The Psychological Basis of Fanship and Its Repercussions on Well-Being

Jennifer AlHarouny and Marianne El Khoury

Lebanese American University

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between loneliness, self-esteem, fanship, celebrity worship and well-being. A survey was conducted on a sample of which the majority were Lebanese youths. Statistical analyses yielded varying results: well-being did not correlate with fanship or entertainment-social celebrity worship. On the other hand, self-esteem was found to negatively correlate with entertainment-social and borderline-pathological celebrity worship. Loneliness was positively correlated with entertainment-social and borderline-pathological celebrity worship. Loneliness and self-esteem did not predict fanship but did predict celebrity worship. Moreover, women reported higher levels of celebrity worship than men. Furthermore, fans of celebrities reported higher levels of celebrity worship and fanship in comparison with other kinds of fans. These results aim to paint a clearer picture of fanship free of bias while simultaneously encouraging individuals to recognize potential for pathology.

Keywords: loneliness, self-esteem, well-being, fanship, display of fanship, celebrity worship, entertainment-social celebrity worship, intense-personal celebrity worship, borderline-pathological celebrity worship

The Psychological Basis of Fanship and Its Repercussions on Well-Being

Fan culture has been prominent for several years and studies have uncovered many of its aspects. Fans of sports clubs, celebrities, and fictional stories such as TV shows and books have often been rendered "obsessed" and "delusional" by others (Gerrard, 2021). Thus, they have been primarily regarded in a negative sense. Research has found different results and does not have a definitive answer to whether being a fan of an interest is "bad" or "good" (Brooks, 2018). The nature of fanship remains nuanced and dependent on many different factors such as self-esteem and loneliness. The purpose of this study is to explore these aforementioned factors and their relationship to each other as well as their role in predicting the likelihood of fanship. Furthermore, this study attempts to uncover the relationship between fanship and well-being. The following literature review presents the previous literature on the different factors used in this study.

The Development of Celebrity Worship

Fanship usually involves a one-sided connection to the admired celebrity (Brooks, 2018); however, many researchers identify a specific form of such a connection, also known as celebrity worship (Sansone & Sansone, 2014). This term was developed in order to better understand fanship and the different extents to which it can be classified. As such, McCutcheon et al. (2002) developed the Celebrity Attitude Scale to better operationalize such dimensions. The scale consists of three subscales, representing the three levels of celebrity worship: the first is manifested in the form of the fan's appreciation towards the entertainment the celebrity provides, the second is related to the fan's stronger preoccupation with the celebrity, and the third is characterized by a delusional interconnection between the fan and the celebrity (McCutcheon et al., 2017). A fourth component, "deleterious imitation", refers to a fan's thoughtless and immoral imitation of a certain

celebrity and has been suggested by several researchers for use (Brooks, 2018). However, current studies are still focused on the original three factors. Given such developments, it is apparent that celebrity worship influences different aspects of fans' lives, some of which will be revisited in this study.

The Effect of Fanship on Self-Esteem

Research has had contradicting results in relation to the effect of fanship on self-esteem. In a systematic literature review, Brooks (2018) cited studies that found a positive correlation between self-esteem and an intermediate level of celebrity worship. One of these studies discovered this relation to persist with borderline-pathological celebrity worship as well. However, other studies found the opposite, and some found no relation between self-esteem and fanship, but they were a minority. O'Donovan (2016) found that participating in fandom activities tended to lead to the development of the individual's skills and the boosting of their confidence, subsequently leading to a higher self-esteem. Additionally, in a study done on K-pop fans, high levels of fanship were predictors of positive psychosocial outcomes, including self-esteem (Laffan, 2020). Notably, Zsila, Orosz, McCutcheon, and Demetrovics (2021) reported gender differences in the relationship between fanship and self-esteem; women scored lower on self-esteem when engaging in fanship, while men did not. Considering the links between self-esteem and anxiety and depression (Henriksen, Ranøyen, Indredavik, & Stenseng, 2017), it is important to study this relationship further.

