Impact of Celebrity Worshiping on Body Image and Maladaptive Daydreaming in Young Adults

Aastha Gupta*, Apoorva Choudhary*, Dinesh Chhabra**, Betina Abraham***

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to explore the predicting role of neuroticism as a dispositional factor for celebrity worshiping. And also to study the mediating role of cognitive flexibility in the relationship among CW (comprising entertainment-social, borderline-pathological, and intense-personal domains), body image and maladaptive daydreaming in the Indian population. A quantitative study was conducted with 70 young adults between the age of 18-25 years through google form; where the gathered data was processed in Jamovi for correlational and mediational analysis. CW and body image concerns had a significant positive relationship. Body image concerns also had a significant positive relationship with neuroticism and maladaptive daydreaming. In contrast, significant negative relationships were observed between cognitive flexibility with neuroticism and body image concerns, respectively. However, no significant relationships of CW with cognitive flexibility, neuroticism, and maladaptive daydreaming were observed. Furthermore, cognitive flexibility was observed to partially mediate the relationship between two domains of CW, namely, borderline-pathological and entertainment-social domains with maladaptive daydreaming & body image concerns, respectively. The present study revealed associations of CW with body image and maladaptive daydreaming, amidst the mediating role of cognitive flexibility. The study highlights the need to focus on the maladaptive impact of CW by strengthening the cognitive flexibility of individuals at risk.

Keywords: celebrity worshiping, body image, cognitive flexibility, maladaptive daydreaming, neuroticism

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INTRODUCTION

Celebrities have always been an essential part of society at large. Since the advent of cinema in the 19th century, celebrities have been gaining attention and being showered with love by the audience. Over the centuries, a celebrity culture emerged, having a significant social impact on young adults' lives. In today's digital era, it's not unusual to talk about parasocial relationships, one-sided relationship, however when the same idea takes an extreme form, it's referred to as celebrity worshiping (CW), and those who are attracted to celebrities, frequently to the point of obsession, are commonly referred to as "celebrity worshipers" (McCutcheon, 2002) CW can be defined as an intense psychological attachment with the celebrity, characterized by strong identification and intense devotional feelings, loyalty and willingness for time and financial investment in that person (Brown, 2015). The trend of following celebrities has been rising from the past 20 years mainly because of the advent of social media with access to personal facets of celebrity lives via regular posts and photos which contribute to the notion that celebrities are everyday people and foster a sense of personal connection with the celebrity, though the relationship is one-sided, or 'parasocial.' The early and middle adolescent age groups have been found to be more invested in celebrity and popular media culture (Brooks, 2021). Research indicates that individuals with high levels of celebrity worship are more likely to have poorer mental health (Sansone, & Sansone, 2014), tendencies towards criminal (Sheridan et al, 2007) and stalking (McCutcheon et al, 2006) behavior, which is harmful for society.

People feel attraction, empathy, and belongingness towards certain celebrities (Redmond, 2015). It has also been suggested that attributes which are lacking in the life of the worshiper such as insecurity about social status, uncertainty about what qualities are worthy of admiration and social isolation also results in a desire to find vicarious meaning in the lives of celebrities (Hollander, 2010).

Research reveals three distinct domains of CW to classify people's obsession with celebrities ranging from normative to more pathological: entertainment-social (according to which people are attracted to celebrities because they have entertainment value and they provide opportunities for conversation within the social circles), intense-personal (individuals start to idealize and idolize celebrities, forming strong emotional attachments), and borderline-pathological (represents an extreme level of obsession with celebrities that can have negative consequences on an individual's well-being and functioning) (Sansone & Sansone, 2014). The impact of these three stages on people has been found to affect the overall psychological well-being of a person (Shabahang et al. 2020). Engaging in celebrity worship is often associated with undesirable attitudes and behaviors including factors such as neuroticism, a trait disposition to experience negative effects, including anger, anxiety, self-consciousness, irritability, emotional instability, impulsiveness, and depression (Simon, 2008). Neuroticism as a personality trait is highly correlated with the intense-personal domain of CW as well as all the facets of trait anxiety, angry hostility, impulsiveness, depression, self-consciousness, vulnerability (Maltby et al., 2011).

