

# Exploring Parasocial Relationships in Committed Individuals

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## Abstract

Parasocial relationships can impact real life relationships both positively and negatively. The current study aims to understand how parasocial relationship affects real-life relationship, work efficiency, emotional bonds and social interactions. The study consisted of 10 participants aged between 18-40, 5 males and 5 females who greatly admired celebrities. Data was collected through interview method. The findings revealed that parasocial relationships provide emotional fulfilment through mood management, consolation, and inspiration from admired figures. However, it can also lead to procrastination, escapism from reality, and reduced productivity. Social impacts include increased fan community engagement but reduced face-to-face interactions. Regarding relationships, participants reported tensions due to unrealistic expectations, unfavourable comparisons to idealized media figures, and perceived neglect. Overall, parasocial relationships demonstrate both beneficial and detrimental effects on emotional well-being, work-life balance, social dynamics, and romantic satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Parasocial Relationships, Committed Relationships, Emotional Impact, Social Implications, Relationship expectations.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Parasocial relationships refer to the sense of friendship or connection that individuals feel towards media personalities, even though these figures do not reciprocate those feelings (Horton and Wohl 1956). Parasocial interaction (PSI) refers to the audience's engagement with media figures as if they were engaging in face-to-face interactions. The terms parasocial relationships (PSRs) and perceived social interaction (PSI) were used interchangeably in early parasocial theories. However, more recent research has highlighted the distinctions between the two, defining PSRs as the audience members' perceived ongoing connection with media personae and PSI as the illusion of

interaction during viewing (Stever, 2017). The concept of PSRs has evolved over time, broadening to include various media figures beyond the original definition provided by Horton and Wohl. Scholars have expanded the concept of persona to encompass real, fictional, or even cartoonish human beings, reflecting the diverse range of media figures to which audiences may form parasocial relationships. The concept also includes several components such as parasocial love and para friendship.

### 1.2 Parasocial Relationships

Parasocial relationships are one-sided connections in which a person develops a deep emotional bond with a media figure, usually a celebrity or fictitious character—even in the absence of in-person communication. Horton

and Wohl initially proposed the phenomena in 1956 while researching how viewers were affected by television. They observed that, despite the relationship being one-sided, viewers frequently experience sentiments of intimacy, camaraderie, or even love towards television personalities. They used the term "parasocial relationships" to describe the more durable, long-term, and typically pleasant, one-sided intimacy at a distance that viewers build, based on repeated interactions, with media actors (Horton and Wohl 1956).

**Para Romantic love** - Para-romantic love refers to the experience of romantic feelings or emotions towards a media figure or character. This phenomenon involves individuals developing intense romantic attachments, fantasies, or desires towards a fictional or non-fictional persona portrayed in the media. Tukachinsky considers para-romantic love as a significant aspect of parasocial relationships, highlighting how individuals may experience feelings of longing, affection, and romantic attraction towards media figures akin to traditional romantic relationships. This form of attachment blurs the boundaries between fantasy and reality, leading individuals to invest emotionally in a one-sided romantic connection with the media figure (Tukachinsky, 2010).

**Para friendship** - Para-friendship involves individuals forming close, friendly connections with media figures or characters, experiencing feelings of camaraderie, trust, and companionship towards them (Tukachinsky, 2010). Tukachinsky explores para-friendship as a key component of parasocial relationships, emphasising how viewers can develop strong bonds with media figures, feeling a sense of solidarity, liking, and emotional connection similar to friendships in real life. This form of relationship highlights the social and emotional fulfilment individuals derive from their interactions with media personas, blurring the lines between fictional characters and real-life friends (Tukachinsky, 2010).

**Parasocial Interaction** – Parasocial interaction is defined as a concept where a media user perceives a media performer as an intimate conversational partner during a

viewing episode, often feeling a sense of conversational give-and-take, especially when the performer bodily addresses the viewer through the camera (Dibble et. al, 2016). Parasocial interaction is characterized by a felt reciprocity with a TV performer during an exposure situation, while a parasocial relationship involves a longer-term association that may begin during viewing but extends beyond the media exposure (Dibble et. al, 2016). Parasocial interaction focuses on the immediate interaction between a viewer and a media performer during a specific viewing episode. In contrast, a parasocial relationship entails a lasting connection that goes beyond individual viewing instances.