The Relationship Between Loneliness and Fanship

Previous literature has also highlighted the found connection between levels of loneliness and one's fanship. This has been studied specifically in the context of interactions within a fan

domain, as seen in the following examples. Researchers such as Reysen et al. (2022) have found that lonely individuals were more likely to seek out fandoms and identify with being a fan in order to possibly establish some form of social connection. Additionally, however, studies have revealed that social group involvement, including that of fandoms, has helped individuals feel less lonely due to their involvement with others who are like-minded (Haslam et al., 2019). Some studies have focused on a sample of sports fans, and results revealed that those who identified with the fandom experienced lower levels of loneliness as well as higher levels of social satisfaction (Wann et al., 2015). Other research, such as that executed by Reysen et al. (2017), confirms such findings for both sports fans as well as non-sports fans, claiming that in-person interaction with other members of the fandom increases one's sense of belonging, thereby decreasing feelings of loneliness. While such findings are significant, they mostly resulted from specific fandoms, thus warranting further research on their generalizability.

The Impact of Fanship on Well-Being

In their study "Better Together", Reysen et al. (2022) claimed that there exist tentative findings regarding the effects of fanship on well-being; research is still undecided on whether well-being is influenced by one's identity as a fan or by the new friendships that have been created due to said identity. Past literature has, however, emphasized the mediating role that the social component of fanship has on individuals' general well-being. For instance, Ray et al. (2018) administered a survey to anime fans both at an in-person convention and online in order to examine the impact of social fan interaction. Consistent with other studies' findings, Ray et al. found that respondents who took part in the live convention reported more interactions with other fans and, subsequently, higher levels of well-being than those who completed the online survey. Laffan

(2020) has also conducted a study on the effects of Korean Pop fanship and found that it predicts significantly higher levels of happiness, self-esteem, and life satisfaction for fans. Generally, fanship has proven to have positive effects on well-being, a revalidation of which will be conducted in this study.

The Relationship Between Gender and Fanship

Many differences have been found in how men and women experience fanship, whether it be a difference in the nature of what they are fans of, or the intensity of their feelings towards it. A study on sport fans in Qatar found men to report higher levels of involvement in sport teams than women, a finding they shared with many other previous studies (Theodorakis, Al-Emadi, Wann, Lianopoulos, & Foudouki, 2017). They also found women to join fandoms as a way of connecting with someone over the shared interest. On the other hand, women were more likely to engage in parasocial activities, which would usually be involving a celebrity (Gleason, Theran, & Newberg, 2017). Furthermore, Brooks (2018) stated that while some studies do not report a difference in celebrity worship between genders, others have found women to exhibit it more. Furthermore, men displayed higher borderline-pathological celebrity worship in comparison to women, in addition to being more likely to be accepting of stalking. On the other hand, women's self-esteem seemed to be negatively affected by excessive celebrity worship while no such relationship existed for men (Zsila, Orosz, McCutcheon, & Demetrovics, 2021).

The Different Faces of Fanship

There are different kinds of fandoms that exist in the world: sport fans, celebrity fans, TV show fans, book fans… Previous studies have tended to focus on one type of fandom in their samples, and they have rarely been compared. However, while their object of admiration is

different, they tend to have similar experiences. Reysen, Plante, and Chadborn (2017) agreed with the latter statement, reporting similar psychological processes between different types of fans. A study on sport fans in Qatar reported high levels of team identification in sport fans, leading to feelings of belongingness to a group (Theodorakis, et al., 2017). Similarly, women fans of fiction and celebrities reported making friends and a willingness to share and connect due to their fandom, which has led to a feeling of belonging (O'Donovan, 2016). On the other hand, some phenomena are particular to certain types of fans. Celebrity worship is a connection between fan and celebrity that manifests only in fans of people, in contrast to interests such as books or sports. As previously detailed, celebrity worship has shown to affect self-esteem, fantasy proneness, obsessive behaviors, and one's attitude about their body (Brooks, 2018).

Aims of This Study

The reviewed literature has many limitations that the present study aims to address. To begin with, previous research tended to be correlational, failing to study possible predictors of fanship. Additionally, fanship was operationalized differently across different studies. Another drawback is the fact that none of these studies took place in Lebanon, and only one takes place in the Middle East. With the rise of the economic crisis and the need for an escape, Lebanese citizens are prone to turn to fan behavior and fandoms. As such, it is important to learn the implications of such interests and its effects on the individual.