Taking into consideration the reviewed literature, it is essential to study the impact of CW, especially among the Indian population where CW has been found to be an ever increasing trend (Sanger, 2007). The relevance of the current study multiplies in view of the COVID-19 times, where people who were locked in their homes followed the celebrities more closely through various social media platforms (Swaminathan, 2020). Celebrities have permeated into the most trivial aspects of our lives dictating each and every decision that a person takes. Hero worship is a part of Indian culture and tradition (Sanger, 2007). Many news reports have highlighted that Rajinikanth's, a South Indian film star, aura would be considerably diminished without footage of fans bathing his cut-outs in milk, thus pointing out the unique fan phenomenon of the south Indian population (Srinivas, 2013). Similarly, the famous Indian Bollywood superstar, Amitabh Bachchan has a temple dedicated to him in Kolkata considering him an incarnation of God Krishna (Ghosh & Biswas, 2022). Globally, when 'King of Pop' Michael Jackson died, it was reported that nearly a dozen of his fans had committed suicide and about 50 fans sought help from a suicide prevention hotline (Hindustan Times, 2009). The craze of Korean pop bands (BTS) and Korean drama actors, popularly referred to as 'K-craze', witnessed a popular hashtag, 'CutForKookie' which was viral in 2016 when the rumors were spread about the BTS member Jungkook having a girlfriend, with fans cutting their wrists in protest (Kfangurl, 2019). These instances indicate the prevalence of lack of touch with reality among celebrity worshippers. Researchers have also found an association of CW and dissociation from reality (Maltby et al., 2006), tendency towards addiction, criminal behavior (Sheridan et al., 2007), and compulsive buying behavior (Reeves et al., 2012).

Given these extreme accounts of CW, and the dearth of research in the Indian context with regard to the mediational role of cognitive flexibility within the relationship between CW, body image and maladaptive daydreaming; to grasp a better understanding, a model has been proposed to outline the relationship between the said variables.
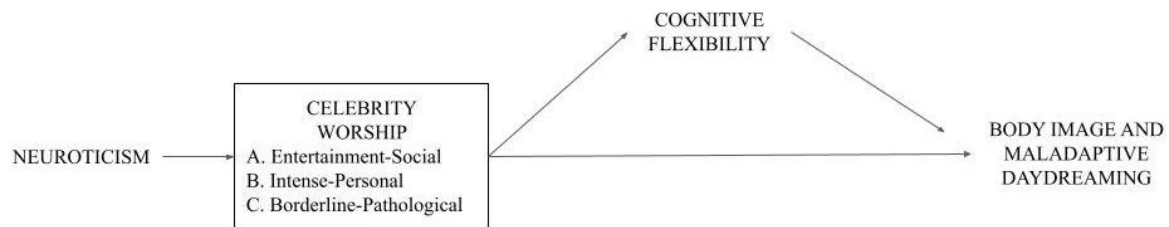
Figure 1. Proposed model

The model proposes to explore the relationship between neuroticism and CW, and further see if cognitive flexibility plays a mediating role between CW and body image & maladaptive daydreaming respectively.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Neuroticism and Celebrity Worshiping

A study reported that celebrity worshippers who tend to exhibit intense and compulsive feelings toward the celebrity are neurotic, thus claiming that neuroticism leads to higher celebrity worship (Maltby et al., 2003). This relationship is in line with the intense-personal dimension of CW which reflects some of the neuroticism traits like tense, emotional, moody, hence making the people more susceptible to developing obsessional tendencies (Maltby et al., 2003). A study done on the Indian population revealed the same association between the two dimensions (McCutcheon et al., 2016).

H1: Neuroticism has a significant relationship with celebrity worshiping.

Celebrity Worshiping, Body Image and Maladaptive Daydreaming

Celebrity culture and media portrayals of celebrities can heavily influence people's perceptions of their own bodies. Maltby et al., (2005) found a significant relationship between body image attitude towards celebrity among female students. A substantial low and negative relationship was also found between celebrity worship and body image in adolescents who idolize K-Pop (Utami, 2019). Maladaptive daydreaming has been defined as "extensive fantasy activity that replaces human interaction and/or interferes with academic, interpersonal or vocational functioning" (Somer, 2002). People may incorporate celebrities into their daydreams, imagining themselves in a romantic relationship or sharing similar experiences with their favorite stars. The social dramas surrounding celebrity reported activities and life-events profoundly affect some people, evoking responses ranging from the mildly unusual to the profoundly pathological. For instance, identification with celebrities can be a form of escape fantasy for those with unstable identities (Willis, 1972).

