



JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES DEVELOPMENT

www.jssd.org.pk



editor@jssd.org.pk

IMPACT OF CELEBRITY WORSHIP ON LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND EMERGING YOUTH. SELF-ESTEEM AND BODY IMAGE AS MEDIATORS

Sara Zainab¹

¹Associate Clinical Psychologist.

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Celebrity Worship; Life Satisfaction; Self-Esteem; Body Image; Adolescents and Emerging Youth.	This study aims to investigate the impact of Celebrity Worship on Life Satisfaction in the presence of Self-Esteem and Body Image as mediators among emerging youth and adolescents in Karachi. It was hypothesized that Celebrity Worship would be significantly related to Life Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, and Body Image and would have significant impact on Life Satisfaction in the presence of Body Image and Self-Esteem as mediators. Using a quantitative survey, 300 participants (M = 20, SD = 2.7) aged 15–25 were selected via purposive sampling from colleges and universities in Karachi. Celebrity Worship, Life Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, and Body Image were assessed using scales. Findings revealed a significant negative correlation of Celebrity Worship with Life Satisfaction ($r = -.51, p < .05$), while Self-Esteem was positively associated with Celebrity Worship ($r = .51, p < .05$). Significant positive correlation was found between Celebrity Worship and Body Image ($r = .05, p < .05$). Significant mediation was found for Self-Esteem ($\beta = 0.51, p < .05$), Body Image ($\beta = 0.41, p < .05$), and both Self-Esteem and Body Image ($\beta = 0.61, 0.44, p < .05$) in the association of Celebrity Worship with Satisfaction with Life.
ARTICLE HISTORY	 2026 Journal of Social Sciences Development
Date of Submission: 20-08-2026	
Date of Acceptance: 18-09-2026	
Date of Publication: 23-09-2026	
Corresponding Author	
Email:	sarahzainab1995@gmail.com
DOI	https://doi.org/10.59075/jssd.v5i7.303
Volume/Issue	5(7), 2026, 396-407

Introduction

Celebrity culture has become increasingly prominent in young people’s social and psychological lives, particularly with the expansion of digital media and social networking platforms. Social media provides continuous access to celebrities’ appearance, relationships, lifestyles, achievements, and activities, increasing opportunities for emotional involvement and identification with admired public figures (McCutcheon & Aruguete, 2021; Wei & Huang, 2024). Celebrity worship refers to relatively intense involvement with a preferred celebrity

beyond ordinary entertainment interest and is commonly examined across entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological levels (Brooks, 2021; Wei & Huang, 2024). However, celebrity worship is not necessarily pathological, as its psychological meaning and consequences may vary across individuals and contexts (Wei & Huang, 2024). Higher levels have nevertheless been associated with self-related concerns, body-related attitudes, and psychological well-being (Brooks, 2021; Zsila et al., 2021).

Self-esteem is particularly relevant because celebrities may serve as standards against which young people evaluate their characteristics, appearance, achievements, and lifestyles (Brooks, 2021; Zsila et al., 2021). Zsila et al. (2021), in a study of 1,763 adults, reported a negative association between celebrity worship and self-esteem, with this association somewhat stronger among women. Similarly, research among Indian professional college students identified a modest negative association between celebrity worship and self-esteem, although the relationship was described as weak and complex (Vezhodulu et al., 2026).

Body image represents another important dimension of celebrity culture. Celebrities are frequently presented through idealized standards of physical attractiveness, potentially encouraging individuals to compare their appearance with perceived celebrity ideals (Brown & Tiggemann, 2022). A systematic review of 36 studies found associations among celebrity images, appearance comparison, celebrity worship, and maladaptive body-image and eating-related outcomes (Brown & Tiggemann, 2022). Lin et al. (2023), among 593 Chinese young adults, found associations between celebrity worship and muscularity-oriented body dissatisfaction, while body-image inflexibility mediated associations with disordered eating. Similarly, upward physical-appearance comparison and body dissatisfaction were identified as mediating factors between celebrity worship and disordered eating among Chinese adolescents (Lyu et al., 2025). In Pakistan, Malik et al. (2024), using 300 young adults aged 18–25 years, reported a significant association between celebrity worship and body-image concerns, with cognitive flexibility mediating this relationship. However, recent findings indicate that associations between celebrity worship and body image may not always be uniformly negative (Vezhodulu et al., 2026).