**Theory of affective bonding-** The theory of affective bonding posits that individuals develop emotional attachments to media figures, real or fictional, through a set of propositions: humans inherently respond to humanlike representations, bonding requires perceived relevance in communication, emotions evoked by media figures may feel real to viewers, and media figures fulfil observers' needs. It emphasizes the experiential aspect of media use and sheds light on users' emotional connections with figures. It elucidates why and how individuals engage emotionally with media figures, irrespective of their physical reality, highlighting the role of relevance in communication and humans' innate propensity to respond to humanlike representations (Konijn et.al, 2017).

**Gender differences-**Gender has been included as a variable in several of the studies on PSI and PSRs. Generally, males were more likely to identify male celebrities as objects of both PSI and PSRs while females were equally likely to identify males and females. A study by Gleason in 2004 showed that boys were more likely to identify athletes as their idol. This suggests that there is a gender preference in the choice of celebrities for parasocial relationships. Boys were more likely to choose males while girls chose favourite celebrities from both sexes in studies on children. Girls are slightly more likely to report than are boys. For boys and girls who interacted with male media characters, intelligence and attractiveness

predicted PSI. However, for girls only, attractiveness predicted PSI with female characters (Hoffner, 1996)

**Singles vs. couples-** For singles individuals, PSRs may serve as a compensation or substitute for real life relationships (Madison et.al, 2015). For those in romantic relationships, PSRs may play more of a complementary role rather than a compensatory one, "For most people, 'the parasocial is complementary to normal social life... it provides a social milieu in which the everyday assumptions and understandings of primary group sociability are demonstrated and reaffirmed'"(Horton and Wohl 1956). Study by Derrick and his colleagues in 2009 found that individuals who had strong parasocial relationships with attractive media figures were more likely to compare their partners unfavourably to these idealized media figures, leading to dissatisfaction in their real-life relationships.

Therefore, while parasocial relationships can provide emotional fulfilment and companionship for individuals, they can also have implications for their real-life relationships. It is essential for individuals to maintain a balance between their parasocial interactions and their actual relationships to ensure healthy and fulfilling connections in both domains.

The study of parasocial relationships (PSRs) has garnered significant attention in academic literature, spanning various disciplines such as psychology, communication, and media studies. Scholars have explored the formation, dynamics, and implications of PSRs in diverse contexts, shedding light on the intricate ways in which individuals engage with media figures and celebrities.

One of the pioneering works in this field by Cohen, in which he investigated the links between individual TV viewers' working models of attachment and the parasocial relationships they establish with their favourite TV characters, revealed a selective pattern of relationships between attachment models and parasocial relationships, particularly

highlighting gender differences in romantic relationships (Cohen, 1997).

Building upon this research, Cole and Leets delved into the influence of attachment styles on the formation of parasocial relationships with television personalities. Their study, involving 115 students, found that attachment styles play a significant role in shaping parasocial behaviour, with anxious-ambivalent individuals being the most likely to form parasocial bonds (Cole and Leets, 1999).

Similarly, Dinkha and his colleagues examined parasocial relationships in a collectivist society, focusing on the reasons viewers develop emotional attachments to TV celebrities. Their study in Kuwait revealed that higher levels of anxious-ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles were prevalent due to the rigid collectivist nature of the society, leading many to compensate for the lack of real-world relationships by forming mediated bonds (Dinkha et.al, 1999).

In the realm of adolescent development, Erickson, and Cin explored the role of parasocial relationships in shaping romantic and sexual identities among adolescents. Their study highlighted the significance of parasocial romantic attachments in influencing relationship-contingent self-esteem and perceptions of sexual experience.

Furthermore, Tukachinsky and Dorros in 2010 investigated emotional and physical aspects of parasocial romantic relationships among adolescents, revealing associations with idealized romantic beliefs and relationship outcomes. Their findings underscored the complex interplay between parasocial relationships and adolescents' perceptions of romantic love.

Transitioning to the realm of social media, Schnarre and Adam in 2017 examined perceptions of parasocial extradyadic relationships among college students. Their study found that participants in parasocial conditions identified such relationships as acts of betrayal, indicating potential negative consequences on real-life relationships.