H2: Celebrity worshiping is significantly related to body image concerns

H3: Celebrity worshiping is significantly associated with maladaptive daydreaming.

Cognitive Flexibility as a Mediator

Cognitive flexibility involves the capacity to shift cognitive sets, which helps individuals to adjust better to external stimuli (Dennis & Wal, 2010). This adaptability can make a significant contribution to the relationship between body image and celebrity worship. A previous study explored the relationship between cognitive factors and celebrity adoration and found that individuals engage in intense personal celebrity worship owing to their lack of flexibility in considering alternative options (Maltby et al., 2004). Thus, the mediating role of cognitive flexibility in CW and other factors of current importance like daydreaming and body image, becomes an important point of study. The proposed hypotheses for the current study are as follows:

H4: Cognitive flexibility significantly mediates the relationship between celebrity worshiping and body image.

Aastha Gupta*, Apoorva Choudhary*, Dinesh Chhabra**, Betina Abraham***

H5: Cognitive flexibility significantly mediates the relationship between celebrity

worshiping and maladaptive daydreaming.

Therefore, the present study aims to explore this culture among young adults (18-25 years of age) in order to see the extent of CW and its impact on various factors like body image, cognitive flexibility, maladaptive daydreaming, and exploring the mediational role of cognitive flexibility between these various factors. Furthermore, the current study also aims to explore whether neurotic personality traits can make people more vulnerable to develop the CW syndrome.

METHOD

Study Design

The present study uses a correlational, descriptive research design which aims to study the relationship of CW with neuroticism, body image, maladaptive daydreaming, and cognitive flexibility. The study also considers the mediating role of cognitive flexibility, which is hypothesized to be mediating the relationship between CW and body image, and CW and maladaptive daydreaming. The study protocol followed the ethical guidelines of APA (American Psychological Association, 2020) including informed consent, voluntary participation etc.

Sample

The study included 100 people in the age of 18-25 (M= 22, F= 77, Non Binary= 1). Participants data was collected using google forms, convenient followed by purposive sampling was employed. After applying the inclusion criteria of whether they follow any celebrity closely, 30 people were filtered out who didn't show any CW. Hence, a total of N= 70 (M= 16, F= 53, NB= 1) people participated in the study. The majority of the participants belonged to middle middle class socioeconomic background (60%).
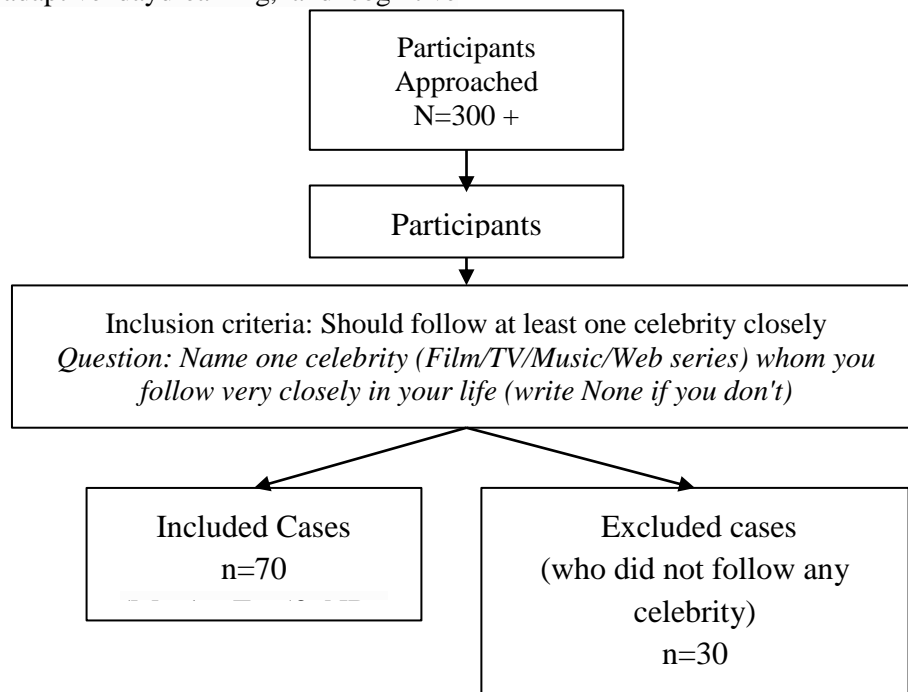
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│ celebrity closely                                      │
│ Question: Name one celebrity (Film/TV/Music/Web       │
│ series) whom you follow very closely in your life     │
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│ n=70     │  │ follow any       │
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Figure 2: Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria for Selection of Participants