This study aims to identify the psychological predictors of fanship and intends to explore how this experience can possibly contribute to one's well-being. Additionally, it aims to compare these predictors, self-esteem and loneliness, between genders and different kinds of fans.

H1: Well-being will positively correlate with fanship and entertainment-social celebrity worship.

H2: Celebrity fans will score higher on celebrity worship than sports fans, music fans, and fiction fans.

H3: Women will be more likely to score higher on levels of fanship (*H3a*) and celebrity worship (*H3b*) in comparison to men.

H4: Loneliness will predict fanship (*H4a*) and borderline-pathological celebrity worship (*H4b*).

H5: Self-esteem will predict fanship (*H5a*) and celebrity worship (*H5b*).

Methods

Participants

The sample consisted of 166 participants (109 women and 54 men) who were sent a link to an online survey through social media, email, and text messages. The participants were both Lebanese (82.5%) and non-Lebanese (17.5%) individuals between the ages of 18 and 61 years old ($M = 22.76$, $SD = 6.93$), and most of them were college students. The sample consisted of 31 sport fans, 38 celebrity fans, 47 fiction fans, 5 music fans, 2 game fans and 2 fans of political figures.

Instruments

The *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (Rosenberg, 1979) is a 10-item self-report scale that was originally developed to measure self-esteem in high-school students. However, with its development, the scale has been qualified for use with adult subjects. Each item was scored on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (= strongly agree) to 4 (= strongly disagree). An example of an item is "I feel that I have a number of good qualities." Research has found this scale to have adequate internal consistency and a Cronbach alpha of 0.92 (Rosenberg, 1979). In this study, the Cronbach alpha is 0.89.

The *Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale* (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980) is a scale that was designed to measure individuals' personal feelings of loneliness and social isolation. It consists of 20 items which are rated according to a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (= Never) to 4 (= Often). The items include statements such as "My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me" and "There are people I feel close to". This scale has proven to have high internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha of 0.96 (Russell et al., 1980). In this study, the Cronbach alpha is 0.90.

The *Celebrity Attitude Scale* (CAS) (McCutcheon & Maltby, 2002) is a 23-item scale that aims to evaluate individual inclinations towards celebrity worship. The items are measured according to a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree), and form three subscales. The first subscale is labeled "Entertainment-social" and reflects the social aspect of celebrity worship. An example of its items is "I love to talk with others who admire my favorite celebrity". The second subscale, "Intense-personal", measures personal and intense sentiments towards the celebrity and consists of items such as "I have frequent thoughts about my celebrity, even when I don't want to." The third and final subscale is titled "Borderline-pathological" as it demonstrates more radical attitudes an individual may have towards the concerned celebrity. As such, items of this subscale include statements such as "If I were lucky enough to meet my favorite celebrity, and he/she asked me to do something illegal as a favor I would probably do it". The reliability of this scale was also found to be sufficient, having a Cronbach alpha that ranged between 0.84 and 0.96 across different studies (Aruguete et al., 2019; Browne et al., 2019; McCutcheon et al., 2004). In this study, the Cronbach alpha of the scale is 0.96, while those of its subscales, entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological, are 0.94, 0.91, and 0.75 respectively.

The *Fanship Scale* (Reysen, & Branscombe, 2010) is a 9-point Likert scale designed to measure the degree of individual identification with being a fan. A higher score would hence indicate higher levels of fanship. The scale's 11 items include statements such as "I am emotionally connected to my interest" and "My interest is a part of me". This instrument has also proven to be reliable, holding a Cronbach alpha of 0.84 (Reysen, & Branscombe, 2010). In this study, the Cronbach alpha is 0.86.

The *Display of Fanship* scale (Chadborn et al., 2017) is a simple scale that complements the *Fanship Scale* and measures the extent to which one displays themself as a fan. It consists of only two items: "I purchase and/or wear/display items associated or identified with the fandom [DVD, toys, clothing, etc.]" and "I share my experiences and/or fan interest with nonmembers of the fandom [nonfans]". The items are rated according to a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (= not at all) to 5 (= very frequently). In this study, the Cronbach alpha is 0.67.

