses the Twitter SNS to interact with her fans and let them feel like a part of her life. This is one of many examples of celebrity athletes using SNS to build more personal relationships with their fan base.

The company Xerox used the SNS platforms Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to highlight fan passion during the U.S. Open (Decker, 2013). The author also pointed out that the sports exclusive network ESPN used real-time SNS content to enhance the experience during a live broadcast of the 25th Annual College Slam. The UEFA Champion League Final and FIFA Women's World Cup Final incorporated Twitter

extensions to the sporting events (Highfield et al., 2013). The immediacy and consistency of updates present an opportunity for the leagues fans to engage with their favorite athletes. Some SNS marketing efforts have even been credited for boosting the popularity of a sport from a holistic perspective. The Association of Surfing Professionals has not typically received significant attention from traditional broadcasters. The association executed a strategy pairing live event online streaming with SNS efforts, which ultimately increased the audience significantly (Gray, 2011). The SNS marketing efforts deployed by the organization were an effective way to build attention and appreciation for the competitive side of the sport.

Celebrity athletes sometimes have such powerful influences over their fan base that it has led to greater concern. Some professional athletes have been stripped of their sponsorships because of offensive posts through SNS. NFL Pittsburg Steelers player Rashard Mendenhall had his sponsorship by sportswear brand Champion revoked after tweeting what was considered an inappropriate post (Bulik, 2012). Because of instances like this, increasing numbers of American colleges now require their sports team players to give up their SNS accounts and allow their coaches or similar authorities to manage for them. Berman (2010) shared how the University of Arizona, in a similar effort, required all their athletes to keep their personal Facebook profiles set to private. Furthermore, some colleges even restricted use of the Facebook SNS altogether. The professional organizations of NFL and NBA forbid players from using Twitter right before and following the game. The threat of controversial SNS posts is considered too great by these organizations.

Because of such concerns for the athlete's SNS presence, rules, guidelines, and other precautions have been put in place. It has been suggested that companies using athletes as endorsers for their product should make an effort to provide the athlete with training and best practices so they can adhere to any SNS guidelines (McKelvey & Masteralexis, 2013). Athlete contracts are increasingly incorporating restrictions on the use of SNS by the athletes (Gray, 2011). The author explains how the restrictions are designed to protect the reputation of the athlete's sponsors, administrators, and their interests overall. However, it is important any SNS limitations, guides, rules, regulations, or restrictions take in consideration the ever-changing features and wide array of SNS. Additionally, whatever is crafted needs to be done in a way that is 'technology neutral' so it's not tied to any specific SNS or become outdated and irrelevant. Some restrictions have raised concern over the rights of the athletes. Gray pointed out how limiting how an athlete can use SNS in terms of marketing may be unfair in restricting the ability of that athlete to improve their profile and capitalize on their image.

Olympics and SNS

The Olympic Games are one of the most mediated sporting events. Because of this, the event hosts an audience that's on a whole other level. The above average audience makes the Olympics a very influential platform to communicate messages (Gray, 2011). The Olympic Games were described by Gray as the 'pinnacle of sporting competition.' The athletes featured in the Olympic Games have the potential to gain substantial international publicity which can transform into commercial gains off the field. Furthermore, Gray explains how what happens outside the sporting venue contributes much more to the professional athlete's trade.

Only recently have the Olympic Games incorporated SNS extensions to their events. The 2012 London Olympics was dubbed the "Social Olympics" with the word 'Olympic' used in approximately 27 million SNS posts during the event (McClelland, 2012). Hashtags (a SNS tool creating a hyperlink from using '#' before a word) were used to promote social efforts around the sporting event. Non-traditional media was even adapted to incorporate SNS initiatives. As a non-Olympic sponsor, the brand Nike purchased hundreds of billboards around London and television spots featuring their branded hashtag #findgreatness (McClelland, 2012). Additionally, official Olympic sponsor Adidas invested in a campaign that evolved around the SNS hashtag #takethestage. Furthermore, seeing how the 2012 London Olympics took place in an era where smartphones and mobile devices were more easily available to the general population, the capability for SNS campaigns was increased. Brands jumped on the bandwagon and made any effort to have social extensions to their Olympic campaigns.

Social promotions and partnerships took place on the Twitter SNS during the 2012 London Olympics, also dubbed "Twitterlympics" (Bulik, 2012). Despite the coined name focusing around Twitter, deals were created between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and other popular SNS like Facebook and YouTube. Continuing, major brands like Visa crafted campaigns around the sporting event using these SNS. Brands would cross promote their sponsorships via both television and SNS. Malone (2012) emphasized the impact technological advances like SNS had on the television coverage of the Olympic Games. Additionally, because of the significant impact of SNS on the event, Olympic reporters were expected to update their SNS regarding event updates. The

author suggests this may be due to the advantage SNS have over the interactivity that traditional broadcasters lack.

Social networking site use was responsible for playing a significant role in the 2012 London Olympics. A record 150 million tweets made the 2012 Games officially the most tweeted event recorded (Shortt, 2012). The author suggested Twitter had the opportunity to connect fans with athletes and the platform flourished in that aspect. Shortt described how Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt set a record for most sports-related tweets during an event. With such high levels of SNS activity, the athletes at the London Olympics were given a list of regulations to help regulate their online behavior (Zmuda, 2012). Continuing, the IOC created a detailed set of rules and regulations for the Olympic athletes called the "Social-Media Blogging and Internet Guidelines." Under these guidelines, participants are encouraged to post via SNS during the Olympic Games, but with several restrictions in place. And posts, blogging, or micro-blogging had to be in a first person, diary-type format as opposed to a journalist-type (IOC Guidelines, 2011). This guideline was designed to avoid promotional-type language within the athlete's posts. Furthermore, SNS posts are not allowed to promote any brands or products/services. The Olympics are considered one of the most prestigious sporting events in the world, and the event crafted these regulations to maintain its high standards.

According to Gantz and Wenner (1995), for some sports enthusiasts, television provides the only exposure to athletes, teams, or sporting events. With the recent growth and popularity of SNS, does this observation still hold true? There are still several gaps in the current state of sports research, and limited studies have focused on SNS from the audience's point of view (Clavio & Kian, 2010). Further research would help gain insight

on how fans interact with professional athletes through SNS, especially parasocially. This insight could help sports management, marketers, and communication specialists better guide the professional athletes they work with (Frederick et. al., 2012). Additionally, the data collected could assist marketers with strategies to better SNS in engaging their desired fan base. McKelvy and Masteralexis (2011) point out that today's professional athletes have a great influence on their fans because of their status and public visibility. This influence offers the athletes an array of opportunities to promote brands and capitalize from it. However, restrictions as formally described, lead to challenges for sports marketers. With such heavy restrictions on promotions through SNS, could PSI be used to disguise endorsements?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A review of the current PSI research reveals no obvious differences in intensity of parasocial interaction when it comes to gender. However, there has been minimal research comparing the potential for differences between males and females. The current state of PSI knowledge also suggests that mediated personalities in general have the potential for PSI. There is little study on if the type of celebrity can have an effect on the intensity of PSI. Researchers have pointed out how the key element of PSI is repeat exposure to the media character (Colliander & Dalhen, 2011). Different types of celebrities have different amounts of exposure in the media-raising question to if some have higher degrees of PSI. Because of this, the study will ask:

RQ1: Does the strength of PSI vary with gender or type of celebrity?