A higher number of female participants (75.71%) observed in the sample could be because more females are engaged in celebrity worship than males (Swami et al., 2011)[31].

The participants had diverse choices in terms of the celebrity that they followed closely which ranged from Indian, Korean and American celebrities, Portuguese footballers, and Spanish drama series. It's interesting to note that 50.00% (n=35) of the participants closely followed Indian celebrities (Indian actors, artists, cricketers, novelist, influencer, youtuber, and motivational

speaker), while 28.57% (n=20) of the participants closely followed Korean celebrities (Korean artists and actors). The other 21.43% (n=15) participants followed American (n=13), Spanish (n=1) and Portuguese (n=1) celebrities.

Table 1

Sample characteristics: frequency and percentage of demographics (N=70)

Demographics		f	%
Age	18-25	70	100
Gender	Male	16	22.85
	Female	53	75.71
	Non-binary	1	1.43
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Class	4	5.71
	Middle Middle Class	42	60
	Upper Middle Class	24	34.28

Measures

The data was collected using self-report measures, which had 2 sections. The first section sought demographic data such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and educational qualifications. The second section was aimed at assessing CW, neuroticism, maladaptive daydreaming and body image concerns using the tools mentioned herein.

Celebrity Attitude Scale

Celebrity worshiping was measured through the Celebrity Attitude Scale (Maltby et al., 2001), having 22-items, giving scores on three domains ranging from normative to more pathological: entertainment-social (normal), intense-personal (moderate), and borderline pathological (extreme). Responses were obtained on a 5-point likert rating ranging from "strongly agree" (5) and "strongly disagree" (1). High scores indicate a person who strongly worships their favorite celebrity (McCutcheon et al., 2002). Across several studies, the reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .84 to .96 (Aruguete et al., 2019).

Neuroticism Subscale of Neo- Five Factor Inventory

Neuroticism was assessed by using one of the subscale of Neo- Five Factor Inventory (McCrae & Costa, 1989) which included 12 items. The participants were asked to endorse each item on a 5-point scale (i.e., 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree). A reliability of .74 was observed for neuroticism subscale (Sneed et al., 2002).

Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (MDS-16)

Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (Somer et al., 2016), a 16 item self-report measure, was used to identify potential maladaptive daydreamers. Participants responded on a 11 point scale ranging from 0% to 100%, with 10% intervals. The score is calculated using the mean. A score from 0 to 39 is considered normal, and indicates that maladaptive daydreaming is unlikely, whereas, a mean score of 40 and above suspecting clinical level maladaptive daydreaming. MDS–16 scores showed good internal consistency reliability (Schimmenti et al., 2020).

The Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI)

The Body Image Concern Inventory (Littleton et al., 2005) having 19 items is a measure of dysmorphic concerns. Respondents rated how often they had the described feeling and behavior on likert scale anchored by 1=never

and 5=always. Higher scores indicated greater body image concern as reflected in negative feelings towards one's body, social avoidance, checking and camouflaging behaviors. The inventory has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 and concurrent validity was also high (r= 0.83).

Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS)

Cognitive Flexibility Scale (Martin & Rubin, 1995) a 12-item 6-point likert scale (i.e., 6 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree) was used to assess cognitive flexibility of the participants. Higher scores on this scale represent a higher cognitive flexibility. Research findings show adequate internal reliability and construct and concurrent validity for the scale.

Procedure

The study utilized primary data collected through an online survey. The online questionnaire was designed on Google Forms and circulated through whatsapp groups, and social media platforms like Instagram and Linkedin. Participants who voluntarily participated gave their informed consent and were requested to fill in the demographics, and to tick only one correct option, suitable to them to answer each item. Strict confidentiality of data was maintained.

