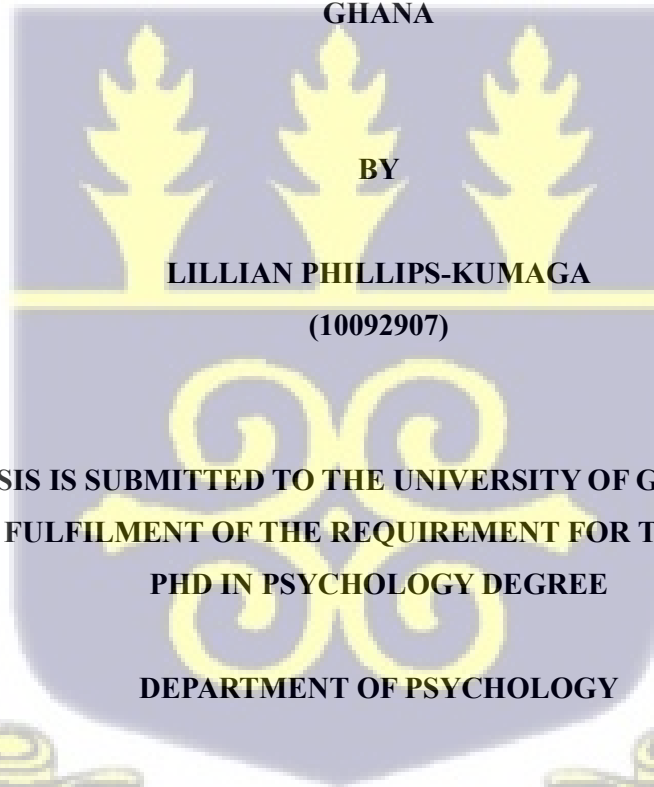


**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**



**CELEBRITY FOLLOWERSHIP AND PERCEIVED IMPACTS: A  
PSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF MUSIC-BASED FAN GROUPS IN  
GHANA**



**BY**

**LILLIAN PHILLIPS-KUMAGA**

**(10092907)**

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA LEGON IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A  
PHD IN PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE**

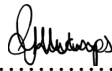
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**



**APRIL 2025**

## DECLARATION

I declare that, except for references to other people's works, which have been duly acknowledged, this research was conducted by me in the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of Prof. Annabella Osei-Tutu and Dr Brenya Wiafe Akenten. I also certify that this thesis is an original piece of research written by me and has never been submitted in whole or part for the award of any Degree in any University.



.....

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29<sup>th</sup> April 2025

.....

DATE

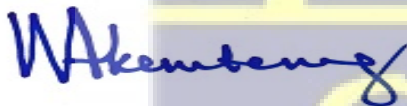


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(CO-SUPERVISOR)

29<sup>th</sup> April 2025

DATE



## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the men in my life: Nuku, Kekeli, Nyameye and Dzidzor.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Isaiah 26:12- Lord, ...all that we have accomplished, you have done for us. I am most grateful to the Lord God, who saw me through this journey and made all this possible. I thank God for my physical and mental health, my memory, and the ability to think all through these challenging years. I could not have made it this far without you- “This is the doing of the Lord”.

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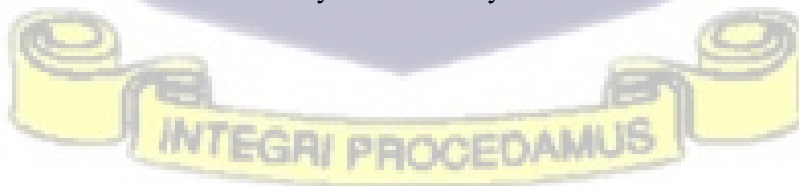
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## ABSTRACT

Famous individuals have long shaped society, but television (TV) and, more recently, social media have intensified parasocial bonds, fuelling celebrity culture and fan attachment. While much of the existing literature frames this attachment as celebrity worship, emphasising obsessive fascination with adverse outcomes, this study shifts the focus to a broader concept of celebrity followership, highlighting the social and communal aspects of fan engagement. A sequential exploratory mixed-methods design examined celebrity followership among Ghanaian music fan groups. Study 1 involved interviews with purposively sampled members and executives of five Ghanaian celebrity musicians (N = 33; Mean Age = 31.3; SD = 6.82; Age range = 20-49; Male =20; Female =13). The interviews explored participants' motivations for following their chosen celebrity, the reasons for forming fan groups, their experiences as fan group members, and the perceived influence of celebrity followership on fan behaviour. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Findings revealed six main themes: (1) profound admiration for artists, (2) pedestalisation, (3) empowering encounters, (4) invisible struggles, (5) fanaticism, and (6) pro-social behaviours. Study 2 investigated social capital, team identification, and social and personal identity among a broader fan base (N = 301; Mean Age = 28.7; SD = 6.30; Age range =18-49; Male =197; Female =104), using structural equation modelling with item-parcelling. Results revealed that stronger celebrity attachment was associated with higher social capital. Although celebrity attachment positively correlated with social and personal identity, this relationship was not statistically significant. Also, higher celebrity attachment was associated with higher team identification. Furthermore, team identification partially mediated the relationship between celebrity attachment and social capital and fully mediated the relationship between celebrity attachment and social and personal identity. The present study highlights the nuances of celebrity followership and posits that active participation in fan communities fosters positive outcomes. Recommendations are provided for celebrities, fan managers, media psychologists, and psychologists.

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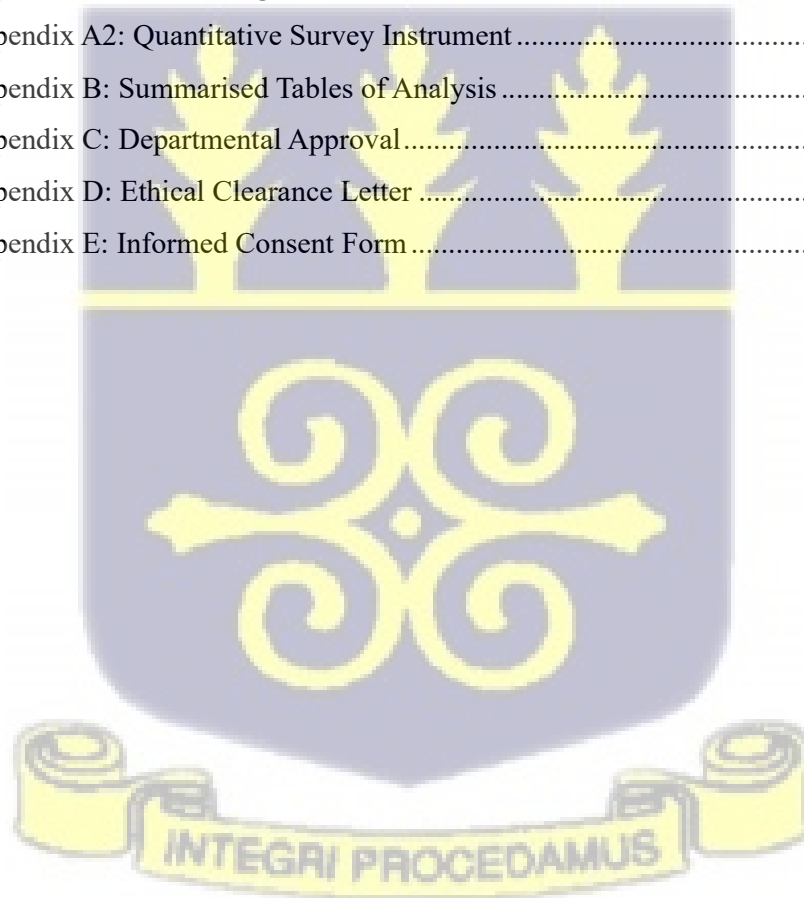
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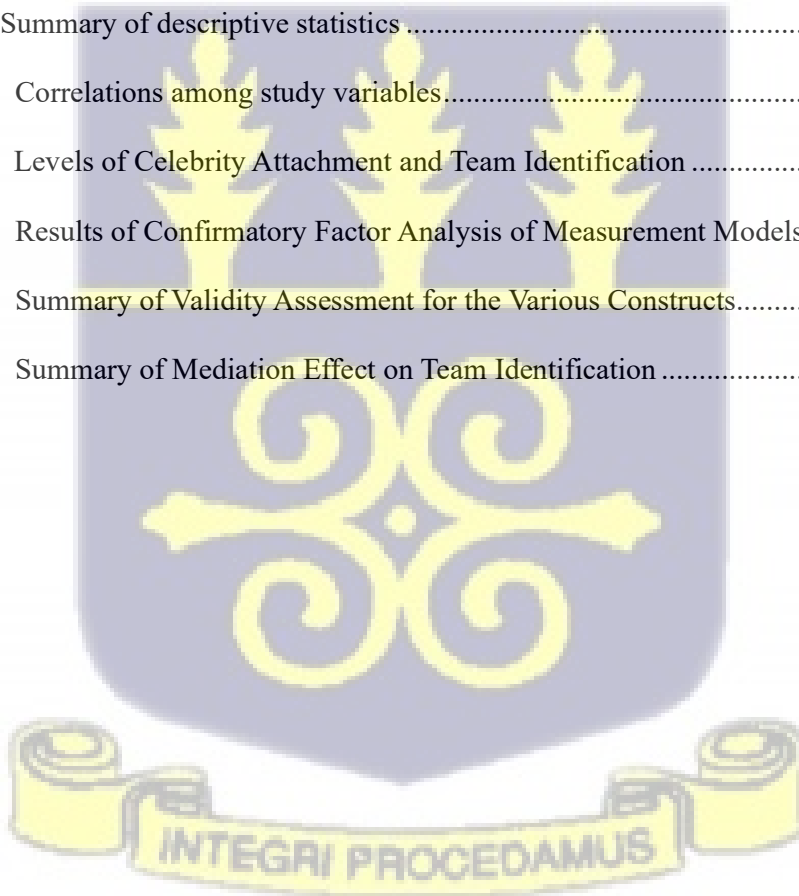
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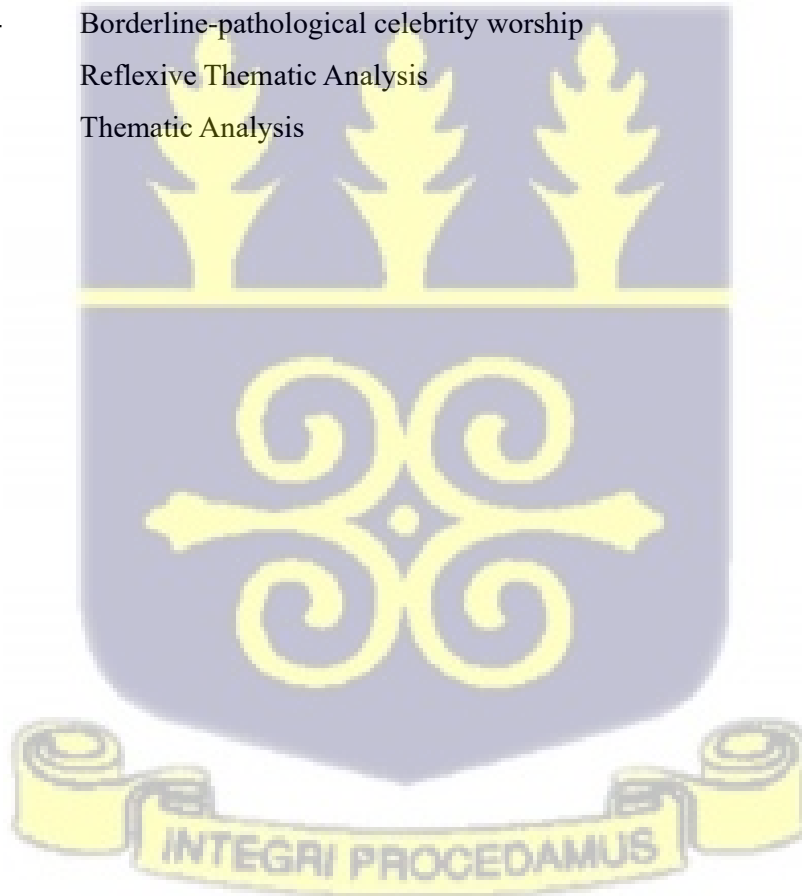
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CA-	Celebrity Attachment
CW-	Celebrity Worship
SC-	Social Capital
SIPI-	Social Identity Personal Identity
SW-	Social Identity
TI-	Team Identity
CAS-	Celebrity Attitude Scale
PSI-	Parasocial Interaction
ES-CW-	Entertainment-social celebrity worship
IP-CW-	Intense-personal celebrity worship
BP-CW-	Borderline-pathological celebrity worship
RTA-	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
TA-	Thematic Analysis



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Fame and the desire for it have always been part of human nature (Brooks, 2018). The reality and evolution of fame can be traced from the historic eras of famed religious icons, such as gods and priests, to the emergence of present-day Hollywood stars (Braudy 1986, cited in Elliot & Boyd, 2018). From Braudy's perspective, fame suggests being known for having done something significant (North et al., 2005). Braudy's fame study traces the emergence of celebrities to the beginnings of radio and TV in the 1920s and 1940s, respectively. Boorstin (1987), on the other hand, traces the celebrity era to the mid-19th-century graphic revolution when photography was developed, and images were used to broadcast information. In his seminal book, *Celebrity*, Rojek (2001) attributes the public's fixation with celebrities to connected historical events: First, the breakdown of rigid class structures of society, where status shifts somewhat from ascribed to earned; the waning influence of the church and increase in secularism; third, the commercialisation of everyday life, where consumer culture turns things into marketable goods.

Recently, the boom in mass media, i.e. new digital technologies, reality TV and social media, and the unprecedented exposure and publicity associated with being famous has transformed greatness and fame into celebrity (Elliot & Boyd, 2018). Celebrity in this way suggests "publicity", being known because one is or has been put "out there," as it were, and not necessarily for having performed a notable feat (Elliot & Boyd, 2018). However, not all celebrities are without talent or any worthwhile achievement, nor is fame qualitatively different from celebrity (Milner, 2010). Celebrity can, therefore, be conceptualised as a subset of fame (Milner, 2010). With the increase in celebrityship,

attachment and intimacy with celebrities and celebrity culture are rising (Elliot & Boyd, 2018; Penfold, 2004; Rojek, 2001). From organisations' increased use of celebrities to reach potential customers, it is evident that celebrity culture has influenced politics and businesses through concepts such as celebrity endorsements of organisations and brands (Agyepong, 2017). This demonstrates celebrities' immense power over their fans and, by extension, whatever brands they endorse or associate themselves with.

### **1.1.1 Who is a celebrity?**

The word "celebrity" has been quite challenging to define because it is a social construct and quite a fluid term (Agyepong, 2017). Although Elliot and Boyd describe it as "fame emptied of content or artistry" (2018, p. 4), one thing is clear: celebrity is a function of well-knownness and is dependent on publicity (Benson et al., 2021). A celebrity is commonly understood as someone liked, known, famous and celebrated by others for actions that have led to their fame (Boorstin, 1961 as cited in Rockwell & Giles, 2009; Uzuegbunam, 2017). Boorstin (1987) aptly describes celebrities as "people well-known for their well-knownness" through media exposure (p. 54). Their visibility involves face recognition, name recall and social media presence. A celebrity can be someone who has contributed positively to society or someone who has gained notoriety for something negative they have done, and how that action is communicated or marketed to the public (Rojek, 2001; Van Krieken, 2018).

According to Rojek (2001), a person can attain celebrity status in three ways. One is by ascription, where a person is famous or well-known because of their lineage, such as belonging to a renowned family; royals are a typical example of this. The second is by achievement, where a person gains celebrity status by accomplishing feats or by their talents, this might include individuals such as sports people, artists, musicians and actors.

The third is through attribution, referring to the way a person is promoted, by what Rojek (2001) refers to as “cultural intermediaries” (p. 18), comprising media publicists, editors or media houses. This third category would include social media influencers or persons involved in scandals or criminal activities whose stories are repeatedly broadcast and sensationalised, elevating their public profile. Such individuals are often labelled as celestoids or short-term celebrities who capture media attention briefly before fading into obscurity (Rojek, 2001). In this context, Van Krieken's (2018) perspective which proposes that celebrity exists on a continuum as an ordinal quality where an individual may be “more” or “less” of a celebrity, is particularly compelling. This framework provides a helpful way to distinguish the relative celebrity status of one person from another. Thus, synthesising various authors’ definitions, a celebrity may be defined as a person famous for their actions or a media-curated figure whose name generates attention, interest and profit (Boorstin, 1987; Rein et al., 1997; Rojek, 2001).

Within the last 20 to 30 years, celebrity content has become more visible in mainstream media, with gossip newspapers, magazines, and television programmes dedicated to celebrity news. This pervasive celebrity culture has also influenced politics and businesses, giving rise to concepts such as “celebrity endorsements”, where well-known personalities or “influencers” promote products or brands, creating positive associations and boosting sales (Yang et al., 2024). Talent shows and reality programmes have focused on turning young people into celebrities (Turner, 2013).

The relationship that exists between fans and celebrities has been conceptualised in different ways, such as parasocial relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956), imaginary social relationships (Caughey, 1995), celebrity attachments (Stever, 2011), and celebrity worship (McCutcheon et al., 2002). All these describe a persistent, usually one-sided, emotional and psychological bond that exists between an individual and a famous person, evident in

behaviours like being vested in news about the celebrity's personal life, career and spending money in activities related to the celebrity (Stever, 2009). There are many reasons why people are interested in the lives of celebrities. Turner (2013) suggests that the private lives of celebrities revealed on social media and TV drive fandom more than their professional lives. According to Rubin and McHugh (1987), parasocial interactions (PSI) are a normal part of human instinct, which drives us to want to connect with others. Uzuegbunam (2017) posits an instinct to revere, worship and look to an authority or higher being, with celebrities representing and assuming this higher being status.

### **1.1.2 Celebrity Worship**

Celebrity worship, a phrase coined by McCutcheon et al. (2002), describes an intense liking and admiration for well-known people or celebrities. This phenomenon, also described as idol worship, is defined as identifying and becoming emotionally attached to idols or celebrities (Cheung & Yue, 2012). Celebrity worship can also be defined as an obsessive fascination with a famous person, often likened to idol worship (Liu, 2013; Maltby et al., 2003; McCutcheon et al., 2003; Zsila et al., 2018). This one-sided or parasocial relationship (Horton & Wohl, 1956) has recently become increasingly blurred by social media, allowing real-time interaction between celebrities and their fans. Maltby et al. (2003) suggest that the expression of this intense, obsessive fascination can be likened to a delusional disorder known as erotomania (McCutcheon et al., 2003).

Stever (2011) critiques this definition of “celebrity worship” by McCutcheon et al. (2002), highlighting the lack of clear distinction between a celebrity worshipper and a fan. She argues that serious fans are often wrongly labelled as “celebrity worshippers”. However, McCutcheon et al. (2002) identify both pathological and non-pathological forms of celebrity worship. Stever contends that fans do not “worship” celebrities, noting that

psychological studies often focus on negative aspects such as, erotomania and stalking. In reviewing celebrity worship from a clinical point of view, Sansone and Sansone (2014) suggest that celebrity worship should be viewed on a continuum from mild to passionate through to pathological.

Regardless of the terminology used, “something” exists between celebrities and their fans, ranging from mild to intense. These relationships are driven by diverse motivations, leading to varied impacts. Adverse outcomes and contributing factors associated with “celebrity worship”, emphasising the power of celebrities, include young people’s reluctance to aspire to higher learning (Benson & Adinlewa, 2021), lower self-esteem, substitution and compensation for a lack in their lives (Reeves et al., 2012; Yuzhang & Xiaotian, 2002), lack of self-concept or self-identity and poor psychological well-being (Brooks, 2018; Maltby et al., 2001). However, some researchers, such as Ang and Chan (2018), Nnubia et al. (2020), and Uzuegbunam (2017), have reported positive outcomes such as enhanced self-esteem and a strong drive towards achieving life goals. Celebrities represent their fans’ aspirations and “wanna-be” future selves. Maltby et al. (2001) suggest that celebrity worship at an individual level could be dangerous but, conversely, could act as a buffer at the group level. The mixed results from these studies indicate the different theoretical reasons why some individuals benefit from celebrity worship, whilst others do not. Although the terms celebrity and idol are used interchangeably, the two concepts have been used and are measured differently in some literature (see Cheung & Yue, 2012 and McCutcheon et al., 2002). Idols are a broader category encompassing current, historical, or fictional characters, while celebrities are contemporary and trending people.

### **1.1.3 Celebrity Worship versus Celebrity Followership**

In media psychology, celebrity followership or fandom and celebrity worship are two different but closely related concepts. The larger trend of individuals interacting with and supporting celebrities through social media via fan communities or participation in fandom culture is known as celebrity followership (McCutcheon et al., 2002; Stever, 2011). Fan behaviours range from casual interest to intense involvement. In contrast, celebrity worship denotes a more intense psychological bond or attachment to a celebrity, evidenced by powerful emotional bonds, obsessive thoughts and, in extreme cases, behaviours such as those seen in parasocial relationships. While all celebrity worshippers are fans, not all fans are celebrity worshippers (McCutcheon, 2025; Stever, 2011). In this study, the term “celebrity followership” is used to capture the range of fan engagement, acknowledging that while some individuals may admire and support celebrities from a distance, others may develop deeper levels of identification and attachment that correspond to the aspects of celebrity worship discussed in the literature (Maltby et al., 2006; McCutcheon et al., 2002). Celebrity followership, celebrity worship, idol worship or celebrity adulation are outcomes of fanship and fandom.

### **1.1.4 Fans, Fan Groups, Fanship and Fandom**

The term “fan” is a shortened form of “fanatic”,; a word initially linked to extreme religious enthusiasm and often used to describe someone as unstable and abnormal. Over time, the negative connotations of “fanatic” led to the adoption of the more neutral and favourable term “fan” (Reysen & Lloyd, 2012). Fans are admirers, devotees and enthusiasts of various interests, from sports to movies to music (Reysen & Lloyd, 2012), while fan groups or fan communities are social communities or a community of individuals who share a common interest or enthusiasm for a cultural object, a person or a

team (Edlom & Karlsson, 2021; Katz et al., 2020). Fan groups share a collective identity which sets them apart from general audiences and shapes loyalty and behaviour. They engage in unique practices and rituals, and within their structure, members occupy distinct status hierarchies, from casual fans to super-fans (Yoshida et al., 2015). Fanship and fandom, distinct yet positively related constructs, are the extent to which people identify as fans (Plante et al., 2020; Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). A fan feels a personal connection with something they love, such as a sports team, celebrity, or other interest. This connection is described as “fanship”. It is the personal meaning that people create at the individual level through their engagement with an object of admiration, whether going to concerts, buying merchandise or just being part of the experience (Reysen & Lloyd, 2012). Alternatively, the sense of connection to the group or other fans who share the same interests is described as “fandom” (Branscombe & Wann, 1993; Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). Fanship is also defined by Branscombe and Wann (1993) in sports as “team identification”, whilst fandom is likened to social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Fanship leads to fandom, which contributes to positive social identity and well-being (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010; Wann, 2006), whether in in-person or online groups. These concepts have primarily been explored in the context of sports and sports team identification (Reysen & Lloyd, 2012). Interestingly, sports fans and fans of other interests have been found to share similar psychological and social characteristics and are therefore regarded as no different from each other (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010).

### **1.1.5 Fan Group Formation**

Fan communities are formed when individuals bond over shared interests in media figures, fictional worlds or cultural phenomena (Yi, 2023). These groups are characterised by active participation rather than passive consumption, with members creating or sharing

content related to their interests like fan fiction (e.g. Star Trek) or artwork (Marwick, 2016). This participatory culture represents a shift from traditional audience behaviour to more interactive forms of media engagement (Jenkins, 2009). Key theories that explain the formation of fan groups include the social identity theory, which posits that individuals derive a part of their self-concept from group memberships (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and the uses and gratification theory (Gerbner, 1998), which suggests that fans form communities to fulfil needs ranging from entertainment to social belonging.

From a psychological perspective, fan attachments are often explained through parasocial relationships, where one-sided bonds are formed with media personalities (Horton & Wohl, 1956). These relationships are facilitated by repeated exposure through various media channels. Additionally, identification processes occur when fans see themselves in their favourite celebrity and desire to be like them. Socially, technology has changed how fan groups work. Where fans used to meet at concerts and conventions, they now connect instantly online. Online platforms have removed geographical boundaries, accelerating group formation. Offline collective rituals such as conventions, streaming parties and concerts transform virtual connections into tangible experiences. Within these spaces, fan groups are organised and maintained through informal hierarchies of roles: fan group managers, leaders, hard-core fans, active participants, fan bases and the like (Chin, 2018).

Evolutionary perspectives reveal deeper reasons for fan group formation. For example, Stever (2017) suggests that humans are wired to seek attachment to familiar faces and voices - traits necessary for social bonding and survival. Repeated exposure to celebrities through television and social media creates a sense of intimacy and familiarity. Fan communities thus function like modern-day tribes, fulfilling our innate need for identity and belonging. Fan groups also provide support that mirrors kinship systems, with

evolutionary group identity playing a role in protecting shared resources (Brewer, 1991; Butler et al., 2025).

### **1.1.6 Music Culture in Ghana**

Music is special to Ghanaians and is an important expression of their identity, community and creativity (Eddison, 2020). Music is an essential part of Ghanaian life, from traditional drumming and storytelling to music forms like highlife and more contemporary genres. Musical talent has long been respected in Ghana with Ghanaians admiring and celebrating such talent not only as means of entertainment but also as a medium of preserving history, building social cohesion and articulating cultural values (Amparbin & Appiah, 2024). Ghanaians' admiration for musical talent is evident in the widespread support for artists and the vibrant music industry that has developed over the years. Ghanaian musicians are celebrated for connecting with their fans at a personal level as much as their art (Matczynski, 2011). This section will outline the development of Ghanaian music from highlife to hiplife to more recent sounds, demonstrating Ghanaians' love for music.

Ghana's music culture is a vibrant blend of traditional and global influences shaped by its rich history (Collins, 2005; Fiagbedzi, 2017). The evolution of popular music in Ghana began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emerging from a blend of indigenous African sounds and European musical elements (Collins, 2004). Some musicians who popularised this style of music included E.T. Mensah, George Darko, C.K. Mann and "Dr" Paa Bobo. Highlife, Ghana's most iconic genre at the heart of this musical journey, laid the groundwork for modern music styles like hiplife, Afro-pop, and even Ghanaian gospel. Highlife is known for its melodic guitar riffs, inspired by the earlier palm-wine music, combined with Western instruments such as trumpets, saxophones,

drum kits, and keyboards, all combined with traditional African percussion (Collins, 1976; Collins, 2004).