The current state of knowledge on PSI focuses on the more traditional media outlets like television. Research has suggested that traditional media such as tabloids, periodicals, and the press have been used as media outlets to follow favorite celebrities (Fowles, 1992). But media outlets are being created and getting traction everyday with the development of new technology. These sites offer new resources to follow a given celebrity that may not have been considered in past studies. Colliander and Dalhen have pointed out how academic on the topic of media use hasn't been able to keep up with the continuously evolving SNS and worldwide use of the platforms (2012). Further research

needs to explore the different media used. These different platforms are also used to different degrees by each gender. Pew Research publishes an annual report on media use broken down by male and female, and different platforms are used to different degrees according to gender.

The current body of knowledge around PSI also neglects to consider if different media outlets are used to different degrees depending on the type of celebrity. Celebrities PSI have been studied in relation to one or few media sources in past research, but different types of celebrities receive different degrees of exposure through various media. Because of this, the study will ask:

RQ2: Does the media used to follow celebrities vary with gender or celebrity type?

A majority of the research on PSI has focused on traditional media, mainly television (Auter & Moore, 1993; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985). Literature has shown that when viewers follow a television character, the likelihood of forming a parasocial relationship increases significantly (Auter & Moore, 1993; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985). Past research has even suggested that television is often one of the only media fans have to view the lives of athletes (Earnheardt & Haridkis, 2009). While the medium may be one of the more commonly used, new media outlets have been growing in popularity in recent years. It is important to recognize that some fans may form the initial parasocial relationship through traditional media (like television, but then may be using SNS to help strengthen that relationship) (Earnheardt & Haridkis, 2009).

New media such as SNS have all the necessary characteristics to foster PSI (Ballantine & Martin, 2005; Men & Tsai, 2013). Different media outlets have different

characteristics that could intensify the PSI with the viewer. Meyrowitz (1986) pointed out how PSI can increase when the audience is given a behind-the-scenes feel to how the mediated character acts candidly. SNS in particular share more of this tone than compared to more traditional media. It is also important to consider the growing use of SNS by celebrities relative to the significant use of the platforms by the audience. The use of these SNS has become common practice for celebrities to increase fandom. Studies have not compared the difference in PSI when looking at different media use. Some researchers even suggest the way the message is delivered is as important as the message itself (Schultz et al., 1993). Because of this gap in knowledge, this study will evaluate:

RQ3: Does the intensity of the PSI effect increase with the intensity of different media use?

Rubin, et al. (1985) suggested exploring if the PSI is consistent across other genres of television programming. However, more current studies have explored PSI through new media and with different genres of mediated characters (Kassing & Sanderson, 2009). Literature suggests that some media outlets are used more than others to seek a particular celebrity type (Smith, 2011). Literature explained how SNS is a tool for professional athletes to build credibility (Barbarisi, 2010), become ambassadors of their sport (Caponiti, 2010), and to communicate with their fans (Pedersen, Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2010). This emphasized use of SNS by athletes could influence the amount of exposure to theirs fans, thus potentially increase PSI. In some cases people prefer the use of SNS as an information resource rather than online websites (Dei Worldwide, 2008). It is evident that media use varies when following different media

personalities. What has been neglected in research is if the influence of media use on PSI is different when comparing celebrity types. Because of this, the study will ask:

R4: Does the influence of media use on PSI vary between celebrity type?

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

Participants

The non-random convenience sample was drawn from students at two large educational institutions, California State University, Fullerton and Daytona State College in Florida. Additional questionnaires were be completed by fans and members on Olympic-related SNS. Requests for participation was posted on the Facebook pages of the following Olympic athletes; *Bodie Miller, Scotty Lago, Danny Kass, Lolo Jones, Louie Vito, Ted Ligety, Julia Mancuso*, and *Shawn White* Fan Page. A request for participation was also posted via Twitter to the *US Olympic* handle along with posts on the following two LinkedIn groups; *Sochi 2014 Olympics* and *Around The Rings*. The LinkedIn group administrator later deleted the post in *Sochi 2014 Olympics* group. Additionally, request for participation was posted in three Google Plus communities; *2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, World Daily Winter Olympics*, and *Sochi 2014*. A total of 174 questionnaires were completed with participants' ages ranging from 18–40+ and a relatively balanced ratio of males to females. Because the heaviest SNS users are the 18–29 age range, this sample will be appropriate for the study (Brenner, 2013). While not randomly selected, this sample was relatively diverse among ethnicities. Participants also represented a mix of undergrad and graduate students with a heavier representation from the undergraduate student body.

Procedure

The data was collected in the winter of 2014. The distribution of questionnaires took place following the completion of 2014 Winter Olympics, starting February 28th, 2014 and ending March 11th, 2014. Questionnaires were either administered during class periods or via the online service Survey Monkey.

Students were recruited from a variety of classes in the Department of Communications ranging from undergraduate to graduate level. Contact with several instructors, administrators, and university staff took place to confirm allotted class time for students to complete the questionnaire. Classes ranged in size and were either on-campus or online based. If class time was unavailable, completion during individual free time was encouraged. This approach was the most conductive to completing the academic study in a timely manner within both the Olympic event timeframe and under a restricted budget.

Participants were assured anonymity of their responses before completion and informed their participation is voluntary.

Instrument

Based on past PSI research, this study implemented a quantitative method questionnaire. A majority of sports media effects studies have used surveys to collect the data (Earnheardt & Haridkis, 2009). A questionnaire has been crafted consisting of individual measures of exposure to athlete SNS profiles, interaction with well-known celebrity Olympic athlete through parasocial interaction, social networking site use, and general demographics. Most ratings were be made using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

First, participants were asked to answer questions concerning SNS use or neglect of. Questions gauged social networking platform popularity, duration of use, and frequency of use. Second, each participant was asked to identify his or her favorite Olympic athlete to answer questions concerning PSI through SNS. If the respondent didn't have a favorite athlete, he/she was asked to refer to the most recognized Olympic athlete. If they were not aware of any Olympic athletes, they were guided to a traditional celebrity set of questions. Participants were then asked to complete the parasocial interaction measures regarding the recognition of a favorite or well-known Olympic athlete or traditional celebrity. The questionnaire ended with demographic questions.

Measurement

SNS Use

The independent variable examined in this study is the social media component. It was broken down into nine different media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, traditional websites, television, magazines, newspaper, and radio. These nine choices of social media platforms have been chosen since individuals of celebrity status use them frequently. It is important to note participants' perceptions of their SNS use may be skewed from their actual media use (Zillmann, 1985). Television, magazines, newspaper, radio, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs have been around for several years and have been practiced by both celebrities and athletes. Instagram is a more recent trending social media that has been extremely popular among celebrity status public figures.

Athlete Information

The athlete information portion of the questionnaire was designed to first screen if the participant is knowledgeable of any Olympic athletes. If the participant did not either

have a favorite Olympic sports athlete or knowledge of any popular Olympic athlete, he/she was guided to a traditional celebrity set of questions. The second purpose of the athlete (or traditional celebrity) information section was to make sure the participant actively follows the celebrity through a media outlet. If the participant did not, he/she will be less relevant to this study. The participants then continued to answer questions like, "Have you ever sent a direct message to this Olympic sports athlete (celebrity)," and "How long have you been following this Olympic sports athlete (celebrity)?" This portion of the questionnaire was adopted from the Frederick, Choong, Clavio, and Walsh 2012 study. Cohen's 1997 study used a similar method asking the participants to write the name of their favorite TV character followed by using the PSI scale to measure the potential relationship.