The *WHO-5 Well-being Index* (Bech, 2004) is a short 5-item scale designed to measure one's well-being and quality of life. The items are measured according to a 6-point Likert scale that ranges from 5 (= All of the time) to 0 (= At no time) and include statements such as "I have felt cheerful in good spirits" and "My daily life has been filled with things that interest me". The scale has proven to be reliable, maintaining a Cronbach alpha of 0.85 (Mortazavi et al., 2015). In this study, the Cronbach alpha is 0.86.

Procedure

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Lebanese American University (LAU). Participants were sent an online link inviting them to participate through email, social media outlets, and text messages. They chose to partake in the study voluntarily, and no incentives were offered. First, the survey required participants to fill out

demographic information, and the scales were then administered in the following order: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. Participants were asked whether they were fans, and if they were, what is their interest. Fans were then given the Celebrity Attitude Scale, Fanship Scale, Display of Fanship, and WHO-5 Well-being Index. The survey took around 10 to 15 minutes to be completed.

Results

Intercorrelations among variables

A bivariate correlation was run in order to study the intercorrelations among our variables, which are presented in Table 1. First, self-esteem was found to negatively correlate with celebrity worship ($r = -0.244$, $p < 0.01$), specifically with its borderline-pathological subscale ($r = -0.285$, $p < 0.01$) and its entertainment-social subscale ($r = -0.250$, $p < 0.01$). Self-esteem was also found to negatively correlate with loneliness ($r = -0.562$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, results revealed a positive correlation between loneliness and celebrity worship ($r = 0.211$, $p < 0.1$), as well as with two of its subscales: entertainment-social ($r = 0.209$, $p < 0.1$) and borderline-pathological ($r = 0.246$, $p < 0.01$).

Fanship was also found to correlate with celebrity worship ($r = 0.303$, $p < 0.01$), whereby significant positive correlations with its subscales were also revealed: entertainment-social ($r = 0.248$, $p < 0.01$), intense-personal ($r = 0.329$, $p < 0.01$), and borderline pathological ($r = 0.298$, $p < 0.01$). Display of fanship, on the other hand, yielded stronger correlations with the same factors. It was found to positively correlate with celebrity worship ($r = 0.516$, $p < 0.01$), showing further

positive correlations to the three subscales: entertainment-social ($r = 0.500$, $p < 0.01$), intense-personal ($r = 0.495$, $p < 0.01$), and borderline pathological ($r = 0.532$, $p < 0.01$).

Finally, results revealed a significant negative correlation between well-being and self-esteem ($r = -0.431$, $p < 0.01$), as well as a positive correlation between well-being and loneliness ($r = 0.401$, $p < 0.01$).

Gender differences among variables

In order to test gender differences in fanship, an independent samples *t*-test was performed, and men and women did not significantly differ in their levels of self-esteem and loneliness. However, women reported higher levels of celebrity worship ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.01$) than men ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 0.77$), $t = 3.78$, $p < 0.001$. Consequently, women were also found to have higher scores on the entertainment-social subscale ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.12$) in comparison to men ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.93$), $t = 3.77$, $p < 0.001$. The intense-personal subscale also revealed a gender difference whereby women ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.06$) scored higher than men ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.79$), $t = 3.26$, $p = 0.001$. The final subscale, borderline-pathological, also revealed a higher score value for women ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.96$) than men ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 0.74$), $t = 3.58$, $p < 0.001$. Another significant difference was found in the well-being factor, whereby women ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.02$) reported higher levels of general well-being in comparison to men ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.26$), $t = 2.02$, $p < 0.5$.

Loneliness, self-esteem, fanship, and celebrity worship

A regression analysis was carried out with fanship as the criterion (see Table 2). The model was insignificant with loneliness and self-esteem as the predictors. Neither was a significant predictor.

Another regression analysis was carried out with celebrity worship as the criterion (see Table 3). With loneliness and self-esteem as the predictors, the model was significant ($F = 4.60$, $p < 0.05$, Adj $R^2 = 0.05$); however, neither was found to be a significant predictor.