Highlife, however, faced a decline during the late 1970s and early 1980s, a period marked by political instability and military coups that stifled nightlife and prompted many Ghanaians to emigrate. By the mid-1980s, a new variation of highlife, known as burger highlife, emerged. This disco-inspired style resonated with Ghana's youth at the time.

Burger Highlife incorporated drum machines and synthesizer horns, popularized by artists like the Lumba Brothers, with Daddy Lumba eventually rising to fame as a solo act (Collins, 2004).

By the end of the 1990s, rap music in local languages and Western hip-hop beats began dominating the music scene of the youth. This led to the birth of hiplife, a fusion of hip-hop and highlife, pioneered by Reggie Rockstone (Osumare, 2012; Yun, 2015). While many Ghanaian artists continue to embrace highlife, they often blend it with contemporary styles like Afro-beat and Afro-pop.

Hiplife paved the way for further experimentation, giving rise to Afro-pop, shortened from African popular music. This genre blends traditional African music with Western pop influences such as R&B, hip-hop, reggae, funk, and dancehall. Afro-pop reflects the vibrant culture of modern African youth and has grown into one of the most popular genres since the early 2000s, thanks to the internet and music streaming platforms. These tools have allowed Ghanaian musicians to tap into global trends, like American R&B, and infuse them into their work. While Ghanaian Afro-pop shares roots with Nigeria's Afro-beat movement, it carries a distinct highlife and hip-hop flavour. Artists like Sarkodie and Stonebwoy have been instrumental in shaping Ghana's Afro-pop sound (Osabutey, 2013).

Another influential genre is dancehall, which originated in Jamaica in the 1970s as an offshoot of reggae, featuring faster rhythms and a vocal style closer to rap. Although reggae had already gained popularity in Ghana through icons like Bob Marley, the 1990s saw Ghanaians embracing dancehall artists like Shabba Ranks and Beenie Man. This led to a fusion of dancehall rhythms with highlife and hiplife. By the 2010s, dancehall had exploded in Ghana, with artists like Shatta Wale and Stonebwoy blending Afro-pop with Reggae and MzVee, adding a powerful female voice to the mix. Ghanaian dancehall often incorporates Jamaican Patois alongside local languages, creating a unique sound (Shiple, 2013).

Neo-soul, a genre rooted in African American music, has also found its way onto Ghana's music scene. Neo-soul blends traditional soul music with R&B, hip-hop, and jazz, sometimes incorporating African elements. Ghanaian artists like Efy have embraced this genre, mixing neo-soul with highlife and Afro-beat to create a soulful and distinctly Ghanaian sound (Shiple, 2013).

## **1.2 Statement of problem**

Celebrity followership, characterised by intense admiration and attachment to famous people, has become an increasingly prominent phenomenon in modern society driven by the widespread consumption of social media content. Existing studies, mainly in the West and in Asia, have revealed mixed results, with the dominant discourse suggesting potential risks, including diminished social well-being and reduced self-esteem, whilst other evidence points to effects such as increased self-esteem and social belonging (Cheung & Yue, 2019; Sansone & Sansone, 2014; Uzuegbunam, 2017). This duality underscores the complexity of this phenomenon and the need for a nuanced understanding of its impacts.

Celebrity culture, a social trend driven by the growing influence of social media, where people and the media become fascinated with famous individuals, focusing on their lives and achievements (Drake & Miah, 2010; Shipley, 2013), appears to be on the rise in Ghana. Reports in the Ghanaian media suggest that celebrities in Ghana are not just entertainers but play a significant role in shaping attitudes and even influencing psychological behaviours. For example, on November 10, 2021, following the arrest of some celebrities for misconduct, the Inspector General of Police engaged celebrities concerning their behaviours (Parkerlongdon, 2021) and their impact on those who look up to them. There have been cases where some stars have talked about their mental health challenges, whilst others have demonstrated through their actions some psychological difficulties (Starrfm.com.gh, 2021; Tali, 2020). There have also been instances where fans have besieged court premises supporting their accused celebrities (Agyekum & Kusorgbor, 2016). These events indicate that it has become imperative that celebrity attachment and followership in Ghana be studied to uncover its underlying psychological and social factors.

In Ghana, most studies on celebrity influences have focused on the role of celebrities in brand endorsement, advertising, their impact on consumer buying behaviour and politics (Asomaning & Ababio, 2020; Kraa et al., 2018; Mensah, 2017), as well as religious celebrities (Appau & Bonsu, 2020; De Witte, 2011). Most of these studies have focused on the celebrities themselves. A probable explanation may be that celebrities are the “main event”. They make things happen. They, not their fans, drive sales. However, it is also true that there are no celebrities without fans. Thus, fans also need to be examined. There is little knowledge about the phenomenon of celebrity followership and its potential risk for fan members and fan groups in the Ghanaian context. Addressing these gaps is

essential and will inform interventions to promote healthy media consumption and foster positive social and psychological outcomes among celebrity followers.

Additionally, worldwide research on “celebrity worship” (CW) has relied chiefly on correlational and cross-sectional data (Brooks, 2018). There is a dearth of qualitative data to give fans of specific celebrities a voice to express their perceptions of celebrity followership and its impact on their lives (Brooks, 2018; Hirt & Clarkson, 2011). Also, most studies have focused on adolescents and university students, but there is a need to study this phenomenon in adult fans (Hirt & Clarkson, 2011; Morgan et al., 2024). Hence, a study focusing on fans and fan groups in Ghana will contribute to the global discourse on celebrities and their fan groups. Additionally, studies reviewed on CW focus on the pathological outcomes of celebrity followership (McCutcheon et al., 2002; Stever, 2011). This research explores the phenomenon of celebrity followership, specifically focusing on the motivations driving fans and fan groups to devote themselves to famous musicians. It explores the social, psychological and cultural factors that contribute to the formation and sustenance of fandom. Additionally, the research examines the potential impact of celebrity followership on fans’ lives, behaviours and identities, while also examining how fandom dynamics vary across different generations and genders of musicians. This study aims to provide valuable insights for celebrities, fan group managers and media psychologists. It will shed light on the influence of celebrities on their fans in Ghana, the perceived social and psychological impact of the fan groups on their members and culturally relevant information about the dynamics of fandom within the Ghanaian context, offering practical implications for managing and engaging fan communities in a meaningful way.

### 1.3 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of fan group members of selected music celebrities in Ghana. Specific objectives were to:

1. Explore the reasons why Ghanaian adult fans follow celebrities.
2. Explore the reasons for the formation of celebrity fan groups in Ghana
3. Explore the experiences and meaning-making of fan group members regarding their relationships with the celebrities their groups follow.
4. Identify how celebrity followership influences the behaviour of fans.
5. Explore differences and similarities across fan groups of various celebrities.
6. Assess the widespread nature of key variables and behaviours within the wider fan group.

### 1.4 Research questions

This study explored six research questions.

1. What reasons do Ghanaian fans cite as motivations for celebrity followership?
2. What motivates the establishment of fan groups in Ghana?
3. What are the experiences of fan members of celebrity fan groups in Ghana as they follow their favourite celebrities?
4. How does celebrity followership influence the behaviour of fans in Ghana?
5. Are there any similarities and differences among fan groups?
6. What is the extent to which the perceived impacts of celebrity followership identified qualitatively reflect those of the broader fan group?

## 1.5 Significance of the study

This investigation represents an additional phase or aspect of research aimed at exploring the growth of celebrity culture in Ghana and its impact on fans. I study this as a social phenomenon where young people look to these celebrities, aspire to be like them, and choose to belong to groups that identify with them, thus fuelling continual followership.

Most studies on celebrity followership have been conducted in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Asia, and a few in India (Halim et al., 2022; Maltby et al., 2003; McCutcheon et al., 2016b; McCutcheon & Aruguete, 2021). Most of these studies report adverse outcomes of celebrity followership. From 2017 to date, very few studies have been conducted in Nigeria or Ghana (Morgan et al., 2024; Nnubia et al., 2020; Uzuegbunam, 2017). The studies from Nigeria report mixed results, with some more positive than negative impacts of CW, while the Ghanaian study reported both positive and negative effects. Celebrity adulation is a global phenomenon, but its manifestations may have cultural variations. This study in Ghana seeks to provide insights into how cultural factors may influence the expression of celebrity followership since African countries have seen a boom in social media use over the past ten years. Specifically, it examines the lives of members of music fan groups rather than those of general lovers of celebrities or adolescents. This study is crucial to assess the growing trend of “celebrification” in Ghana and serves as a springboard to provide psychological or social interventions if necessary.

## 1.6 Organisation of Chapters

This thesis is organised into six (6) chapters, using a sequential exploratory mixed method design. Chapter One consists of the background of the study, the problem

statement, and the study's objectives. The significance of the study is also discussed. Chapter Two presents the study's theoretical foundation and the review of related studies. In chapter Three, the methodology is presented. This includes the philosophical underpinning, the study approach, and the methods used to collect data for the research. Chapter Four presents the results of the qualitative study, whilst Chapter Five presents the quantitative results. Chapter Six discusses the results obtained from the two methods used in this study. The discussion, implications, limitations, recommendations and conclusions of the study are all included in this final chapter.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

Research on celebrities and their impact on their fans have been investigated over the years. However, since the advent of social media and easy access to celebrities' lives, research has grown and continues to grow worldwide. This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature on celebrity followership mostly referred to as CW in the literature: its nature, impact and outcomes on practitioners. The theoretical and conceptual framework is discussed first, followed by empirical studies to elaborate and illustrate key concepts.

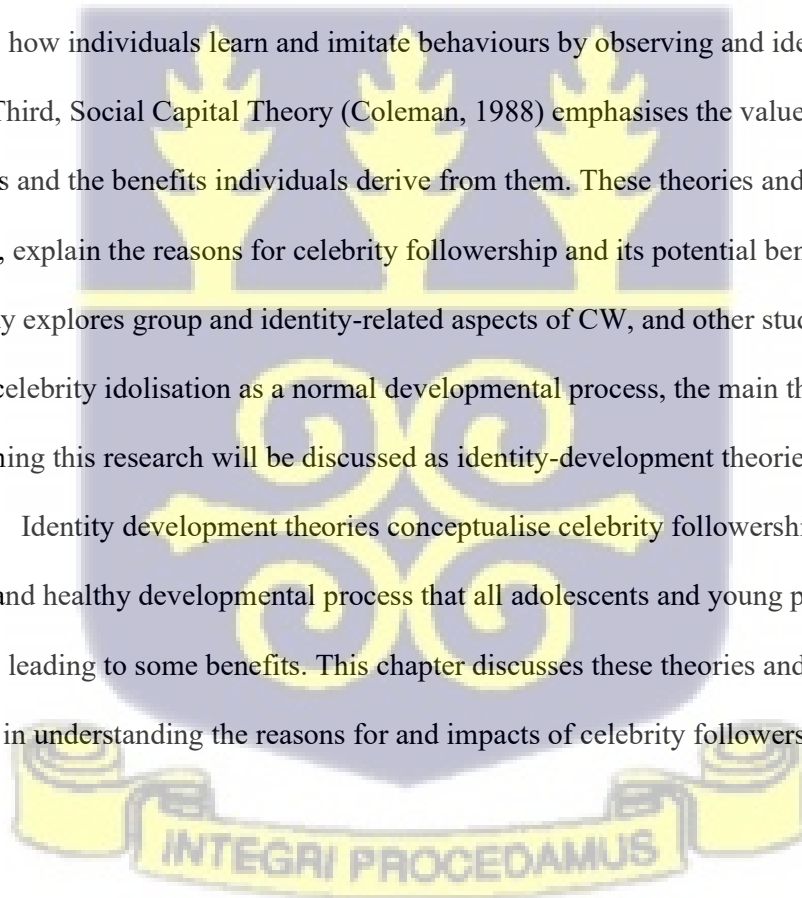
#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Various theories have been proposed to explain the psychological mechanisms driving celebrity followership or CW. Among the most widely referenced are McCutcheon et al.'s (2002) absorption-addiction model, which proposes that individuals become psychologically absorbed with celebrities to compensate for deficiencies in their lives and Cushman's (1990) empty-self theory, which argues that consumer culture fosters a sense of existential emptiness, leading individuals to seek fulfilment through attachments to public figures. These theories identify celebrity followership as potentially dangerous behaviour that affects people who have low self-esteem (Cheng, 1997; North et al., 2007) and or low attachment to their parents (Cheung & Yue, 2012; Giles & Maltby, 2004), and/or body image problems (Maltby & Day, 2011; Swami et al., 2011), leading to adverse outcomes such as poor psychological well-being (Maltby et al., 2001). While

these models offer important insights into the more pathological aspects of celebrity followership, they tend to focus on individual deficits and pathologise fan behaviour.

However, this study takes a different approach by focusing on social identity, group belonging and meaning-making in fan contexts rather than individual pathology. Specifically, this research is grounded in three main theories and two corresponding models. First, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), applied through the team identification social psychological health model (Wann, 2006), explains how individuals gain a sense of self and group belonging by identifying with teams, and the psychological and emotional benefits this brings. Second, Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), operationalised through the Identification-Emulation model (Cheung & Yue, 2019), explores how individuals learn and imitate behaviours by observing and identifying with others. Third, Social Capital Theory (Coleman, 1988) emphasises the value of social networks and the benefits individuals derive from them. These theories and models, together, explain the reasons for celebrity followership and its potential benefits. Since this study explores group and identity-related aspects of CW, and other studies have framed celebrity idolisation as a normal developmental process, the main theories guiding and framing this research will be discussed as identity-development theories.

Identity development theories conceptualise celebrity followership as part of normal and healthy developmental process that all adolescents and young people go through, leading to some benefits. This chapter discusses these theories and explains how they aid in understanding the reasons for and impacts of celebrity followership.



## **2.1.1 Identity Development Theories**

### **2.1.1.1 Social Cognitive Theory (Identification-Emulation model)**

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory provides a framework for understanding how human behaviour, emotions and attitudes are shaped through observational learning rather than direct experience (Bandura, 1986). At its core, social cognitive theory posits that people learn by observing "models" in their social environment, a process known as vicarious learning. The theory is specifically relevant in explaining how celebrities influence lifestyle choices and even buying behaviour (Bandura, 1986; Stever, 2011b; Zafar et al., 2021). Key constructs of the theory collectively explain the power of celebrity followership.

Observational learning is based on individuals paying attention to, retaining, and later imitating the behaviours of models they observe. With the proliferation of social media, fans continuously observe their favourite celebrities, leading to the emulation of their lifestyles, fashion choices, or sometimes, even their political stances (Zafar et al., 2001). However, the influence or effectiveness of the model, according to this theory, depends on whether individuals perceive the model as similar to them, attractive, or successful. When the celebrity is perceived as relatable or inspirational, the observer identifies with them, thereby strengthening the identification-emulation model (Cheung & Yue). This connection is what turns observation into the potential for behavioural change. Observing the model's behaviour can also boost an observer's self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief that they have the capacity to perform certain actions to attain some desired goal (Bandura, 1989). For example, seeing that a celebrity has overcome some challenges in their lives can inspire fans to believe that they can also do the same. Additionally, self-efficacy also impacts identity as individuals incorporate certain aspects

of the model's identity, such as their confidence or ability to deal with opposition, into their own self-concept, further enhancing their own sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1989).

Contrary to the absorption addiction and the empty-self model, the identification-emulation model by Cheung and Yue (2019) conceptualises idol followership as a regular part of growth and identity formation. Young people usually have role models such as sports icons or musicians whose lifestyle they aspire to. However, as they grow, their identification with role models decreases. Thus, celebrity followership is beneficial to the individual/fan. Fans see their idols as sources of inspiration. That is, people who are celebrated for their talents and achievements, their ability to draw people, and are pointers to success that young people aspire to (Cheung & Yue, 2019). This model is supported by North et al. (2007) and Uzuegbunam (2017). In their studies, some youth reported a positive impact of celebrities on their lives, including helping them dream big, and making them determined to pursue their own goals to also "make it in life". The desire for self-development explained why some young people wanted to dress well and look as good as their favourite celebrities, as this helped them develop a positive self-identity and self-confidence.

#### **2.1.1.2 Social Identity Theory (Team Identification Social Psychological Health Model)**

Social identity theory (SIT) by Tajfel and Turner (1979) incorporates group behaviour with the behaviour of the self. In contrast to the absorption-addiction model, which focuses on individuals' psychological progression towards pathology, this theory highlights the social context and group dynamics that may be present in CW behaviour.

This theory postulates that individuals derive their self-concept based on their membership in a social group and the emotional significance attached to that membership

(Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). According to this theory, individuals engage in self-categorisation, that is, have an “us” or “we” feeling towards the group and tend to favour in-group members over others (Hornsey, 2008). Group members also strive to maintain a positive social identity by emphasising the positive traits of the in-group. When their groups do well, this positive social identity boosts their self-esteem. A positive social identity leads to positive behavioural outcomes like group commitment (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). This theory also suggests that when the group faces a threat to its social identity, it copes with the threat by using various means. These methods include team-building activities and social comparison; occasionally, they may resort to aggression to deal with the threat (Belmi et al., 2015). One of the SIT's hypotheses relates to the values, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours shared by group members.

SIT has been applied extensively in understanding group processes and inter-group behaviour, such as understanding sports fans' identification with their team (Tsigilis et al., 2022). Sports teams present, perhaps, the most common opportunity for individuals to identify with groups. This way, SIT explains the psychological bond between sports teams and their fans. Identification with a team benefits mental health by reducing loneliness and anxiety (Wann & Pierce, 2005). Evidence shows that social relationships positively impact stigmatised and religious groups (Crabtree et al., 2010). In his review, Compton (2005) concludes that positive social relationships are the best predictors of psychological well-being.

The Team Identification Social-Psychological Health Model by Wann (2006), is one way the social identity theory has been applied to help understand how fans identify with their sports teams. This model situates the positive relationship between identifying with a local sports team and social-psychological health (Wann, 2006). Unlike previous literature on aggression and violence among sports fans, this model draws on positive

psychology to hypothesise how fans benefit from their identification with their favourite sports teams. Team identification can be described as the psychological bond a fan feels towards a team, so much so that they see the team as part of who they are (Wann, 2006). The team identification social-psychological health model hypothesises that psychological, environmental and team-related factors explain why people identify with their favourite teams. This identification, evidenced by a strong sense of belongingness, has a positive social-psychological health impact on fans due to the social bonds and connections formed with other members (not by mere followership). Additionally, when faced with threats to social identity, members who highly identify with the team employ various coping strategies which moderate the relationship between identity threat and social well-being (Wann, 2006). Identifying with a sports team influences various outcomes for spectators. These include feelings of self-worth, satisfaction, and sometimes depression (Branscombe & Wann, 1991). Related to the social identification theory, high identification with sports teams leads to in-group favouritism and out-group derogation (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Additionally, identification with a sports team is suggested to draw members closer (in-group categorisation) because of their shared identity. As Wann (2006) explains, identification with a sports team can impact behaviour and affect, including attribution style, when the team suffers defeat or is successful in a game. Previous research on sports teams had focused primarily on the negative impacts of sports team identification, like post-game aggression (Wann et al., 1999). To counter this, Branscombe and Wann (1993) developed a scale to measure the degree of identification among sports team fans. The results of the scale development revealed an internally consistent unidimensional scale that effectively predicts individuals' allegiance to a team. Wann (2006) further investigated the social-psychological benefits of group identity, specifically in sports

teams, thus postulating the sports team identification social-psychological health model. Research supports the linking of sports team identification with positive psychological outcomes. For example, sports fandom is related to psychological well-being (Eastman & Land, 1997; Inoue et al., 2020). Members further boost their well-being by associating with successful teams and sharing in their glory, enhancing their social identity (Boen et al., 2002; Cialdini et al., 1976).

In this study, I draw on this model and the social identity theory to explain the relationship between celebrity fan groups and their members, since, according to Reysen and Branscombe, there are no differences between sports fans and fans of other interests (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). In this case, the fan group identity is tied to the celebrity they follow. However, the group members also have relationships with each other as they support their favourite celebrity. Drawing parallels from the sports team identification model, it is plausible that identification with celebrity fan groups may similarly positively impact members' well-being and social capital. However, as with other forms of group identification, high or close personal and social identification could also lead to negative behaviours when members' social identity is threatened (Ellemers et al., 2002). This paradox between well-being and negative behaviours calls for further exploration to understand the psychological and social dynamics within celebrity fan communities.

### **2.1.1.3 Social Capital Theory**

Introduced initially as a sociological and economic concept by Coleman (1988), social capital is defined in his seminal work by its function as a force that facilitates specific actions and creates new possibilities (Coleman, 1988). Social capital is also described as resources individuals or groups have because of their membership in certain groups. Social capital exists within relationships, providing individuals within that group

or relationship the ability to achieve some desired goal. Social capital is invaluable in helping us understand how social connections contribute to individual and collective well-being. According to Coleman, within groups, social capital is strengthened by greater reliability, trust and responsibility towards each other (Coleman, 1988).

Social capital is widely recognised as an important determinant of overall well-being and psychological health, with numerous studies linking it to many positive outcomes (Pattussi et al., 2016; Yoosefi Lebni et al., 2023). For instance, research among Iranian health and medical students found that higher social capital was associated with negative attitudes towards cigarette smoking, suggesting its beneficial role in health-related behaviour change (Zahedi et al., 2021). Beyond health, social capital is shown to enhance academic performance and foster greater satisfaction with university life and enhances academic performance (Bye et al., 2020).

In the context of fan culture, the relationships formed within these groups can generate high entrepreneurial intentions and expanded market opportunities for products (Ali & Yousuf, 2019; Ranieses, 2024). Furthermore, studies indicate that online social capital can mitigate depression levels, particularly in instances where offline social capital is lacking. However, offline social capital remains strongly correlated with individual health outcomes, underscoring its enduring significance (Song & Jiang, 2022).

This study applies the social capital theory to investigate the potential outcomes of the relationships existing within celebrity fan groups. This theory suggests that members of celebrity fan groups may gain significant benefits, which contribute to their strong identification with the group. Social support, a key aspect of social capital, is essential as it impacts mental health and well-being, which are vital psychological resources during crises. By being in groups, individuals derive a strong sense of identity due to the social connections.

#### **2.1.1.4 Types of Social Capital**

Putnam (2000) discusses two types of social capital: bridging and bonding social capital. Bridging social capital means forming social connections with people of diverse backgrounds. Relationships are not very deep (weak ties) but wide in terms of the number of connections formed. This type of social capital is described as inclusive; thus, an individual has more connections but low emotional support (Williams, 2006). Bonding social capital is described as exclusive when closely tied individuals provide emotional and social support for each other. The downside of this type of social capital is dislike for outgroup members.

While the preceding theories form the core framework for this study, it is also important to consider the traditional models that have shaped the discourse and understanding of celebrity worship. These frameworks provide a different lens that emphasises internal problematic motivations behind celebrity attachment but may overlook the social and cultural dynamics this study seeks to highlight.

#### **2.1.2 Celebrity Worship Theories**

##### **2.1.2.1 The absorption-addiction model (McCutcheon et al., 2002)**

McCutcheon et al. (2002) proposed the absorption-addiction model to explain the nature of celebrity worship. The term absorption, originally by Tellegen and Atkinson (1974), is defined as concentrating one's attention, thoughts, and cognitive abilities on an object. Maltby et al. (2003) and McCutcheon et al. (2002) suggest that introverted people who lack close relationships are prone to absorption tendencies in a bid to find their identity and provide a sense of meaning to their lives. However, absorption later increases to addiction.

Absorption, associated initially with hypnosis, means devoting complete attention and focus to an object. In the context of celebrity worship, absorption allows individuals to immerse themselves in every detail of their beloved celebrity, fostering a deep sense of connection or bond with them (McCutcheon et al., 2002). Watching television, following stars on social media, and being in fan groups and clubs provide more information about the celebrity, creating a hub for more absorption. According to the model, absorption leads to delusions of closeness to the idolised celebrity, and some extreme worshippers may act on these delusions leading to obsessions at higher levels of CW. Obsessive behaviours follow the progression of absorption because the fan is no longer satisfied by previous absorption behaviours. They, therefore, engage in more obsessive and compulsive behaviours described as addictive behaviours (McCutcheon et al., 2002, 2003). This theory explains celebrity followership as emanating from individuals with identity issues, becoming psychologically absorbed with a celebrity to find an identity and sense of accomplishment or satisfaction (McCutcheon et al., 2003). Later, these people become addicted to the celebrity. In this model, celebrity worship moves from absorption to addiction.

The Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) is the most common measure of celebrity worship (McCutcheon et al., 2002). It identifies three dimensions of CW and assesses the level of attachment a fan has to a celebrity within the framework of the absorption addiction model. This model posits three stages of celebrity worship: the entertainment-social level, the intense-personal and the borderline-pathological stage. It is noteworthy, however, that in this model, the entertainment-social dimension is not pathological and reflects a healthy way to engage with celebrities. It explains that people get attracted to celebrities for the entertainment they provide. However, it is a potentially risky stage as it can develop into pathology as it moves to the intense-personal stage (McCutcheon et al.,

2002). The absorption addiction model is corroborated by evidence that high scores on the celebrity attitude scale (CAS), especially on the intense-personal and borderline pathological stages (levels 2 and 3), are associated with various psychological problems. For instance, celebrity worship is related to obsessive-compulsive behaviours (Maltby et al., 2006) and impulsiveness (McCutcheon et al., 2014). The borderline-pathological stage positively correlated with measures of irresponsibility and even criminality (Sheridan et al., 2007). North et al. (2007) found a negative relationship between borderline-pathological CW and self-esteem, but intense personal CW was positively related to self-esteem (Ashe et al., 2005; North et al., 2007). Fan club members, who are assumed to be celebrity worshippers, reported significantly lower self-esteem and higher fear of negative evaluation than non-fan club members (Cheng, 1997). Total CAS scores were associated with narcissism in a UK sample (Ashe et al., 2005).