Parasocial Interaction

Rubin and Perse developed the first scale used to measure parasocial interaction in 1987. This 20-item Parasocial Interaction Scale has since evolved to fit different types of media and measure other variables. Only parts were used in the more recent Audience-Persona Interaction Scale (API) created by Auter and Palmgreen in 2000. Auter and Palmgreem (2000) study suggests the API Scale addresses all aspects regarding the parasocial experience. The API Scale was the main framework in the questionnaire used to measure PSI with slight modifications to adapt to SNS. The API adaptation to the Parasocial Interaction Scale is a more updated measurement that will better analyze new media. For the purpose of this study, the 20-item scale was modified into a 17-item version (Appendix B). Each question was reworded to be celebrity athlete-specific.

The Audience-Persona Interaction Scale uses a series of questions which measures factors such as identification with a character, interest in the character, and group identification. Based on prior studies using this scale, intercoder reliability will have to meet the threshold of reliability at Chronbach's Alpha = .84 and was at .89. The scores from the five-point Likert scale questions will be averaged up to generate a parasocial interaction score. Higher scores will indicate stronger parasocial attachment.

A regression analysis will be used to interpret the results of the survey and test the hypothesis. The independent variable (media use) was thought to influence the dependent variable (parasocial relationship) in a meaningful way.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Descriptives

Gender

Of the 721 respondents, 64 (48.9%) were male and 67 (51.1%) were female with 590 non-respondents (see Appendix A, Table 1).

Age

The age of the population ranged from 18-40+. Although the range was wide, 42.6% of the sample fell into either the 27-30 or 40+ range (see Appendix A, Table 2).

Gender Reporting on Celebrity Type

Of the 130 respondents, 37 (28.5%) of males and 17 (13.1%) of females answered the Olympic athlete set of questions. Of the same sample of respondents, 27 (20.8%) of males and 47 (36.2%) of females answered the celebrity set of questions. A total of 2 (1.5%) of females neglected to respond to either set of questions. Therefore, 41.6% of the respondents answered the Olympic athlete set of questions and 57% of the respondents answered the celebrity set of questions (see Appendix A, Table 4).

Age Reporting on Celebrity Type

Of the 97 respondents of the Olympic set of questions 4 (4.1%) were 18-20, 20 (20.6%) were 21-23, 13 (13.4%) were 24-26, 19 (19.6%) were 27-30, 12 (12.4%) were 31-35, 4 (4.1%) were 36-40, and 25 (25.8%) were 40+. Of the 74 respondents of the

celebrity set of questions 3 (4.1%) were 18-20, 16 (21.6%) were 21-23, 15 (20.3%) were 24-26, 18 (24.3%) were 27-30, 7 (9.5%) were 31-35, 4 (5.4%) were 36-40, and 11 (14.9%) were 40+. A total of 2 respondents, 1 (50%) was 21-23 and 1 (50%) was 40+, neglected to respond to either set of questions. Therefore, 56.1% of all-aged respondents answered to the Olympic athlete questions and 42.8% answered to the celebrity set of questions (see Appendix A, Table 3).

Media Use

Of the respondents, 171 (m = 2.30) reported using Facebook, 168 (m = 1.82) used Twitter, 171 (m = 1.78) used Instagram, 170 (m = 1.36) used traditional blogs, 173 (m = 2.08) used online websites, 170 (m = 2.93) used television, 168 (m = 1.76) used newspaper, 170 (m = 1.97) used magazines, and 168 (m = 1.68) used radio (see Appendix A, Table 5).

Data Reduction

The eleven parasocial interaction topic items were subjected to principle component analysis with Kaiser varimax rotation. The eigen value was set at one. Only scales that loaded > .66 for the factor in question and loaded < .50 for all other factors were retained. One factor emerged for characteristics of parasocial interaction. Individual Parasocial characteristic factor was characterized by high loadings on the scales *This athlete reminds me of myself* (.86), *I have the same qualities as this athlete* (.87), *I have the same beliefs or attitudes as this athlete* (.68), *I can imagine myself as this athlete* (.71), and *I can identify with this athlete* (.71). The combination of these scales yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .892 (see Appendix A, Table 7).

Analysis

R1: Does the strength of PSI vary with gender or type of celebrity?

The strength of PSI with either a traditional celebrity or with an Olympic athlete did not vary significantly by gender (see Appendix A, Table 8).

The strength of PSI did significantly vary for celebrity type, $t(1, 170) = -2.09$, $p < .04$. Participants who answered the celebrity questions were more likely ($m = 2.78$) to show higher level of PSI than were the participants who answered the Olympic athlete set of questions ($m = 2.47$) (see Appendix A, Table 9).

R2: Does the media used to follow celebrities vary with gender or celebrity type?

Significant gender differences were found for two media types, Instagram $t(1, 126) = -2.09$, $p < .04$, and radio $t(1, 122) = -3.01$, $p < .01$. Females were more likely ($m = 2.06$) to use Instagram to follow celebrities than males were ($m = 1.60$). Similarly, females were more likely ($m = 1.95$) to use radio to follow celebrities than males were ($m = 1.34$) (see Appendix A, Table 10).

One significant difference was found in the media used to follow different celebrity types. There was a significant difference in the use of newspapers, $t(1,165) = 3.47$, $p < .001$, such that it was used more to follow Olympic athletes ($m = 2.01$) than it was to follow traditional celebrities ($m = 1.44$) (see Appendix A, Table 11).

R3: Does the intensity of the PSI effect increase with the intensity of different media use?

Regression analysis revealed a significant relationship between media use and intensity of PSI $F(9,160) = 4.95$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .48$, adj. $R^2 = .19$. Facebook ($\beta = .20$), Twitter ($\beta = .19$), television ($\beta = .25$), and newspaper ($\beta = -.21$) were all found to be

significant positive predictors of PSI strength. Online websites was approaching significance (β = .15) (see Appendix A, Table 12).

R4: Does the influence of media use on PSI vary between celebrity type?

Regression analysis revealed no significant relationships between types of media used and PSI formed with traditional celebrities $F(9, 91.92) = 1.80$, $p > .05$, $R^2 = .46$, adj. $R^2 = .09$ (see Table 8) (see Appendix A, Table 13).

Significant relationships were found between types of media used and PSI formed with Olympic athletes $F(9, 55.91) = 3.85$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .56$, adj. $R^2 = .23$. Facebook (β = .237), online websites (β = .278), and television (β = .287) were positive predictors of PSI strength (see Appendix A, Table 14).

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

This study was implemented to explore the relationship between parasocial relationships with Olympic athletes and the use of different media. Past literature has found that individuals may form strong feelings with well-known media personalities to the extent that parasocial interaction takes place. Past studies have not found any notable differences in parasocial relationships with certain types of media personalities or characters. The questions researched in this study help add to this body of knowledge by comparing two different media personalities. Many studies have explored how a specific media engagement may influence parasocial relationships, but such investigations have not directly compared the influence of different types of media. Thus, this study endeavored to determine the extent to which parasocial relationships might vary for different types of celebrities and different types of media engagement.

Research question one (RQ1) explored whether the strength of parasocial interaction varied with gender or celebrity type. The data revealed that there was not a significant difference in the strength of parasocial interaction between males or females.

Both males and females were likely to form just as strong parasocial relationships with their favorite athlete or celebrity.