In order to further study celebrity worship, three regression analyses were carried out with its subscales (see Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6 respectively). The models of entertainment-social with loneliness and self-esteem as the predictors ($F = 4.76$, $p < 0.05$, Adj $R^2 = 0.53$) and that of borderline-pathological ($F = 6.46$, $p < 0.05$, Adj $R^2 = 0.79$) were found significant while that of intense-personal was insignificant. Furthermore, in the model of the borderline-pathological celebrity worship, self-esteem was a significant predictor ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.05$).

Differences between different kinds of fans

ANOVA analyses were conducted in order to test the differences across individuals with different kinds of fan interest. The ANOVA indicated no significant differences in self-esteem, loneliness, fanship or well-being. However, significant differences were found in celebrity worship ($F(6,121) = 10.49$, $p = .000$). Follow-up Bonferroni post-hoc tests showed significant differences in celebrity worship between celebrity fans and other kinds of fans, whereby they showed more celebrity worship than sports fans ($p = .000$, 95% C.I. = [.76, 2.00]), fiction fans ($p = .000$, 95% C.I. = [.43, 1.54]), fans of games ($p < .05$, 95% C.I. = [.11, 3.78]), and music fans ($p = .001$, 95% C.I. = [.41, 2.83]).

Similarly, significant differences were found in entertainment-social ($F(6,121) = 13.76$, $p = .000$). Follow-up Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed significant differences between celebrity fans and sports fans ($p = .000$, 95% C.I. = [1.03, 2.36]), fiction fans ($p = .000$, 95% C.I. = [.60,

1.79]), fans of games ($p < .01$, 95% C.I. = [.35, 4.30]), and music fans ($p = .000$, 95% C.I. = [.76, 3.35]).

In addition, significant differences were found in intense-personal (F (6,121) = 6.38, p = .000). Follow-up Bonferroni post-hoc tests found celebrity fans to score higher on intense-personal celebrity worship than sports fans ($p = .000$, 95% C.I. = [.50, 1.86]), fiction fans ($p = .001$, 95% C.I. = [.22, 1.45]), and music fans ($p = .05$, 95% C.I. = [.01, 2.67]).

Borderline-pathological celebrity worship was also significantly different between the types of fans (F (6,121) = 5.67, $p = .000$). Follow-up Bonferroni post-hoc tests found celebrity fans to have higher borderline pathological celebrity worship than sports fans ($p = .000$, 95% C.I. = [.41, 1.69]) and fiction fans ($p = .001$, 95% C.I. = [.23, 1.38]).

Lastly, significant differences were found in display of fanship (F (6,121) = 3.26, $p < .01$). Follow-up Bonferroni post-hoc tests showed significant differences in display of fanship between sports fans and celebrity fans, whereby celebrity fans exhibited more display of fanship ($p = .01$, 95% C.I. = [.14, 1.85]).

Discussion

This study explored possible predictors for fanship through self-esteem, loneliness and celebrity worship, as well as the potential impact that fanship may have on a fan's well-being. While multiple significant correlations were yielded, not all of them were predicted and accounted for within the hypotheses. As such, *H1* was disproved as there was no significant correlation found between well-being and fanship as well as between well-being and entertainment-social celebrity worship. This is also inconsistent with the findings that Reysen et al. (2022) and Laffan (2020)

proposed in their studies, whereby they claim that fanship can accentuate one's well-being and life satisfaction.

Nevertheless, other aspects of such studies must be considered. Both Laffan (2020) and Reysen et al. (2022) emphasize that it may not be the fanship itself, but rather the social relationships that stem from it, that influence a fan's well-being positively. Traces of such a principle may be found within the results that this study's hypotheses did not account for. For instance, both self-esteem and loneliness were found to correlate with the entertainment-social level of celebrity worship. This finding implies that social levels of celebrity worship may enhance one's self-esteem and decrease their feelings of loneliness. Another significant result is the found correlations between well-being and self-esteem as well as between well-being and loneliness. These correlations imply that higher self-esteem and lower levels of loneliness may contribute to one's sense of well-being. Taken together, these findings may prove the claims held by Reysen et al. (2022) and Laffan (2020), whereby fanship may stimulate one's social environment which, in turn, may enhance their well-being.