RESULTS

Analysis was carried out using Jamovi (2.3.28 solid) software. Descriptive statistics and correlational analysis was used to study the inter-correlations between body image, cognitive flexibility, maladaptive daydreaming, neuroticism and CW.

Table 2

Mean, SD and Inter-correlations Among the Variables (N=70)

Variables	M (SD)	ES	IP	BP	CAS	N	BI	MDD	CF
Entertainment-Social	35.1 (6.19)								
Intense-Personal	27.2 (7.15)	0.750**							
Borderline-Pathological	6.99 (2.40)	0.467**	0.531**						
Celebrity Attitude Total	69.3 (13.9)	0.910**	0.939**	0.653**					
Neuroticism	25.0 (6.31)	0.063	-0.135	0.136	-0.018				
Body Image	39.1 (11.7)	0.357**	0.202	0.100	0.280*	0.381**			
Maladaptive Daydreaming	31.2 (19.2)	0.093	0.099	0.266*	0.138	0.150	0.253*		
Cognitive Flexibility	53.8 (6.25)	0.061	0.125	-0.201	0.057	-0.483**	-0.350**	-0.174	

Note. * p<.05, **p<.01

Table 2 indicates the mean and the standard deviation of the scores obtained by the participants on each of the scales and their sub-dimensions. Participants obtained a mean of 69.3 and a SD of 13.9 on the aspect of CW. On the scale of neuroticism participants obtained a mean of 25.0 and SD of 6.31, while on the aspect of cognitive flexibility participants obtained a mean of 53.8 and SD of 6.25. On the aspect of body image, mean of 39.1 and SD of 11.7 was obtained

by the participants. On maladaptive daydreaming, a mean of 31.2 and SD of 19.2 was obtained, which was lower than the threshold mean score of 40, indicative of the presence of maladaptive daydreaming.

Inter-correlation analysis was carried out to understand the relationships amongst these variables, and table 3 indicates that a significant relationship was found between body image concerns with CW (r= 0.280 , p<0.05) and with its dimensions of entertainment-social (r= 0.357, p<0.05), but not with intense-personal (r= 0.202) and borderline-pathological (r= 0.100). No significant relationship was found between maladaptive daydreaming with the total CW scores (r= 0.138) and with its dimensions of entertainment-social (r= 0.093), intense-personal

(r= 0.099) except for borderline-pathological (r= 0.266, p<0.05) which was significant.

No significant relationship found between neuroticism with the total CW scores (r= -0.018) and with its dimensions of entertainment-social (r= 0.063), intense-personal (r= -0.135) and borderline-pathological (r= 0.136); and similarly no significant relationship was found between cognitive flexibility with the total CW scores (r= 0.057) and with its dimensions of entertainment-social (r= 0.061), intense-personal (r= 0.125) and borderline-pathological (r= -0.201).

Thereafter, mediation analysis was carried out to study whether cognitive flexibility mediates the relationship between CW and body image; and maladaptive daydreaming, as hypothesized in the model.

Table 3

Mediation Analysis

Independent variables	Outcome variables	β	SE	t	p
Direct effect Entertainment-social	Body Image	0.716	0.193	3.698	<.001
Indirect effect Entertainment-social	Cognitive Flexibility	-0.043	0.084	-0.508	0.611
Direct effect Borderline-pathological	Maladaptive Daydreaming	0.029	0.014	2.06	0.039
Indirect effect Borderline-pathological	Cognitive Flexibility	0.003	0.003	1.01	0.313

The results of the mediation analysis reveal a significant direct relationship between independent variables and outcome variables. Cognitive flexibility partly mediated the influence of the entertainment-social domain of CW with body image concerns. Further cognitive flexibility also partly mediated the influence of borderline-pathological domain of CW with maladaptive daydreaming.

DISCUSSION

In the current study, authors aimed to understand how CW interacts with cognitive flexibility, body image concerns, and maladaptive daydreaming among Indian youth. A simple correlation analysis and mediation (path) analysis was conducted to understand the relationship between the variables and the mediational role of cognitive flexibility. Results indicated that

cognitive flexibility partially mediates the relationship between the entertainment-social (ES) domain of CW and body image concerns.