The data from the questionnaire, however, revealed that there was a significant difference in the strength of parasocial relationships for different celebrity types. This finding departs from past research that has not found that the type of character influences the intensity of PSI (Cohen, 1997). Audiences who answered questions about their favorite traditional media celebrity reported higher levels of PSI than did those who reported having favorite Olympic athlete celebrities. This insight is logical when considering the consistency of the celebrity type's exposure. Olympic athletes are covered in a more news-like fashion in inconsistent spurts. The athletes will most likely earn media coverage slightly before, during, and shortly after their sporting event. Because of this limitation, they have a shorter time frame in which to build a relationship with the viewer. In contrast, traditional media celebrities appear more consistently in the media. Consider traditional celebrity types like fictional actors, newscasters, and talk-show hosts. They are all featured through the media for prolonged periods of time, if not all year long increasing the potential for PSI.

Research question two (RQ2) explored whether the media used to follow favorite celebrities varies with gender or celebrity type. Significant gender differences were found for two media types, Instagram and radio. Females reported greater use of Instagram to learn about their favorite celebrity than males did. This is consistent with recent research that has generally found higher Instagram use among females. Pew Research found that 20 percent of surveyed women reported using Instagram compared to only 15 percent of males (Duggan & Smith, 2013). This heavier use by females is

consistent with gender use across the more visually driven social networking sites like Pinterest and Facebook. Interestingly, females also reported higher radio use than did males It is unclear why women might be more likely to get information about their favorite celebrities from radio, but it could be possible that females are likely to listen to morning radio shows which often report on celebrity gossip. This would align with the data suggesting more women reporting on their favorite traditional celebrity than Olympic athlete.

Only one significant difference was found for the media used to follow different celebrity types. Newspaper was used significantly more to follow Olympic athletes than to follow traditional celebrities. This makes sense because the newspaper has traditional served as a primary news source for current events such as the Olympics more so than it has served as primary source for general celebrity news or gossip, that are less consistently covered through all other media. The newspaper could be viewed as a source for more detailed coverage of events taking place such as the Olympics than other media sources might provide which is consistent with past research.

Research question three (RQ3) explored if the intensity of the parasocial interaction increased with the intensity of different media use. Increased use of four media types, Facebook, Twitter, television, and newspaper, were found to significantly increase PSI. All four of these media can deliver the key ingredient for PSI: frequent, repeat exposure to a character. The Facebook SNS platform is known for its informal, behind-the-scenes feel to its posts. Viewers will visit a company's Facebook page versus the online website to get a more informal look into the company. Facebook appears to be

obvious media choices for heavy use since 67 percent of the total 72 percent reported SNS users use the platform (Brenner, 2013).

Heavy use of Twitter also reported a stronger PSI effect. Past research reporting the platform as a resource to interact more personally with a celebrity aligns well with the data's finding (Kassing & Sanderson, 2010). The Twitter platform has become more of a common practice for celebrities in order to communicate with their fans (Pedersen, Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2010). The platform allows the mediated character to post on in a more personal tone, whether the content is actually designed for an individual or the masses.

Consistent with early PSI research, heavy television use continues to lead to greater PSI effects. The results of this study show two SNS (Facebook and Twitter) along with two traditional media (television and newspaper) as responsible for increasing PSI with increased use. It is possible that the traditional media listed could then be followed with the SNS in order to increase or maintain the PSI developed. But still, some studies suggest that television has greater potential for users to build connections than compared to other media types (Ballantine & Martin, 2005).

Increased newspaper use was also associated with increased PSI. This may be due to the fact that the medium has been around the longest relative to the other outlets researched in this study. Newspaper exposure is at the mercy of the consumer, but there are no limits to the degree of repeat exposure to a particular story or mediated character. Television has limitations since programs are sometimes only aired once or are not recorded for repeat viewing.

The last research question (RQ4) explored whether the influence of media use on PSI varies for different celebrity types. Interestingly, PSI with traditional celebrities did not vary with different types of media use. PSI with Olympic athletes, however, was stronger for those who reported following athletes more on Facebook, website and television. The Facebook insight aligns with past research sharing how 25 percent of SNS users claimed their motivation in participating involved interest in following celebrities or athletes (Smith, 2011). The Facebook platform is designed for personal profiles, which makes it a great platform for fans to follow specific people. Facebook can be used a resource by the athlete to accomplish all of those needs in order to retain fans. In turn, fans will follow the athlete's SNS profile, Facebook specifically, and consume the repeat exposure to the athlete, potentially resulting in the formation of a parasocial relationship.

Online websites also reported as a significant influence on PSI when looking at Olympic athlete celebrity type. Surprisingly, this contrasts the Dei Worldwide research suggesting that people prefer the use of SNS as an information resource rather than the official website (2008). This is logical considering the initial exposure to the unfamiliar athlete may lead to a visit to that athlete's website for further information. Another possibility to consider with online websites is the possibility of them linking to SNS that furthers the PSI with the Olympic athlete.

The third significant media reported, television, has been a strong source for aiding PSI and continues to be with Olympic athlete celebrities in this study. Earlier researchers suggested exploring if PSI is consistent across different genres of television programming (Rubin et al., 1985). The present study sheds insight to that question, showing that PSI can expand beyond the fictional and newscaster genre programs studied

in earlier PSI research. The Olympic television coverage features the recurring Olympic athlete (characters) in the programs, which increase the potential for the viewer to build connections (Ballantine & Martin, 2005). The three media outlets reporting significant for Olympic athletes could correlate with Malone's 2012 study. He explained how past Olympic Games would cross promote their sponsorships via both television and SNS. The use of SNS would impact the television coverage during the Games and the media outlets would compliment each other. This could very well be the case when looking that Facebook, online websites, and television which reported as significant influences on PSI with Olympic athletes.

The fact that the type of media fans use to engage with favorite celebrities only appeared to make a difference for Olympic athletes is a particularly important finding. It suggests that the effects of media type on PSI that has been found more generally both in this study and others may be misleading. This study speaks to the need for more research, which attempts to identify important factors that may qualify the influence of media use on the development of parasocial relationships.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between intensity of PSI relative to different genres of celebrities and media use. Current research suggested there were no obvious differences in the intensity of PSI with different celebrity types when it came to gender. Consistent with past literature, no significant differences surfaced when comparing males versus females. Past research has also found that any mediated personality has the potential for PSI with an audience. However, little academic research has compared the differences in intensity when looking at various types of mediated

characters. Cohen (1997) suggested that the type of character had no effect on intensity of PSI. Different types of media characters or celebrities have different amounts of exposure, thus should vary in intensity when comparing PSI. As anticipated, this present study found that there were differences in PSI when comparing types of celebrities. More traditional types of celebrities had higher intensity in PSI than the Olympic athlete celebrities studied.

A majority of PSI research has been focused around television as the mediator. The possibility of forming PSI is not limited to any one media outlet in particular. Different media outlets are used to different degrees by gender and by celebrity type. Logically, this would suggest that the media used to follow celebrities would vary with gender or celebrity type. The present study found that there were significant gender differences when looking at media use of Instagram and radio. Consistent with more current research, Instagram is used more heavily by females, and in the present study, used more by females to follow celebrities. Only one significant difference surfaced looking at celebrity type. Newspaper was used more to follow Olympic athletes than traditional celebrities. Intuitively, this finding made sense since newspaper has served as a primary news source for current events, such as the Olympics, more so than for celebrity gossip.

While many different types of media are used to follow celebrities, past studies leaned towards television as the main source. But more recent PSI research suggests that new media like SNS have the same elements needed to foster PSI. Consistent with more recent research, this present study found that the higher the Facebook and Twitter use, the higher the PSI reported. The more traditional media outlets, television and newspaper,

remained to be significant sources of increased PSI with increased use. The results of this study show that not all media foster PSI equally.