The ANOVA run to compare different types of fans yielded a few expected results. Fans of celebrities did in fact score higher on celebrity worship than sports fans, music fans and fiction fans, which is in line with our hypothesis (*H2*) as well as previous research (Brooks, 2018). Specifically, celebrity fans exhibited more entertainment-social celebrity worship than sports fans, fiction fans, fans of games, and music fans. They scored higher on intense-personal celebrity worship than sport fans, fiction fans, and music fans and displayed more borderline-pathological celebrity worship than sports fans and fiction fans. These results may be caused by the nature of having a celebrity as one's interest as it puts the focus of one's energy on one person rather than a concept, phenomenon, or a big group of people. Furthermore, the decreasing number of differences

between types as the level of celebrity increases is expected as people are more likely to be casual fans, having entertainment-social celebrity worship, than be borderline-pathological.

Additionally, celebrity fans were found more likely to display their belonging to a fandom than other fan types. This was unexpected but its weaker significance is in line with what is expected, as both celebrity fans and sport fans experience belongingness to a group and use their fandom to make friends. This would encourage display of fanship and would be expected to manifest equally for both kinds of fans (O'Donovan, 2016; Theodorakis, Al-Emadi, Wann, Lianopoulos, & Foudouki, 2017). This may be explained by considering that most celebrity fans in this study were women, while most sport fans were men, and that men tend to wear less accessories. Another notable speculation is that women tend to use fandom to connect with others and make friends more than men (Theodorakis, et al., 2017) and therefore may have more of a motivation to display their belonging to a fandom as a way of catching the attention of other fans of the same interest.

Further analysis of independent sample t-tests have yielded significant results in terms of gender differences in fanship experiences and well-being. Women and men had similar reported levels of fanship, which therefore disproves part of the study's hypothesis (*H3a*). This was implied in other studies, seeing as to how most gender differences in past literature focused on the type of fandom each gender belongs to, the purpose behind their fanship, and other specific factors (Gleason et al., 2017; Theodorakis et al., 2017). Another finding was in line with the current research's hypothesis (*H3b*), which speculated that women would have higher levels of celebrity worship in comparison to men. A study by Brooks (2018) has also shared similar findings, with an emphasis on the fact that men may score higher on borderline-pathological subscale. However, the results of this study had opposite results, whereby women reported higher scores on said scale.

This may be attributed to the social belief that a woman fan is a crazed fan in love with an attractive celebrity (Obel, 2012). Essentially, this stereotype may have led to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Such gender differences warrant further research.

As opposed to our hypothesis (*H4*) loneliness was found to predict neither fanship nor celebrity worship and its subscales. This is not in line with the findings of Reysen et al. (2022) which have found loneliness to encourage individuals to join fandoms. The present study's result may be caused by administering the loneliness survey after participants were already fans and their loneliness has subsided due to fandom activities as reported by previous studies (Reysen et al., 2022).

Moreover, self-esteem was not found to be a predictor of fanship or celebrity worship, disproving our hypothesis (*H5*); however, it was a significant predictor of borderline pathological celebrity worship. This result may be explained by adding onto previous research. It has been found that fanship contributes to an increase in self-esteem (Brooks, 2018; Laffan, 2020). Perhaps individuals with a lower self-esteem become overdependent on the object of their interest to give them esteem, and subsequently develop a borderline-pathological celebrity worship. Moreover, being unable to raise one's self-esteem despite the worship may lead to the intensifying of said worship as a desperate attempt at increasing self-esteem.

The model of loneliness and self-esteem did predict celebrity worship, which is possibly due to the narrowing of the data. This would imply a certain profile for a fan with high celebrity worship that would need further research to identify and describe.

The obtained results may serve individuals a greater understanding of the underlying factors behind fanship as well as the associations that accompany it. The study renders this

important as it contributes to clear misunderstandings on the nature of fans, disprove the negative social image attributed to them, and decrease the prejudice that surrounds them in social contexts. Nevertheless, it is also important to highlight the importance of being aware of the signs of pathology that some fans may possess, as well as the possible causes behind the pathological behavior. This study thus hopes to provide sufficient information on such matters.