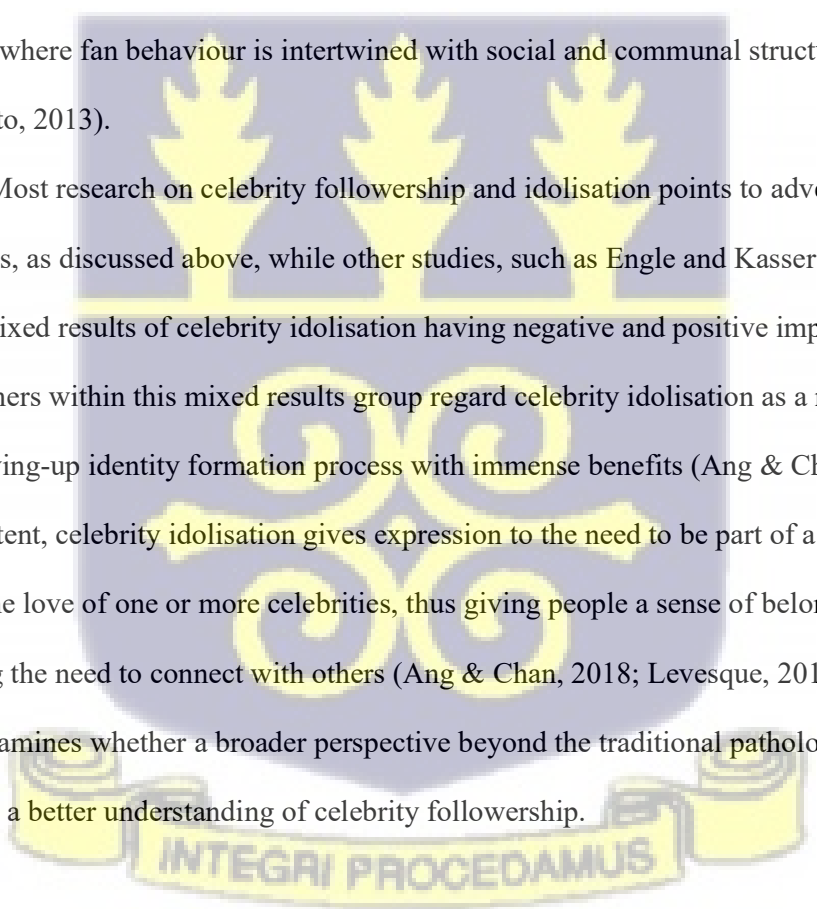
This model has been used and confirmed in studies on celebrity worship (McCutcheon & Aruguete, 2021; Reeves et al., 2012; Zsila et al., 2018). However, it has been criticised for its focus on the pathological nature of celebrity worship (Stever, 2009). Additionally, some of its claims lack support in the literature. For instance, the assertion that deficiencies in personal relationships drive individuals towards celebrity worship was contradicted by a study that found no significant correlation between insecure attachment style and higher levels of CW (McCutcheon et al., 2006). Also, most studies using this model focus on individual-level celebrity idolisation without considering celebrity attachment at the group level.

### **2.1.2.2 Empty-self theory**

The empty-self theory (Cushman, 1990) relates to the absorption addiction model in explaining obsession with celebrities (Aruguete et al., 2024). It posits that when the self

is empty through alienation from social bonds and collective values (Cushman,1990), the hunger from the “empty self” is then filled by a culture that emphasises consumerism, food, and celebrities. This idea of filling up an empty self is supported by Cheung and Yue (2012), whose study revealed that the absence of parents and socioeconomic status contributed to adolescent idol worship. Cheung and Yue's (2012) study also further explains the compensation model, where deficits in a person’s life explain idol and celebrity worship. This theory overemphasises individual deficiency and fails to recognise that fan engagement can also be a source of social connection and collective identity (Stever, 2011). Also, it may be culturally limited as it is grounded in Western postmodern consumer society, and it may not explain celebrity followership in collectivist cultures or cultures where fan behaviour is intertwined with social and communal structures (Chin & Morimoto, 2013).

Most research on celebrity followership and idolisation points to adverse outcomes, as discussed above, while other studies, such as Engle and Kasser (2005), report mixed results of celebrity idolisation having negative and positive impacts. Researchers within this mixed results group regard celebrity idolisation as a normal part of the growing-up identity formation process with immense benefits (Ang & Chan, 2018). To some extent, celebrity idolisation gives expression to the need to be part of a group that shares the love of one or more celebrities, thus giving people a sense of belonging and fulfilling the need to connect with others (Ang & Chan, 2018; Levesque, 2011). This study examines whether a broader perspective beyond the traditional pathological models provides a better understanding of celebrity followership.



## **2.2 Review of related studies**

A narrative literature review was conducted between August and October 2023 using available databases, including SCOPUS, PUBMED, AJOL, Sabinet and Google Scholar. The search strategy used a combination of keywords like “celebrity worship”, “celebrities”, “fandom”, “parasocial relationships”, “parasocial relationships”; “idols”, and “stars”. Citations were downloaded to EndNote© software version 21. A total of 255 citations were initially imported into EndNote. After removing duplicates, the titles and abstracts were screened for relevance to the research topic and area. Ultimately, the review included 85 articles, seven books or book chapters, and two theses. Most of the studies were conducted in the United States and Europe, followed by Asia and the Middle East, with about four studies originating from Africa. Notably, most African studies employed some form of qualitative methodologies.

In addition to the structured database searches, periodic random searches were conducted throughout the review process to identify any newly published literature relevant to the subject matter, to make the review current and comprehensive.

### **2.2.1 Conceptualising Celebrity Worship and Followership**

This section explores the concept of celebrity worship as it is used in the literature, while positioning it within the broader framework of celebrity followership. Celebrity worship, as conceptualised by McCutcheon et al. (2002), has been debated in the literature (Stever, 2011a). On the one hand, researchers label passionate fans as celebrity worshippers. Certain psychological behaviours, such as stalking celebrities, do exist (McCutcheon et al., 2002). Maltby et al. (2003) describe celebrity worship as an abnormal obsession with celebrities driven by elements of absorption and addiction.

Nevertheless, celebrity worship is best understood as a continuum from mild to extreme (McCutcheon et al., 2002).

According to this conceptualisation, celebrity worship ranges from the mild stage, referred to as the entertainment-social stage, to the intense-personal stage, then the borderline-pathological stage (Sansone & Sansone, 2014). At the entertainment-social level of the CW, which may be conceived as low worship, individuals engage in individualistic behaviours such as watching their favourite celebrity on TV or listening to or reading about them. Engaging with their favourite celebrity is purely for entertainment's sake. The intense-personal stage, which can be described as intermediate, is more social. Here, the individuals enjoy the works of their favourite celebrity in the company of others, talking to others about their favourite celebrity and fantasising and sometimes daydreaming about the celebrity (McCutcheon et al., 2002). At high celebrity worship, individuals exhibit close identification with the celebrity, obsession with the celebrity's life and the outrageous extents to which they are willing to go for their celebrity. Individuals who score high on the Celebrity Worship Scale (McCutcheon et al., 2002) and now the Celebrity Attitude Scale (McCutcheon & Maltby, 2002) have been linked to psychosocial characteristics (Sansone & Sansone, 2014). These dimensions of CW are measured using the most common scale in the literature, the Celebrity Attitude Scale (Brooks, 2018a; McCutcheon et al., 2002; Sansone & Sansone, 2014). A fourth dimension of celebrity worship, deleterious imitation, has been put forth by North and Hargreaves (2005), which describes fans' eagerness to emulate their favourite celebrities' reckless and immoral behaviour. However, most studies focus on the three dimensions.

Before the now-popular term "celebrity worship", Horton and Wohl (1956) used the term parasocial interaction (PSI) to describe the one-sided interaction between users of mass media and media personalities such as presenters and actors (Giles, 2002).

Researchers of that day viewed it as a type of surrogate relationship or connection stemming from people who had deficiencies in their everyday social lives and thus were compensating for their loneliness (Giles, 2002). This idea had been supported by studies by Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) but contradicted by earlier studies like Rosengren et al. (1976) and Rubin et al. (1985). In his review of the literature, Giles (2002) discusses that although PSI has been primarily viewed as pseudo-social and, therefore, a pathology, parasocial relationships, however, usually do not stay that way forever as fan groups and those like them, facilitate direct access to the celebrities (Giles, 2002). Also, many PSIs exist in everyday social interactions (Giles, 2002; Horton & Strauss, 1957), and parasocial interactions may be an extension of normal social cognition whose psychological processes are the same as are needed for building normal relationships as well as normal developmental processes which are seen in many children (Giles, 2002), and creates a model to describe the stages in parasocial relationships.

For Giles, PSI should not be viewed as a single unified concept but as a continuum, just like CW was conceptualised by McCutcheon et al. (2002). He, however, agrees that some aspects of PSI may be psychopathological, such as when an individual is unable to differentiate PSI from regular social activity, for example, and feels that their love for a celebrity has been/is being reciprocated. He advocates for a deeper look into fan activity to identify at which points ordinary fan behaviour becomes delusional. Although CW and PSI are related concepts, they are viewed as qualitatively different. The literature suggests that CW is a more serious commitment, admiration and vested form of parasocial interaction with celebrities (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2008). CW is mainly described in terms such as being disconnected from people (Houran et al., 2005), more psychotic (Maltby et al., 2003, 2004), whilst parasocial interaction is described as a perceived connection or

imaginary social relationship between a person and another person of higher status (Giles, 2002).

However, the difference between these two terms is not clearly demarcated. If CW is on a continuum and the first stage, the entertainment-social stage, is the non-pathological stage, is the ES stage where PSI begins? Brown (2018) contributes to this debate by outlining three processes of fan-celebrity involvement: parasocial interaction, identification, and celebrity worship. He acknowledges an overlap between parasocial interaction and celebrity worship but emphasises that CW represents the most intense form of celebrity-fan involvement, where the celebrity is perceived with god-like reverence. According to Brown, fans engage in parasocial relationships by consuming media about celebrities, attending events, and listening to their messages. Some fans go further by adopting their idols' values, beliefs and behaviours (identification), while others progress to the level of worship. A critical comparison with Maltby et al. (2003) reveals that the expression of parasocial interaction aligns with the entertainment-social stage of CW, as does Giles' (2002) model of the stages of parasocial interaction. Still, Stever (2011) raises issues about the lack of a conceptual definition of celebrity worship and argues that not all fans can or should be classified as celebrity worshippers.

Stever (2009) conducted an ethnographic content analysis on written narratives of interactive fans of celebrities to find out why they were fans of their favourite celebrity. The study distinguished between interactive fans and isolated fans, who had been the focus of the study in the parasocial interaction literature (Stever, 2009). Isolated fans identify with an object of admiration, usually in isolation, whilst interactive fans interact with other fans in groups and sometimes with celebrities (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010; Stever, 2011). Drawing on fan groups of pop stars like Michael Jackson, Madonna, Janet Jackson, and fans of science fiction shows like Star Trek, she reported that whilst some

fans appeared obsessive in their admiration for their celebrities, the larger group of fans were not. Instead, their motivations for followership were largely social in nature. She argued that separating fans who may be obsessive or have some pathology is necessary rather than classifying all dedicated fans as problematic.

Her study classified fans on levels four to five as “low intensity” and levels six to eight as “high intensity”. The level fans were found to be on were not stagnant throughout their lives and could change depending on life circumstances. In discussing the motivations for parasocial attraction, nine (9) themes generated from the content analysis were task attraction, where fans’ admiration and attraction to their favourite celebrities was due to the celebrity’s talents and achievements in their chosen field; romantic attraction, identificatory attachment A, where the fan identifies with the celebrity and wants to be like them; identificatory attachment B, where the fan sees the celebrity like themselves; filial attachment, co-worker attachment, wanting to work with the target or celebrity; hero worship; infantile attachment, where the target meets the fans unmet needs and the fan depends on the celebrity for those needs and parental attachment where the fan is protective of the target in a parental way (Stever, 2009). It should be noted that Stever avoided using the phrase celebrity worship as she argued that the term is not clearly conceptualised and pathologises fans (Stever, 2011a). This study aligns with Stever’s, hence the use of the term celebrity followership in this study.

Still, in this era of interactive media, unlike passive media, it may be simplistic to describe the relationship between celebrities and their fans as parasocial or one-sided. The landscape of parasocial interaction has seen a significant transformation with the advent of social media platforms. Through platforms like X (Twitter), TikTok, Instagram Live or Facebook Live or through fan groups, live concerts and meet-and-greets, many fans interact face-to-face with their object of admiration, and some dedicated fans are known

(at least by face) by their favourite celebrities (Schramm et al., 2024; Yin, 2020). The celebrity is now closer to their fans through these new media. Hills (2016), thus suggests the term multisocial interaction in place of parasocial. Also, the rise of influencer culture has democratised celebrity, creating a new class of celebrity based on content creation and connection with their fans on these media platforms (RaNa, 2023). The relationship between the fan and influencer can be understood more as a “connection” than “worship”.

The two concepts used, celebrity worship and parasocial interaction, both seem to describe the relationship between celebrities or famous people and those who admire them. At best, in the current literature, it would not be far from the truth to think of them as very similar, if not exactly synonymous. They can be classified broadly as celebrity followership, especially regarding fan groups and their members.

### **2.2.2 Motivations for Celebrity Followership**

Whilst this study focuses on celebrities and their fan groups, fanship and fandom have been studied extensively around sports teams and the fans that support them. Researchers have been interested in what drives people to become fans so that sports marketers can leverage this insight to boost team identification. Fanship refers to the psychological connection fans feel towards their team and how they regard the team’s performance as their own personal success (Branscombe & Wann, 1993). The motives for sports fanship bear a striking resemblance to those for celebrity followership.

For instance, in reviewing the literature that explains the motives for sports fanship, Hirt and Clarkson (2011) state that the motives underlying fanship include entertainment and eustress, described as wanting to experience the thrill of winning and the game’s suspense. Other motives include fanship to escape the stresses of life through the cathartic effects of watching their favourite teams play. By being active participants

through the shouting and teasing of rival teams, fans temporarily forget their current circumstances and lose themselves in the game. However, this escape motive has been associated with some anti-social behaviours of fans through the psychological process of primed aggressive thoughts and behaviours (Branscombe & Wann, 1992) and deindividuation (Zimbardo, 1970). Some also become fans for aesthetic reasons, such as their appreciation for the beauty and skills executed on the field of play. Another motive underlying sports fanship is boosting self-esteem by belonging to accomplished groups and “basking in reflected glory” (Cialdini et al., 1976). In this context, self-esteem is linked to group membership. Hirt and Clarkson (2011) also highlight companionship and belongingness through a shared passion as key motives for sports fanship. As identified in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1968), the desire to belong is a fundamental human need, prompting individuals to connect with others who share common interests. Additionally, Hirt & Clarkson (2011) highlight that underlying these motives is the need for acceptance, enjoyment and the sheer thrill of the experience, which people satisfy through sports.

In exploring the motivations for parasocial relationships or why individuals are big fans of celebrities, Stever's (1994, 2009) ethnographic study and networking with fans of rock music stars and science fiction, Star Trek fan groups, revealed that motives for parasocial attraction included “task attraction, romantic attachment, identificatory attachment A and B, filial attachment, co-worker attachment, hero worship, infantile attachment and parental attachment.” (Stever, 2009, p.18). Task attraction was the most coded reason fans wrote to explain their attraction to their favourite celebrity. Fans explained that they liked the celebrity because of their talents and excellence in their fields of work. Some fans also expressed that they found the celebrity sexy and good-looking. Identificatory attachment “A” described how the artiste was viewed as a role model

because of some admirable qualities they possessed, leading to fans' desire to be like them; identificatory attachment "B" referred to how fans saw themselves in the celebrity. Fans also saw their favourite celebrity as heroes or legends above ordinary people. Some fans were attracted to celebrities because they wanted to work with them on creative projects. For others, the celebrity fulfilled some unmet needs in the fan's life, whilst others felt a protective nurturing role over the celebrity who they saw as a replacement for their child.

This viewing of idols or celebrities as the children of fans is like Yan and Yang's (2021) study using grounded theory to explore an intriguing phenomenon they refer to as parakin relationships between fans and their idols. Whilst comparable to parental attachment in Stever (2009), parakin relationships are a notably more intense form of parasocial relationships. Here, fans see themselves as relatives or kinsmen of the celebrity, and even exert influence over the celebrity's life regarding what roles they take if they are movie stars or whom they fall in love with. Yan and Yang (2021) discuss this as a unique feature of the relationship between Chinese fans and their idols. This dynamic is shaped by Chinese cultural values, where kinship plays a significant role, with the one-child policy in China referenced as a contributing factor to this type of celebrity followership. In this setting, fans are active participants in building and sustaining the celebrity (Yan & Yang, 2021). The study discusses the dual motivation model of fans as self-focused reasons and idol-focused reasons. Self-focused reasons like escapism and compensation for a lack in their lives, identity acquisition and self-achievement and idol-focused reasons like entertainment value, physical attraction and a desire for companionship from the celebrity. Escapism, entertainment, identification with a celebrity's struggles and attachment to the celebrity's persona have also been reported by Morgan et al.'s (2024) study of adolescents in Ghana.

In another study conducted in China, looking to the celebrity for inspiration in self-development, personal characteristics of the celebrity and identification with the values of the celebrity were motivating factors for idol worship (Li, 2022).

In a study in Malaysia which studied adolescents, the participants reported that the celebrity's products, musical and other talents, and personal characteristics such as their looks, generosity to others, kindness, and care for fans, were the drivers of attraction. Still others reported that their friends had influenced them by introducing them to the artist's works, and this caused them to become fans (Ang & Chan, 2018)

In a quantitative study in Iran using structural equation modelling, Pirzade et al., (2024) showed that celebrity worship was driven by avoidant identity style, neuroticism and the need to belong. The need to belong was significantly and positively associated with CW, although the magnitude of association was small,  $r = .217$ . The study also found that the need to belong fully mediated the relationship between people high in neuroticism and CW, while the need to belong partially mediated the relationship between avoidant identity type and CW. This study corroborates another study which discusses neuroticism and loneliness as drivers of social media use, acting as a foundation for CW (Zsila et al., 2018). Additionally, adolescents with avoidant identity styles are noted as more likely to be celebrity followers because they view celebrities as role models due to the lack of a healthy identity (Cohen, 2014; Ferris, 2007). These studies, however, appear to refer to individual lone lovers of celebrities rather than lovers of celebrities who are in groups that share their passion. In addition, Pirzade et al.'s (2024) study participants were adolescents between 11 and 18 years old. The demographics may be a contributing factor to the results obtained. For example, the sense of belonging here could refer to a concept most common to or desired by adolescents.

The role that celebrities play in the lives of their fans, the nature of celebrity-fan relationships and the motivations for followership, although similar in many respects, is also profoundly shaped by socio-cultural factors as shown in studies from across the world, including US (McCutcheon et al., 2021), Iran (Pirzade et al., 2024) and China (Li, 2022; Yan & Yang, 2021). McCutcheon and colleagues' study showed that pleasure and power predicted total celebrity attitude scores (CAS) for American students, while tradition and stimulation predicted scores for Iranian students. Yan and Yang's study highlighted the one-child policy in China from 1980 to 2015, which was cited as depriving a generation of siblings and potentially leading them to seek kinship relationships with celebrities, supporting the compensation motive of CW. In Iran, Khayami et al. (2019) report that people admire celebrities for their ability to influence and mobilise support in economic and social crises. In a nation grappling with financial challenges and social inequalities, celebrities are sometimes seen as alternatives to governmental institutions because of their ability to rally sympathy and resources. For many, celebrity followership could serve as a means of coping while hoping for a better future (Pirzade et al., 2024).

### **2.2.3 Factors influencing Celebrity Followership: Personality, attachments and demographics**

Scholars and researchers have explored the characteristics of individuals most likely to engage in “celebrity worship”. Studies have examined factors like personality traits, attachments with significant others and demographic variables such as gender, age and ethnicity. Earlier research by Lewis (2002) reviewing Hollywood films showed that fans were depicted as irresponsible, lonely and isolated individuals or as deranged if they were male fans. Other research hypothesised that fans cannot distinguish reality from fiction whilst interpreting the characteristics of their favourite celebrity (Burchill, 1986;

Caughey, 1978). In an experimental study in the US and Britain, McCutcheon and Maltby, (2002) investigated stereotypes of the celebrity worshipper. The results showed that respondents used negative language to describe celebrity followers, reflecting how they were stereotyped in movies. In the two samples investigated, most people described fans negatively, such as lacking responsibility and being prone to poor judgement. According to the researchers, these findings corresponded to stereotypes present in the media about the personalities of CWs. Interestingly, those who scored high on the CAS scale tended to view other CWs favourably. Celebrity worship, using scores on the CAS scale, has even been linked to cognitive ability with McCutcheon et al., (2003) noting that individuals with higher cognitive functioning will hardly fantasise about celebrities.

Research reports mixed results on the relationship between CW and the Five Factor Model of personality. McCutcheon et al. (2016a) found that people who scored high on borderline-pathological CW were less conscientious, while Maltby et al. (2011) found no significant correlation between CAS scores and conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness. Researchers found a positive correlation between scores high on the borderline-pathological scores and the intense-personal levels of CW and having materialistic values (Chia & Poo, 2009; Green et al., 2014).

McCutcheon et al. (2002) suggest that introverted people who cannot form relationships with others become absorbed in the lives of these celebrities. Song et al. (2014) further corroborate this by reporting that lonely people with limited social support are more likely to find some comfort in social media platforms, leading them to form parasocial relationships. According to the researchers, such people also had a low personal identity, corroborating Maltby et al.'s (2003) study, which revealed that the personality of individuals puts them at risk of being either low or high in CW. In their research, they noticed that the borderline-pathological subscale was related to psychoticism. Maltby et al.

(2006) found a relationship between the medium level of CW and being susceptible to fantasy thinking. Other studies, however, disagree with this link between lonely people and CW. Rubin et al. (1985) commented that although lonely people may seek alternatives to “real” interaction, their behaviour does not necessarily indicate pathology. Furthermore, in countries with low internet penetration and where people cannot afford smartphones due to low socio-economic status, social media may not be the default place people turn to when they are lonely. Other studies have linked attachment with the likelihood of celebrity worship. For instance, McCutcheon et al. (2006) reported a negative, although insignificant, correlation between childhood attachment and all levels of CW.

Additionally, they found that adults with a history of insecure attachment had favourable attitudes towards stalking behaviours and were more likely to engage in stalking. Coddair (2015), in a sample of adults from 19 to 73 years, found a significant correlation between anxious attachment scores and attraction to one's favourite celebrity. In contrast, Collisson et al. (2018) found no differences between attachment styles and admiration for celebrities. Similarly, Cheung and Yue (2012) observed that adolescents with absent parents were more likely to form close attachments to celebrities, suggesting a compensatory relationship. Interestingly, while a negative relationship was found between attachment to parents and celebrity worship (CW), emotional autonomy, such as when adolescents perceived themselves as independent from their parents, was positively associated with CW (Brooks, 2018; Giles & Maltby, 2004).

Regarding demographics, several studies report that young people and adolescents are more prone to attachment to celebrities (Ashe & McCutcheon, 2001; Maltby et al., 2001). McCutcheon et al. (2006) and Swami et al. (2011) found that older participants were less likely to support stalking behaviours. However, Borderline-pathological

celebrity worship was more prevalent among older adolescents (Chia & Poo, 2009). In an adult study, researchers identified a positive correlation between Intense-personal (IP) celebrity worship and age while finding a negative correlation between age and Entertainment-social (ES) CW and Borderline-pathological (BP) CW. Females were also more likely to idolise celebrities overall on the ES CW, whilst males scored higher on the BP CW (Brooks, 2018; Chia & Poo, 2009; Reeves et al., 2012). Several other studies (Giles & Maltby, 2004; Maltby & Day, 2011; McCutcheon et al., 2002, 2003, 2015) reported no gender differences in CAS scores.

Studies by McCutcheon et al. (2016a) demonstrated that socioeconomic status was unrelated to CAS scores. In racial terms, non-whites scored higher than whites on all three subscales of the CAS, with Hispanics and Asian Americans scoring in between whites and non-whites (McCutcheon et al., 2016a).

#### **2.2.4 Religion and Attachment to Celebrities**

Celebrity attachment often mirrors aspects of religious devotion, with fans elevating their idols to near-divine status. Some scholars have explored whether individuals with religious beliefs are more likely to engage in celebrity worship or if celebrity worshippers and followers are those without religious affiliations. For instance, Maltby et al. (2002) investigated the relationship between religious orientation and CW. They hypothesized that religious people would not be associated with CW. Although CW and religiosity had a negative relationship, the correlation was weak, suggesting that even religious people did not feel any dissonance between CW and their religiosity. There appeared to be a compartmentalisation between religiosity and love for celebrity. This result was more surprising as most people were found to be on the lowest scale of the CAS - the entertainment social scale. The study also found that some fan group behaviours

resembled those in religious contexts. In a follow-up to this study, Maltby (2004) used a specific measure of religiosity, and he found that a close attachment to religion made the difference in how attached a fan would be to their celebrity, leading to a revision of the previous claim of a disconnect between religious prohibitions against idolatry and religious people. With Ghanaians being highly religious, the relationship between religion and being a celebrity follower would be interesting to explore, especially how highly religious fans navigate this duality, if it can even be described as such.

### **2.2.5 Impact of Celebrity Followership on Mental Health and Well-being.**

In sports literature, research often highlights the progression of fanship and fandom. It has been established that fanship leads to fandom, which is positively correlated to enhanced well-being (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). Similarly, celebrity followership can have a range of impacts on mental health and well-being, both negative and positive. While the dominant focus in the literature has been on detrimental effects (see Brooks, 2018a; Zsila & Demetrovics, 2020) such as poor mental health (Maltby et al., 2001), poor general well-being and low self-esteem, especially for female admirers of celebrities (Zsila et al., 2021). It is important to consider that it might also bring benefits, such as social well-being, happiness, and social connectedness (Ang & Chan, 2018; Laffan, 2021).

The two problematic levels of CW, the intense-personal and borderline pathological, have been associated with poor mental health and maladaptive behaviours (McCutcheon & Aruguete, 2021). In a 20-year trend study since the development of the CAS scale, they emphasised that as social media use increases and celebrities can connect more with their fans and vice versa, fans are becoming more absorbed in the lives of their

celebrities, which is associated with poor mental health. They concluded that with the rise in poor mental health issues in the US, a corresponding rise in CW is also suspected.

Zsila et al. (2021) conducted a study in Hungary, exploring the relationship between CW, primarily associated with young people and well-being. Their findings revealed negative but weak correlations between general well-being and self-esteem and CW. Similarly, Laffan's (2021) study of over 1400 K-pop fans worldwide reported that K-pop (Korean popular music) fanship predicted positive psychosocial outcomes such as happiness, self-esteem and social connections. Halim et al. (2022) reported a positive relationship between CW and psychological well-being. They perhaps should have been a bit conservative in recommending CW as a treatment for adolescents' psychological well-being.