The study suggests that the intensity of PSI varies with the intensity of different media. Equally as important to explore was if the influence of media use on PSI varied between celebrity types. While PSI with traditional celebrities did not vary with different types of media, PSI with Olympic athletes did. Those who reported following the Olympic athlete type via Facebook, websites, and television reported stronger PSI. This could be explained with the possibility of the three different sources complimenting each other during the event. The more traditional media (television and websites) references the use of SNS (Facebook) to expand reach of the celebrity. The effects of media type on PSI that surfaced in the present study and in past research may be inaccurate based on the finding that type of media fans use to engage with favorite celebrities only appeared to make a difference for Olympic athletes.

From a practical standpoint, the results of this study could help support athlete and corporate marketing strategy with a more in-depth understanding of PSI. Insight is provided to the influence athletes have on fans and media viewers. From an academic perspective, this study adds to the current state of knowledge on PSI and takes the next step in comparing the intensity based on media type used and celebrity type in which the PSI is formed. However, future research is needed to fine tune what characteristics make up PSI, help understand other types of media that can be used to form PSI, and analyze celebrity types beyond the traditional or athlete type.

Implications

The findings of this research suggest multiple implications for intensity of PSI based on media use and celebrity type. Results suggested multiple differences in the media used to follow celebrities as well as differences in intensity of PSI based on media type. With technology evolving so quickly, the influence of the media outlets reporting significantly could shift to other platforms rapidly rendering these findings expired. Men and Tsai (2012) make an important point when stating academic research hasn't been able to keep up with the continuously evolving SNS and worldwide use of platforms.

Second, media outlets Facebook, online websites, and television reported as sources for higher levels of PSI with Olympic athletes. Considering the current SNS rules and strict regulations for high profile Olympic athletes, there may be need for more attention to these three media outlets in particular. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) already placed SNS limitations for athletes participating in the Games, but they may need to extend to online website activity or television coverage of the athletes. From the athlete's perspective, they may want to consider focusing more of their efforts to these three media outlets in order to strengthen their fan base.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study that should be brought to attention. The first limitation was the sample size of participants. While the intention was to gather up to 1,000, only 174 total individuals answered the complete questionnaire. Furthermore, efforts to gather data from a larger geography were limited by time and resources for the researcher. The majority of the participants resided in Southern California, Maryland, and Florida. Geographically, these are warmer states that may not participate in winter-related sports as frequently compared to colder geographic areas; thus residents may not follow

the Winter Olympics as closely. While the questionnaire provided detailed data, the limited sample size cannot be generalized to individuals of different ages or geographic areas.

Another limitation of this study was that the questionnaire asked about the feelings of the participants from a first-person perspective. It is possible that participants had a third-person effect resulting in denial and inaccurate recollection. This may have been limited if the questionnaire reiterated throughout that respondents' answers will remain anonymous and should base their answers accurately on their personal. The present study also focused on one particular sporting event due to convenience of timing. Different sporting events may yield different levels of PSI. Different sports, teams, leagues, athletes, and events have unique rules and regulations on their media exposure that could skew the results of PSI measurement significantly. To more accurately represent the 'celebrity athlete' as a whole, several different athletes from different sports, leagues, teams, and events should be included in the questionnaire. However, that eclectic sample may not be practical to measure.

Strict SNS guidelines brought about limitations in data collection for this study. Several posts requesting participants for the questionnaire were viewed as spam and were removed from the respective SNS profile. Because these Olympic athletes and the Games as a whole are so widely followed, their SNS profiles are oversaturated with fan posts of varying qualities. Moderation of the open SNS feed limits what is kept or deleted by the administrators of the profile. Several Olympic athlete Facebook pages and Olympic-related LinkedIn groups deleted the request for participation in this study. To strengthen the potential for more participation, compensation could have been offered to entice

completion of the questionnaire. Holistically, the biggest limitation of the present study is the small sample size, thus the generalizability of the results.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research is needed to keep up with the evolving media landscape. Looking at SNS specifically, new platforms emerge frequently and use by viewers varies dramatically. The findings of the present study suggest certain SNS platforms are used more than others to follow celebrities, and some are credited for influencing more PSI than others. Thus, it is important to continuously measure the impact of the various media outlets used to aid PSI. Implementing such studies, however, would be challenging since new media outlets may emerge since the start of the study.

Despite a majority of past PSI research focusing on one or few celebrity genres, the present study attempts to expand the understanding to less traditional celebrity types. Future research should continue to study different types of celebrities and media personalities to measure differences in influence. Perhaps, an even greater analysis would view the PSI from the celebrity's perspective. Consider what unique media outlets different types of celebrities' use and how that affects PSI with their fan base. This research could examine the different type of language or visual queues used that may foster PSI. It would be interesting to see if different celebrity types use different techniques to form relationships with their fans.

The present study used an adapted version of the original Parasocial Interaction Scale developed by Rubin and Perse in 1987. The Auter and Palmgreen API version used for this study was updated in 2000. Future research should reevaluate the reliability of the scale to factor in changes in the PSI dynamic. New media outlets, like SNS, open up

communication with celebrities for the potential of two-way communication. An updated PSI scale should consider at what point or degree of communication from the celebrity is it now longer considered parasocial.

APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1: Age Demographics for Survey Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-20	8	1.1	4.6	4.6
	21-23	37	5.1	21.3	25.9
	24-26	28	3.9	16.1	42.0
	27-30	37	5.1	21.3	63.2
	31-35	19	2.6	10.9	74.1
	36-40	8	1.1	4.6	78.7
	40+	37	5.1	21.3	100.0
	Total	174	24.1	100.0	
Missing	System	547	75.9		
Total		721	100.0		

Table 2: Gender Demographics for Survey Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	64	8.9	48.9	48.9
	Female	67	9.3	51.1	100.0
	Total	131	18.2	100.0	
Missing	System	590	81.8		
Total		721	100.0		

* Missing cases were artifacts of file conversions. A total 174 valid surveys were collected in the study.

Table 3: Age Demographics for Question Set Answered (Celebrity Type)

			Age							
			18-20	21-23	24-26	27-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Total
Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	1	Count	4	20	13	19	12	4	25	97
		% within Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	4.1%	20.6%	13.4%	19.6%	12.4%	4.1%	25.8%	100.0%
		% within Age	57.1%	54.1%	46.4%	51.4%	63.2%	50.0%	67.6%	56.1%
		% of Total	2.3%	11.6%	7.5%	11.0%	6.9%	2.3%	14.5%	56.1%
	Celebrity Set of Questions	Count	3	16	15	18	7	4	11	74
		% within Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	4.1%	21.6%	20.3%	24.3%	9.5%	5.4%	14.9%	100.0%
		% within Age	42.9%	43.2%	53.6%	48.6%	36.8%	50.0%	29.7%	42.8%
		% of Total	1.7%	9.2%	8.7%	10.4%	4.0%	2.3%	6.4%	42.8%
	99	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
		% within Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Age	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	1.2%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	1.2%
Total		Count	7	37	28	37	19	8	37	173
		% within Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	4.0%	21.4%	16.2%	21.4%	11.0%	4.6%	21.4%	100.0%
		% within Age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	4.0%	21.4%	16.2%	21.4%	11.0%	4.6%	21.4%	100.0%

Table 4: Gender Demographics for Question Set Answered (Celebrity Type)