Limitations and Recommendations

Although this study yields substantial results, several limitations must still be considered. The recruited sample consists of roughly over 160 participants and is composed of mostly Lebanese youth. The study had aimed to explore differences in fanship across different cultures and nationalities but was unable to do so due to the scarcity of non-Lebanese individuals who participated in the study. Furthermore, the sample presented an unequal distribution of types of fans. Such factors, alongside the fact that it has been recruited conveniently rather than randomly, make the sample less representative and the results less generalizable. Another limitation is the online administration of the survey, seeing as to how it allows multiple submissions which may therefore skew results. Additionally, reliability testing for the used scales revealed that the 2-item *Display of Fanship* scale (Chadborn et al., 2017) had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.66, which may threaten its reliability and, subsequently, the obtained results.

Given such limitations, future studies are advised to conduct their research having recruited a larger, more random sample. Including individuals of different ages and backgrounds may assist in varying the obtained results and better generalizing them. Moreover, researchers are recommended to use scales with higher Cronbach's Alphas in order to better ensure the validity of the obtained results. It is also advised to use scales that have been validated in Lebanon. Ideally, the mode of administration of the survey would steer away from one that is online and would entail

experimental methods. However, if online administration were to be applied, researchers are urged to control for the possibility of multiple submissions, thus making only one submission per individual possible and diminishing the probable skewness of results. Most importantly, it is advised that future research include mediating variables such as social relationships, more predictors that would make it possible to describe the profile of a fan, more importantly one with pathological celebrity worship who may put themselves and others at risk. Finally, to ensure the best results, longitudinal studies are recommended in order to get the most reliable results possible.

References

Bech P. (2004). Measuring the dimensions of psychological general well-being by the WHO-5. *QoL Newsletter*, *32*, 15–16.

Brooks, S. K. (2018). 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

Chadborn, D., Edwards, P., & Reysen, S. (2017). Displaying Fan Identity to Make Friends. *Intensities: The Journal of Cult Media*, *9*, 87–97.

Gerrard, Y. (2021). Groupies, Fangirls and Shippers: The Endurance of a Gender Stereotype. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 000276422110422. https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642211042284

Gleason, T. R., Theran, S. A., & Newberg, E. M. (2017). Parasocial Interactions and Relationships in Early Adolescence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00255

Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Chang, M. X., Bentley, S. V., Haslam, S. A., Dingle, G. A., & Jetten, J. (2019). GROUPS 4 HEALTH reduces loneliness and social anxiety in adults with psychological distress: Findings from a randomized controlled trial. Journal of consulting and clinical psychology, 87(9), 787–801. https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000427

Henriksen, I. O., Ranøyen, I., Indredavik, M. S., & Stenseng, F. (2017). The role of self-esteem in the development of psychiatric problems: a three-year prospective study in a clinical sample of adolescents. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-017-0207-y

Hitlan, R. T., McCutcheon, L. E., Volungis, A. M., Joshi, A., Clark, C. B., & Pena, M. (2021).

    Social Desirability and the Celebrity Attitude Scale. *North American Journal of*

    Psychology, *23*, 105–114.

Laffan, D. A. (2020). Positive Psychosocial Outcomes and Fanship in K-Pop Fans: A Social

    Identity Theory Perspective. *Psychological Reports*, *124*(5), 2272–2285.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294120961524

McCutcheon, L. & Maltby, J. (2002). Personality Attributions About Individuals High and Low

    in the Tendency to Worship Celebrities. *Current Research in Social Psychology, 7*(19).

Mortazavi, F., Mousavi, S. A., Chaman, R., & Khosravi, A. (2015). *[Validation of the World*

    Health Organization-5 Well-Being Index; assessment of maternal well-being and its

    associated factors]. National Library of Medicine. Retrieved 2022, from

    https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25742037/#:%7E:text=Results%3A%20Cronbach's%20

    alpha%20coefficient%20for,63.1%25%20of%20the%20total%20variance.

Obel, C. (2012). Fantasy, Fun and Identity Construction Among Female Fans of Rugby Union.