The study results indicated that the first hypothesis i.e. there will be a significant relationship between neuroticism and CW, was rejected. The finding is in line with an existing study on an Indian sample (McCutcheon et al. 2016), which found the relationship between CW and neuroticism to be statistically insignificant. The present hypothesis aimed to unravel whether celebrity worshippers who tend to exhibit intense and compulsive feelings toward the celebrity are neurotic; however, contrasting results were noted. This could be because people with neuroticism, being highly tensed, anxious, impulsive, are generally lost in their own world, dilemmas, life situations and personal problems such that it seems that they are not able to direct their attention to celebrities, whom they may not have seen or met (Kwon & Weed, 2023). The persistent focus on their internal concerns and emotional turbulence can limit their mental bandwidth making it challenging for them to direct their attention outward, towards the realm of celebrities and entertainment. Furthermore, neurotic individuals may be less likely to engage with celebrities because they may not see a direct, personal connection to these public figures. They might feel that the concerns and experiences of celebrities are worlds apart from their own lives and problems. This lack of perceived relevance can further diminish their interest in celebrities.

Body image concerns consisting of one's own perception, feeling and beliefs about one's body, was observed to be affected by media and celebrity culture. The present study revealed a significant positive relationship between CW and body image concerns (second hypothesis). Moreover, within CW, the entertainment social domain (inclusive of people who are attracted to celebrities due to their entertainment value) had a significant relationship with body image concerns (r =0.357), which is unique to the present sample as previous researches' reported the intense-personal domain (i.e. the moderate level of CW) to be associated with body image concerns (Swami et al., 2011). This could be understood in light of the fact that people who are overconsuming celebrity information are more likely to blur the difference between the real and the reel, thereby falling prey to unrealistic body standards. In view of the skewed gender norms within our society (Jayachandran, 2015), research suggests that women are quick to fall prey to the images of celebrities portrayed on media and compare themselves to these projected body ideals leading to more body-image dissatisfaction than men (Ho et al., 2016). The hypothesis, pertaining to a significant mediational role of cognitive flexibility in the association between body image and CW, stood partially true for the present study. The study hypothesized that people indulging in CW may thus be over consuming celebrity information blindly, projecting towards a probable lack of cognitive flexibility skills to actively filter out the irrelevant information about celebrities, which thereby might be reflected in the body image concerns that participating individuals witnessed. However, the current study found no significant relationship between cognitive flexibility and CW, though a significant negative relationship was observed between cognitive flexibility and body image concerns, indicating that a decrease in cognitive flexibility would bring about an increase in body image concerns. A lack of cognitive flexibility might make it difficult for people to negate the unachievable aspects of their own, as reflected in the significant negative relationship with body image concerns, such that people easily fall into the trap of achieving a perfect body. The current study thus indicates a partial mediation of cognitive flexibility between CW and body image concerns. Similar results were also observed in Shabahang & Besharat's (2020) study wherein, body image concerns were positively correlated with CW, while being negatively correlated with cognitive flexibility.

In the present research, 20 participants (28.57%) followed Korean celebrities who are known to alter fans' perception of body image in an unhealthy way (Koreaboo, 2018). The perfect body shapes, size, color and glamor may blind the celebrity worshippers such that they remain in the vicious cognitive cycle of poor body image, obsession and compulsion of body alteration. Moreover, reviewed literature indicates that

repeated exposure to an attractive celebrity can increase bodily dissatisfaction among women (Kenny et al., 2018).

Though no significant correlation was observed between CW and maladaptive daydreaming, the current study revealed a significant positive relationship between borderline pathological domain of CW (wherein a person feels that they have a special bond with the celebrity and are willing to do anything for the celebrity) and maladaptive daydreaming (third hypothesis), which suggests that greater the celebrity worship in borderline pathological domain, greater is that person's tendency to daydream about that celebrity. This is in line with several previous researches (Vally et al., 2021) wherein individuals with extensive fantasy activities are more likely to be obsessed with celebrities (Zsila et al., 2018). The final hypothesis i.e., there will be a significant mediational role of cognitive flexibility in the association between maladaptive daydreaming and CW was partially retained. A partial mediation of cognitive flexibility in the relationship between celebrity worshiping and maladaptive daydreaming can be explained in view of people's tendency to become so invested in celebrities' lives that they start to daydream about it, connecting their lives to the fantasy world. This excessive daydreaming can be explained by average cognitive flexibility scores obtained by the participants in the current sample. In addition to this, the current study included emerging young adults (18-25 years), who are known to experience a whirlwind of changes as they try to gain autonomy and develop a sense of self (Bensen & Elder, 2011), at times, influenced by their attachment to celebrities (Boon & Lomore, 2001). An increase in binge watching practices during the pandemic (Rahman & Arif, 2021) along with their developmental predisposition may have pushed this cohort to find solace in celebrity lives, for example binge watching K drama and then fantasizing about a similar kind of romantic life. Blas and Erestain (2020) observed in their study that the participants get swept up in the lives, personas, and careers of their celebrity idols, which causes them to daydream and succumb to delusions. Hence cognitive flexibility may be jeopardized to