			Gender		
			Male	Female	Total
Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	1	Count	37	17	54
		% within Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	68.5%	31.5%	100.0%
		% within Gender	57.8%	25.8%	41.5%
		% of Total	28.5%	13.1%	41.5%
	Celebrity Set of Questions	Count	27	47	74
		% within Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	36.5%	63.5%	100.0%
		% within Gender	42.2%	71.2%	56.9%
		% of Total	20.8%	36.2%	56.9%
	99	Count	0	2	2
		% within Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	0.0%	3.0%	1.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	1.5%	1.5%
Total		Count	64	66	130
		% within Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	49.2%	50.8%	100.0%
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	49.2%	50.8%	100.0%

Table 5: Participant Media Use

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Facebook	171	1	5	2.30	1.402
Twitter	168	1	5	1.82	1.215
Instagram	171	1	5	1.78	1.244
Traditional Blog	170	1	5	1.36	.766
Online Website	173	1	5	2.08	1.262
Television	170	1	5	2.93	1.243
Newspaper	168	1	5	1.76	1.092
Magazine	170	1	5	1.97	1.153
Radio	168	1	5	1.68	1.084
Valid N (listwise)	161				

Table 6: Parasocial Relationships Data Reduction

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.584	50.762	50.762	5.584	50.762	50.762
2	1.092	9.931	60.692	1.092	9.931	60.692
3	1.073	9.757	70.449	1.073	9.757	70.449
4	.716	6.510	76.959			
5	.569	5.177	82.136			
6	.502	4.559	86.695			
7	.439	3.991	90.686			
8	.400	3.641	94.327			
9	.232	2.113	96.439			
10	.221	2.006	98.446			
11	.171	1.554	100.000			

Table 7: Parasocial Relationships Data Reduction

	Component		
	1	2	3
This athlete reminds me of myself.	.856	.159	.211
I have the same qualities as this athlete.	.872	.160	.168
I have the same beliefs or attitudes as this athlete.	.684	.319	.248
I have the same problems as this athlete.	.507	.468	-.028
I can imagine myself as this athlete.	.714	.267	.156
I can identify with this athlete.	.710	.307	.265
I would like to meet this athlete.	.187	.036	.855
I care about what happens to this athlete.	.208	.230	.756
This athlete's interactions are similar to mine with my friends.	.303	.817	.264
My friends are like this athlete.	.212	.868	.032
I enjoy interacting with this athlete and my friends at the same time.	.295	.633	.447

Table 8: Gender Differences in Parasocial Interaction

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ParaCelebrity	Male	27	2.8667	1.24283	.23918
	Female	47	2.7234	1.09111	.15916
ParaAthlete	Male	37	2.6270	.87580	.14398
	Female	17	2.4824	.96711	.23456
SMParaIndividual	Male	64	2.7281	1.04403	.13050
	Female	67	2.6687	1.04363	.12750

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ParaCelebrity	Equal variances assumed	.670	.416	.517	72	.607	.14326	.27727	-.40947	.69600
	Equal variances not assumed			.499	48.723	.620	.14326	.28729	-.43416	.72069
ParaAthlete	Equal variances assumed	.789	.378	.546	52	.588	.14467	.26513	-.38735	.67670
	Equal variances not assumed			.526	28.529	.603	.14467	.27522	-.41862	.70797
SMParaIndividual	Equal variances assumed	.143	.706	.326	129	.745	.05947	.18245	-.30151	.42044
	Equal variances not assumed			.326	128.721	.745	.05947	.18245	-.30152	.42045

*ParaCelebrity relates to a more traditional mediated personalities that are famous; actors, politicians, and television personalities. ParaAthlete relates to mediated personalities that are famous athletes, Olympic athletes in particular.

Table 9: Celebrity Differences in Parasocial Interaction

	Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SMParaIndividual	1	98	2.4653	.80246	.08106
	Celebrity Set of Questions	74	2.7757	1.14243	.13281

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
SMParaIndividual	Equal variances assumed	14.897	.000	-2.092	170	.038	-.31037	.14835	-.60321	-.01753
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.995	124.518	.048	-.31037	.15559	-.61831	-.00243

*Celebrity set of questions relates to a more traditional mediated personalities that are famous; actors, politicians, and television personalities. ParaAthlete (1) relates to mediated personalities that are famous athletes, Olympic athletes in particular. ParaIndividual refers to parasocial interaction characteristics that tie into an individual more than friends.

Table 10: Media Use by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Facebook	Male	62	2.47	1.376	.175
	Female	65	2.38	1.507	.187
Twitter	Male	61	1.80	1.093	.140
	Female	64	1.91	1.281	.160
Instagram	Male	62	1.60	.966	.123
	Female	66	2.06	1.477	.182
Traditional Blog	Male	63	1.24	.588	.074
	Female	63	1.44	.819	.103
Online Website	Male	63	2.27	1.382	.174
	Female	66	1.88	1.157	.142
Television	Male	63	2.81	1.229	.155
	Female	64	3.03	1.357	.170
Newspaper	Male	61	1.54	.959	.123
	Female	63	1.62	1.023	.129
Magazine	Male	64	1.78	1.031	.129
	Female	63	2.05	1.237	.156
Radio	Male	61	1.34	.655	.084
	Female	63	1.95	1.442	.182

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Facebook	Equal variances assumed	1.232	.269	.324	125	.746	.083	.256	-.424	.591
	Equal variances not assumed			.325	124.763	.746	.083	.256	-.423	.590
Twitter	Equal variances assumed	1.152	.285	-.482	123	.630	-.103	.213	-.526	.320
	Equal variances not assumed			-.484	121.527	.629	-.103	.213	-.524	.318
Instagram	Equal variances assumed	17.463	.000	-2.089	126	.039	-.464	.222	-.903	-.024
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.115	112.767	.037	-.464	.219	-.898	-.029
Traditional Blog	Equal variances assumed	9.153	.003	-1.625	124	.107	-.206	.127	-.458	.045
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.625	112.511	.107	-.206	.127	-.458	.045
Online Website	Equal variances assumed	5.161	.025	1.746	127	.083	.391	.224	-.052	.834
	Equal variances not assumed			1.738	121.041	.085	.391	.225	-.054	.836
Television	Equal variances assumed	.095	.758	-.965	125	.337	-.222	.230	-.677	.233
	Equal variances not assumed			-.965	124.159	.336	-.222	.230	-.676	.233
Newspaper	Equal variances assumed	.191	.663	-.438	122	.662	-.078	.178	-.431	.275
	Equal variances not assumed			-.439	121.874	.662	-.078	.178	-.430	.274
Magazine	Equal variances assumed	3.929	.050	-1.319	125	.190	-.266	.202	-.666	.133
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.317	120.379	.190	-.266	.202	-.667	.134
Radio	Equal variances assumed	39.117	.000	-3.007	122	.003	-.608	.202	-1.008	-.208
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.039	87.186	.003	-.608	.200	-1.006	-.210

Table 11: Media Use by Celebrity Type

	Olympic Athlete (1), Celebrity (2)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Facebook	1	96	2.25	1.392	.142
	Celebrity Set of Questions	73	2.40	1.431	.168
Twitter	1	94	1.77	1.257	.130
	Celebrity Set of Questions	72	1.92	1.172	.138
Instagram	1	96	1.71	1.151	.117
	Celebrity Set of Questions	73	1.90	1.366	.160
Traditional Blog	1	94	1.38	.844	.087
	Celebrity Set of Questions	74	1.34	.668	.078
Online Website	1	97	2.16	1.280	.130
	Celebrity Set of Questions	74	1.97	1.249	.145
Television	1	95	3.02	1.062	.109
	Celebrity Set of Questions	73	2.86	1.427	.167
Newspaper	1	94	2.01	1.214	.125
	Celebrity Set of Questions	73	1.44	.816	.096
Magazine	1	94	2.03	1.131	.117
	Celebrity Set of Questions	74	1.92	1.191	.138
Radio	1	93	1.61	.808	.084
	Celebrity Set of Questions	73	1.79	1.364	.160