Moreover, Hoffner and Bond in 2022 explored the impact of PSRs on social media platforms, highlighting both beneficial and adverse well-being outcomes. Their study elucidated how PSRs can promote healthy attitudes and behaviours while also potentially contributing to negative self-comparisons and mental health issues.

In addition to these empirical studies, theoretical frameworks such as those proposed by Eyal and Dailey in 2012 have advanced our understanding of relational maintenance in PSRs.

Overall, the literature on PSRs encompasses a wide range of topics, from attachment theory and adolescent development to the influence of social media and well-being outcomes. Through empirical research and theoretical advancements, scholars continue to unravel the complexities of PSRs, offering valuable insights into human interaction with media figures and their implications for individual and societal well-being.

#### Current study

Parasocial relationships can have an impact on real life relationship, leading to dissatisfaction and comparison among partners. The impact of parasocial relationships can be both positive and negative. The current study focuses on the impact of parasocial relationships in committed relationships. The role of parasocial relationship in mood management, emotional fulfilment, its effect on work, impact on relationships etc. Most of the studies were focused on adolescent population.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Objective

- To understand the impact of parasocial relationship on real life relationships.
- To understand the impact of parasocial relationship on social and work life.

### 2.2 Research Questions

- How does parasocial relationship affect real life relationship?
- How does parasocial relationship affect social and work life?

### 2.3 Operational Definition

Parasocial Relationship: Horton and Wohl (1956) referred parasocial relationships as the more enduring, long-term, and usually positive, one-sided intimacy at a distance that users develop toward media performers, based on repeated encounters.

### 2.4 Concepts

Parasocial Relationship is the sense of friendship or connection that individuals feel towards media personalities, even though these figures do not reciprocate those feelings.

Committed Relationships is a long-term, dedicated partnership between two individuals who agree to be emotionally and often legally bound to each other. It includes marriage, civil unions, cohabitation, engaged relationships, long distance relations and so on.

### 2.5 Universe of the Study

The study focuses on individuals who are in a relationship between the age group 18-40.

### 2.6 Geographical Area

The study is conducted in India.

### 2.7 Sample

The present study selected 10 individuals between the age group 18 – 40 in which 5 were females and 5 were males.

### 2.8 Sampling Technique

The samples of the study were selected through Purposive Sampling Technique.

### 2.9 Inclusion criteria

- Individuals belonging to the age group of 18-40
- Individuals who are in a committed relationship

- Individuals who are great admirers of celebrities.

#### 2.10 Exclusion criteria

- Individuals above the age of 40 and below the age of 18
- Single individuals

#### 2.11 Procedure

The participants were asked to fill a google form consisting of screening questions. Their consent was taken and were ensured about confidentiality. 10 participants were selected based on their responses, 5 males and 5 females. A questionnaire to interview the participants was formed by the investigators which consisted of 10 questions. The questions were reviewed by experts who are knowledgeable in the field of study. The selected participants were interviewed in a comfortable and quiet environment and responses were collected. The responses were analysed through thematic analysis.

#### 2.12 Data Analysis

##### Thematic Analysis

### 3. Result & Discussion

The study aimed to explore parasocial relationships and its impact on real life relationships. The study was conducted among ten individuals, 5 males and 5 females between the ages 18 - 40. The data was collected by using an interview method. A questionnaire was prepared by the investigators and was reviewed by experts who have knowledge in the field of study.

The selected participants, individuals in relationships who also greatly admire celebrities, were chosen based on screening questions analyzing their parasocial relationships with their idols. All ten participants were briefed about the study and their roles before the interview, and their confidentiality has been maintained. The idols admired by female participants were primarily from the entertainment industry, such as actors

or singers, while those of male participants were predominantly sports personalities.

The analysis of the data collected gathered several themes and sub-themes. Six major themes have been derived from the analysis: 1) Expressive Talents 2) Emotional Attachment 3) Impact on Work 4) Impact on Personal Connection 5) Impact on Relationship 6) Comparison of Relationship. Under the theme of Expressive talents, two sub-themes have been identified: Appreciation of Skills and Role Model. From the theme, Emotional Attachment, four sub-themes were derived: Mood Management, Consolation and Comfort and Emotional Response. From the third theme, Impact on Work, three subthemes, Escapism, Procrastination and Social Media Engagement were derived. From Impact on Personal Connection, Social interaction and Fight for Idol were the sub-themes derived. Impact on Relationship has two sub themes, and they are Support from partner and Influence on partner. Comparison of relationships has four sub themes, and they are Ideal relationship vs. real relationship and Unrealistic Expectations.