    In *Sport and Its Female Fans* (1st ed., pp. 115–134). Routledge.

O'Donovan, R. (2016). 'To boldly go where no psychologist has gone before": effects of

    participation in fandom activities on parasocial relationships. *Journal of Applied*

    Psychology and Social Science, 2 (1), 41–61.

Reysen, S. & Branscombe, N. (n. d.). Fanship and Fandom: Comparisons Between Sport and

    Non-Sport Fans. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 33*(2), 176–193.

Reysen, S., Plante, C. N., Roberts, S. E., & Gerbasi, K. C. (2022). Social Activities Mediate the

    Relation between Fandom Identification and Psychological Well-Being. *Leisure*

    Sciences, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2021.2023714

Reysen, S., Plante, C., & Chadborn, D. (2017). Better Together: Social Connections Mediate the

  Relationship Between Fandom and Well-Being. *AASCIT Journal of Health*, *4*(6), 68–73.

Reysen, S., Plante, C., & Chadborn, D. (2022). Perceived Permeability of Group Boundaries as a

  Mediator Between Belonging to Multiple Fandoms and Loneliness. *Popular Culture*

  Studies Journal, *10*(1), 315–333.

Rosenberg, M. (1979). *Conceiving the Self.* New York: Basic Books.

Russell, D., Peplau, L.A., & Cutrona, C.E. (1980). The revised UCLA Loneliness Scale:

  Concurrent and discriminant validity evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social*

  Psychology, 39, 472–480.

Sansone, R. A., & Sansone, L. A. (2014). *"I'm Your Number One Fan"— A Clinical Look at*

  Celebrity Worship. National Library of Medicine. Retrieved 2022, from

  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3960781/

Staff, M. (2022, March 5). *Fanship Scale*. Midss. https://www.midss.org/content/fanship-scale/

Theodorakis, N., Al-Emadi, A., Wann, D., Lianopoulos, Y. & Foudouki, A. (2017). An

  examination of levels of fandom, team identification, socialization processes, and fan

  behaviors in Qatar. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 40,* 1–21.

Wann, D. L., Brasher, M., Thomas, D. L., & Scheuchner, H. L. (2015). Generalizing the team

  identification: Social psychological health model for adolescents. *Journal of Sport*

  Behavior, *38*(3), 339–355.

Zsila, G., 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*.

  https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.651067

Appendix

Table 1

Intercorrelations between the study variables

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Self-esteem	-.562**	-.250**	-.183*	-.285**	-.244**	-.099	-.127	-.431**
2. Loneliness		.209*	.168	.246**	.211*	.129	.021	.401**
3. Entertainment-social			.832**	.819**	.961**	.248**	.500**	.164
4. Intense-personal				.813**	.945**	.329**	.495**	.157
5. Borderline-pathological					.895**	.298**	.432**	.175*
6. Celebrity Worship						.303**	.516**	.172
7. Fanship							.363**	-.027
8. Display of Fanship								.045
9. Well-being								

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

Table 2

Regression of fanship on loneliness and self-esteem

	SE	*β*	*t*
Loneliness	.333	.107	.994
Self-Esteem	.265	-.039	-.363
F/Adj-R^2	1.104/.002		

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

Table 3

Regression of celebrity worship on loneliness and self-esteem

	SE	β	t
Loneliness	.201	.111	1.088
Self-Esteem	.158	-.183	-1.786
F/Adj-R^2	4.602*/.053		

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

Table 4

Regression of entertainment-social celebrity worship on loneliness and self-esteem

	SE	β	t
Loneliness	.227	.103	1.009
Self-Esteem	.179	-.194	-1.899
F/Adj-R^2	4.760*/.053		

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

Table 5

Regression of intense-personal celebrity worship on loneliness and self-esteem

	SE	β	t
Loneliness	.210	.098	.939
Self-Esteem	.165	-.130	-1.247
F/Adj-R^2	2.633/.025		

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

Table 6

Regression of borderline-pathological celebrity worship on loneliness and self-esteem

	SE	*β*	*t*
Loneliness	.188	.130	1.287
Self-Esteem	.148	-.214	-2.117*
F/Adj-*R*^{2}	6.458*/.079		

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