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	df
Facebook	Equal variances assumed	.077	.782	-.673	167
	Equal variances not assumed			-.671	152.866
Twitter	Equal variances assumed	.300	.585	-.788	164
	Equal variances not assumed			-.796	157.731
Instagram	Equal variances assumed	2.739	.100	-1.010	167
	Equal variances not assumed			-.987	139.837
Traditional Blog	Equal variances assumed	1.051	.307	.377	166
	Equal variances not assumed			.387	165.992
Online Website	Equal variances assumed	.478	.490	.982	169
	Equal variances not assumed			.985	159.147
Television	Equal variances assumed	13.790	.000	.823	166
	Equal variances not assumed			.793	128.470
Newspaper	Equal variances assumed	19.699	.000	3.465	165
	Equal variances not assumed			3.634	161.929
Magazine	Equal variances assumed	.728	.395	.628	166
	Equal variances not assumed			.624	152.931
Radio	Equal variances assumed	15.753	.000	-1.068	164

Table 11: Continued

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Facebook	Equal variances assumed	.502	-.147	.219
	Equal variances not assumed	.504	-.147	.220
Twitter	Equal variances assumed	.432	-.151	.191
	Equal variances not assumed	.427	-.151	.189
Instagram	Equal variances assumed	.314	-.196	.194
	Equal variances not assumed	.325	-.196	.198
Traditional Blog	Equal variances assumed	.707	.045	.120
	Equal variances not assumed	.699	.045	.117
Online Website	Equal variances assumed	.328	.192	.196
	Equal variances not assumed	.326	.192	.195
Television	Equal variances assumed	.412	.158	.192
	Equal variances not assumed	.430	.158	.199
Newspaper	Equal variances assumed	.001	.572	.165
	Equal variances not assumed	.000	.572	.157
Magazine	Equal variances assumed	.531	.113	.180
	Equal variances not assumed	.533	.113	.181
Radio	Equal variances assumed	.287	-.182	.170

*Celebrity set of questions relates to a more traditional mediated personalities that are famous; actors, politicians, and television personalities. ParaAthlete (1) relates to mediated personalities that are famous athletes, Olympic athletes in particular.

Table 12: Degree of Media Use in Relation to PSI Level

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.477[a]	.228	.182	.88850

a. Predictors: (Constant), Radio, Twitter, Newspaper, Online Website, Facebook, Television, Traditional Blog, Magazine, Instagram

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35.150	9	3.906	4.947	.000[b]
	Residual	119.204	151	.789		
	Total	154.354	160			

a. Dependent Variable: SMParaIndividual

b. Predictors: (Constant), Radio, Twitter, Newspaper, Online Website, Facebook, Television, Traditional Blog, Magazine, Instagram

Table 12: Continued

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.772	.223		7.960	.000
	Facebook	.141	.061	.199	2.331	.021
	Twitter	.161	.074	.194	2.192	.030
	Instagram	-.104	.076	-.128	-1.372	.172
	Traditional Blog	.014	.119	.011	.120	.905
	Online Website	.120	.065	.153	1.836	.068
	Television	.198	.069	.249	2.848	.005
	Newspaper	-.194	.081	-.209	-2.395	.018
	Magazine	-.007	.080	-.008	-.086	.932
	Radio	-.053	.071	-.059	-.740	.460

* ParaIndividual refers to parasocial interaction characteristics that tie into an individual more than friends.

Table 13: Media's Effects on PSI for Celebrities

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.455[a]	.207	.092	1.08412

a. Predictors: (Constant), Radio, Facebook, Newspaper, Traditional Blog, Online Website, Television, Twitter, Instagram, Magazine

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.048	9	2.116	1.801	.086[b]
	Residual	72.870	62	1.175		
	Total	91.918	71			

a. Dependent Variable: ParaCelebrity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Radio, Facebook, Newspaper, Traditional Blog, Online Website, Television, Twitter, Instagram, Magazine

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.781	.408		4.362	.000
	Facebook	.097	.114	.122	.853	.397
	Twitter	.252	.132	.260	1.913	.060
	Instagram	-.086	.128	-.104	-.678	.500
	Traditional Blog	.030	.269	.017	.111	.912
	Online Website	.110	.117	.121	.941	.350
	Television	.190	.111	.238	1.712	.092
	Newspaper	-.134	.182	-.096	-.736	.464
	Magazine	-.005	.148	-.005	-.035	.972
	Radio	-.068	.110	-.082	-.624	.535

a. Dependent Variable: ParaCelebrity

*ParaCelebrity set of questions relates to a more traditional mediated personalities that are famous; actors, politicians, and television personalities.

Table 14 : Media's Effects on PSI for Olympic Athletes

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.555[a]	.308	.228	.70447

a. Predictors: (Constant), Radio, Twitter, Magazine, Facebook, Online Website, Television, Instagram, Traditional Blog, Newspaper

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.202	9	1.911	3.851	.000[b]
	Residual	38.709	78	.496		
	Total	55.911	87			

a. Dependent Variable: ParaAthlete

b. Predictors: (Constant), Radio, Twitter, Magazine, Facebook, Online Website, Television, Instagram, Traditional Blog, Newspaper

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.705	.268		6.369	.000
	Facebook	.141	.067	.237	2.117	.037
	Twitter	.066	.088	.098	.747	.457
	Instagram	-.138	.098	-.183	-1.408	.163
	Traditional Blog	.047	.124	.048	.375	.709
	Online Website	.178	.077	.278	2.323	.023
	Television	.220	.093	.287	2.358	.021
	Newspaper	-.092	.092	-.135	-.991	.325
	Magazine	-.088	.097	-.119	-.901	.370
	Radio	-.132	.105	-.135	-1.260	.211

a. Dependent Variable: ParaAthlete

* ParaAthlete (1) relates to mediated personalities that are famous athletes, Olympic athletes in particular.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

I have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about social media use and fandom. This research study will be conducted by Michael Goldys of the Communications Department at California State University, Fullerton as a part of his Thesis requirement, a graduate requirement. His faculty advisor is Dr. Carolyn Coal, a Professor in the Communications department at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).

If I agree to be in this research study, I will be asked to answer questions to the survey that is part of this study, answering various questions about the media use, fandom, and my thoughts.

There are no known risks associated with my participation in this research beyond those of everyday life. Results from this study may add to our knowledge about social media use and fandom.

Federal regulations require that all participants be informed of the availability of medical treatment or financial compensation in the event of physical injury resulting from participation in the research. I am in good health and able to participate in this study. I voluntarily assume the risk of possible injury or death my participation in this study may cause. If I need emergency medical treatment, I agree to be financially responsible for any costs incurred as a result of such treatment. I understand and acknowledge that Cal State Fullerton does not provide health or accident insurance. I have been advised to carry medical and hospital insurance of my own.

If I have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, I may contact the researcher, Michael, at 949-205-3878 or his faculty advisor, Professor Carolyn Coal, at 657-278-4609.

For questions about my rights as a research participant, I may contact the California State University, Fullerton Regulatory Compliance Coordinator at (657) 278-2327.

Participation in this study is voluntary. I may refuse to participate, skip any question, or withdraw at any time without penalty. Non-participation or withdrawal will not affect my grades or academic standing. Confidentiality of my research records will be strictly maintained by the survey's nature, which allows the participant to stay anonymous.