##### Expressive talents:

1. Role model: Celebrities' power to influence their audience often stems from the audience's ability to relate to them, as outlined in their discussions on celebrity and norm activation. This connection, known as identification, represents a deep level of commitment. However, even individuals who don't strongly identify with a celebrity may still view them as influential figures and be impacted by their actions. In our research some participants have placed their idol as a role model thinking they want to become like them one day. They also see them as someone they can take inspiration from. These participants eventually start doing things that their idol is doing, making them feel more connected to them.

##### Emotional Attachment

1. Emotional Response: Bandura emphasized the significance of emotional involvement in influencing individuals' behaviour (Bandura, 2001). Emotional

engagement manifests when a viewer participates in a dynamic, interactive chatting environment, fostering an emotional connection with others, and subsequently expressing emotions while interacting with the live-streamer or fellow viewers (Lim et.al, 2020). Thus, achieving emotional engagement necessitates psychological immersion in the live chatting milieu, with an awareness of others' presence (Brockmyer et.al, 2009). This concept of emotional engagement has become pivotal in social TV, enabling viewers of live-streaming shows to feel emotionally connected and express their feelings in response to the performer and other viewers (Guo, 2018; Hilvert-Bruze, 2018).

From the perspective of triadic reciprocal causation, emotional engagement represents a significant behavioural factor indicative of a novel style of behaviour, such as the use of emotes in platforms like Twitch, which individuals learn from others and the platform's norms. According to the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) of mass communication, individuals are easily influenced by the emotional expressions of others, and observing others' emotional reactions to stimulating conditions triggers similar emotional responses in observers (Bandura, 2001).

In contrast to online video games where gamers collaborate to achieve shared goals, viewers of streamed games lack the opportunity for direct collaboration, necessitating engagement with the streamer and other viewers through real-time chat to have a vicarious experience.

Overall, our findings imply that people emotionally react strongly to parasocial ties, especially when they look up to famous figures such as cricket players. Because of this, active fan group members may be more prone to form an intense, one-sided emotional attachment to a favourite celebrity, which may have negative effects on their mental health and other facets of their lives. Admiration for the person's mental health and coping strategies, in addition to their professional accomplishments, has a significant impact on emotional reactions. On the other hand, people can be affected by this emotional connection in both positive and

harmful ways. In general, the emotional reaction to parasocial connections shows a nuanced interaction between empathy, admiration, and the understanding of the difficulties admired people experience.

2. Mood Management: Parasocial interactions involve a deliberate selection process by audience members, who choose which characters to form relationships with. Maltreated children may differ from non-maltreated children in the types of characters they engage with due to their life circumstances. Zillmann's mood management theory provides insight into how audiences, particularly those in aversive states, select media content (Zillmann, 1980)

According to Zillmann, individuals seek media that elicits positive emotions to counteract negative moods. This suggests that those experiencing negative emotions will gravitate towards media that uplifts them, while those in positive moods will prefer content that maintains their positivity. When in an aversive state, individuals are predicted to choose media that is: 1) opposite in arousal to their current state, 2) highly engaging to distract from their negative state, and 3) thematically different from their current state.

The concept of mood comprises trait and state moods, with trait moods reflecting stable emotional characteristics over time. This paper focuses on trait moods, particularly those stemming from maltreatment by a parent, as opposed to state moods which are situational (Fridhandler, 1986). Numerous studies support the fundamental principles of mood management theory for both state and trait moods. Generally, negative moods prompt the selection of positive media, while positive moods lead to the maintenance of that positivity (Dillman-Carpentier, 2008; Knobloch, 2003; Zillmann, 1980). Although some studies present deviations from these predictions, even counter-hedonistic media usage tends to improve mood (Dillman-Carpentier, 2008; Mares, 1992).

The impact of mood on parasocial relationships is significant and multifaceted. As evidenced

by the observations made in this discussion, individuals tend to seek out media content that aligns with their current emotional state. Whether experiencing positive or negative moods, individuals are drawn to media that either reinforces their existing emotions or provides a counterbalance to alleviate aversive states.