Life satisfaction is an important indicator of psychological well-being because it reflects an individual's overall cognitive evaluation of life. Celebrity worship may be relevant to life satisfaction because intense involvement can coexist with unfavorable evaluations of one's life, self, or circumstances. Zsila et al. (2021) found associations between celebrity worship, subjective well-being, and self-esteem, although relationship strengths varied across individual characteristics. Recent research among 1,103 Chinese undergraduates also linked borderline-pathological celebrity-worship cognitions with reduced life satisfaction and negative affect. However, findings are not entirely consistent, as some forms of celebrity involvement have shown positive or non-significant associations with well-being (Wei & Huang, 2024).

Although research has examined celebrity worship in relation to self-esteem, body image, and psychological well-being, comparatively less attention has been given to their combined relationship with life satisfaction among adolescents and emerging youth in Pakistan. Brooks

(2021) highlighted self-esteem, body attitudes, and psychological well-being as important correlates of celebrity worship and identified areas requiring further investigation. Therefore, the present study examines the relationship between celebrity worship and life satisfaction and investigates the mediating roles of self-esteem and body image among adolescents and emerging youth, addressing an identified gap in the Pakistani context (Malik et al., 2024).

Literature Review

The literature review examines celebrity worship, body image, and self-esteem as important psychological constructs relevant to adolescents and emerging youth. Celebrity worship refers to an interest in a celebrity that extends beyond ordinary interest and approaches fascination or infatuation. Celebrities may become important figures in individuals' social and psychological experiences, particularly through continuous exposure to their lives, appearance, and activities. The literature identifies celebrity worship as a multidimensional construct, ranging from entertainment-social involvement to intense-personal and borderline-pathological involvement. The entertainment-social level reflects enjoyment and discussion of celebrities, whereas intense-personal involvement reflects stronger and less controllable feelings toward a celebrity. At the highest level, celebrity involvement may become highly preoccupying and intense (Brooks, 2021; McCutcheon & Aruguete, 2021).

The Absorption-Addiction Model explains celebrity worship in terms of individuals becoming psychologically absorbed in celebrities to obtain satisfaction and develop a sense of identity. According to this perspective, greater involvement may progress from ordinary interest toward stronger psychological attachment. Research has continued to examine individual differences associated with celebrity worship and its psychological outcomes, particularly among young people (Brooks, 2021; Wei & Huang, 2024). Celebrity relationships have also been described as one-sided relationships in which individuals develop attraction and interest toward public figures. Contemporary media environments provide increased opportunities for individuals to follow and engage with celebrities, making celebrity-related involvement an important area of psychological research (McCutcheon & Aruguete, 2021).

Body image is a multidimensional psychological experience involving thoughts, feelings, evaluations, and attitudes concerning one's physical appearance. It includes both evaluation of appearance and the psychological importance assigned to appearance. Body image evaluation involves positive or negative judgments regarding physical characteristics, whereas body image investment concerns the extent to which appearance contributes to an individual's self-evaluation and sense of personal worth. Greater psychological investment in appearance may make individuals more vulnerable to negative experiences concerning their bodies (Brown & Tiggemann, 2022).