The research team, authorized CSUF personnel, the study sponsor, and regulatory entities may have access to my data records to protect my safety and welfare. I understand that any information resulting from this research project that personally identifies my information will not be voluntarily released or disclosed by these entities without my

separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Confidentiality of my research records will be maintained to the extent provided by law.
In consideration of my participation in this research study and the benefits I will receive from my participation, on behalf of myself, my heirs and assigns, I release and hold harmless the State of California, the California State University Trustees, Cal State Fullerton, and their officers, agents, volunteers and employees from liability and responsibility for any claims against any of them by reason of any injury to person or property, or death, in connection with my participation in this research study.

I have carefully read this Consent Form. I am fully competent to give my consent by continuing with the survey. I can print a copy of this consent document for my files.

By continuing with the survey, I agree to the following statement: I have carefully read and/or I have had the terms used in this consent form and their significance explained to me. Additionally, I agree that I am at least 18 years of age and agree to participate in this research by completing this survey.

By completing the attached survey you are agreeing to participate in this research study. This protocol contains no foreseeable risks.

Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to study media use and fandom.. Specifically, this survey is going to ask you about your media habits and your thoughts about your favorite Olympic athlete or celebrity .

Please read each question carefully and answer it to the best of your ability. There are no incorrect responses and your answers will remain anonymous. The research team will make every effort to keep the gathered information collected confidential. You are free to discontinue the questionnaire or decline to answer specific questions if you feel uncomfortable.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Instructions

Most questions in this survey make use of rating scales with a range of 5 choices. For those questions, please mark the box that best describes your opinion on the corresponding response scale.

1. Are you 18 years of age or older?
☐ Yes
☐ No

If you answered no, please do not continue survey.

2. Have you been following the 2014 Winter Olympics?
☐ Yes
☐ No

If answered no to question 2 please skip to page 9.

3. Which 2014 Winter Olympic athlete have you followed the most closely?
☐ Shawn White (Snowboarder)
☐ Hannah Teter (Snowboarder)
☐ Ted Ligety (Skiier)
☐ Meryl Davis (Figure Skater)
☐ Charlie White (Figure Skater)
☐ Noelle Pikus-Pace (Ludger)
☐ Lindsay Vonn (Skiier)
☐ Julia Mancuso (Skiier)
☐ Lolo Jones (Bobsled)
☐ Louie Vito

☐ Other: _____
☐ I am not familiar with any athletes in the Winter Olympics

If not familiar with any Winter Olympic athletes, please skip to page 9

4. How often do you participate in the same sport as the athlete you mentioned?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Regularly
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. How often do you attend live performances of the same sport as the athlete you mentioned?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Regularly
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. How often do you play video games based off same sport as the athlete you mentioned?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Regularly
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How often do you follow this individual through:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Regularly
Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Twitter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Instagram	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online Website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Television	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Newspaper	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Magazines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Radio	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. I am likely to send a direct message to this athlete through the social networking site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. I feel this athlete is likely to send a direct message to you through the social networking site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. I am likely to repost content that this athlete posted on their social networking site profile.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. I feel this athlete is likely to repost content I originally posted on my own social networking site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. This athlete reminds me of myself.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. I have the same qualities as this athlete.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. I have the same beliefs or attitudes as this athlete.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. I have the same problems as this athlete.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. I can imagine myself as this athlete.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. I can identify with this athlete.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. I would like to meet this athlete.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. I care about what happens to this athlete.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. This athlete's interactions are similar to mine with my friends.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. My friends are like this athlete.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. I enjoyed interacting with this athlete and my friends at the same time.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. I enjoy viewing this athlete's content through social networking sites.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. This athlete makes me feel comfortable as if I'm a friend.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. This athlete is close to my age.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. I'm likely to seek this athlete's personal profile while consuming media.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

27. This athlete appears engaging and interactive with the fans on social networking sites.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. I feel the athlete enjoys my comments and messages to them on the social networking site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

29. How often do you use the following media?

	Never	< Once a week	Weekly	2- 6 times/week	Daily	> 1x/day
Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Twitter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Instagram	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online Website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Television	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Print (newspaper)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Print (magazines)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Radio	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. How oftern do you use media to obtain information about celebrities or public figures?

Never	< Once a week	Weekly	2- 6 times/week	Daily	> 1x/day
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Demographics

31. Gender:
☐ Male
☐ Female

32. Age:
☐ 18 - 20 years old
☐ 21 – 23 years old
☐ 24 – 26 years old
☐ 27 – 30 years old
☐ 31 – 35 years old
☐ 36 – 40 years old
☐ 41 and over

33. Race:
☐ White/Caucasian
☐ Asian
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Other

34. Occupation:
☐ Full Time Employment
☐ Part Time Employment
☐ Student
☐ Unemployed

35. Yearly Household Income:
☐ $0 - $14,999

☐ $15,000 - $24,999
☐ $25,000 - $39,999
☐ $40,000 - $54,999
☐ $55,000 - $69,000
☐ $70,000 +

36. Residence:
State (U.S.) _____
Country (Outside U.S.)_____

End

Please DO NOT continue onto the next page. Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Your information will help better understand media use and fandom

Who is your favorite celebrity?
(Fill in celebrity's name)_____

How often do you follow this celebrity through:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Regularly
Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Twitter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Instagram	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online Website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Television	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Newspaper	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Magazines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Radio	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. I am likely to send a direct message to this celebrity through the social networking site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. I feel this celebrity is likely to send a direct message to you through the social networking site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. I am likely to repost content that this celebrity posted on their social networking site profile.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. I feel this celebrity is likely to repost content I originally posted on my own social networking site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. This celebrity reminds me of myself.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. I have the same qualities as this celebrity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. I have the same beliefs or attitudes as this celebrity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. I have the same problems as this celebrity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. I can imagine myself as this celebrity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. I can identify with this celebrity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. I would like to meet this celebrity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. I care about what happens to this celebrity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. This celebrity's interactions are similar to mine with my friends.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. My friends are like this celebrity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. I enjoyed celebrity with this individual and my friends at the same time.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. I enjoy viewing this celebrity's content through social networking sites.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. This celebrity makes me feel comfortable as if I'm a friend.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

25. This celebrity is close to my age.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. I'm likely to seek this celebrity's personal profile while consuming media.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

27. This celebrity appears engaging and interactive with the fans on social networking sites.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. I feel the celebrity enjoys my comments and messages to them on the social networking site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

29. How often do you use the following media?

	Never	< Once a week	Weekly	2- 6 times/week	Daily	> 1x/day
Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Twitter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Instagram	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online Website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Television	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Print (newspaper)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Print (magazines)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Radio	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. How oftern do you use media to obtain information about celebrities or public figures?

Never	< Once a week	Weekly	2- 6 times/week	Daily	> 1x/day
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Demographics

31. Gender:
☐ Male
☐ Female

32. Age:
☐ 18 - 20 years old
☐ 21 – 23 years old
☐ 24 – 26 years old
☐ 27 – 30 years old
☐ 31 – 35 years old
☐ 36 – 40 years old
☐ 41 and over

33. Race:
☐ White/Caucasian
☐ Asian
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Other

34. Occupation:
☐ Full Time Employment
☐ Part Time Employment
☐ Student
☐ Unemployed

35. Yearly Household Income:
☐ $0 - $14,999
☐ $15,000 - $24,999
☐ $25,000 - $39,999
☐ $40,000 - $54,999
☐ $55,000 - $69,000
☐ $70,000 +

36. Residence:

State (U.S.) _____
Country (Outside U.S.)_____

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Your information will help better understand media use and fandom.

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