Overall, mood plays a crucial role in shaping parasocial interactions, influencing both the selection of media content and the depth of emotional investment in parasocial relationships. Understanding how mood affects these relationships can provide valuable insights into audience behaviour and preferences, offering opportunities for content creators and media producers to better cater to the emotional needs of their audience members.

3. **Consolation and Comfort:** The statements of the participants illustrate how various forms of media and parasocial relationships offer consolation and comfort to individuals in different ways. Watching specific content, such as podcasts, cooking channels, or funny videos, serves as a source of happiness and emotional upliftment, heightening moods and providing relief from negative emotions. Furthermore, individuals find solace in connecting with the coping mechanisms and mental states of admired figures, such as cricket players, which not only inspires admiration but also fosters empathy towards others. Conversely, moments of defeat or loss evoke profound sadness and disappointment, highlighting the emotional investment individuals have in these parasocial relationships. Overall, these experiences demonstrate how parasocial interactions can offer consolation, comfort, and a sense of connection, serving as a valuable coping mechanism in navigating life's ups and downs.

#### Impact on work

1. **Escapism** - The individuals gain experiences from the consumption of the content of their idols. These encounters provide fans with a means to temporarily escape from undesirable aspects of social life. Despite the individual's awareness that they don't

personally know idols, a deep personal connection and attachment still form. Additionally, the abundance of content available makes it effortless to become deeply engrossed for extended periods. According to Ko and his colleagues, the individuals who admire their idol often liken their experiences to a "reward," suggesting that being a fan offers a more desirable state of being than their current reality. They propose that fans' preference for engaging in virtual environments online may stem from the hardships they face in the real world with academics or work (Ko, 2014). Many participants in a study conducted by Jenol and Pazil mentioned that they feel sad when they need to face reality. They even mentioned that they preferred the virtual world instead of the real world (Jenol and Pazil, 2020). Prior research has demonstrated that the rise of the internet has partially obscured the boundaries between existence in virtual environments and the physical world. Appadurai contends that the internet has the potential to create "imagined worlds that are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world" (Appadurai, 1996).

Overall, the studies have found that the parasocial relationship with an idol is a form of escape from reality to balance the stress of their work life. More than half of the interviewees mentioned that they consider parasocial relationships as a safe place when they have issues in their relationship or in their professional life.

2. **Procrastination-** Many of the participants mentioned that they sometimes leave their work pending when they are watching their idol's content. Some have mentioned that when they are overloaded with the work they would go and watch their idol's video content and might watch one after another and would have a hard time to stop it and work. Another participant said that they tend to prioritize watching matches over studying or working during game times.

3. **Social media Engagement** - Some of the participants reported that their admiration

for their idol has increased over years because of their social media engagement. Horton and Wohl and Horton and Strauss stated that parasocial interaction is triggered if media performers acknowledge the presence of the audience (Horton and Wohl 1956; Horton and Strauss, 1957). It can be during performances or through social media. The engagement of the idols with their admirers these days has created a somewhat blurred line between life in online spaces and the real world. This in turn has played a major role in creating the parasocial relationships. The idols not only through mainstream media but also use special platforms to interact with their admirers especially in the Korean entertainment industry.

#### Impact on Personal Connection

1. Social interaction - Individuals who spend most of the time watching their idols reported that they didn't feel the need to interact with others which in turn affected their interpersonal relationships. Wang and his colleagues found a positive relationship between loneliness and parasocial behaviour in young women, suggesting that those who experience loneliness are more likely to engage in parasocial relationships (Wang et.al, 2008). Individuals heavily engaged in PSRs with media personalities or celebrities through social media may allocate significant time and emotional investment to these one-sided connections, potentially leading to a decrease in face-to-face social interactions (Tatem and Ingram, 2022). Such an intense focus on parasocial relationships can result in a lack of social interaction with real-life friends, family, or acquaintances. Furthermore, individuals who rely on parasocial relationships for companionship or emotional support may be less motivated to cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships offline, contributing to reduced social engagement (Cohen, 2004).

On the other hand for some participants social interaction increased and they formed many new friends because of sharing common interests and following similar K-pop idols and watching similar K-dramas. According to Cohen when developing social relationships via

social interactions and contacts “individuals gain a sense of identity, predictability, and stability; of purpose; and of meaning, belonging, security and self-worth” (Giles, 2002). Study by Giles confirmed the presence of parasocial relationships in the online environment and highlighted that these relationships have a higher propensity to become reciprocal and turn into social relationships in online contexts than in offline settings (Giles, 2002).