Celebrity images may influence body image because celebrities are frequently presented through socially desirable standards of attractiveness and physical appearance. Individuals who strongly admire celebrities may compare their own appearance with that of their preferred

celebrity. Research has reported associations between celebrity worship and body dissatisfaction, particularly among young people, with appearance comparison and body dissatisfaction identified as important factors in this relationship. Recent research has further examined the relationship between celebrity worship, body dissatisfaction, and disordered eating among young adults and adolescents (Lin et al., 2023; Malik et al., 2024; Lyu et al., 2025). Research among Indian professional college students have also examined the interrelationships among celebrity worship, body image, and self-esteem, extending this area of investigation in young populations (Vezhodulu et al., 2026).

Self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluation of personal worth and includes beliefs, feelings, and judgments about oneself. It may vary according to social experiences and perceived differences between the actual self and the desired or ideal self. When individuals perceive a greater discrepancy between their actual and ideal selves, their self-evaluation may become less positive. Celebrity-related comparisons may therefore be relevant to self-esteem because young individuals may evaluate themselves against idealized characteristics associated with admired celebrities. Recent literature continues to examine celebrity worship in relation to self-esteem and broader psychological well-being among emerging adults (Zsila et al., 2021; Wei & Huang, 2024).

Significance of Research

This study aims to understand the relationships between celebrity worship, self-esteem, body image, and life satisfaction, and to identify the potential harmful effects of celebrity worship. The findings may support awareness and intervention programs for adolescents and emerging youth, particularly in educational settings through guidance and counseling. The study may also contribute to identifying individuals experiencing different levels of celebrity worship, including entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological involvement.

Objectives / Hypotheses of the study:

Objectives:

- a. Identifying the relationship between celebrity worship, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and body image among emerging youth and adolescents.
- b. To investigate the impact of celebrity worship on life satisfaction among emerging youth and adolescents in the presence of body image and self-esteem as mediators.

Hypotheses:

- a. There will be a significant relationship between celebrity worship and life satisfaction, self-esteem, and body image among emerging youth and adolescents.
- b. Celebrity worship will have a significant impact on life satisfaction among emerging youth and adolescents in the presence of self-esteem and body image as mediators.

Methods

Research Design and Sample

A quantitative correlation survey research design was utilized, employing structured self-report questionnaires. A sample of 300 participants, consisting of 154 females and 146 males from different colleges and universities of Karachi, was selected through purposive convenient sampling. Participants were 15–25 years old, had at least one favorite celebrity, and were studying in 10th grade or above.

Instruments

Demographic Information Form

The Demographic Information Form collected information regarding participants' age, gender, education level, marital status, family type, and socioeconomic status.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale consists of 10 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$) and test-retest reliability (.85 and .88).

Body Image States Scale (Cash et al., 2002)

The Body Image States Scale is a six-item, 9-point bipolar scale assessing body image states. It demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with reliability of .77 for women and .72 for men.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale consists of five items rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree and assesses satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole. Internal consistency ranges from .79 to .89.

Celebrity Attitude Scale (McCutcheon et al., 2004)

The Celebrity Attitude Scale is a 23-item, 5-point Likert-type scale assessing attitudes toward a favorite celebrity. It comprises three subscales: Entertainment/Social, Intense/Personal, and Borderline/Pathological, with total scale Cronbach's alpha ranging from .84 to .94.

Results

Table 1: *Correlation between Variables (N= 300)*

Variable	SWL	BSIS	CAS(Ent)	CAS(Int)	CAS(Bor)	CAS	RSES
SWL	1	~	~	~	~	~	~
BSIS	.51**	1	~	~	~	~	~
CAS(Ent)	-.01	-.02	1	~	~	~	~
CAS(Int)	.24**	.04	.60**	1	~	~	~
CAS(Bor)	.10	-.23	.54**	.62**	1	~	~
CAS	-.51*	.05*	.85**	.89**	.77**	1	~
RSES	.03	-.03	.06*	-.01	-.33	.51*	1

Note. SWL = Satisfaction with Life, BSIS = Body Image State Scale, CAS(Ent) = Celebrity Attitude Scale Entertainment Subscale, CAS(Int) = Celebrity Attitude Scale Intense Personal Scale, CAS(Bor) = Celebrity Attitude Scale Borderline Subscale, CAS = Celebrity Attitude Scale, RSES = Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. ** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$.