In the study conducted in Ghana by Morgan et al. (2024), adolescents reported how positive messages from their favourite celebrities inspired and motivated them. They also spoke about the sense of belonging and social connection they experienced by knowing they were part of a wider group of fans. In contrast, they also reported the harmful impacts of intense attachment to celebrities and following them on social media. They reported feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth resulting from comparing themselves to celebrities, leading them to experience anxiety and sometimes depression. In Nigeria, Benson and Adinlewa (2021) found that celebrities influenced young people's ideas of fame and riches. Their study found that over 56% of respondents would choose fame over higher education. Nnubia et al. (2020) also found that the three levels of celebrity worship positively predicted social well-being and overall mental health. Comparing celebrity worshippers to non-worshippers, CWs had better psychological well-being but poorer social well-being than non-worshippers. Intense-personal CW was beneficial and predicted emotional well-being and boosted happiness and satisfaction.

This corresponds to North et al. (2007) on the positive relationship between IP celebrity worship and self-esteem. From Uzuegbunam (2017), participants reported that their favourite celebrities inspired them to dream big and work hard to be like them. However, some respondents commented that looking at these celebrities gave the youth a get-rich-quick mentality as they wanted to have the same lifestyle as their idols.

Adolescents in Ang and Chan's (2018) study in Malaysia who had scored high on the three subscales of the CAS scale (thus identifying as celebrity worshippers) reported positive impacts of their engagement with celebrities, such as positive emotions, inspiration, enhanced personal and social relationships, helping them obtain a “can-do” spirit, and introducing them to new cultures. From the qualitative studies reviewed, it is essential to note that those who adored celebrities and were classified as celebrity worshippers or who had experienced celebrity worship reported benefits. This suggests that attachment to celebrities may benefit devotees, even those levels viewed as pathological.

### **2.2.6 Synthesis and Chapter Summary**

This literature review reveals that “celebrity worship”, defined as intense admiration for a public figure, continues to attract significant research interest, particularly with the introduction of new media platforms. These platforms have made it easier for fans to connect more easily with their icons and amplified the influence of celebrities in their followers’ lives. While the existing research through the Absorption-addiction model and similar frameworks focuses on the negative impact of CW and highlights celebrity worshippers' deficiencies, other perspectives have explored the phenomenon with a more optimistic lens. These alternative approaches examine the positive impact of engaging with celebrities and fan communities, such as fostering social connections and emotional

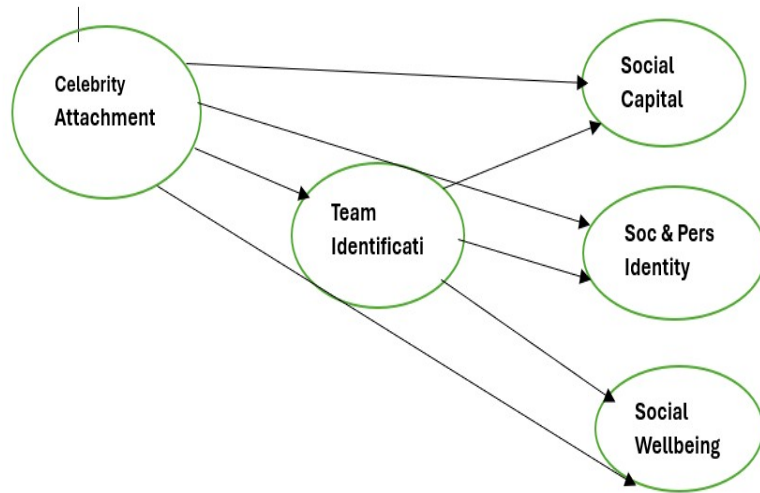
well-being. Grounded in social identity theory and the team identification social psychological Health model, which originates from research on sports fandom, this study further aims to investigate the phenomenon of celebrity followership. It shifts the focus from adolescents, typically the subjects of such studies, to adult fans from organised fan groups. Additionally, unlike previous studies that rely on quantitative approaches, this study employs a sequential exploratory mixed-method approach to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

### **2.2.7 Statement of Hypothesis for Quantitative Study**

Informed by the existing literature and the findings from the qualitative study, the following hypotheses were to be tested and are illustrated in Figure 1:

1. Celebrity attachment will have a significant positive relationship with social capital.
2. Celebrity attachment will have a significant positive relationship with social and personal identity.
3. Higher levels of celebrity attachment will be associated with higher team identification
4. Higher levels of celebrity attachment will be associated with higher scores on social well-being.
5. Team identification will mediate the relationship between celebrity attachment and social capital.
6. Team identification will mediate the relationship between celebrity attachment and social identity and personal identity.
7. Team identification will mediate the relationship between celebrity attachment and social well-being.

**Figure 1**  
*Hypothesised Model*



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the methodological process employed to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. It begins by discussing the study's philosophical basis and the research design. The qualitative and quantitative phases of the project are then explored alongside the ethical considerations. Finally, my reflexivity and positionality are shared, underscoring the importance of these aspects in the research process.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

The study employed the sequential exploratory mixed-method approach (Creswell & Clark, 2018), guided by an overarching paradigm aligned with the study's objectives. Pragmatism was chosen because it reflects the researcher's worldview in social science research (Creswell & Plano, 2018). As the overarching paradigm, pragmatism allows the use of multiple epistemologies, methodologies, and methods in this study. It enabled the selection of the most suitable approach to address the research problem under investigation (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Specifically, this study employed constructivist and post-positivist epistemologies to collect and interpret the two phases of the data.

#### 3.3 Research Philosophy and Justification: Pragmatism

The pragmatic research paradigm is a late nineteenth-century paradigm associated with some American philosophers like Charles Peirce, William James and John Dewy

(Saunders et al., 2019). Pragmatism is a philosophical worldview that provides the epistemology and rationale for mixing methods and assumptions from different paradigms (Creswell, 2014; Maarouf, 2019). Rather than perceiving the world using the dichotomies of objective or subjective, pragmatics see the world on a continuum with Pragmatism somewhere in the middle, bringing flexibility to research. The research question is most important regardless of epistemology and ontology (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). While pragmatism does not imply mixed methods, it emphasizes selecting a method of investigation that adequately answers the research question. Pragmatic philosophy is often associated with mixed-method studies because it aligns with the goals of mixed-method research, which is to obtain complete and corroborative results about a phenomenon (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Mixed-method research is an eclectic tool that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches to research to find practical solutions to research problems (Grbich, 2012). As the overarching paradigm, pragmatism incorporated the strengths of post-positivist and constructivist perspectives and made up for the weaknesses of these epistemologies when used by themselves.

### **3.3.1 Constructivist ontology and epistemology in the qualitative phase:**

The study began with the qualitative phase, rooted in constructivist ontology and epistemology. Constructivist ontology maintains a stance of relativism: that reality and objectivity are rooted in people's minds, and people experience multiple realities. Knowledge is known through subjectivity based on the participant's personal experiences. Research, via interviews and quantitative analysis, for example, is the vehicle through which we explore the way people make sense of their understanding of the world. Also, the researcher's worldview and experiences shape the interpretation of the data. Nonetheless, this is a valuable resource for the research process (Grbich, 2012). This study

utilised semi-structured interviews from a sample purposively chosen to collect qualitative data.

### **3.3.2 Post-positivist ontology and epistemology in the quantitative phase**

The post-positivist philosophy shaped the survey-based quantitative phase of this mixed-method design. Post-positivists utilise critical realist ontological and critical empiricism epistemology standpoints, which postulate that, broadly, there is an external reality independent of our perceptions (Panhwar et al., 2017). However, it also acknowledges that knowing this reality depends solely on observation but sometimes through construction and interpretation (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; O’Leary, 2004). However, post-positivists are more often associated with quantitative approaches, which require detailed observation and measurement of variables (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This study used psychometric scales to measure celebrity worship, team identification, social capital, and social well-being.

Pragmatism's overarching paradigm is pluralistic and guided by “what works” in solving real-world problems, allowing for postpositivist and constructivist paradigms in this study.

### **3.4 General research design and approach**

The sequential exploratory mixed-methods design is used in this study. This design combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to complement each other, gain breadth and depth of understanding and obtain various angles of a phenomenon (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Shannon-Baker, 2015; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The sequential exploratory design allowed the researcher to explore the nature of celebrity worship in Ghana and fans’ experiences qualitatively and uncover behaviours, themes, and patterns later quantified in the second study to assess their prevalence among the broader fan

members (Bryman, 2006). The researcher then measured outcomes such as social and personal identity, attachment to celebrity, team identification, social capital and social well-being.

### **3.4.1 Research Setting**

The study was conducted in Ghana's capital, Accra, and in Kumasi, the second-largest commercial city (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2021). Kumasi, with a population of approximately 3.5 million people (GSS, 2021), is a major urban centre deeply rooted in tradition and cultural heritage, serving as the cultural capital of the Ashanti Kingdom (Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), n.d.). However, informal conversations with key informants of the fan groups showed that most celebrity fan groups are based in Accra or in the city where the celebrity or founder of the group is based. This finding was expected as Accra is a melting pot of people from all over Ghana. Also, with a total population of about 5.4 million people (GSS, 2021), Accra is the nation's economic and commercial hub, making it a natural home base for most fan groups. While many of these fan groups were based in Accra, they had branches in other cities like Kumasi and Tamale.

## **3.5 Selection of Music Celebrities and Fan Groups.**

### **3.5.1 Inclusion criteria**

To be included in the study, fan groups had to meet the following criteria: They had to be affiliated with prominent or top Ghanaian male and female non-gospel musicians and have existed for at least two years. The affiliated musicians had to be objectively recognised as top musicians in Ghana. This recognition was based on significant media presence or influence, public recognition of their identity and work and

a substantial fan base. The selected musicians must predominantly perform different genres of music to ensure representation across various music styles.

### 3.5.2 Selection processes

Four main criteria were used to select the celebrities and music fan groups for this study. Firstly, a survey was conducted via Google Forms to elicit views on Ghana's top three favourite male and top three female non-gospel artistes. The forms were analysed, thus providing an objective means of deciding which celebrities will be considered for the study. Secondly, the top stars chosen were screened to determine whether their fan groups were at least two years old, guaranteeing their inclusion in the study. Thirdly, the selected artistes were further screened to ensure they performed in different music genres. Finally, the stars chosen were cross-checked against online articles highlighting Ghana's most prominent fan groups to validate the choices. An older celebrity with an established fan group was included in the selection of the stars. This older artiste was Charles Kwadwo Fosu, a 60-year-old highlife musician popularly known as Daddy Lumba. Thus, the study population consisted of fan groups of two selected male artists, one female artiste, and the fan group of Daddy Lumba. Daddy Lumba was chosen because he has an established fan group and belongs to a different generation from the younger musicians. Daddy Lumba's music has been popular from the early 1990s till the present.

Results from the polls from 161 respondents showed Ghanaian rap artiste Michael Owusu Addo, popularly known as Sarkodie, and Jane Awindor, a neo-soul, afro-pop jazz artist, also known as Efyia, as the top favourite male and female musicians, respectively. Other artistes like Stonebwoy, Kidi and Shatta Wale were also mentioned. The selection of Sarkodie also corresponds with blog articles by Enoku (2019) and Mireri (2023), which depict Sarkodie as the leading musician with the most extensive fan base, followed

by Shatta Wale and then Stonebwoy. Although both Shatta Wale and Stonebwoy are dance-hall genre artistes and have large fan bases, Shatta Wale (formerly known as Bandana) was chosen over Stonebwoy for this study because of his perceived, controversial bad-boy nature in the media space. Another blog article (GH. Opera News, 2022) also mentions Efyas as one of the top female musicians with a vast following. However, it appears the article mistakenly refers to her fan group as Slaynation, which is instead the fan group of Sista Afia, another female afro-pop, afrobeat artiste, with a fan base. The article measures these celebrities' popularity by examining their existing fan bases and Twitter and Instagram followings. Initial checks on the female artistes from other fan groups and their leadership suggested that though they have a large following on social media and established fan groups, the groups were currently not very active. However, this information aroused my interest in discovering more about them. The study finally settled on these fan groups as the population of the study: Sarkodie's Sarknation, Shatta Wale's Shatta Movement family (SM Family), Daddy Lumba's Die-Hard Fans, Efyas's Nocturnals and Sista Afia's Slaynation. These artistes perform in different genres: rap, dancehall, highlife, neo-soul/R&B and afro pop/afrobeat.

### **3.6 Participant Selection**

#### **3.6.1 Inclusion Criteria**

This study included participants aged 18 years old and above and were ordinary members or executives of the fan groups of the selected musicians. Selected fan groups had to have existed for at least two years. Efforts were made to sample an equal number of men and women to understand the phenomenon from various perspectives. For some fan groups, there appeared to be more females than males; for others, it was the opposite.

### **3.6.2 Exclusion Criteria**

Individuals below 18 years old and who did not belong to fan groups were excluded from participating in this study.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

This research was conducted with high ethical standards. First, clearance was sought from the University of Ghana's Ethical Committee for the Humanities before the fieldwork began. Executives of the various groups were contacted, and they permitted their members to be interviewed. Leaders shared phone numbers of other executives or members I could call and interview; In other cases, fan members gave contacts of other fan members of their groups and other fan groups who could be contacted. Participants were called via phone and told of the purpose of the study, after which a suitable time was scheduled for the interview. Where the interview was in person, an informed consent form was given to participants to fill out before the interview began. Where participants chose phone or Zoom interviews, their willingness to participate and take part in the interview was interpreted as "consent given". Participants were given a choice to withdraw from the interview at any point in the process if they so desired.

Because of the nature of the research and its possible potential effects on the reputation of celebrities, participants were assured of the utmost confidentiality and privacy after informed consent was sought. Executives and leaders of the fan groups were assured that the research findings would be shared with the group when the study was completed. Confidentiality was ensured by excluding the names of the participants from the transcript. The only identification given was the participant number, the fan group to which they belonged, whether they were executives or not, their ages and sex. During the interviews, participants who had travelled to meet the researcher at a location of their

choosing were given some money ranging from 50 GHC to 100 GHC (about \$4 to \$8 (rate \$1- GHC12) to cover the transportation cost of the participants. For the quantitative phase, the first 150 people to complete the questionnaires were given GHC 20 (about \$ 1.6) for airtime to take care of their data cost during the questionnaire filling since the questionnaire format was online. Participants had the choice to withdraw from the study or not participate.

### **3.7.1 Covid protocols**

Data was collected between August and December 2022, during which COVID-19 protocols, although a bit relaxed, were adhered to, including wearing masks, washing and sanitising hands, and social distancing during interviews.

## **3.8 Data collection procedures and tools**

### **3.8.1 Study 1: Qualitative Methodology**

This section presents the methods used in the qualitative data collection phase. It includes the sampling technique, data gathering, and data analysis procedures.

### **3.8.2 Data Collection Instruments**

The primary data collection instrument used for the qualitative study was a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions and prompts (see Appendix A). The interview guide was designed to align with the research questions to obtain rich and in-depth reflections and descriptions of participants' experiences. The interview guide consisted of two variations: one tailored for fan group executives had additional questions about the group's formation and purpose. For ordinary fans, the other focused on their relationship with the celebrity, their experiences of followership, and their interactions

within the fan group. Some questions posed to the executives and other members include: Can you tell me about this fan group? What is so special about him/her (referring to the celebrity) compared to another person (rival celebrity)? The semi-structured guide was used to ensure consistency by asking the same core questions for all participants while allowing the researcher the flexibility to explore other unanticipated yet relevant discussions, whilst keeping the focus of the study (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021; Carruthers, 1990).

### **3.8.3 Pilot study**

The interview guide for the qualitative phase was piloted with three (3) participants. One each from Sarknation, Die-Hard Fans of Daddy Lumba and the Shatta Movement Family. There were two males and one female. The pilot study aimed to establish how fan members understood the questions in the interview guide. It also brought to the fore items that needed to be better explained and helped the researcher determine the average duration of the interviews. From the pilot study, it was realised that some additional questions had to be included, while others needed to be rearranged to better aid the flow of the conversation.

### **3.8.4 Data collection procedures**

The study aimed to purposively sample and interview at least four leaders and four fan group members from each selected group using key informants and snowballing (Parker et al., 2019). The snowball method is used when the group is inaccessible to the general population because they are not in a specific location (Elfil & Negida, 2017). The snowball method was the most appropriate for this study because fan group members were scattered across the country, and their meetings were hardly ever held in person. Some

also had branches in the United States or in Europe. Thus, in this study, key informants were contacted through social media and/or personal contacts. These key informants led the researcher to either their leaders or other group members. Quota sampling (Moser, 1952; Yang & Banamah, 2014) was initially planned to interview at least 8 participants from each group. The sample size was determined based on practical considerations like access to participants. Some group members were difficult to access, while others did not have a complete database of their members. Data collection ended when the data set provided enough depth and diversity to address the research questions, consistent with reflexive thematic analysis principles (Braun & Clarke, 2019b). Thus, interviews were conducted with willing and available members to ensure thorough data collection. Research participants chose places for the interviews and how they wanted to be interviewed, either face-to-face or online. During the interviews, many participants were reluctant to disclose their actual ages. To accommodate this, the researcher asked them to provide a general range (early, mid or late), which was used for data reporting in Chapter 4.

### **3.8.5 Qualitative Data Gathering Procedures.**

Participants chose the language in which they could best express themselves. Overall, interviews were conducted primarily in English or Akan (Twi or Fante). Participants were allowed to code-switch or code-mix the languages as they felt comfortable (Tay, 1989). The researcher interspersed the questions in English with explanations or translations in Akan. Three interviews were conducted entirely in the Akan language, as it was the language with which the participants felt comfortable expressing themselves. Most people mixed English and Akan (code mixing) (Tay, 1989). Respondents in the quantitative study were given self-administered questionnaires in

English. The researcher or her assistants (with a bachelor's degree in psychology) were available to assist those who needed clarification or help completing the questionnaires.

Leaders reported that since the COVID-19 pandemic, their groups primarily met online via social media, except for specific fan activities, shows, or concerts. Interviews were conducted in person, as preferred by most participants. However, some chose phone or Zoom interviews due to work schedules or concerns about anonymity, despite assurances that only audio would be recorded. Both executives and ordinary fans responded to the same interview guide, which covered topics such as the fan group's formation, relationship with the celebrity, and reasons for joining. Executives answered additional questions about the group's formation.

Although performing qualitative interviews in person has typically been viewed as best practice and phone and video have been regarded as inferior and thus discouraged (Hermanowicz, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2011), there are instances where conducting interviews via phone or video conferencing is regarded as equivalent to in-person interviews (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Johnson et al., 2021). These instances, for example, include the period of the COVID-19 pandemic when there were restrictions on movement from place to place, cases of sensitive research (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004) or when distance becomes a challenge between the researcher and participant. However, empirical research has proven that being aware of the shortcomings of remote interviewing can make the method more robust (Khan, 2022; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Sturges and Hanrahan's (2004) study showed no significant differences between face-to-face interview transcripts and telephone transcripts.

In the present study, twelve (12) out of the thirty-three (33) interviews were obtained via phone or Zoom conferencing. For Zoom interviews, initial pleasantries and introductions were done with the camera on so the participants could see the researcher

and feel more comfortable during the interview. Interviews took between 50 minutes and one hour and thirty minutes.

In keeping with the recommendations of Khan (2022), the researcher undertook “culturally sensitive listening” (p. 494) by listening to background noises and voice inflexions to pick up changes in verbal cues. The researcher also wrote down reflexive notes during the interviews. Whilst acknowledging the argument by Johnson et al. (2021) that less information is generally generated during remote interviewing, this research, however, corroborated Khan's, (2022) experience that it is the nature of the topic under discussion, whether public or sensitive, and the environment of the interviewee that determines whether sufficient or less information is obtained and not necessarily the mode of questioning. In this case, the subject matter was not a particularly sensitive topic. Additionally, before the interviews, the researcher contacted the participants via phone calls and established some rapport with them before scheduling interviews, thus making the actual interviews more relaxed and less awkward (Sah et al., 2020).

### **3.8.6 Field Observations**

After every interview, field notes were methodically taken to deepen the qualitative analysis. These notes included descriptive observations and preliminary analytical thoughts (Emerson et al., 2011). After each participant interview, observations were made immediately to guarantee that verbal and nonverbal clues were accurately documented. These field notes played a crucial role in helping me write the results.

### **3.8.7 Qualitative data analysis**

Three people, including the researcher, transcribed the interviews. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Interviews in the local language (Twi) were transcribed and

translated into English by a native Twi speaker and then re-checked by another native speaker and the researcher (also a native Akan speaker) to ensure that peculiar phrases and words had been correctly translated. Some Twi expressions were retained to maintain their nuances with the English translation in parenthesis.

### **3.8.8 Reflexive Thematic Analysis**

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) by Braun and Clarke (2019) is an updated version of their 2006 article on thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They maintain that their most quoted 2006 article has been (mis) applied by researchers who still need to understand completely what they had proposed (Braun et al., 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2019a, 2020b). Thematic analysis (TA) is a family of methods used across many disciplines (Braun et al., 2022). These methods utilise data coding and theme generation to analyse qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2020b). There are, however, many versions of TA, each with different underlying paradigms and assumptions. Finlay (2021) delineates them into those that are scientifically descriptive and others which are artfully interpretative. Examples of those classified as scientifically descriptive are those that reflect the post-positivist paradigm and have been described by Braun and Clarke (2020a) as coding-reliability thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) and Codebook thematic analysis (King & Brooks, 2017; Smith & Firth, 2011). These methods perceive researcher subjectivity as somewhat of a “danger” to qualitative research and try to keep it in check, for example, by emphasising accuracy and reliability and using multiple coders (Braun & Clarke, 2020b; Byrne, 2022).

RTA is an entirely qualitative approach underpinned by qualitative techniques and values. ‘Reflexivity’ in the name reflexive thematic analysis implies that the researcher must critically examine their personal perspectives and the decisions they make during the

study to consider how their worldview can influence the research either positively or negatively (Braun & Clarke, 2022). It emphasises the role of the researcher as a storyteller in creating (rather than discovering) knowledge shaped by their positionings and choices. Instead of bracketing (Given, 2008) and putting aside these positionings, RTA embraces them as invaluable in shaping knowledge (Gough & Madill, 2012). Reflexivity is a form of quality control as it allows the researcher to reflect on how their backgrounds may contextualise the results. RTA is experientially oriented, telling the story about the participant's lived experiences, views, and behaviours (Braun et al., 2022; Byrne, 2022). Meaning-making is explored in the data as either semantic or latent. Semantic meaning-making focuses on the surface, descriptive meanings of response, whilst latent meaning looks for participants' deeper/hidden meaning or assumption (Braun & Clarke, 2020b; Clarke & Braun, 2013). Latent coding requires creativity and makes the analysis more interpretative during theme generation (Braun & Clarke, 2019a, 2020b). Analysis in RTA can be deductive, inductive or a combination of both, where the voices and experiences of participants are the most important source of meaning and existing theories and literature help enrich the interpretation (Shah-Beckley et al., 2020).

In the reflexive approach to thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2019, 2020b) and Clarke and Braun (2013) insist that themes do not emerge, nor are they discovered, as in the case of TA, which is more descriptive but rather creatively generated or created by the researcher. They also warn that themes are not topic summaries of codes or summaries of the data set (Byrne, 2022) but are shared-meaning and story-based, which require some level of reflection and abstraction (Braun et al., 2022). The data was analysed using the six-phase analytical process consistent with Braun and Clarke, (2020) and Clarke and Braun's, (2013) reflexive thematic analysis.

### ***3.8.8.1 Phase one: Familiarisation with data***

All transcripts were read and re-read so the researcher would be familiar with the data and check that all punctuations were in the right places and all pauses were noted to ensure accuracy between the audio and the transcripts. Where there was a peculiar exhibition of emotion, such as passion in the voice, these were penned down in the transcript in parenthesis or the field notes. While listening to the transcripts, ideas about possible codes, patterns and other ideas that came to mind were noted and typed out later in a Word document. Some missing data was also reported, such as the age of two participants. Also, the researcher filled in or corrected words or phrases that the other transcribers had missed since the data was collected by the researcher herself. My thoughts and feelings were also documented along with the stages of the analysis to ensure transparency.

### ***3.8.8.2 Phase two: Generating initial codes***

Codes form the basic structure for themes in qualitative data. They represent a short, succinct summary of what a respondent has said relevant to the research question (Byrne, 2022; Saldana, 2016). The initial coding for this study was done using the “comments” function in Microsoft Word. Coding was done both inductively and deductively. I coded content from the transcripts that I found interesting and new insights to help answer my research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). Coding generated over one thousand codes. A challenging process during this stage was that, when the codes were aggregated, it was challenging to remember which codes were linked to which transcripts. Coding was thus re-done, using a different format via Microsoft Excel to connect codes to transcripts. Coding was also done semantically, with some codes reflecting descriptions of what had been reported or coded in-vivo, such as “love for

artiste”, and a few coded latently (such as “pedestalisation”). Overall, the coding process was iterative as new codes were generated from the transcripts, others merged with other codes, and all were included in a coding framework. In keeping with pure qualitative values, RTA rejects positivist and post-positivistic methods in data interpretation, such as intercoder reliability values (Braun & Clarke, 2020b). Thus, to aid the reflexivity process and check the researcher’s ideas, two independent persons were allowed to look through the codes by the researcher and make helpful suggestions to help achieve a richer interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022). Table 1 presents an extract from the qualitative data, along with its corresponding coding.

**Table 1**  
*Sample Data Extract and Codes*

<b>Sample Data Extract</b>	<b>Sample Codes</b>
<p>“Yes, so Sark Natives, Sark Natives was basically created to support Sarkodie, whether he was aware of our existence or not. That was the initial err plan for the group. ...So erm the group, as I said the group’s main notion is to support anything that Sarkodie does, his lifestyle, his music. Anything that deals with Sarkodie we support. (P3, Sarkodie fan, Executive, male, 24 years )”</p>	<p>Support artiste</p>
<p>I joined because I love Daddy Lumba. I like his music and the kind of, the kind of, how he sings. Me particularly, I love everything about Daddy Lumba, that’s why I joined. (P10, Lumba Fan, mid 40’s )</p>	<p>“Love” for artiste</p>

### ***3.8.8.3 Phase three: Initial theme generation***

Themes are recurring patterns of meaning that have a core underlying idea (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Theme generation occurs when all data has been coded. It is done by interpreting the meaning of codes and aggregating them according to meaningful patterns (Braun et al., 2022; Byrne, 2022). The coded data is reviewed, and multiple codes are joined to become potential themes, whilst others are categorised as potential sub-themes. Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasise that themes are not discovered or emerge from the data as though hidden within data. Rather, theme generation is described as an activity where the researcher actively engages the data to interpret meaning by looking at relationships between different codes (Byrne, 2022). The usefulness of theme generation is the theme's ability to answer the research question (Braun et al., 2022). At this stage of the study, the research questions guided the development of the themes. Codes were sorted and collated by drawing their associations and similarities into identified themes and sub-themes. Codes were explored further to see which might belong together to form a meaningful pattern. Codes such as “promote artiste”, “supporting the artiste”, and “pushing the music” were thematised as supporting the artiste and further sub-themed into “brand promotion” and “preserving legacy”. Some codes, such as “creating fan group for female artiste”, did not appear to share any pattern of meaning with other codes and, therefore, were set aside initially and categorised as “miscellaneous”.