2. Fight for idol- The participants reported that they often end up fighting with other club members while talking to each other about their idols. Schmid and Klimmt (2011) in their studies indicated that fans form strong emotional attachments to their chosen idols, considering them integral to their identity. Social identity theory suggests that individuals derive self-esteem from group belonging, contributing to conflicts between fan groups over perceived insults or challenges to their idol's superiority (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

#### Impact on Relationship

1. Support from partner- Most of the participants reported that their partners usually get frustrated when participants spend most of the time watching the videos, dramas or even shows of their idols. This often ends up in fights and are indicated as moments when their partners hate them. People with strong parasocial relationships may displace their emotional needs, such as intimacy or companionship, onto the celebrity figure. This can lead them to neglect their real-life relationships, including with their partner, and instead prioritize their relationship with the celebrity (Derrick et.al, 2009). Furthermore, Derrick, Gabriel, and Tippin demonstrated that parasocial relationships can lead to self-discrepancies, where individuals may perceive themselves more positively when engaging with parasocial connections.

2. Influence on partner- When one partner develops a parasocial relationship with a celebrity, they may introduce their partner to the celebrity's work or persona to share their enthusiasm and create shared experiences.



Individuals with parasocial relationships often model their behaviour, interests, and values after the celebrity they admire. They may encourage their partner to imitate the celebrity's style, interests, or beliefs to bond with them and share their admiration for the celebrity (Tian and Hoffner, 2010). This could also involve encouraging their partner to watch the celebrity's movies, listen to their music, or attend their events (Stever, 2011).

#### Comparison of Relationships

1. **Ideal relationship VS real relationship:** According to our study, our participants have compared their ideal relationship to their real relationship, where they have expressed it by saying that they have always thought about their ideal relationship, but as they got mature, they understood that fantasy life is different and real life is very much different. Since they its fantasy life, they would want to make it happy all the time. But eventually they realized that real relationships are not always happy.

Liebers and Straub suggests that fantasy does not unconditionally lead to more post-receptive involvement when the influence of romantic PSIs (Romantic Parasocial Interactions) is excluded (Liebers and Straub, 2020). One reason for this might be different levels of interpersonal attraction and, therefore, motivations to form RII (Retrospective Imaginative Involvement) of their participants within their studies. The central hypothesis of their research was that an individual's level of fantasy predicts the intensity of their romantic parasocial phenomena with a media character because individuals who are more fanciful form more intense romantic parasocial phenomena.

2. **Unrealistic Expectations -** Almost half of the participants have mentioned that they sometimes compare their existing relationship with the relationship they imagined with their idol. Some have brought up that they have also wanted their partner to have their idol's features. Patterns of unrealistic romantic ideals depicted in media have been extensively researched (Galloway et.al, 2015; Vaterlaus et.al, 2018). The studies indicate that individuals with greater emotional involvement

in media tend to have higher levels of parasocial relationship involvement (Theran et.al, 2010). This emotional attachment to media figures, particularly among adolescent females, may lead to greater acceptance of the romanticized messages portrayed in media. As a result, excessive emotional attachment to fictional characters in romance media can lead individuals to internalize unrealistic and potentially harmful romantic ideals, influencing their expectations in real-life relationships (Driesmans et.al, 2016).

Even though the participants have alluded to having compared their partner or relationship to their ideal ones, some participants show their acceptance that their expectations are unrealistic, and their partner would not be able to attain them.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study explored the impact of parasocial relationships—where individuals form emotional connections with celebrities they admire—on real-life relationships and daily life. Participants demonstrated strong emotional bonds with their idols, viewing them as sources of inspiration and coping mechanisms for both positive and negative emotions. These relationships influenced various aspects of life, including work efficiency and personal interactions. While some participants found escapism in their idols' content, leading to procrastination and reduced productivity, others experienced enhanced social connections or conflicts within fan communities. Parasocial interactions also affected romantic relationships, with some reporting dissatisfaction and tension due to unrealistic expectations and comparisons with their partners. The study highlights the complex effects of parasocial relationships on interpersonal dynamics and mental well-being, suggesting the need for further research and strategies to manage these connections in the digital era.

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