give way to maladaptive daydreams because of unhealthy investment in a celebrity's life. This particular finding adds value to the present research more so because this relationship hasn't been explored in previous literature. For the present research, the idea to explore this dimension comes with an aim to uncover the future directions, as suggested in McCutcheon et al., (2021) study.

No significant relationship was observed between cognitive flexibility with the total CW scores, due to which the mediation was reported to be partial. Prior reviewed literature reports both of these variables to be related to each other (Brooks, 2021). However, the current study set within the Indian context suggests otherwise. Perhaps the audience in India is much more cognitively active than being passive followers of celebrities. Passive followers are individuals who do not think critically or actively participate. They don't involve their brain enough, nor do they take any real action (Nasrudin, 2022). People in India might show an active participation, critical thinking, and independent thinking when consuming information about celebrities rather than just passively following their favorite celebrities. This suggests that when people actively indulge in the information provided to them, their cognitive flexibility is not impacted by CW traits. Participants of the current study coming from educated and well-aware backgrounds (majority being college going graduates), might also be contributing to the discretion they display when following celebrities.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study adds value to the literature on CW and can be seen as a starting point for conducting further research on this cohort. The insignificant relationships observed between the concerned variables suggests the possibility of the Indian population being not as much invested in celebrities as perceived. This suggests that, in India, people are actively and consciously processing information related to celebrities, without letting the information hamper their day to day life.

One of the key limitations of the current study is the use of an exclusive quantitative approach. Incorporating qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews could have yielded a more comprehensive understanding of how CW impacts lives. As a result, more exact and extensive approaches should be employed in future investigations. In addition, characteristics such as the participants' social, cultural, and economic circumstances were not fully controlled in this study. In the same spirit, further study should be conducted by controlling and analyzing the aforementioned demographic variables.

Implications and Future Directions

Despite the limitations, this study offered a more nuanced picture of the association of celebrity worship with the concerned variables. The present study has wide implications in the clinical setting, especially w.r.t maladaptive daydreaming diagnosis. Interventions in this area can be developed to reduce the borderline pathological CW tendencies of people. By broadening the scope of psychological difficulties that should be considered in relation to celebrity worship, these findings may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the nature and dynamics of this phenomenon. Another implication can be w.r.t teen population, since previous studies have suggested that teens are more susceptible to CW and its association with various other factors. Future studies can also look at gender differences and shift the focus of lens towards teens instead.

In future, factors such as social, cultural and economic conditions of the participants can also be taken into account to see their impact on the present variables. Future researchers should consider using qualitative methodology to allow the fans to voice their opinion in the research and to explore the fans' perceptions of CW.

CONCLUSION

The present research's results revealed a significant relationship between body image and the entertainment-social subscale of CW, while maladaptive daydreaming was observed to have a significant relationship with the borderline-pathological subscale of the celebrity attitude scale. Additionally, the mediational analysis revealed cognitive flexibility as a partial mediator influencing the relationship of the borderline-pathological domain of celebrity worship with maladaptive daydreaming. The entertainment-social domain of CW was also found to significantly predict cognitive flexibility as a mediator to body image. One particular finding unique to the present study was the role of cognitive flexibility as a partial mediator influencing the relationship of the borderline-pathological domain of CW with maladaptive daydreaming in young Indian adults. The study has useful implications in the clinical setting, where a more comprehensive understanding of the nature and dynamics of this phenomenon can help produce more effective interventions with the clinical population.

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