### ***3.8.8.3 Phase four: Reviewing and developing themes.***

This phase involves exploring the initial themes to see if they effectively capture what the data reveals (Braun et al., 2022). At this recursive stage, initial themes generated were reviewed to ensure that they had enough coherence to capture the story of the data and answer the research questions. Some of the themes were refined as subthemes and

vice-versa. For example, on the research question of why fan groups exist, codes such as “pure love for the artiste” and “marketing the artiste’s product” were grouped into one overarching theme called “Profound admiration for artiste”.

#### ***3.8.8.5 Phase five: Refining, defining, and naming themes.***

Here, all the themes generated were reviewed, refined, subdivided, or renamed where necessary. For example, the theme of negative experiences with subthemes of futile ventures and misperception of followership was refined further to “social disdain” and “misperception of purpose” to better reflect the information received from participants. Also, a theme that explored the behavioural impact of celebrity followership on fan behaviour was refined to two subthemes of “fanaticism” and “prosocial behaviour” rather than the previous three of “extreme dedication”, “antisocial and prosocial behaviour”. Data was initially organised with the help of Microsoft Excel and then with NVIVO software version 14.

#### **3.8.8 Trustworthiness and Validity**

To ensure the quality and trustworthiness of this research, multiple strategies were employed, guided by Braun and Clarke (2020b), Creswell and Miller (2000), and Nowell et al. (2017). These strategies aimed to enhance the validity and credibility of the findings and included maintaining an audit trail of raw data, writing detailed field notes, and engaging in inter-coder reflexivity (Byrne, 2022) and keeping a reflexive journal. The journal documented my interests, reflections on the subject matter, and how the interviews affected me (see page 63).

A critical aspect of the data analysis process involved observations and extensive note-taking during interviews. These notes captured the context of conversations, my

thoughts on participants' responses, and non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and voice inflexions. This process helped identify significant moments that enriched the analysis. The field notes included descriptive details about the interview settings, off-record statements, and my interpretations of the discussions (see page 114).

To ensure transparency in data analysis, participants' voices were prominently featured through direct quotes, guaranteeing that interpretations remained grounded in the data. Additionally, inter-coder reflexivity was employed throughout the coding process to enhance rigour and credibility (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2020b). This involved the researcher and two independent coders critically reflecting on the initial codes, interpretations and initial themes by comparing, discussing and reconciling differences in the coding decisions. Through discussion and comparison, differences in coding decisions were reconciled, strengthening the trustworthiness of the findings by incorporating multiple perspectives.

To support transferability, thick contextual descriptions of participants, interview settings, and interactions were provided. Purposeful sampling was also used to select participants based on criteria relevant to the study's objectives, increasing the applicability of the findings to similar contexts.

Finally, after analysing the qualitative data, specific themes were generated that warranted further investigation to determine their generalizability to the broader fan base of the selected artist and other similar fan communities (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

### **3.8.9 Reflexivity and Positionality**

In keeping with reflexive thematic analysis, I present my reflections on this research and how my background, values and expectations shape the research process. Reflexivity in research refers to how the researcher's values, assumptions and background

can impact knowledge creation (Braun et al., 2022). Reflexivity acts as a form of quality control that enables the researcher to introspectively consider and articulate how their backgrounds may “contextualise” the knowledge produced.

My interest in celebrities was stirred when I heard an interview between a then-popular “celebrity” and a CNN reporter in 2016. Initially, I was appalled, then sad, then angry. I was upset because I saw this celebrity as someone admired by many young ladies, and I was concerned about the impact of her actions and statements on the many “naive” young women who would listen to her, for example, how she was dating a married man who she expected to pay her rent and provide her with all she needed. I wondered what made these so-called celebrities/slay queens so influential and why people would want to follow them in the first place. This led me down this journey of unpacking their followers and their motivations for following these individuals.

First, in the entire research process, I was an outsider. I have no fan group allegiance, and I admittedly was initially prejudiced and sceptical about people in fan groups. I had no expectations about what I would hear and imagined that I would be talking to unemployed people who, at best, could be described as “hypers”. I also implicitly thought my research would prove some deviance in these groups and how it was generally negatively affecting people in these groups. My subsequent interest in the participants, my genuine eagerness to appreciate their points of view, and the fact that most had never been asked to examine and discuss their membership of these groups introspectively made them share openly. However, with my role as an outsider, some groups were initially reluctant to “release” members for me to interview for fear of divulging group or “trade secrets”.

I also noticed throughout most of my interviews that the information that I remembered most after the interviews were those which the participants had said that they

worshipped the celebrity and regarded him as a music god, saviour, healer etc. These statements surprised me. The passion with which they spoke about their artiste also left me in awe. This was most poignant, mainly when the participants reported being very religious and attending church services regularly. On further reflection, I realised that I was viewing these interactions from my lens as a believer in a monotheistic God, my identification as an evangelical Christian, and my role as a worship leader in the church. In my view, certain behaviours, such as a passion for celebrities and a passion for God, are incompatible. I often found myself surprised and, honestly, scandalised when someone could boldly say, “Yes, we worship him” (in reference to a human) and suggest that these celebrities were more real to them than even God. After the initial shock, however, I allowed myself to imbibe these stories, perspectives, and worldviews and came to appreciate them without judgment to better appreciate their experiences. I was especially warmed by the experiences of help from members of the fan groups and the sense of community that participants felt in these fan groups. These stories inspired me.

### **3.9 Study 2: Quantitative Survey**

Questionnaires were adapted from existing scales to measure attitudes towards celebrities, social and personal identity, identification with celebrity groups, social capital and social well-being.

#### **3.9.1 Study Design**

The quantitative phase of the study employed the survey method, which was conducted by distributing online questionnaires to members of various fan groups across Ghana. This phase complemented the qualitative study by statistically validating some of

the findings from the qualitative phase across a broader and more diverse sample of fan group members.

### ***3.9.1.1 Study Population***

The study population comprised fan group members across Ghana. However, the exact number was unknown due to the absence of official records. Even among known groups, some did not have a complete database of members. While for others, membership was defined in fluid and informal terms.

### **3.9.2 Participant selection**

#### ***3.9.2.1 Inclusion Criteria***

Individuals who were 18 years old and above who were members of fan groups of Ghanaian musicians, including those already selected for the qualitative study, and were known by fellow fan members or were on fan group social media pages, were eligible to take part in the study.

#### ***3.9.2.2 Exclusion Criteria***

Individuals below 18 years and who did not belong to fan groups of Ghanaian musicians were excluded from participating in the study.

#### ***3.9.2.3 Sampling***

Fan members who met the inclusion criteria were purposively chosen using snowball and convenience sampling methods.

### **3.9.3 Instruments**

The instruments used in the study have not (to the best of my knowledge) formally been validated within the Ghanaian context. However, for each of the scales, their core

constructs- admiration for celebrity, identification with a celebrity or fan group, personal identity and identities with a social group and social well-being, were considered universal and cross-cultural. The scales were therefore deemed appropriate to measure these phenomena in Ghana. Furthermore, while not validated in Ghana, the CAS, specifically, has been successfully used in diverse settings, including Nigeria (John et al., 2019), with a reported Cronbach's alpha of  $\alpha = 0.92$ . To enhance their application, the scales were adapted as noted below. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of the target population to confirm that the items were clear and understandable, showing good facial validity (Lim, 2024).

***Attachment to celebrity:*** Attachment to celebrity was measured using the twenty-three-item Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) by McCutcheon et al. (2002), also known as the celebrity worship scale. Although celebrity followership consists of a broad spectrum of celebrity engagement from casual to intense, the CAS is a well-established measure designed to measure the depth and nature of celebrity attachment. The use of the CAS is justified as it provides empirical evidence for the strength and nature of celebrity attachment within celebrity followership. The CAS Responses were on a Likert scale from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree. The scale measures the three dimensions of celebrity worship: entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological (McCutcheon et al., 2003). Low attachment, characterised by the entertainment-social dimension, describes people who engage in individualistic behaviours purely for personal entertainment, like watching, reading, and keeping up with information about their favourite celebrities. For example, "I enjoy watching, reading, or listening to my favourite celebrity because it means a good time." Items 18, 19 and 16 typified this dimension (Appendix A). The next higher level, the intense personal stage, includes social activities performed with other fans. For example, "When my favourite celebrity fails or loses at

something, I feel like a failure myself.” Items 25, 14 and 7 were typical examples. The borderline-pathological stage is an extreme form of celebrity worship demonstrated by compulsive behaviours and over-identifying with the celebrity’s successes and failures. (i.e. items 22, 7, 10). E.g. “If I were lucky enough to meet my favourite celebrity, and he/she asked me to do something illegal as a favour, I would probably do it” (McCutcheon, et al. 2002).

In this study, some items were adapted to make them more relatable to the respondents. For example, in item 11, where dollars and personal possessions like “napkins or plates” were referred to, “dollars” was adapted to “Ghana cedis”, whilst the personal possessions were changed to “t-shirts or other attire”. The CAS has very strong psychometric properties observed across many studies in different regions worldwide (McCutcheon et al., 2003, 2004). McCutcheon et al. (2016a) found internal consistencies of .89 for entertainment-social, .91 for intense-personal, and .72 for borderline-pathological. In a recent study in Iran, Shabahang et al. (2020) reported an alpha of .88 for total CAS scores.

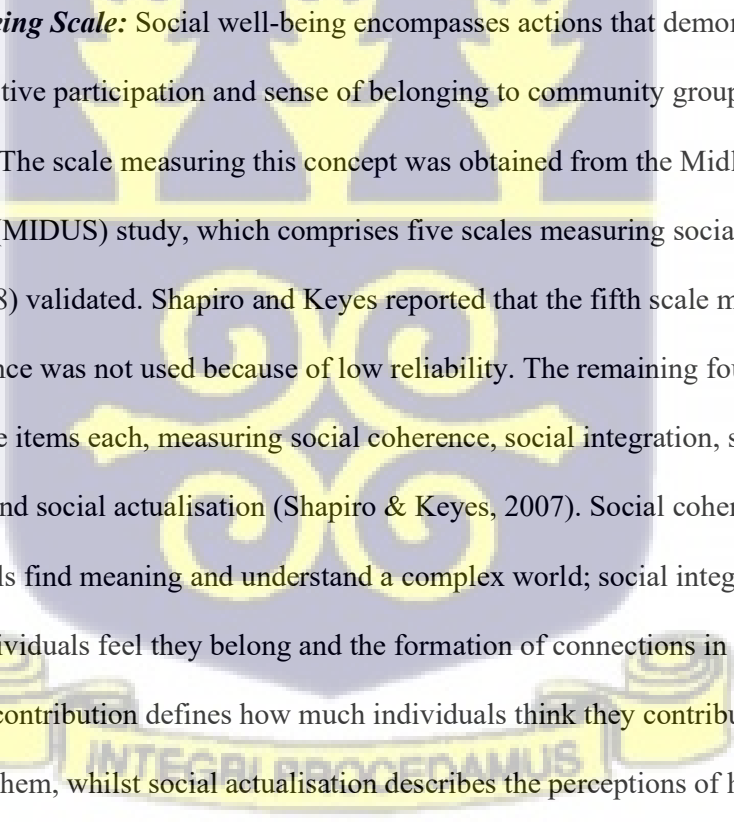
***Social and Personal Identity:*** Social and personal identity was measured using the initial 16-item Social and Personal Identities Scale (SIPI) by Nario-Redmond et al. (2004). This scale measures the relative importance that people ascribe and categorise themselves by either using their group membership or their identities and which of these is central to who they are (Nario-Redmond et al., 2004). The SIPI scale consists of eight items measuring personal identity, for example, “My need to be completely distinct and unique from everyone else”, and nine items measuring social identity, for example., “The memberships I have in various groups”. The scale was adapted for this study to include a 17th item to reflect the celebrity fan group (social identity): “My being a member of my favourite

celebrity fan group”. Responses were on a Likert scale from Extremely important to who I am (5) and Not at all important to who I am (1). The social identity subscale of this scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .79 and that of the personal identity is .80.

***Sports Team Identification Measure:*** An adapted measure of the Sports Team Identification Scale (STIS-10) by Tsigilis et al. (2022) was used to measure celebrity fan members’ identification with their fan group. Although this scale was developed to measure fan identification with their favourite sports team, it was appropriate for celebrity fan groups. Reysen and Branscombe (2010) found out in their study that sports fan groups are not different from non-sport fans regarding the psychological processes that occur within them. The STIS-10 scale is also based on the Social Identity Theory, thus measuring the social identity of individuals’ identification with their favourite team. The STIS-10 is a 10-item scale with a .95 reliability coefficient. The scale items were modified to reflect the population under study. For example, item one was changed from “My team is an important part of who I am” to “My celebrity fan group is an important part of who I am”, and item nine was changed from I wear my team’s insignia when I watch their games (e.g. either at the stadium or a sports cafe or via TV, radio or the internet) to “ I wear the fan group merch/paraphernalia whenever I attend group events”. Items were scored on a Likert scale from “Not at all” (1) to “To a great extent” (5), with higher scores indicating high team identity. This study referred to the adapted scale as the Team Identification Scale.

***Internet Social Capital Scale (ISCS):*** This study measured social capital using the Internet Social Capital Scale (ISCS) by Williams (2006a). It is a scale that builds on Putnam's (2000) bridging and bonding social capital subscales, with adaptations from

Cohen and Hoberman's (1983) Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL), a multi-dimensional inventory measuring perceived social support. In adapting this scale for this study, examples of items modified include, "There are several people online/offline I trust to help solve my problems" changed to "There are several people in this group I trust to help solve my problems" also, "If I needed an emergency loan of \$500 I know someone online/offline I can turn to" changed to "If I needed an emergency loan of GHC 500 I know someone in this group I can turn to" Reliability alpha for the online bridging and bonding was .900 and offline was .889. Items were scored on a Likert scale with responses ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The scale is referred to as the social capital scale in this study.



***Social Well-being Scale:*** Social well-being encompasses actions that demonstrate an individual's active participation and sense of belonging to community groups (Shapiro & Keyes, 2007). The scale measuring this concept was obtained from the Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) study, which comprises five scales measuring social well-being, as Keyes (1998) validated. Shapiro and Keyes reported that the fifth scale measuring social acceptance was not used because of low reliability. The remaining four scales contained three items each, measuring social coherence, social integration, social contribution, and social actualisation (Shapiro & Keyes, 2007). Social coherence refers to how individuals find meaning and understand a complex world; social integration defines how much individuals feel they belong and the formation of connections in their social world. Social contribution defines how much individuals think they contribute to the world around them, whilst social actualisation describes the perceptions of how society can become a better place for all. Sample items included "The world is too complex for me" and "I have something valuable to give the world". Items were scored on a Likert

scale with responses from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The total internal reliability reported for this scale is 0.81.

### 3.9.4 Pilot Study Procedure and Report

A pilot study was conducted as a small-scale feasibility study or pre-test to the main study. It aimed to give information about what would likely be experienced once the study was completed and evaluate the validity and reliability of the instrument to be used in the more extensive study (In, 2017; Lowe, 2019). The questionnaire for this study was piloted among 20 fan members of the celebrity fan groups used in the qualitative study, namely fans of Daddy Lumba, Shatta Wale, Sarkodie, Efyra and Sista Afia. The questionnaire was administered both manually and online. Eighteen fans responded to the online questionnaire, whilst the researcher assisted two in filling out the same questionnaire. Data from the 20 respondents was analysed. For the pilot study, the sample comprised sixteen (16) men and four (4) women who were available. Cronbach's alpha was computed to test the internal consistency of the scales. The results are presented in Table 2. Results for the Cronbach's alpha for the study are in Table 9, p.127.

**Table 2**  
*Cronbach's alpha of all piloted instruments (N=20)*

Scale	Number of items	Developer's $\alpha$	Pilot study $\alpha$
Celebrity Attitude Scale	23	.89	.92
Social and Personal Identities Scale (SIPI)	17	.79(SI)/.80(PI)	.83(SI)/.90(PI)
Team Identification Scale	10	.95	.91
Social Capital Scale (Bridging: online/offline)	10	.90/.90	.92

Social Capital Scale (Bonding: online/offline)	10	.90/.90	.86
Social Well-Being Scale	10	.81	.69* (.74)

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\*Cronbach's alpha improved after item deletion

The social well-being scale had a Cronbach's alpha of ( $\alpha=0.69$ ). Item 5 was flagged for deletion for having a low item-total correlation. When deleted, that item showed an improved Cronbach alpha of ( $\alpha=0.74$ ). In the main study, however, item 5 was not deleted but flagged to see if a larger sample size would confirm the need for deletion after completing the final data collection. The remaining scales, the CAS, STIS-10, SIPI and ISCS, had excellent and acceptable alphas; thus, no deletion or modification was done.

### 3.9.5 Procedure for main study

A total of 301 respondents participated in the quantitative phase of the study. Data was collected purposively via a self-report approach using key informants. Because the researcher had used the snowball method during the qualitative phase and had been acquainted with some of the executives, permission was sought from these leaders for the online questionnaires to be shared on the fan group WhatsApp and other social media pages. From those pages, data was collected via convenient sampling. Data was obtained from Daddy Lumba, Sarkodie, Shatta Wale, Efya and Sista Afia fan groups. Additionally, other fan group leaders with whom the researcher had become acquainted with during the qualitative phase, like the fan group leaders of Aqua Nation for the musician Akwaboah

and Bhim Nation for Stonebwoy, were also included and asked to share the questionnaire with their members.

Additionally, in December 2023, the researcher and two assistants, with the permission of specific fan group leaders, attended some celebrities' concerts to recruit additional participants for a later follow-up with questionnaires. The researcher and her assistants' phone numbers were included on the questionnaires' flyers so that participants who needed further information about the study or help completing the questionnaires could call for assistance. Data collection took about three months because gatekeepers of some of the groups had to clear some administrative procedures before sharing the questionnaires on their fan group pages. The time frame also allowed for some randomness in participant participation. Data was obtained via Google Forms, cleaned, and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 23). Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 24) software was used for structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM was used to test the relationships between the variables. SEM was used over other multivariate techniques because the study had multiple dependent variables. SEM tests these multiple relationships simultaneously instead of running separate regression models, thus reducing potential type one error. SEM improves measurement accuracy by helping to reduce biases introduced by measurement errors (Byrne, 2016)

### **3.9.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis was first done by examining the assumptions of multivariate analysis, conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the validity and distinctiveness of the scales, and descriptive statistics and correlational analysis were used to examine means, standard deviation and bivariate correlations among variables of the

study. The final step tested the hypothesised model. Model fit was assessed using fit indices such as comparative fit index (CFA), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardised Root Mean Square residual (SRMR).



## CHAPTER FOUR

### STUDY 1: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings for the qualitative phase of the study. It analyses data for the five research questions this study sought to answer.

A total of thirty-three interviews were conducted, with ten (10) from Sarknation, nine (9) from the Shatta Movement Family and ten (10) from Die-Hard Fans of Daddy Lumba. One participant belonged to both the Shatta Movement and Die-hard fans with equal intensity (counted as part of SM). For the female artistes, however, Efyia (Nocturnals) and Sista Afia (Slaynation), because the two groups were not particularly active at the time of data collection, only four (4) members of the two groups were interviewed. They consisted of the founder of Nocturnals and three members of Slaynation, comprising two executives (including the founder) and one member. Further demographic details are found in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Demographic characteristics of qualitative participants n=33*

Participant	Sex	Age	Region of Origin	Education	Occupation	Fan Group	Status
Participant1	male	29	Volta	SHS graduate	Uber Driver	Shatta	Non-Exec
Participant 2	Female	late 30s	Ashanti	Tertiary	Radio presenter & Entrepreneur	Shatta	Non-Exec
Participant 3	male	late 30s	Volta	Tertiary	Management & Leadership Strategist	Shatta	Exec
Participant 4	Male	31	Greater Accra	Tertiary	Mech. Engineer	Shatta	Exec
Participant 5	male	24	Greater Accra	SHS graduate	Waiter	Shatta	Exec
Participant 6	Female	Not	Savannah	Tertiary	Businesswoman	Shatta	Non-

		stated					Exec
Participant 7	male	early 30s	Greater Accra	Diploma	Entrepreneur	Shatta	Exec
Participant 8	male	25	Greater Accra	SHS graduate	Micro Finance collector	Shatta	Non-Exec
Participant 9	male	30	Eastern	SHS graduate	Unemployed	Shatta	Yes
Participant 10	male	29	Ashanti	JSS Leaver	Trader	Sarkodie	Exec
Participant 11	male	30	Eastern	Tertiary	Music distribution	Sarkodie	Exec
Participant 12	male	24	Volta	Tertiary	GHone digital	Sarkodie	Exec
Participant 13	female	26	Greater Accra	SHS graduate	Caterer	Sarkodie	Exec
Participant 14	male	30	Akan	Tertiary	Event organiser	Sarkodie	Non-exec
Participant 15	male	early 30s	Eastern	Tertiary	Project coordinator	Sarkodie	Exec
Participant 16	female	mid 20s	Volta	SHS graduate	Media presenter	Sarkodie	Non-Exec
Participant 17	female	22	Greater Accra	Tertiary	Student	Sarkodie	Non-Exec
Participant 18	male	26	Eastern	SHS graduate	Event organiser	Sarkodie	Exec
Participant 19	female	early 20s	Ashanti	Tertiary	Fashion Designer	Sarkodie	Non-Exec
Participant 20	female	early 40s	Ashanti	Tertiary	Entrepreneur	Daddy Lumba	Non-Exec
Participant 21	male	late 30s	Upper East	SHS graduate	Hotel Staff	D. Lumba	Exec
Participant 22	female	mid 30s	Ashanti	Tertiary	Public Health Officer	D. Lumba	Exec
Participant 23	female	early30s	Ashanti	Tertiary	Nurse	D. Lumba	Exec
Participant 24	male	32	Bono East	JSS Leaver	Freight forwarder	D. Lumba	Exec
Participant 25	female	43	Eastern	Tertiary	Health administrator	D. Lumba	Exec
Participant 26	female	early 30s	Eastern	Diploma	Teacher	D. Lumba	Non-Exec
Participant 27	female	36	Ewe	Tertiary	Media Practitioner	D. Lumba	Non-Exec
Participant 28	male	mid 40s	Ashanti	Tertiary	Trader	D. Lumba	Non-exec
Participant 29	male	44	Ashanti	SHS graduate	Trader	D. Lumba	Non-Exec

Participant 30	Male	late 20s	Greater Accra & Central	Tertiary	Movie director	Efya Noc.	Exec
Participant 31	male	25-32	Ashanti	Tertiary	Radio presenter	Sista Afia	Exec
Participant 32	male	early 20s	Central	SHS leaver	Laptop & Phone repairer	Sista Afia	Exec
Participant 33	female	early 20s	Ashanti & Fante	SHS Leaver	unemployed	Sista Afia	Non-Exec

As shown in Table 3, data were collected from fan group members of various celebrities, consisting of 20 Males and 13 females, aged between 20 and 49 years ( $M = 31.38$ ,  $SD = 6.82$ ). Sixteen had some form of Tertiary education, followed by those who were Senior High School graduates. Twelve people stated that their region of origin was the Ashanti region, followed by six people each from the Greater Accra and Eastern regions, while five individuals came from the Volta Region. The Central region, Bono East, Savannah, and Upper East regions each had one person.

This chapter discusses six main themes and 13 subthemes generated from participants' interviews as they address the research questions. The themes and subthemes are discussed, where applicable, from the personal and group levels. Table 4 presents a bird's-eye view of the themes and sub-themes.



**Table 4:**  
*Overview of thematic structure*

Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-subthemes
1 & 2 Profound Admiration for artiste.	Personal disposition	
	Craft Appeal	
	Supporting Artiste	Brand Promotion Preserving Legacy
	Desire to Belong “feel like a fan”	
3. Pedestalisation	Deification Role Model	
Empowering Encounters	Identity Enhancement Social Connections Social Support Personal growth	
Invisible Struggles	Social disdain Misperception of Purpose Negative religious judgements	
4. Fanaticism Prosocial Behaviour		

#### 4.2 Questions 1 and 2

What reasons do Ghanaian fans cite as motivations for celebrity followership, and what motivates the establishment of fan groups in Ghana?

For this question, one central theme – Profound admiration for artiste, was observed along with four sub-themes: (1) personal disposition, (2) craft appeal, (3) desire to belong and (4) supporting artiste, which had two sub-sub themes: (4a) brand promotion

and (4b) preserving legacy. Table 5 presents a summary of the themes and sub-themes of research questions one and two, along with sample quotes.

**Table 5**  
*Summary Table of themes, sub-themes and sample quotes*

Theme	Sub-theme	Sub-subtheme	Sample of supporting quotes
Profound admiration for artiste	Personal Disposition		"... First of all, I have been a fan since childhood. So I just saw the man on TV; I liked his personality, yes. So, it was just about his personality..." (P9, Lumba Fan, Female, 36 years old).
	Craft Appeal		"I joined the group because I'm a fan of Afia, Sista Afia. Big fan. I love her music." (P3, Sister Afia Fan, Female, Early 20s)
		Brand Promotion	So, strictly, at first it was promoting his brand, just promoting his brand, yeah" (P5, Sark Fan, Male, 30)
	Supporting Artiste	Preserving Legacy	"It's about ensuring that his legacy lives on, it's ensuring that his legacy thrives for generations yet unborn to get to know that there is and there was a great man who was full of wisdom, who was full of intellect, who was a blessing from God so that they will also come and appreciate his works." (P7, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, 43 years old)
		Desire to Belong "feel like a fan"	"... I joined because I want to feel like a fan, you know, and I want to feel like a member of Die-Hard Fans of

			Daddy Lumba, a member, I'm okay. I am not joining for any benefits..." (P3, Lumba Fan, Female, Late 30s)
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#### 4.2.1 Profound admiration for artiste

This theme examines objective one, which focuses on the reasons for forming celebrity fan groups and why people join them. Both executives of the fan groups and ordinary members mainly attributed the formation of the fan groups to the immense admiration and love they had for the artiste. Although most of them used the word "love" to express their feelings, a deeper examination showed that their expressions leaned towards more profound admiration bordering on deep respect, inspiration or reverence for the artiste's personality or craft rather than romantic or casual connotations usually associated with the word "love". This profound admiration for artiste is evidenced in some participant statements. For example, one participant expressed the group's extreme passion for the artiste and his craft, "... Yes, we formed the group because we had mad love for Sarkodie, and then we were moved by what he was doing." (P4, Sark Fan, Executive, Female, 26 years old).