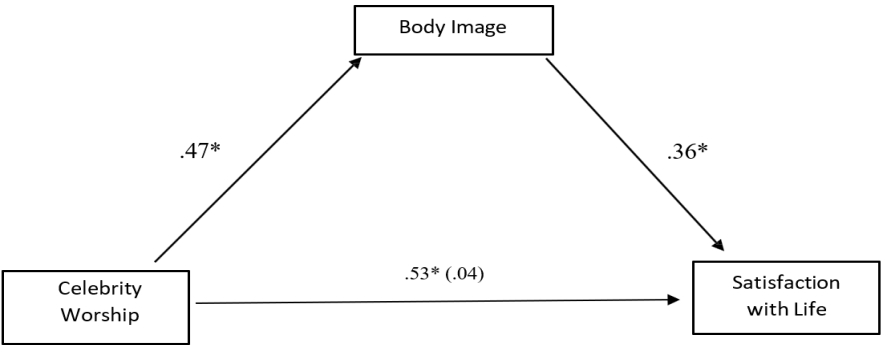
Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationships among celebrity worship, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and body image. The results showed a significant negative correlation between celebrity worship and satisfaction with life ($r = -.51$, $p < .05$), a significant positive correlation between celebrity worship and body image ($r = .05$, $p < .05$), and a significant positive correlation between celebrity worship and self-esteem ($r = .51$, $p < .05$).

Table 2: *Impact of CAS on SWL, Body image as mediator (N=300)*

Body Image	Estimate	SE	Z	P	%Mediation
Indirect	0.41	0.77	13.98	0.05	64
Direct	0.38	0.23	06.89	0.05	36

Note: SE=Standard Error

The standardized regression coefficient showed significant mediation of body image in the association of celebrity worship and satisfaction with life. The path estimates of model tested in the analysis have been presented in the fig 1.



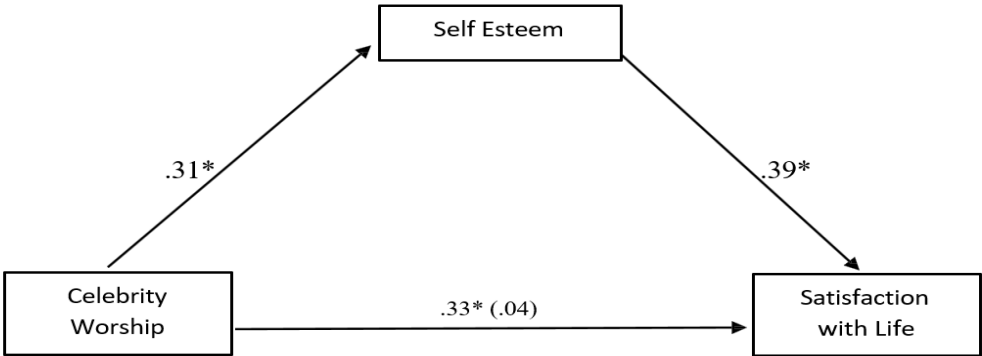
*Fig 1. Standardized regression coefficient for the relationship between celebrity worship and satisfaction with life as mediated by body image. The standardized regression coefficient between celebrity worship and satisfaction with life while controlling body image * $p < 0.05$.*

Table 3: Impact of CAS on SWL, Self-esteem as mediator (N=300)

Self-Esteem	Estimate	SE	Z	P	%Mediation
Indirect	0.51	0.64	17.01	0.05	60
Direct	0.43	0.29	01.22	0.05	40

Note. SE=Standard Error.

The standardized regression coefficient showed significant mediation of self-esteem in the association of celebrity worship and satisfaction with life. The path estimates of model tested in the analysis have been presented in the fig 2.