Another also spoke about how his love for the artiste and her brand made him want to do all he could, without thinking of the money he might be losing, to support the artiste:

... But because the brand is important to me and I love the brand and love the artist, I have to come, I have to schedule my time and then come. But I don't think about the money I'm spending while I'm doing these things.

(P1, Lumba Fan, Executive, Male, 29 years old).

This “profound admiration for artiste” led to distinct expressions discussed here as the four sub-themes emanating from participants' profound admiration for the artiste: personal disposition, craft appeal, supporting artiste [with sub-sub-themes: brand promotion and legacy preservation], and desire to belong.

#### ***4.2.1.1 Personal disposition***

This sub-theme speaks to participants who expressed profound admiration for the artiste’s disposition or the personality traits the artiste embodied as one of the reasons why they loved them and joined the celebrity fan group. They regarded the disposition of the artists, such as their demeanour, generosity, resilience, wisdom, humility and religiosity, as admirable and worthy of emulation. Some fans appreciated that their preferred celebrities were gracious enough to recognise and occasionally respond to the work of their fans in contributing to their success. Some fans spoke about how they or other fans had received gifts or “shoutouts” from their favourite musicians. The humanness of the celebrities also touched fans as celebrities gave back to the destitute in society through the foundations they had set up. Regarding their personal dispositions for example, one participant reported that, “...he's such a quiet person, (he’s not a noisy person) he is not rowdy. People say a whole lot of negative things about him, but he decides not to give attention to them nor respond. So, I like that side of him also.” (P2, Lumba Fan, Executive, Male, late 30s). Another also commented on their resilience and reaction to negativity by saying,

...Yeah ... one thing... the only reason why I love Shatta is that he’s someone that, he doesn’t get disturbed by the negativity you throws (sic) at him. He... He sees opportunity in every negativity and, er, he’s someone that he persevered... (P1, Shatta Fan, Male, 29 years old).

Another spoke about the artiste being herself and not putting on celebrity airs but having the same friendly personality on and off stage. She commented that,

...She's real... Like, you know, there are these artists out there when they meet you, and maybe they are on set, they are a whole different person. And when they are out of their zone, and they are out on the street, they are also a different person. But Afia is, uhm, she's her. (P3, Sista Afia Fan, Female, Early 20s).

The personal dispositions and qualities exhibited by the celebrities made them admirable and attractive to their fans, even desiring to emulate them. Some of these personal dispositions also made them more personable and relatable to their fans.

#### ***4.2.1.2 Craft Appeal***

The affection participants expressed for their preferred artiste/celebrity stemmed from the artiste's exceptional talent and skill. Participants articulated their admiration for artiste's stage presence/craft, captivating performances, distinctive brand, musical compositions, and the profound influence of their lyrics on fans' lives. For instance, one participant remarked about the artiste's prolific songwriting prowess and versatile musical abilities, noting that the artiste's repertoire encompassed compositions suitable for various social settings:

...and in every situation you may find yourself, you will find one of his songs. Whether gospel, if you are having a funeral, if you're having your wedding, if you are happy, if you are sad, there's a Lumba song for you.

(P10, Lumba Fan, Male, Mid-40s).

Another also spoke about the poetic nature of the artiste's craft, namely, the depth of the lyrics, the use of proverbs, and idioms, which make the songs rich and unique. She also commented that the artiste's songs stay new and "fresh" because the lyrics used in one song are not repeated in another: "... o, like I said, words ... the words in his music. Yes, like... using proverbs idioms makes him unique... And he doesn't repeat words, like other songs. Yeah, when he's done with this song, the words are not repeated" (P5, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Early 30s).

Yet another spoke of the artiste's stagecraft, "...anytime he's performing on stage, I really like it, the way he conducts himself, I like it, yeah. And he knows how to engage the crowd when he's performing... yeah. So, all these things motivate you..." (P8, Shatta Fan, Male, 25 years old)

The lyrical prowess of the artistes, motivated and inspired the fans. A participant stated that the songs uplift, enkindle hope and teach life lessons such as caring for people. He stated that:

... Something that motivates you, something that maybe you are dealing with something... the kind of music you listen to takes you out of that dark place. Me personally, I started following Sarkodie because of the things that he says in his music, he has so much inspirational stuff, erm about God about love, how to treat people. Yeah so I fell in love with that person. I fell in love with that person because he motivates me (P3, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, 24 years old).

#### ***4.2.1.3 Supporting artiste: brand promotion and preserving legacy***

From a synthesis of the findings, the main theme, profound admiration for artiste, was also expressed through members' desire to support the artiste by promoting their favourite celebrity's brand and ensuring the artiste's legacy lives on. For the celebrity fan groups, one of the aims of forming the groups was to promote their artiste to the world and ensure that their legacy lives on after they are no longer active. The Shatta Movement Family and Sarknation (Sarknatives GH) mainly sought to make their artiste's music well known and relevant by constantly keeping the artiste's name in the news (trending) whether they had a new song or not. They also sought to increase the streaming numbers of their artiste's music on streaming platforms. This was done by coordinating the posting of specific songs or tweets by the artiste, whether old or new, so that the artiste's tweet and song would appear in the trending list. Streaming parties were also organised where fans would put together a playlist that they would play repeatedly to increase the streaming numbers. By doing this, the artiste's songs get more airplay on music streaming platforms, leading to nominations for international awards like the Grammy or BET Awards (Black Entertainment Television Network). Thus, admiration of artiste led individuals to unite and support the artiste through brand promotion. Some of their members remarked that,

... No, it was strictly for promoting Sarkodie's brand, yeah. Anytime he drops a song, we have to share the links, be on social media, we have to make sure he's trending. Even if he is not releasing, he is trending, he has to be the talk or the topic. Like maybe... you be on Twitter (sic), you see that Sarkodie is trending but he's not done anything. We just get his pictures, the links of his music, old, old tracks then we will just post it, just to create attention for him. (P5, Sark Fan, Male, 30 years old)

.. normally, we were just fans waiting behind Charles Nii Armah Mensah because we believed (sic) in whatever he was doing and then we saw the industry wasn't giving him a push. So, we all wanted to come on board to push him so that he can showcase his talent to the world. So, that's how come we started forming fan bases all around Ghana to support him... (P7, Shatta Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30's)

... And every bar that I go to, I make sure that I will give the people in charge some money. If you are a DJ, I would give you some money and request that you just play only Lumba's songs for me that day. And I think that was one of the things that helped to project his name and his songs. If you are a presenter, I could befriend you and once a while, I would buy you airtime. If you need anything, I will give to you just so that you play Lumba's songs for me. (P6, Lumba Fan, Executive, Male, 32 years old)

For the Die-Hard Fans of Daddy Lumba, their primary motivation for creating the fan group apart from promoting him, was to preserve his legacy by engaging in humanitarian activities. They expressed that being motivated, inspired, and comforted by Daddy Lumba's music, they wanted to share it with others and sought to ensure that he and his music would be immortalised. Through humanitarian activities done in the artiste's name, his name will always be mentioned in connection with whatever project has been done in his name. Some members of the fan group commented that "... because, our aim is to

promote his name through humanitarian activities. We don't just... It's not just a fan base to have fun or let's go and have fun no, we have our humanitarian activities." (P4, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Mid-30s)

... we help the society in the name of Daddy Lumba. So, like orphanages, hospitals and those who need support, we do that. So, the dues that we pay, we use the dues and then sometimes we do contributions. So, whatever we decide to do, donations, we do that in honour of Daddy Lumba, so that's the main purpose. (P2, Lumba Fan, Executive, Male, Late-30s)

...it's not only about promoting Daddy Lumba. It's about ensuring that his legacy lives on; it's ensuring that his legacy thrives for generations yet unborn to get to know that there is and there was a great man who was full of wisdom, who was full of intellect, who was a blessing from God so that they will also come and appreciate his works (P7, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, 43 years)

Daddy Lumba, as an artiste, is older than the other celebrities in this study. His career started in the late 80's and currently, he does not actively sing and produce as many albums as he used to. Thus, for the Die-Hard Fans of Daddy Lumba, making him trend on social media or increasing his music downloads on streaming platforms was not the motivation for the group. Rather, keeping his legacy and name alive was the group's driving force, and engaging in humanitarian activities in his name was the vehicle to achieve this. This focus on humanitarianism versus boosting popularity or creating

attention was one of the main differences between the younger music celebrity fan groups and Daddy Lumba's fan group.

#### ***4.1.2.4 Desire to Belong “feel like a fan”***

This sub-theme concerns how fan group members' profound admiration for the artiste makes them want to be a part of the group so they can “feel like members”. They sought to create a community where fans could support each other financially and psychologically, connect with like-minded people and feel closer to the artiste. They also shared how, through the fan groups, they can be updated with information about their favourite artiste. Fans shared that sometimes they would meet to socialise, or someone would share a joke on the fan group pages, generating comments and laughs. At other times, being in the group helped the fans learn or correct their artiste's lyrics, which they found difficult to hear. Connecting with others who share the same love and passion for the artiste helps the fans connect and creates an enabling environment to support the artiste. This “us” feeling helps the fans feel like a family and work together on various projects to increase visibility for the group whilst also helping each other in various ways. Some participants shared that, “The main reason I formed the group is this; ... to help any member by 40% if we have to. I initially intended we pay monthly dues to help each other personally aside helping the brand.” (P2, Sista Afia Fan, Executive, Male, Early 20s). For another, “joining the group... because sometimes it helps, it boosts you more, it makes you feel like a fan more”. (Shatta & Lumba Fan, Female, Late 30s)

... I found it very interesting to join the fan base so that I'll get...

you know to be connected to my artiste; the artist that I love so

much. I had to get connected to the artiste. So, you have to join the

group, find those who share the same interest, you have the same thing in common, so we can all you know help our artist. (P5, Sark Fan, Male, 30 years old)

Fan group members shared the group's aims of creating a community where people with similar passions could connect and support each other while connecting with their favourite celebrity. They also shared in the celebrity's glory whenever the artiste was awarded either locally or internationally and kept abreast with information not privy to non-members. This created an exclusive feeling of belonging to a family.

#### 4.3 Question 3: What are the experiences and outcomes for fan members of celebrity fan groups as they follow their favourite celebrities?

Three main themes were observed for this research question: Pedestalisation, empowering encounters, and invisible struggles. Each of these themes had sub-themes, as shown below in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
*Summary table of themes and sample quotes for research question three*

Theme	Sub-theme	Sample of supporting quotes
Pedestalisation	Deification	<p>“I’ve met “m' asaase so Nyame” [on this earth he is god to me, what else is left?... So, whatever will make me happy on this earth, what will help me live my life, what's going to help me concentrate on life, is his songs. So, he’s my god on this earth”. (P10, Lumba Fan, Male, Mid 40s)</p> <p>“He’s saving my life; in a way, he healed me.” (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)</p>
	Role model	<p>“My hero. He inspires me in all aspects of life: religion, eerm my love life, my family, my</p>

		sisters and everything. My career, too, as well.” (P3, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, 24 years old)
Empowering encounters	Identity enhancement	“And the group is, the group made me who I am today... when we going somewhere they give me the necessary respect. They made me feel like yes, you are the boss.” (P1, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, 29 years old)
	Social Connections	“I’ve made a very good friend, he's like a brother now, he’s called TM. We are like family and it's just a phone call. He would do everything for me like, maybe I have my goods at the ports, I need to clear. “Bro, I need 20,000 I’ll give it to you Monday, he will not speak”. “Bro, I’m not around... my mother has to go to the hospital”... he would just sacrifice and pick my mother up. (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)
	Social Support	“...We don’t leave you alone. There are people who, excuse me to say, are orphans and they come to join. You don’t organise a funeral and be left all alone. The group can be with you for a whole week. Yes! and when we come we will not take a dime from you. We rather bring you something.” (P1, Lumba Fan, Female, Early 40s)
	Personal growth	“So, his music and his character dares me to dare myself, take risks, say it don't be afraid, don't be timid, don’t let people step on you and walk away like that. Tell them into their faces that they are wrong.” (P2, Shatta Fan, Female, Late 30s)
Invisible struggles	Social disdain	“Oh, sometimes they say this person that you are following, does the person even know you? Uh, what are you going to get from her? You’re wasting your time, you’re doing this, blah, blah, blah and all that.” (P3, Sista Afia Fan, Female, Early 20s)
	Misperception of purpose	“Err... the fun clubs mostly people think that, excuse me to say its about adultery, prostitution and so on but is not like that” (P4, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Mid 40s)

	Negative religious judgements	They will think because you're playing highlife or something, so, you're not a child of God. You're backsliding. (P5, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Early 30s)
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### 4.3.1 Experiences of Fan Members

The experiences of fan members, as discussed here, are defined as events or occurrences of being in the fan group and following the celebrities. It includes the impact this followership has had on their lives, both at the personal and group level; benefits fans have gained from being a part of these fan groups, negative experiences they may have gone through, and some actions that emanate from being members of the fan groups. Some of these experiences emanate directly from being fans and admirers of the celebrity themselves, whilst others are group-level experiences. These experiences are captured under three themes and nine subthemes: (1) pedestalisation- deification and role model, (2) empowering encounters such as enhanced identity, personal growth, social connections, and social support and (3) invisible struggles such as social disdain, misperception of purpose and negative religious judgement.

#### 4.3.1.1 Pedestalisation

This theme represents how fans regard their favourite celebrities and how celebrities are held in high esteem by their fans. Fans' descriptions of what their celebrities meant to them can best be described as putting them on a pedestal and adoring them. This theme is discussed under two subthemes: deification; and role models. These experiences were mainly at the individual level.

#### **4.3.1.1.1 Deification**

From the interviews, fans described their celebrities in a god-like manner with reverence and awe. For example, they described the artiste's music as so profound that the messenger could be likened to a god on earth. They described the messages from the lyrics of their music as more inspirational and uplifting than the words of any religious leader. Participants' tone of voice and expressions were full of admiration and reverential wonder when they spoke of their favourite celebrity. This theme gave credence to the expression “celebrity worshipper”. They expressed the impact the music had brought as the reason for adoration. For others, just seeing their favourite celebrity was like seeing God on earth. Others saw celebrities as their second god, or god on earth, as compared to God in heaven. Some described their music celebrities as God-sent pastors without Bibles or pulpits. Some participants commented, “You understand... He’s a music god... I see Shatta, in the musical circles as god” (P1, Shatta Fan, Male, 29 years old) for another, “...So, if Shatta Wale has left us with this great music... shape my life with it, why won’t I appreciate him and even say I’m adoring him and even worshipping him?” (P2, Shatta Fan, Female, Late 30s) this same fan continued by saying, “I can love him more than even any titled pastor because he’s telling me what’s (sic) the realities of life is...you see, so I’m saying is that they become your mini gods”. Another described the celebrity as his god on earth by saying,

...I’ve met “m’asaase so Nyame” [on this earth he is god to me,]

What else is left?... So, whatever will make me happy on this earth, what will help me live my life, what's going to help me concentrate on life, is his songs. So, he’s my god on this earth. (P10, Lumba Fan, Male, Mid-40s)

This theme was fascinating because it produced mixed reactions. Some participants felt that although they regarded their favourite celebrity very highly, they could not compare them to God, the Supreme Being, but viewed the artiste as a servant or messenger of God. Yet still, even in the description of the artiste as a god, there appeared to be a distinct separation of the artiste from God Himself for some of the participants. This reflected the profoundly religious nature of Ghanaians and the idea that only the Supreme Being can be God in His own class, with no comparison. It was, therefore, not surprising that many of the participants who deified their artiste did not regard themselves as particularly religious and chose relatively low ratings of their religiousness, although they regarded themselves as spiritual. One such participant boldly declared, “I worship Daddy Lumba, I worship Shatta Wale”. (Shatta & Lumba Fan, Female, Late 30s).

Although some would not go as far as to ascribe their favourite celebrities to god-like status, they nonetheless described them using religious metaphors and language usually expressed in religious settings. They described them as gifts of God, sent to bring healing and salvation. Their lyrics were regarded as prophetic as they spoke to specific issues humans experience whilst offering their listeners advice, comfort, and hope. Artistes were described as prophets, healers, and saviours whose music had brought fans back from the brink of despair. Some shared: “In life, sometimes you just want to give up, but Daddy’s songs have really helped me. My heart was really broken... and I should have died... but one of his songs really encouraged me. So, as for Daddy, he is a healer” (P8, Lumba Fan, Female, early 30s).

Sarkodie saved my life... So, I used to be in the room, and I’ll be crying every time because the man [referring to himself] was actually hungry. I am not gonna lie. The only thing I was listening to was Sarkodie rapperholic... that music spoke to me differently. So, it's like every time,

I wanted to listen to Sarkodie, every time! You know, technically doing that on the other side, too it's healing you, yeah. I felt he was speaking to me, he was trying to let me understand, I have a purpose... (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)

The fan group was also described using religious language. The group was seen as a kind of religious movement. Members described themselves as apostles and evangelists sent out to proclaim the messages of their favourite artiste. Others described the group as crusaders- fighting for the brand. For some, the group was seen as a church with different denominations. Some participants shared the following:

Shatta Movement is a spiritual movement...Everywhere we go, we are more or less like... for a lack of a better word, let me use this word: yeah, we need to do what we call evangelism. Yeahh... How did they call these people? Crusade, so we are crusaders. We are crusaders; everywhere we go, we have to fight for the brand (chuckles) (P3, Shatta Fan, Executive, Male, Late 30s).

...Okay, so Sarknation as a whole, is a big... Let me put it this way, it's a big religion, or it's a big family... It's like the same group of people with an equal mindset or the same passion, but we have different denominations yeah... we are like the apostles exactly we propagate the gospel. (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, early 30s)

...to we (sic) the Die-Hard Fans, it's a religion; it's just like a church, yes. We teach one another and teach Lumba's songs. So, as for us, it's

more like a church. In case someone is sick, someone dies, or something related to that, we contribute something and give it to them. We also do some donations at orphanages and some of those things. And that's how every religion is like. It's not like maybe somebody would say that we've gone for an idol or we are occults, no, no. It's just like a normal religion (P10, Lumba Fan, Male, Mid-40s).

From the above, we can construe that besides the artiste being put on a pedestal and adored, their craft was also regarded as bringing healing and saving people from difficult circumstances. In that light, the fan groups also saw themselves as a kind of religious movement purposely to share the message and music of their music celebrities, describing themselves as evangelists and crusaders.

#### ***4.3.1.1.2 Role Model***

Seeing the artiste as an inspiration and a role model was also part of the experience of putting the artiste on a pedestal and adoring them. The participants viewed their artiste's character, resilience and perseverance as worthy of emulation. For many, the artistes represented people who had climbed the social ladder "from grass to grace". They perceived that the artiste had overcome many challenges and rejections by being positive to achieve their current heights. They thus believed that by following in the artistes' footsteps and being inspired by their music, they would also "make it" in life. Others also cited how observing the artiste's reaction to attacks from others influences them to be mindful of their responses to negativity. In this way, the artiste inspires and motivates them in emotion regulation. They remarked that, "...So, if Shatta Wale has been able to

make it on the streets, that means me too I can make it on the street if I follow his footsteps” (P9, Shatta Fan, Male, 30 years old)

... Positive guy, he’s someone that... his story, ... how he started and that kind of example like ... “Dabi dabi ebeye yie” (one day all will be well) if you are focused and whatever you believe in you have belief that ok this is what I’m doing and I’ll make it. (P1, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, 29 years old).

... if someone does something, immediately you would want to maybe retaliate or do something, but looking at Sarkodie, you know, fellow artiste going at him, people throwing shots at him and everything, the way he will handle the issue, I mean it has really influenced my life. So, right now, if something happens or I’m going through something, I really have to stay back, keep calm with any issue that comes my way and know how to handle everything, yeah (P5, Sark Fan, Male, 30 years old).

The artistes are their role models, and their life stories inspire the fans to strive to achieve more than their current states.

#### **4.3.2 Empowering encounters**

Fan club members spoke about their empowering encounters, which were understood to mean positive experiences for members of the group and followers of the celebrity. Members of the fan group spoke of the experiences that had enriched their lives as fans. Empowering encounters are discussed under four subthemes: identity enhancement, social connections, social support, and personal growth. These subthemes

speak of the benefits that members derive from their attachment to the fan group and as followers of the celebrity.

#### ***4.3.2.1 Identity Enhancement***

Fan members spoke about how being a fan group member enhanced their personal and group identities. Some recounted that although they had come from low backgrounds, sometimes with low education, by being associated with the brand either as a founder of the fan group, executive member or dedicated/core fan, their self-identity had been boosted. For instance, identity was boosted through being known, recognised and or respected by other members of the fan group, people outside the fan group or in the media space as fan group leaders or fan group members. Associating with the celebrity carried vicarious importance or transference, as the “sparkle dust” of the celebrity rubbed off on the executive or group member. This vicarious importance led the members to feel important as contributors to an important cause, thus enhancing self-esteem and self-identity.

In some instances, these recognitions led to TV or radio appearances. Although there was usually no monetary reward for being a fan group member or leader, the visibility, subsequent popularity, and respect gained were enough as these fans had also indirectly become celebrities. Some fans shared their experiences, “Hmm Yeah, it has made me a fan who is a celebrity too. [Laughs]” (P3, Shatta Fan, Executive, Male, Late 30s). Another fan communicated that, “It was through him that I was able to go to radio stations; It was through him that people got to know me on Facebook; It was through him that people have come to know me a lot”. (P11, Lumba Fan, Male, 44 years old). Others spoke of the recognition they had because they associated with the celebrity. “...the good thing is the community I used to live in Labadi. Most of the people show me love and

respect because of how Shatta Wale relates with me...” (P9, Shatta Fan, Male, 30 years old).

... the group made me who I am today...If Sarkodie wins Grammy right now the praises that Sarkodie will get, I will get some. There are so many times that Sarkodie has won international award that I’ve got people calling me to congratulate me... Yes! because they know the work that we are doing for the brand (P1, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, 29 years old)

Identity enhancement makes the fans feel important and valued. In addition to their ordinary selves, which no one knows about, having a relationship with the celebrity and being a fan group member brings self-relevance and self-importance through being known by others as “close to the celebrity”. For others, acknowledgement of their role in the group by the celebrity and being treated extra specially was a vital endorsement to the self and an indication that they had been noticed by the artiste and appreciated for the work done to push the brand. This also boosted their self-esteem.

Also, being a member of the fan group and its associations with the celebrity brought about a change in names. Some people’s given names were unknown to many as they were known by the brand they supported, making them more popular. In this way, their identity boost was tied to their identification with the artiste and their brand. Many fan group members had taken up “Sarkcess” or “Lumba” as part of their names, especially on social media, mainly to show their love for their artiste and identify with them. Others had “Shatta” or “SM” (Shatta Movement Family) attached to their names or known simply as “SM”. In this way, their self-identity was linked to the artiste’s or the fan group’s name, conferring celebrity status and boosting their identity further. This action can also be

interpreted as an impression management technique influencing how others perceive them. Some fans shared how their new names sometimes gave them access and acceptance to some restricted areas because of their association with their celebrity's brand. This also carried responsibility, as such fans felt they had to behave appropriately in order not to embarrass the celebrity or the brand.

#### ***4.3.2.2 Social Connections***

This subtheme refers to the network of relationships within the fan group or an individual acting as a resource and bringing about specific outcomes (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Wacquant & Bourdieu, 1992). Participants spoke about the network of relationships they had formed by being in the fan group, which had brought many positive outcomes. Some of them had formed relationships with other group members who had become like family members and had been present in times of need. Other participants had gotten job opportunities by associating with the artiste and the fan group. The social capital gained by being a fan member is the most significant benefit and positive experience most participants cited. Mere fan club members had evolved into friends and family; even beyond celebrating and following the artiste, these relationships would continue to be life-long.

This is, however, not very surprising since, as mentioned earlier, fan members described the group from a religious point of view, as a church or religion. Such institutions are known to possess substantial social capital among members. It appeared then that the formation of these relationships and their outcomes were primarily available to active members or what the groups themselves termed as “core fans” as opposed to “general fans” or “floating fans”.

A member recounted how he had received help for his business from another member who was drawn to how active he was on social media defending the artiste. Being a fan brought the connection that enabled him to receive help. It also demonstrated the help members give each other in the “family group”.

There are times that, erm, I struggled with monetary issues...When I was starting my business, it was very hard for me. My cash was draining... so I was like, “Yo! Can you give me some 3k, 4k.” I was going to pay when the month ends when my pay comes. He said, “Okay, no problem”. He sent me the money that day. He never took the money back.

**Interviewer:** Where does he know you from?

He’s a Sark fan. (P3, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, 24 years old)

I’ve been able to link up with a lot of businesses through the fanbase, you know. So, it’s all about the network; it has built a solid corporate network for me. It has built a solid interrelatory (sic) network for me. (P3, Shatta Fan, Executive, Male, Late 30s)

This participant commented on how he received his first job:

So, I keep telling people, so right after Uni, my first job I got, somebody recommended me to the HR of the company, that “Oh this boy, he does this... he manages the fanbase social media...” I got my first job without an application letter. I got there and then I have to start job the next day. (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)

Another also recounted how she had received help from a fellow fan when she was scammed, “I was once scammed... There was this inspector on the page, I contacted him, he was able to help with it” (P5, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Early 30s)

The social connections also led to job-creating opportunities. One fan had started a business as an event organiser and was providing dancers for music videos. This business opportunity presented itself through his connections with others in the fan group, who then recommended him to other musicians. Social connections also brought credibility to some fans’ businesses. Clients had come to know and trust them through their activities in the fan group and knew these fans would not scam them because they were popular and associated with the celebrity. Some had boosted their existing businesses because of their social connections. Some even had the opportunity to present their wares to the celebrities themselves who further posted about it on social media, giving them an increased market for their products. Thus, they testified that the social connections formed “had fed them”.