*Fig 2. Standardized regression coefficient for the relationship between celebrity worship and satisfaction with life as mediated by self-esteem. The standardized regression coefficient between celebrity worship and satisfaction with life while controlling self-esteem * $p < 0.05$.*

Table 4: *Impact of CAS on SWL, Body image and self-esteem as mediator (N=300)*

Mediator	Path	Estimate	SE	Z	P	% Mediation
Body Image	Indirect	0.44	0.53	11.01	0.05	52
Body Image	Direct	0.40	0.03	08.11	0.05	48
Self-Esteem	Indirect	0.61	0.90	9.11	0.05	65
Self-Esteem	Direct	0.50	0.21	0.03	0.05	35

Note. SE=Standard Error.

The standardized regression coefficient showed significant mediation of body image and self-esteem in the association of celebrity worship and satisfaction with life. The path estimate of model tested in the analysis have been presented in the fig 3.

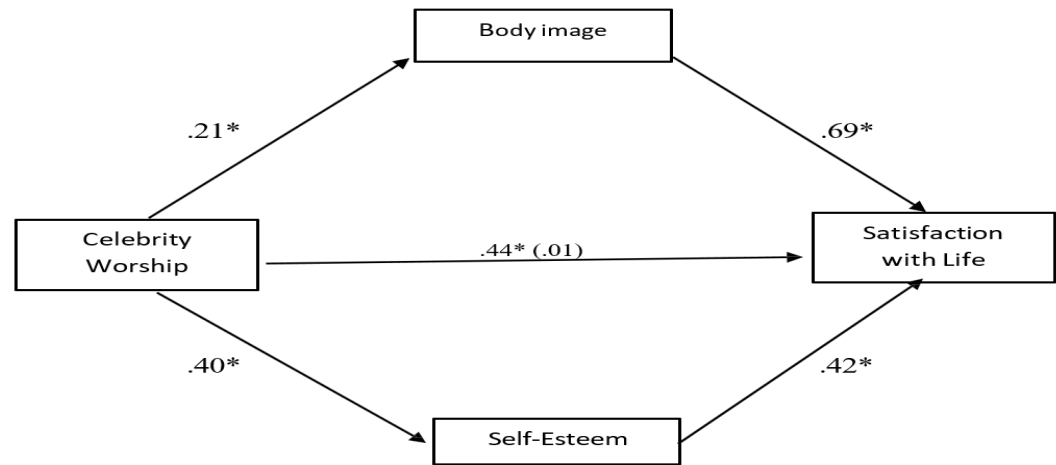


Fig 3. Standardized regression coefficient for the relationship between celebrity worship and satisfaction with life as mediated by body image and self-esteem. The standardized regression coefficient between celebrity worship and satisfaction with life controlling body image and self-esteem * $p < 0.05$.

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between celebrity worship, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and body image among emerging youth and adolescents and further investigated the mediating roles of self-esteem and body image in the association between celebrity worship and life satisfaction. The findings are discussed according to the two hypotheses of the study and in relation to recent literature.

The first hypothesis proposed a significant relationship between celebrity worship and life satisfaction, self-esteem, and body image. The findings showed a significant negative relationship

between celebrity worship and life satisfaction ($r = -.51, p < .05$), indicating that higher celebrity worship was associated with lower life satisfaction in the present sample. This finding is consistent with recent evidence linking celebrity worship with indicators of subjective well-being. Zsila et al. (2021) reported associations between celebrity worship and subjective well-being, while more recent research among 1,103 Chinese undergraduates found that borderline-pathological celebrity-worship cognitions were particularly connected with reduced life satisfaction and negative affect. The present finding therefore supports the view that stronger involvement with celebrities may be associated with less favorable evaluations of one's own life, although the cross-sectional design does not establish causality.