#### ***4.3.2.3 Social support***

Linked to social connections, another experience that most participants spoke about was the social support received in the fan groups at the individual and group levels. Many described their fan groups as “a family” where they received physical and psychological support. At the personal level, some members had received support through money when they had financial hardship. They also spoke of welfare donations they received when they were bereaved, getting married or naming their child. This support was also psychological as it comforted the bereaved and made those rejoicing feel that they had a family to stand with them in whatever moment they found themselves, “Me myself the group has helped me. But other people too, if, for instance, your mother has passed away and you’re a member of the group, we have a donation for you. We don’t

leave you alone. ...You don't organise a funeral and be left all alone.” (P1, Lumba fan, Female, Early 40s)

For another, “My mum died, and they stormed my hometown, about 480 members. They came to my mom's funeral, and I don't take that for granted ...They came with buses from all over, Kumasi, Accra...

Concerning how her family members and other townsfolk viewed the gesture, she said,

...They came to realise that it's a family and we are really dedicated... Yeah, at times, if we are having a program, it's not even what you'll get, just the number of people to crown the occasion... grace the occasion (P5, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Early 30s)

...when they came to my wedding, they came to give me money.

When I gave birth to my second child, they came to give me money, gifts, help to do the baby christening, yes. They contributed towards that. I think each member paid 40 cedis or so, so you can see.

They've really done a lot (P4, Sark Fan, Female, 26 years old).

Some also spoke of how the group interactions provided psychological support, helping to reduce stress levels and momentarily forget about economic and other hardships. They mentioned how interaction with others who share the same passion can “add some few years to your years...” (P1, Lumba Fan, Female, Early 40s). Social support also contributed to fans' family feeling in their groups. They felt the group cared about their welfare just as a family would.

#### 4.3.2.4 Personal Growth

Participants shared their experiences of how following the artiste and being a fan group member had helped them develop certain characters and skills they did not have before. Firstly, they spoke concerning how their duties in the fan group had, for instance, helped them come out of their shells and become bolder. Some skills they acquired include public speaking, organising, strategy building, leadership, and the ability to use these skills effectively. Secondly, for others, personal growth came by imitating the artiste. This helped them grow and shape these behaviours and skills.

Concerning personal growth from the group, a participant shared that,

...I was always scared of being a leader. Apart from my temperament issues, I didn't like people talking behind me, but he taught me to be a leader like when I became the president, so much of incidents happening but I still held on to that position and that's what has brought me that project coordinator, yeah. He's shaped me. (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)

Another participant said that in addition to leadership skills and confidence in speaking to people, he had also learnt skills concerning the music industry in Ghana and how fan groups can, through social media, contribute to making an artist's song "a hit song." He added that these skills would help him fulfil his dream of being an artist manager someday.

...It has helped me. Before, I was very shy, so it has also helped me to, I mean take away that shyness and then how to relate to people...I've also learned about streaming, how to create agenda for... to make a hit song...how to make a hit song and how to make

errm let's say news circulate on social media and then how to get people's attention to whatever you want to post, yeah... (P5, Shatta Fan, Executive, Male, 24 years old)

Other participants experienced personal growth as they observed the behaviours of their artists. They thought deeply about the lyrics of their songs and were inspired to make changes to their lives:

I used to be a quick-tempered person but when I started listening to his songs and following Daddy Lumba, I sat down and I was like ah, the man we are following I've never seen him retaliate to any criticisms, so why do I do that? Yes, so it's taught me a lot of things. Everything is about calmness; it's prayer and music, it's not talking. Because when you utter a word, someone will take it in a different way, so it's helped me a lot. (P10, Lumba Fan, Male, Mid-40s)

For this fan, who is an equal-intensity member of both Daddy Lumba's and Shatta Wale's fan groups, she has learnt from the calm nature of Daddy Lumba and his songs, which speak of human nature, and the bold and daring character of Shatta Wale.

...That is Shatta Wale. So, his music and his character dares me [to] dare myself, take risk, say it, don't be afraid, don't be timid, don't let people step on you and walk away like that. Tell them into their faces that they are wrong. (Shatta & Lumba Fan, Female, Late 30s)

I think following Daddy Lumba has done a lot for me because with Daddy, his music transforms me. His music has made me understand how human beings are and how I can easily relate with them. I haven't done human resources before, but through Daddy Lumba, I'm more like a human resource personnel (sic) yes, because it has made me understand how to live with humans, how to understand the state of a human being. (Shatta & Lumba Fan, Female, Late 30s)

### **4.3.3 Invisible struggles**

Despite the empowering encounters that fan members shared, they also recounted some difficulties they had experienced as fan group members. Invisible struggles or negative experiences from being a follower of a celebrity mainly came from family and friends. Some relationships with significant others had suffered because of the love for the celebrity and participation in fan group activities. General (mis)perceptions towards the artiste rubbed off on some of their followers, as some fans reported stigma related to celebrity followership. This theme is discussed under the subthemes of “social disdain”, “misperceptions of purpose”, and “negative religious judgement”.

#### **4.3.3.1 Social disdain**

Some participants reported how friends and family looked down on their activities and regarded their membership and activities in the fan group as a waste of time. This was especially true for those fans who did not have what was considered a “real job”. They remarked that their families were concerned that they were wasting their lives engaging in fan group activities or serving the fan group in various capacities and wondered what benefits would be available to them in the long run. This undoubtedly saddened the fans

but did not change their love for the artiste or their level of engagement in group activities. They shared, for example, that, “...some of them think we are just wasting our time following Sarkodie. They say things like since you started following Sarkodie, what have you gained? you get those things coming at you each and every day....” (P5, Sark Fan, Male, 30 years old). A fan of Sista Afia shared that, “...Oh, sometimes they say this person that you are following, does the person even know you? Uh, what are you going to get from her? You’re wasting your time, you’re doing this, blah, blah, blah and all that.” (P3, Sista Afia Fan, Female, Early 20s)

In some cases, fans bore the consequences of the disdain, such as loss of relationships. In other instances, they tried to hide their involvement, especially on social media, for fear of being judged. Others reported that they usually ignored these comments and continued to support their favourite celebrity and be active in the groups because they knew the exposure and “connections” their group memberships had afforded them.

#### ***4.3.3.2 Misperceptions of Purpose***

Misperceptions were mainly concerned with how outsiders viewed the groups. Fans reported some of the opposing views of the group and its members. Some groups are perceived as no-good or rowdy troublemakers, whilst their members are considered uneducated. Some of the misperceptions came from other fan groups who perceived other fan group members as rowdy, “street” and uncivilised people. These views emanated primarily from perceptions about the artiste and an erroneous view of his followers. The perceptions of indecency or rowdiness tended to rub off on the fan group and their members. One fan member shared how people are surprised that a lady of her calibre would follow a particular artiste, “...like somebody will say. “A lady like you, following

Shatta! ... I mean, can you imagine? Am I a rascal, the lady that you're speaking to now? (Shatta & Lumba Fan, Female, Late 30s). Another fan shared that "...and people normally think that those who follow Lumba are outdated, they don't know what's up, so they always say we listen to songs for old men". (P6, Lumba Fan, Executive, Male, 32 years old). Other misperceptions shared included,

...you, you are an SM fan, Shatta fans, you are an illiterate. Shatta fans are ordinary people on the street...People who can't read and write, that's how they classify us to be. Yes, It's like people do love Shatta so much, but people that feel like Shatta is that kind of feisty person when they support him, they will say you are also a bad person. (P1, Shatta Fan, Male, 29 years old)

These views reflect how perceptions of the artiste were extended to their fans. Such that even the negative perceptions of the artiste, just like the positive sides, were also shared by the fans.

There were also reports about how fan clubs were viewed as places of immorality and lewd behaviour. This is also tied to the public's perception of artistes, especially the dominant lyrics of their songs. Also, men who supported female artists and were members of female artiste groups were also perceived as emasculated. A fan shared that, "...Err... the fan clubs mostly people think that, excuse me to say it's about adultery, prostitution and so on but is not like that..." (P4, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Mid-30s). A fan of Sista Afia added that, "Female brands are something when you are affiliated with as a man you are seen as "girlish", you are aware of that yourself but we sacrificed to help regardless." (P2, Sista Afia Fan, Executive, Male, Early 20s).

In a culture that extols the masculinity of men as a symbol of strength and desirability, being seen as effeminate can be particularly demeaning for a man. Similarly,

adultery and prostitution are frowned upon and judged harshly by society. These negative perceptions would be enough for any person tagged in this way to abandon the fan groups or hide their involvement in them. However, most of the fans interviewed could be described as highly committed fans who were undeterred by these tags.

#### ***4.3.3.3 Negative religious judgement***

Additionally, some fans reported a conflict between their faith and their membership with the fan groups. In instances where fans were religious or attached to religious groups, family and friends could not understand how, for example, a professing Christian would join a fan group of an artiste they considered secular and profane. One member recounted how her relationship had ended because her partner wanted her to quit her activities with the group, which he considered ungodly. Another reported how she blocks certain people from seeing her status whenever she features her favourite artiste so she will not be judged:

... And that's what most people don't like about it, but why are you following this man, with all... the way you worship God, the way you... why are you people following him? I met a Pastor who wanted to marry me about five years ago, and because of this same fan club issue, he was having an issue with it (P4, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Mid-30s)

... There are a few people I need to block before I can put... because, you know, these our "crife, crife" friends... They will think because you're playing highlife or something, so, you're not a child of God. You're backsliding, or, you're in sin or whatever, and then they'll

have different perceptions about you (P5, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, Early 30s.)

The expression “crife”, shortened from “Christian fellowship”, is a local slang in Ghana that describes people seen as overly religious or extremely committed to the Christian faith, such that they avoid behaviours they perceive as worldly. These references to how followership of the celebrity was perceived were not surprising, given the religious nature of Ghanaians. Throughout the interviews, most people vehemently denied the tag “celebrity worshippers”, as worship was deemed exclusively for the Supreme Being. Thus, for the wider society, being a religious person or a Christian, for that matter, was incompatible with dedication to a celebrity and a secular one at that. Although the fan members did not particularly feel any dissonance in their behaviours, the responses of others made them uncomfortable and came with unpleasant consequences.

#### **4.4 Question 4: How does celebrity followership influence the behaviour of fans?**

##### **4.4.1 Influence of celebrity followership on Fan Behaviour**

This research question examined how celebrity followership and fan group membership influence fan behaviours. These influences were categorised under two themes: fanaticism and pro-social behaviour a summary of which is presented in Table 7.



**Table 7**

*Summary table of themes and sample quotes for research question four*

Theme	Sample of supporting quotes
Fanaticism	<p>“So, I requested that we take a picture and he accepted that and we took the picture. Although I hadn’t eaten that day, I was satisfied. The picture I took with him wasn’t so clear because I used my phone’s camera, it wasn’t clear but I still managed print it out and put it in a frame and I have replaced it with my wedding picture.” (sic) (P10, Lumba Fan, Male, Mid 40s)</p> <p>“during the lockdown period, I fought with my friend...., I beat him up. He disrespected PG and Sarkodie in my presence. Ohh ..I don’t care losing their friendship because what I’m getting from this side is bigger than that friendship.” (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)</p>
Prosocial behaviour	<p>We had a borehole project, and erm, we donated, last year we donated, an amount of money, to Kwame Sefa Kayi incubator project, he has a project he does....We donated... We have a lot, a lot of projects we fund” (P5, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female , Early 30s)</p>

#### **4.4.1.1. Fanaticism**

Following and loving their favourite celebrity led some fans to engage in behaviours that could be considered extreme and described as worship of the celebrity. These behaviours were on both the personal and group levels. Some fans described their behaviours whilst attending events of their favourite celebrity, whilst others described behaviours they exhibited in defence of their favourite artiste, all labelled fanaticism. In hindsight, some fans felt remorseful for their extreme behaviours. They admitted that the

passion they felt for the artiste and the abhorrence of anyone or anything that disrespected their artiste had influenced their behaviour. When confronted by the researcher about whether they did not think they were obsessed, some did not care and responded, “Call it what you will”, justifying their behaviours. Some fans borrowed money to attend their favourite artiste's shows even when ticket costs exceeded their means. Some of these fans were ready to go to any extent to connect with their artiste or defend their artiste's name whenever negative things were said about them.

This fan from Kumasi described how she travelled from Kumasi to Accra to attend a parade to commemorate the launch of the DL radio station. She describes walking through a heavy downpour because of her love for the artiste and the group, “We were really beaten by the rain that day, but I still managed to come. I came all the way from Kumasi and got there at 10:00 AM, yes. It was raining all through the journey and it was still raining even during the float. We were in the rain till we got to his radio station”.

(PD8, female, early 30s)

For this fan, taking a picture with his favourite celebrity was more satisfying than eating. Because of his extreme love for the celebrity, he replaced his wedding picture with a picture of himself and his favourite celebrity.

Although I hadn't eaten that day, I was satisfied. The picture I took with him wasn't so clear because I used my phone's camera, it wasn't clear, but I still managed to print it out and put it in a frame and I have replaced it with my wedding picture. (P10, Lumba Fan, Male, Mid-40s)

In more extreme fanaticism, this male fan did not take kindly to his date, speaking ill of his favourite celebrity and ended the date time promptly and without notice, “I dropped a girl off; We were going on a date I turned and dropped her off at home because she made a silly statement about Sarkodie. She never knows till date.” (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)

He also recounted how, as a student, he would argue and defend the artiste in heated discussions with his colleagues because of his passion for the artiste.

I went to a *state* university” (emphasis researcher). You know how our buildings are very tall, I can be downstairs arguing. People from the 7th, 8th floor will come gather watching me argue about Sarkodie and my whole attire will get wet. I’ll just take it off, I will squeeze it, I’ll put it on. It was crazy. (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)

Some fan groups’ dedication to the artist could be described as extreme. Their position was to support the artiste no matter what; their understanding was that the artiste always had good reason for their actions, regardless of the fans’ views. They believed that after time had passed on any behaviour or action of the artiste, one would discover that the artiste was always right. This belief became part of their tagline that the “artiste is always right”. Thus, no matter what the artiste did, they supported them to the full extent.

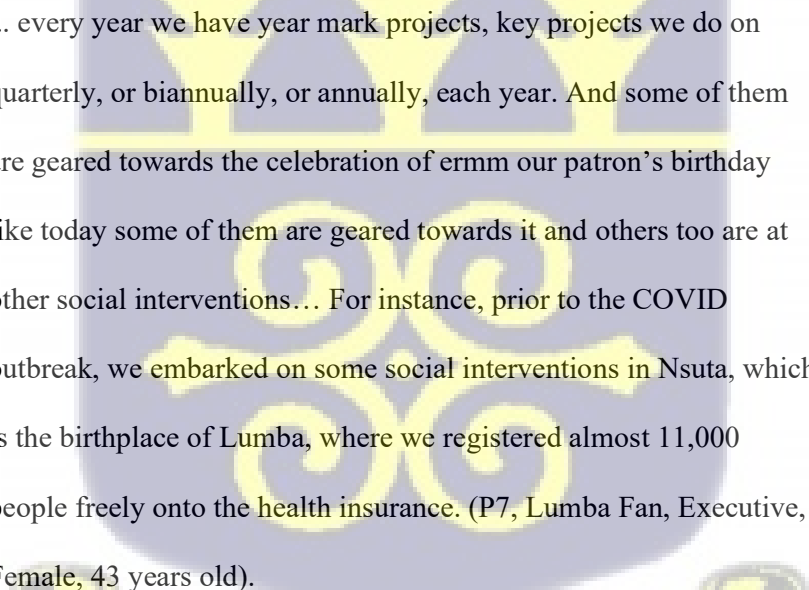
Passion and love for their artiste led some to fanatic behaviours that could be described, at best, as anti-social. Some groups admitted that there had been fights in the groups, especially at shows and with rival groups or other fans. This fan, however, reported that this passion had led him into behaviours he was not proud of:

I have threatened people, I have beaten people...[laughs (more like in disbelief in retrospect)] I slapped a friend... He made a statement against

Sarkodie...The guy was like Sarkodie, he doesn't have money to feature Davido. Never! It "entered" me, I slapped him, yeah. I'm sorry but, yeah, I slapped him... (P6, Sark Fan, Executive, Male, Early 30s)

#### 4.4.1.2 Pro-Social Behaviours

Fan groups did not only have fun or attend concerts or promote their artists by voting for them to win awards but also served their communities. They engaged in activities to help society, mostly in the name of their artists. They reported that, "...apart from the fanbase itself, we have other pressure and power groups that organise donations to the prisons and then to deprived communities, we do all these things as fans." (P3, Shatta Fan, Executive, Male, Late 30s).



... every year we have year mark projects, key projects we do on quarterly, or biannually, or annually, each year. And some of them are geared towards the celebration of ermm our patron's birthday like today some of them are geared towards it and others too are at other social interventions... For instance, prior to the COVID outbreak, we embarked on some social interventions in Nsuta, which is the birthplace of Lumba, where we registered almost 11,000 people freely onto the health insurance. (P7, Lumba Fan, Executive, Female, 43 years old).

... Normally erm we do donations. Yes, and let me tell you, we have... the branches... I didn't tell you about this. We have ladies'

side of us and they are called... erm SarkNatives Royals, normally they do the donations. (P1, Sark Fan, Male, 29 years old)

To increase visibility of their artiste, fan groups engaged in activities that helped their communities. These included donations to prisons and deprived communities and registering people from the celebrity's hometown on the National Health Insurance Scheme. These activities not only portrayed the artiste in a positive light but also positioned the group as socially responsible. These activities were motivated by the desire to enhance the public image of the celebrity and strengthen the group's social relevance, reinforcing their identification with the artiste beyond entertainment. These findings indicate that these pro-social behaviours served a dual purpose, promoting artiste image while legitimising the fan group's relevance and contribution to society.

#### **4.5 Question 5: Are there any similarities and differences among fan groups**

A noteworthy finding from the interviews regards the formation and running of the various fan groups. The formation and organisation of the groups were different and intriguing. They demonstrated the different paths to group formation. Some groups were founded by a key visionary-founder who rallied others together via social media posts, showing their love for the artiste, thus attracting others who shared his passion. The group's continuity was maintained by executives or an advisory board, with the founder now playing a minimal role in the group's day-to-day activities. Another group followed a relay-like cycle: one group would start, "grow older" or become preoccupied with other life commitments. A different unrelated group would then step in to continue driving the agenda of promoting the artist with other fans. Despite the transition, there was no competition between the groups as they all operated under a single umbrella with the

shared goal of supporting their artist. The artiste is hardly involved in the fan group or their activities in these two groups, although they are informed of any activities through their management team.

The third group was created with and by the artiste. The artiste chose a fan group manager to manage all fans. This manager thus put in place a team of fans from various locations around the country to coordinate fan group activities in their localities. Unlike the other two groups earlier referred to, the artiste often contributes to the donations and service activities of the fan group and stays abreast with the group's activities. He or his manager is present on some executive WhatsApp platforms.

Another significant difference was the focus of the fan groups. Fan groups dedicated to older idols prioritised humanitarian efforts and preserving their idols' legacy. In contrast, fan groups of younger celebrities focused on promoting their artiste on the global stage, securing awards, ensuring their music remained "trendy", and boosting their artistes' popularity.

The formation of female celebrity groups revealed an interesting dynamic. Although few, the two groups interviewed seemed to have been created by individuals who were already executives or active members of existing male artiste fan groups. Due to the female artiste's connection to these male celebrities, some members of the male artiste's fan group, initiated fan groups to support and promote these female musicians. As a result, most members of the female act's groups were originally part of or offshoots of the male artiste fan groups. Their primary motivation for forming these groups was to establish a platform like the one supporting the male artiste, aimed at advancing the female artistes' career because of her association with their favourite male celebrity. As some founding members of the female fan group explained, "I sent her a DM and told her how I have analysed and noted how Ghanaian female musicians don't have a fan base and

how I want to create one to support her brand of which she agreed.” (P2, Sista Afia, Executive, Male, mid-20s)

...I did that because of the relationship between Sista Afia and Sarkodie, the relationship between Sista Afia and Sarkodie is very, very tight. And I quite remember Sista Afia was on Sarkodie’s album “Black Love”. So, if... let’s say that there’s an upcoming project and we are to promote, we promote Sista Afia in the name of Sarkodie (P1, Sista Afia Fan, Executive, Male, Between 25-32 years old)

The study revealed that no female artiste had sustained a career long enough or made a significant enough impact to establish or attract a fan group as formidable as those of male artistes. The female groups interviewed were smaller in number and less influential compared to their male counterparts. They were also nearly inactive, only showing signs of activity when their artiste released a new song.

#### **4.5.1 Field Observations**

##### ***4.5.1.1 Fan Adoration and Emotional Connections***

One of the most striking observations was the depth of admiration fans expressed for their favourite celebrities. Participants spoke about artists like Sarkodie in deeply personal terms, often describing how their music had “saved their lives” or brought significant positive change. This emotional connection was evident in their facial expressions, tone of voice, and even in their occasional struggle to articulate their feelings.

For some fans, the way they spoke about these artists bordered on reverence, as if they were discussing a religious figure or a divine being rather than a musician.

#### ***4.5.1.2 Contrasting Reactions to Different Artists***

An intriguing case was a fan who expressed equal admiration for Shatta Wale and Daddy Lumba but had strikingly different reactions when discussing each. When talking about Shatta Wale, she became animated and excitable, mirroring his energetic persona. In contrast, her demeanour shifted to calm and reflective when discussing Daddy Lumba, aligning with his more introspective and poetic musical style. She acknowledged that these reactions reflected her own dual nature, being her “calm side” and her “wild side.” This duality highlighted how fans often internalise and reflect the personalities of the artists they admire.

#### ***4.5.1.3 Daddy Lumba Fans: Wisdom and Mystery***

Daddy Lumba's fans were drawn to his music and his embodied wisdom and mystery. His elusive nature, including rarely giving interviews or appearing publicly, added to his allure, making him a fascinating figure. One fan took this admiration to extremes, comparing Daddy Lumba's lyrics to the teachings of religious figures like Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad. After the interview, this fan insisted (off the record) that Daddy Lumba deserved a public holiday, likening his impact to these revered figures. This recurring theme of Daddy Lumba's near-divine wisdom was a notable pattern in the interviews.

#### ***4.5.1.4 Separating the Artist from the Person***

A fascinating observation was how fans often separated their celebrities' public personas from their private lives. Even when aware of personal flaws or controversies, fans tended to view these as separate from the artist's work. They would acknowledge their humanity, saying things like, "They're only human," while simultaneously elevating them to near-godlike status. This duality, by viewing celebrities as both fallible individuals and larger-than-life figures, was a recurring and intriguing contradiction. However, not all fans placed their celebrities on such a high pedestal.

#### ***4.5.1.5 Fan Group Dynamics and Perceptions***

During the interviews, it became clear that fan groups often had little awareness of other groups' activities, particularly in terms of community engagement. Each group viewed their efforts as superior or more relevant, dismissing others as outdated or less impactful. This lack of awareness highlighted fan communities' insular nature and tendency to prioritise their own narratives.

#### ***4.5.1.6 Gender and Strategic Fan Support***

One interview that stood out involved a male fan who held an executive position in a female artist's fan group. However, his enthusiasm for her paled compared to his passion for the male artist she was affiliated with. His involvement with the female artist's fan group seemed partly strategic, being a way to maintain proximity to the male artist's circle while positioning himself for potential recognition if the female artist achieved greater success. This dynamic underscored the hierarchical and sometimes opportunistic aspects of fan group structures.

#### 4.6 Summary

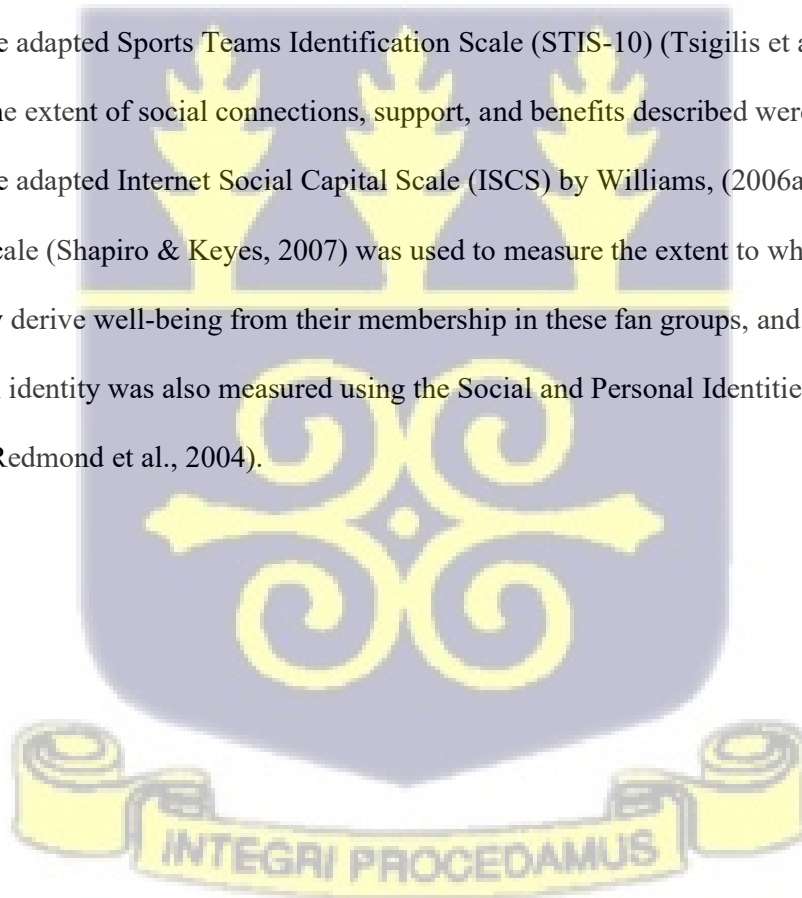
Responses from the interviews generated six themes with their various sub-themes. The qualitative findings showed that fan groups exist mainly because of their love for their artiste's craft and personality, and a desire to bring together like-minded others to connect and support the artiste. Individuals joined these fan groups for these reasons and had many positive, empowering encounters and occasional struggles, both personally and at the group level, as they pedestalled and received inspiration from their artists. Their admiration for the artiste community service and sometimes extreme behaviours. These efforts went beyond promoting the artiste's popularity; they aimed to create a lasting legacy that would endure beyond the artist and the fan group itself.