A significant positive relationship was also found between celebrity worship and self-esteem ($r = .51, p < .05$). This finding differs from some recent research reporting a negative association between celebrity worship and self-esteem. Zsila et al. (2021) reported a negative association between celebrity worship and self-esteem, while Vezhodulu et al. (2026) similarly found a weak negative association among Indian professional college students. The difference in the present findings may be considered in relation to the measurement characteristics of self-esteem in the current sample. The thesis reported that items 7 and 8 of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale showed low factor loadings and were excluded, after which an eight-item scale was retained. Thus, the positive association observed in the present study should be interpreted in the context of the adapted scale structure used for this sample rather than assumed to represent a consistent direction across populations.

The findings further demonstrated a significant positive relationship between celebrity worship and body image ($r = .05, p < .05$), although the magnitude of the association was small. Recent research has similarly demonstrated that celebrity worship and body-related perceptions are related, while also indicating that these relationships are complex. Lin et al. (2023) found significant associations between celebrity worship and muscularity-oriented body dissatisfaction among Chinese young adults, while body-image inflexibility mediated associations with disordered eating. Similarly, Malik et al. (2024), in a Pakistani sample of 300 young adults, reported a significant association between celebrity worship and body-image concerns, with cognitive flexibility mediating the relationship. Vezhodulu et al. (2026) also found a weak positive association between celebrity worship and body-image impact among Indian professional college students, supporting the presence of a relationship while indicating that its strength may be limited.

The second hypothesis proposed that celebrity worship would have a significant impact on life satisfaction in the presence of self-esteem and body image as mediators. The mediation analysis showed significant mediation of self-esteem in the association between celebrity worship and life satisfaction. The analysis also showed significant mediation of body image in this association. These findings indicate that self-esteem and body image were individually involved in the relationship between celebrity worship and life satisfaction in the present sample. Recent literature supports the relevance of these variables to celebrity worship. Brooks (2021) identified

self-esteem, body-related attitudes, and psychological well-being among important correlates of celebrity worship, while more recent studies have continued to demonstrate associations between celebrity worship, self-esteem, and body image among young people.

When self-esteem and body image were entered simultaneously as mediators, the results showed significant mediation of both variables in the association between celebrity worship and life satisfaction. This finding extends previous research because recent studies have generally examined celebrity worship in relation to body image, self-esteem, or well-being separately. For example, Lyu et al. (2025) demonstrated sequential mediating effects of upward physical-appearance comparison and body dissatisfaction between celebrity worship and disordered eating among Chinese adolescents. Similarly, current evidence continues to describe celebrity worship, body image, and self-esteem as interconnected but complex constructs rather than uniformly negative phenomena (Vezhodulu et al., 2026). The present findings therefore provide evidence for considering self-esteem and body image together when examining the relationship between celebrity worship and life satisfaction among adolescents and emerging youth. Overall, the findings support both hypotheses of the present study and extend the existing literature by examining these variables together within the Pakistani context.

Conclusion

Results show significant relationship and impact of participants' attitude towards celebrities and their satisfaction with the life. Results have also shown significant differences in their mean scores of Celebrity Attitude Scale between males and females. The body image and self-esteem individually mediate between the celebrity attitude and life satisfaction of participants. Our results have concluded that self-esteem and body image significantly mediates the impact of celebrity worship on the life satisfaction in our sample.

Implications

The findings will support clinical, educational, and workplace settings by informing psychoeducational interventions that promote awareness of celebrity worship and its association with psychosocial functioning. Guidance and counseling services may support adolescents and emerging adults in developing realistic perceptions of celebrity representations, while addressing self-esteem, body image, emotional functioning, and life satisfaction.

Recommendations

The results of the present study recommend to conduct higher level studies on these variables as it will arise new horizon findings in the fields of causes of mental illness. After the emergence of Covid-19 the use of media has been increased. Exploring these variables in depth with large sample size is important in future.

Limitations of the study

The sample was collected through convenience sampling strategy, so the sample was not representative of the population. Due to lack of time and resources small sample was collected and advance analysis (Structural Equation Modeling) using Amos was not performed. The present study has used the self-report measure. The responses of the participants could be affected by the environmental factors. Participant's biasness could be also limitation of the study. The questionnaire in this study was a self-report which might have involved an inherent social desirability bias (Assor & Connell, 1992). It has been established by Podaskoff and Organ (1986) that measures that are self-reported includes the influence of social desirability, self-distortion and other psychological barricades affecting the responses. Participants may have been responding in a socially desirable manner, which could have biased the results. As these limitations of self-reported questionnaires are well known, future researches should attempt to include other sources of data for the independent variables of interest.

References

- Brooks, S. K. (2021). FANatics: Systematic literature review of factors associated with celebrity worship, and suggested directions for future research. *Current Psychology*, 40(2), 864–886. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9978-4>
- Brown, Z., & Tiggemann, M. (2022). Celebrity influence on body image and eating disorders: A review. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 27(5), 1233–1251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105320988312>
- Cash, T. F., Fleming, E. C., Alindogan, J., Steadman, L., & Whitehead, A. (2002). Beyond body image as a trait: The development and validation of the Body Image States Scale. *Eating Disorders*, 10(2), 103–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10640260290081678>
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71–75. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13
- Lin, Y., Lu, C., Huang, Z., Barnhart, W. R., Cui, T., & He, J. (2023). Exploring the links between celebrity worship, body dissatisfaction, and disordered eating among young adult celebrity worshippers in China. *Body Image*, 45, 210–218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.03.006>
- Lyu, Z., Wang, X., & Zheng, P. (2025). Celebrity worship and disordered eating among Chinese adolescents: The sequential mediating roles of upward physical appearance comparison and body dissatisfaction. *Appetite*, 208, 107911. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2025.107911>
- Malik, N. I., Shahab, M., & Makhdoom, I. F. (2024). Impact of celebrity worship on body image concerns among students: Role of cognitive flexibility. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 39(3), 639–661. <https://doi.org/10.33824/PJPR.2024.39.3.35>
- McCutcheon, L. E., & Aruguete, M. S. (2021). Is celebrity worship increasing over time? *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 7(1), 66–75.

- McCutcheon, L. E., Maltby, J., Houran, J., & Ashe, D. D. (2004). Celebrity worshippers: Inside the minds of stargazers. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 6(1), 66–77.
- Pirzade, M., Peyvastegar, M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2024). Celebrity worship among adolescents is driven by neuroticism, avoidant identity style, and need to belong. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 185(6), 463–476. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2024.2331731>
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton University Press.
- Tresna, K. A. A. D., Sukamto, M. E., & Tondok, M. S. (2021). Celebrity worship and body image among young girls' fans of K-pop girl groups. *HUMANITAS: Indonesian Psychological Journal*, 18(2), 100–111. <https://doi.org/10.26555/humanitas.v18i2.19392>
- Vezhodulu, S., Velayudhan, B., & Yesodharan, R. (2026). In the spotlight: Exploring celebrity worship, body image, and self-esteem among Indian professional college students. *Acta Psychologica*, 268, 107226. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2026.107226>
- Wei, D., & Huang, Y.-T. (2024). Unraveling complexity of celebrity worship and its associations with mental health among emerging adults in China. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11, 1721. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04296-4>
- Zhang, K., Jia, R., Dong, S., Yang, J., Yang, Q., & Zhang, L. (2026). Mapping the links between celebrity worship and subjective well-being in Chinese undergraduates via network analysis. *Behavioral Sciences*, 16(1), 28. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs16010028>
- Zsila, Á., Orosz, G., McCutcheon, L. E., & Demetrovics, Z. (2021). Individual differences in the association between celebrity worship and subjective well-being: The moderating role of gender and age. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 651067. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.651067>