The qualitative data analysis shows that the love for the artiste primarily drives the group and its members in their activities and their resultant experiences and fanatic behaviours. Members passionately spoke about their favourite artistes, even adulating them and describing them as godlike. Fans also talked about the support they received from being members of these fan groups, the connections made, and how it had enriched their lives. They spoke of the group's impact on their identity and how identification with the group opened doors of opportunity for them. The findings from the interviews came from executives and other active members of the celebrity fan groups. These people can be described as close to the centre and the "action" regarding their relationship with the celebrities themselves and or the fan group heads.

In keeping with the sequential exploratory mixed method approach (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2017), it is essential, as has been done in this study, to shed light on fan groups in Ghana, to know the depth of their activities and experiences and to capture the breadth of these findings by determining how widespread these experiences are on the broader fan group system. Do general members feel this passion and love for the artiste,

and are they willing to do anything to feel close to and support their artiste? Do they feel that close attachment to the team? Is that identification a part of their identity? Is this identity connected to their membership in these groups? How widespread are the experiences of the benefits of social support and social connections found in the groups?

These questions lead to testing some of these experiences on a broader scale using standardised measures. As the profound admiration for the artiste had been recounted by participants, as well as the extent members were prepared to go, it was appropriate to measure its widespread nature using the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) (McCutcheon et al., 2002) to find out their attitude towards their favourite artiste and the extent of their attachment to them. The extent to which members identified with the group was measured using the adapted Sports Teams Identification Scale (STIS-10) (Tsigilis et al., 2022), whilst the extent of social connections, support, and benefits described were measured using the adapted Internet Social Capital Scale (ISCS) by Williams, (2006a), Social Well-being Scale (Shapiro & Keyes, 2007) was used to measure the extent to which members feel they derive well-being from their membership in these fan groups, and social and personal identity was also measured using the Social and Personal Identities Scale (SIPI) (Nario-Redmond et al., 2004).



## CHAPTER FIVE

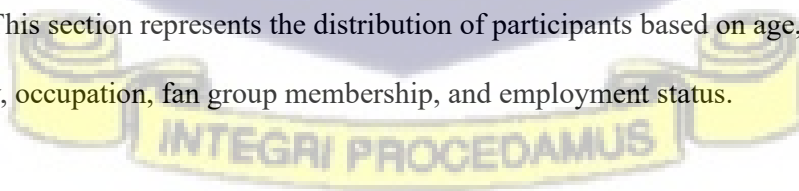
### STUDY 2: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore the concept of celebrity followership among music fan groups in Ghana. The quantitative phase of the research aimed to address research question five, which determines how much the experiences shared in the qualitative study represent the broader fan groups. Specifically, it investigated how the themes of social capital, social and personal identity, team identification, and social well-being identified in the qualitative study are reflected within the wider fan group context. Specifically, the objectives of the quantitative phase of the study were to a) assess the level of celebrity attachment among the fan groups, b) determine the extent of fan members' team identification towards their groups, and c) examine the mediating role of team identification in the relationship between celebrity attachment and social capital, social well-being and social and personal identity. This chapter presents a summary of the results of the quantitative stage of the study from the descriptive statistics on the demographic characteristics of the participants, preliminary analysis, and hypothesis testing.

#### 5.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section represents the distribution of participants based on age, education, ethnicity, occupation, fan group membership, and employment status.



**Table 8**  
*Demographic characteristics for study participants (N=301)*

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	197	65.4
Female	104	34.6
<b>Age (M=28.7, SD=6.30)</b>		
18-25	98	32.6
26-33	145	48.2
34-41	47	15.3
42-49	11	3.7
<b>Educational Level</b>		
No formal education	1	.3
Primary	1	.3
Middle/JSS	18	6.0
Secondary	99	32.6
Tertiary	182	60.8
<b>Region of origin</b>		
Greater Accra	61	20.3
Ashanti	54	17.6
Volta	49	16.3
Central	49	16.3
Eastern	41	13.6
Upper East	13	4.3
Others	34	11.6
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	245	81.4
Married	48	15.9
Co-habiting	5	1.7
Divorced	2	.7
Widowed	1	.3
<b>Religion</b>		
Christian	242	80.4
Traditional	4	1.3
Muslim	35	11.6
No Religion	17	5.6
Other	3	1.0
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Formal employment	110	36.5
Unemployed	52	17.3
Self-employed	75	24.9
Student	64	21.3
<b>Fan group Membership</b>		
Daddy Lumba	50	16.7
Sarkodie	61	19.9
Shatta Wale	37	12.3
Efya Nocturnal	5	1.7
Sista Afia	11	3.7
Akwaboah	26	8.7
Stonebwoy	109	36.3
Other	2	.7

As shown in Table 8, the mean age was 28.7 (SD = 6.30), with 80% between 18 to 33 years, with a dense cluster of 145 in the 26-33 range. We can conclude that the fan groups in this study were predominantly young adults with a concentration in their late 20s to early 30s. The sample, including 197 (65.4%) males and 104 (34.6%) females, shows that more males tended to be found in celebrity fan groups. Most participants, 182 (60.8%), were highly educated, followed by those with secondary education, numbering 99 (32.6%). Interestingly, the employed majority which included 110 formally employed plus 75 self-employed, about 60 % including 21% students demonstrated that being in a fan group was born out of “nothing to do” but a conscious choice made by busy people to support an artiste they admired, although it is also noted that a large majority were single. It was also noted that fan members hailed from all regions of Ghana, with Greater Accra having the highest number, 61 (20.3%), followed by Ashanti with 54 (17.6%). The table recorded regions with a minimum of 10 participants, while the remaining regions were classified as 'others', comprising 34 (11.7%). In terms of fan group membership, 109 (36.3%) belonged to Stonebwoy’s fan group, 61 (19.9%) identified with Sarkodie’s group, 50 (16.7%) with Daddy Lumba, 37 (12.3%) with Shatta Wale, while 16 individuals (5.4%) belonged to the fan group of the two female artistes. Overall, 259 (86.0%) reported they were part of their fan group's WhatsApp pages, while 42 (13.9%) were not.

### **5.3 Data Screening and Preliminary Analysis**

Before hypothesis testing was conducted, some preliminary analyses were performed to assess the appropriateness of the data for analysis and the psychometric properties of the instruments used in the study. These initial analyses included checking for missing data, outliers, the normal distribution of variables, reliability and collinearity checks, and sample adequacy. On scrutinising the data, it was realised that there was no

missing data regarding the variables of interest in this study. An examination of the data showed no outliers, which was confirmed using the generalised Cook's distance (gCD) calculation. The Cook's distance determines whether a case item impacts the data. Cook and Weisberg, (1982) recommend that values of more than one (1) could be considered threats that should be flagged. The Cook's distance minimum and maximum residuals for this study were between 0.00 and 0.617, indicating no outliers in the data.

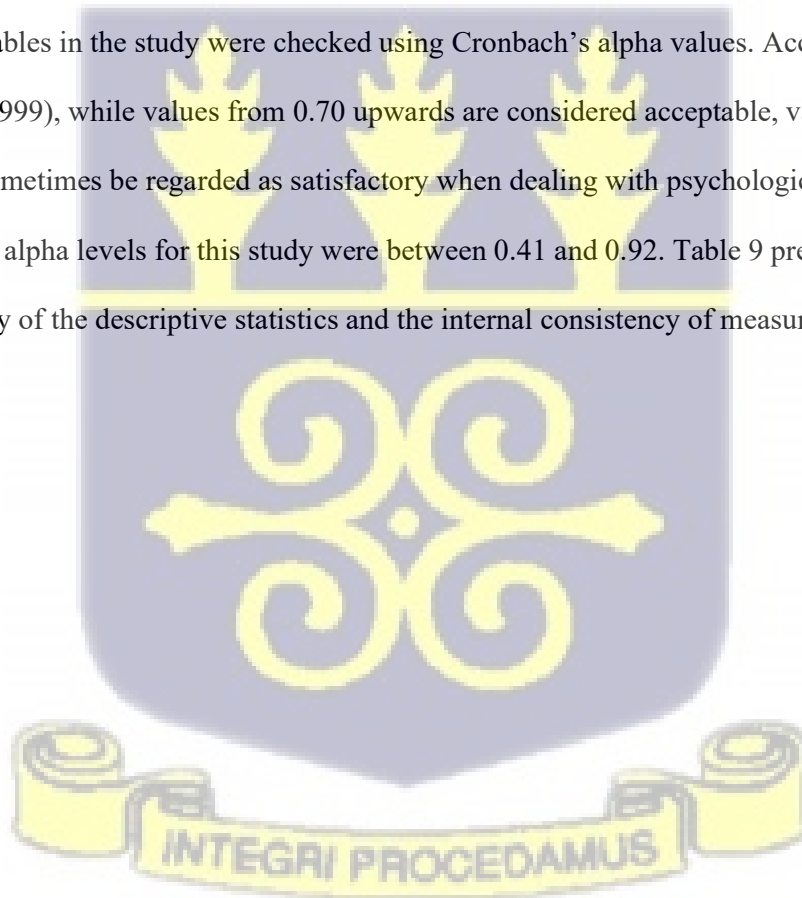
A multivariate normality analysis was also conducted in AMOS to check for the normality of the data. Mardia's coefficient for multivariate normality was assessed (Byrne, 2016). The multivariate kurtosis was 150.902, and the Critical Ratio (CR) was 44.054. The CR being larger than 1.96 shows a departure from multivariate normality. Thus, bootstrapping was used to obtain more accurate estimates because the SEM assumption of the normality of data was not met. Bootstrapping was conducted with 5000 resamples in AMOS, and bias-corrected intervals were generated to assess the significance of the parameter estimates.

A Common Method Variance (CMV) test was conducted using Harman's single-factor test. An unrotated exploratory factor analysis was performed on the study items. By this method, if a single factor explains a significant portion of variance, then a common method bias is likely to be present. In this study, the proportion of variance explained by the method factor was 30.19%, which is below the recommended threshold of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Thus, there is no threat of common method bias in the data.

Because sample size impacts the statistical power of regression analysis, sample size considerations in multiple regression are crucial. The likelihood that a false null hypothesis is rejected is known as statistical power. It is the likelihood that a particular test will detect an effect if there is one in the population. Standardised and objective measurements of the strength of observed effects are called effects (Field, 2013). The size

of the effect to be discovered and the level of certainty required to detect this effect determine the necessary sample size.

The required sample size was determined using G\*Power software (Kang, 2021). This calculation was based on a moderate effect size ( $f^2 = 0.15$ ) (Cohen, 1988), six predictors, with a desired statistical power of 0.80 (allowing only a 20% chance of committing a type 2 error) and a 5% chance of committing a type 1 error of rejecting a true null hypothesis, which indicated a minimum sample size of 98 would be required. Additionally, to ensure robustness, aligning with recommendations by Field (2013), a target of 200 was set. The final sample of 301 respondents successfully met both minimum and target thresholds. After the data were screened, the reliability coefficients of the variables in the study were checked using Cronbach's alpha values. According to Kline (1999), while values from 0.70 upwards are considered acceptable, values below 0.7 could sometimes be regarded as satisfactory when dealing with psychological constructs. Overall, alpha levels for this study were between 0.41 and 0.92. Table 9 presents a summary of the descriptive statistics and the internal consistency of measures.



**Table 9**  
*Summary of descriptive statistics*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	$\alpha$ (alpha value)	Number of items	Minimum	Maximum
CAS	3.83	0.61	0.92	23	1.85	5.00
SIPI	3.87	0.69	0.92	17	1.12	5.00
TeamI	3.69	0.87	0.92	10	1.00	5.00
SC	3.99	0.63	0.92	20	1.00	5.00
SW	3.16	0.50	0.41	12	1.00	5.00

Notes: CAS-Celebrity Attitude scale; SIPI-Social Identity& Personal Identity Scale; TeamI- Team Identification scale; SC-Social Capital Scale; SW-Social Well-being Scale

Because the Social Well-being (SW) scale's reliability was poor, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to assess the variable's factor structure. The construct's factor loading was shown to be poor, and the factor structure was unclear. Thus, social well-being was eliminated from the quantitative study.

#### 5.4 Correlations among study variables

Before estimating the structural model, bivariate correlations among the study variables were examined and presented in Table 10. The results showed no significant correlation between sex and age, indicating no relationship between these variables. There was no statistically significant linear correlation between age and celebrity attachment ( $r = 0.08, p = .347$ ). Additionally, the correlation between celebrity attachment and employment indicated that age and employment had no meaningful correlation with celebrity attachment. There was also a weak but significant positive correlation between age and Team I ( $r = 0.19, p < .001$ ) and between age and social capital ( $r = 0.15, p < .001$ ). This shows that team identification tends to increase slightly as age increases, and the

older participants in the sample tend to experience more social capital. There was a weak but significant positive correlation between formal employment and team identification ( $r = 0.15, p < .001$ ) and a negative but significant correlation between team identification and unemployment ( $r = -0.13, p < .005$ ). This indicates that team identification increases slightly with formal employment and decreases slightly with unemployment.

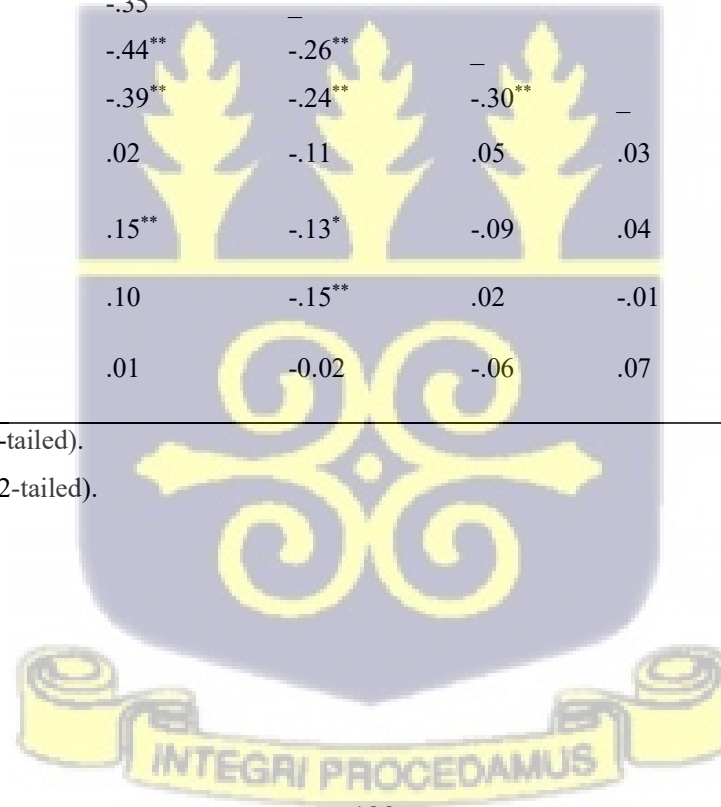
Although these relationships are significant, they are weak. The correlation between celebrity attachment (CA) and social and personal identity (SIPI) showed a moderate positive correlation, which was significant ( $r = 0.48, p < .001$ ). This suggests that higher levels of celebrity attachment are associated with higher social and personal identity scores. There was a strong significant positive correlation between celebrity attachment and team identity (Team I) ( $r = 0.67, p < .001$ ). This shows that individuals who identified more with their team also scored higher on CA. The correlation between CA and Social capital was also strong and positive ( $r = 0.68, p < .001$ ), suggesting that as CA increased, social capital increased or that higher celebrity attachment was associated with higher social capital. Social capital also had a weak but significant correlation with age ( $r = 0.15, p < .001$ ) and a significant but negative weak correlation with unemployment ( $r = -0.15, p < .001$ ). This indicates that as age increased, social capital increased, but social capital decreased with unemployment. These correlations are, however, weak. The correlation between SIPI and Team identity was moderate although significant and positive ( $r = 0.57, p < 0.01$ ), indicating that stronger social and personal identity is associated with higher team identification. SIPI and Soc Cap had a moderate positive but significant correlation, indicating that higher social and personal identity is related to higher social capital ( $r = .51, p < .001$ ). There was also a strong positive correlation between Team I and Soc Cap ( $r = .68, p < .001$ ), indicating that higher team identification predicts higher social capital in this sample.

**Table 10**  
*Correlations among study variables*

	Sex	Age	Educational level	Formal Employment	Unemployed	Self-employed	Student	Celebrity Attachment	Team Identification	Social capital	Social & Personal Identity
Sex	–										
Age	.04	–									
Educational level	.09	-.08	–								
Formal_Employment	.00	.36**	.14*	–							
Unemployed	-.09	-.15*	-.17**	-.35**	–						
Self_employed	-.05	.10	-.23**	-.44**	-.26**	–					
Student	.14*	-.39**	.24**	-.39**	-.24**	-.30**	–				
Celebrity Attachment	-.03	.08	.00	.02	-.11	.05	.03	–			
Team Identification	.03	.19**	.00	.15**	-.13*	-.09	.04	.67**	–		
Social Capital	.01	.15**	.01	.10	-.15**	.02	-.01	.68**	.68**	–	
Social and Person. Identity	.04	0.04	.05	.01	-0.02	-0.06	.07	.48**	.57**	.508**	–

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

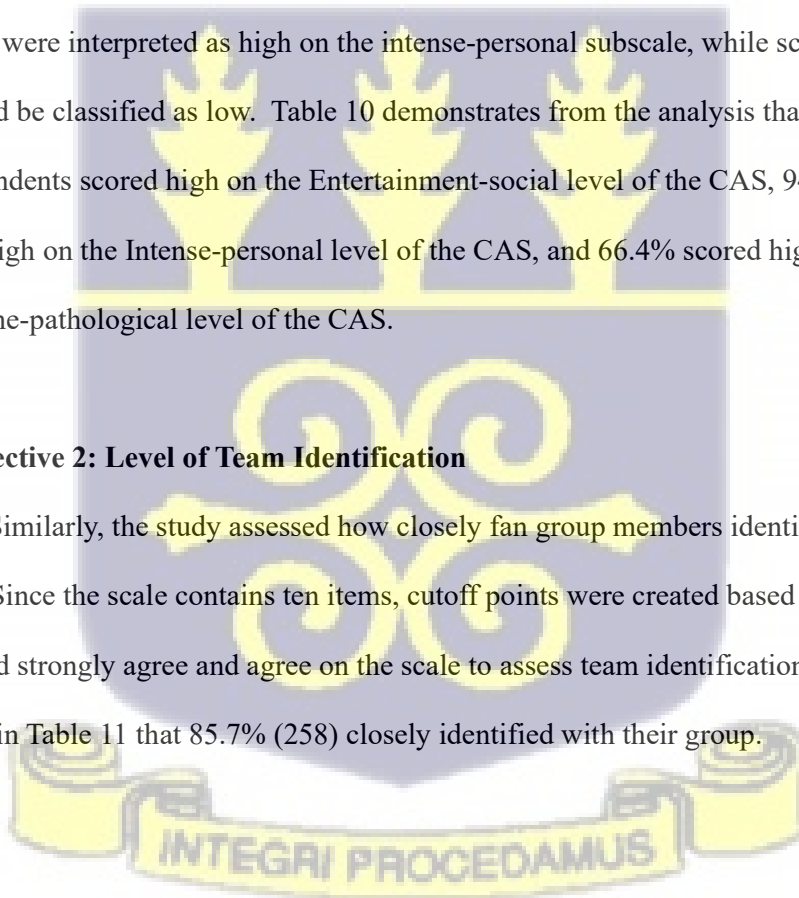


### **5.5 Objective 1: Level of Celebrity Attachment among Fan Group Members**

Since celebrity attachment has three levels, from mild to severe, this study sought to investigate the levels of celebrity attachment among fan group members in Ghana. According to McCutcheon et al. (2003) and McCutcheon and Aruguete (2021), a person who was very much attached to the celebrity, would score above the midpoints on each Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) subscale. This study created conservative cutoff points based on responses on the CAS scale. It was reasoned that those who answered strongly agree and agree on each subscale meet the criteria as celebrity worshippers (per McCutcheon et al. 2002) or strongly attached to the celebrity. For example, on the 11-item intense-personal subscale, the range of scores was from 11 to 55. Thus, scores from 43 to 55 were interpreted as high on the intense-personal subscale, while scores from 11 to 42 would be classified as low. Table 10 demonstrates from the analysis that, 85.7% (258) of respondents scored high on the Entertainment-social level of the CAS, 94% (283) also scored high on the Intense-personal level of the CAS, and 66.4% scored high on the borderline-pathological level of the CAS.

### **5.6 Objective 2: Level of Team Identification**

Similarly, the study assessed how closely fan group members identified with their group. Since the scale contains ten items, cutoff points were created based on those who answered strongly agree and agree on the scale to assess team identification. The results showed in Table 11 that 85.7% (258) closely identified with their group.



**Table 11***Levels of Celebrity Attachment and Team Identification*

	Entertainment-Social		Intense-Personal		Borderline-Pathological		Team Identification	
	Freq.	%.	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Low	43	14.3	18	6.0	101	33.6	43	14.3
High	258	85.7	283	94.0	200	66.4	258	85.7

### 5.7 Validity and Reliability Assessment of Measures

The validity of the scale items employed to collect data was assessed as part of the preliminary analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to estimate the measurement model. The six-factor model comprised four latent constructs: celebrity attitude scale (CAS-23 items with its three dimensions), social and personal identities (SIPI-17 items), team identification (TI-10 items) and social capital scale-bridging and bonding (SC-20 items). In total, 70 items were involved in the factor analysis. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the constructs to find out the underlying structure of the variables. For celebrity attachment, which was initially theorised to consist of three dimensions, the results revealed significant cross-loadings across the items. Also, many items loaded strongly on the first component. The scree plot also showed the dominance of one factor. This indicated that most items did not load onto their expected dimensions. The items demonstrated a stronger fit under a single factor. With this, the CA construct was treated as a unidimensional construct for this analysis. (See Appendix B)

The acceptable reliability cutoff is 0.70 and above in determining a good model fit. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures how much variance in the construct's items is explained by the construct. This measure should be 0.50 and above, explaining that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance, showing good convergent validity. Also, the value of AVE should be greater than the Maximum Shared

Variance (MSV) to indicate adequate discriminant validity. The MSV signifies that the constructs are distinct from each other. The study's model representing the variables was specified to estimate the measurement model. The model fit assessment was done by examining the model fit indices. This was done by reviewing the chi-square values, absolute and incremental fit measures (Byrne, 2016; Hair et al., 2014). According to Hu and Bentler (1999), the cutoff for excellent fit indices for CFI and TLI is greater than or equal to 0.95. CFI (Comparative-Fit Index) and TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) are fit indices that compare a study's model to a baseline model to determine how much that study's model fits the data. RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) measures how much error exists between the model and real-world data. Values below 0.06 show an excellent fit. SRMSR (Standardised Root Mean Square Residual) expresses how closely the model's predictions match the actual data. Values less than 0.08 indicate a good fit, and CMIN/DF (Chi-square/ Degrees of Freedom  $\chi^2/df$ ) should range between 1 and 3.

### 5.7.1 Item Parcelling

To help improve the model fit and stabilise parameter estimates, Item parcelling was done as Matsunaga (2008) and Williams and O'Boyle (2008) suggested. Parcelling refers to aggregating items of a scale into one or more parcels and using these parcels to represent the latent construct (Matsunaga, 2008). Hau & Marsh, (2004) demonstrate that parcelling, in most cases, helps to deal with the non-normality of the data by helping to stabilise the distribution, which is a vital assumption of SEM (Hutchinson & Olmos, 1998). From a modelling perspective, many items (in this study, 70 items) could increase the measurement error. Thus, parcelling gives fewer indicators per construct, reducing the number of parameters to be estimated and increasing the ratio between the sample size and parameters.

The use of item parcelling was not without careful consideration of its potential limitations. Critics of parcelling (see Bandalos, 1999; Marsh et al., 2013) caution that item parcelling may obscure the detailed structure of the data, specifically the nuanced relationships among individual items and might mask model misspecifications. To address these concerns, parcelling was utilised for the Team Identity and Celebrity Attitude scales, which were confirmed to be unidimensional through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Bandalos, 2002; Hall et al., 1999; Little et al., 2002, 2013 see appendix), while other scales that did not exhibit unidimensionality during the EFA were parcelled according to their underlying factor structures. Acknowledging and addressing these concerns justifies using parcelling in this study as an appropriate methodological choice to balance theoretical coherence with practical analytical demands (Little et al., 2002).

This study utilised the internal consistency and the item-to-construct method, also called the factorial algorithm method (Rogers & Schmitt, 2004). With the factorial algorithm method, parcelling was done according to the factorial loading, where parcels sequentially took up items with the highest to lower factor loading, alternating the direction of the item picking through the parcels. The internal consistency or content-based approach (Landis et al., 2000) parcelled according to the dimensions the construct belonged to. Initially, a six-factor item parcelling was done (Model 1). In this six-factor model, the 23 dimensions of the CAS were parcelled. Item one from the celebrity attitude scale was removed because it correlated negatively with all other items. Thus, CAS had 22 items, which were put into four parcels. The Social and Personal Identity Scale had nine items to three parcels for social identity and eight items to three for personal identity dimension). Social Capital, with its two dimensions, was parcelled along the dimensions with three parcels each.

The six-factor model was compared to a theoretically possible model to determine the best-fitting model. In this four-factor model (Model 2), SIPI and Social capital were treated as reflective higher-order constructs (Thien, 2020), whilst CAS was treated as a first-order construct with four parcels. A higher-order construct (HOC) or second-order construct involves operationalising a construct at a higher layer of abstraction. Thus, instead of modelling the attributes of SIPI and SC separately to measure respondent's overall identity or social capital, higher-order modelling involves simultaneously mapping the lower or first-order construct of social identity and personal identity or bridging social capital and bonding social capital to a single higher-order component (Thien, 2020). One reason for this was that it appeared that the SIPI dimensions were highly correlated with each other, as were the social capital dimensions. Another reason for this was to make the path model more parsimonious. Also practically, broader constructs are better predictors of criteria that have multiple domains. The reflective presentation mode showed the relationship moving from the higher-order construct (HOC) to the LOC (lower-order constructs).

### **5.7.2 Specification and Fit Indices for Measurement Model**

To estimate the measurement model, the six-factor model representing the latent variables in the study (which are the three dimensions of celebrity attachment, team identification, social and personal identity and social capital) was specified. A model fit assessment of how well the model fits the data was done by examining model fit indices and validity. There were some validity concerns on the SIPI subscales as the AVE values were all smaller than the MSV values, although the model fit indices were acceptable: CMIN/DF= 2.545, TLI= .946, CFI= 0.956 and RMSEA 0.072.

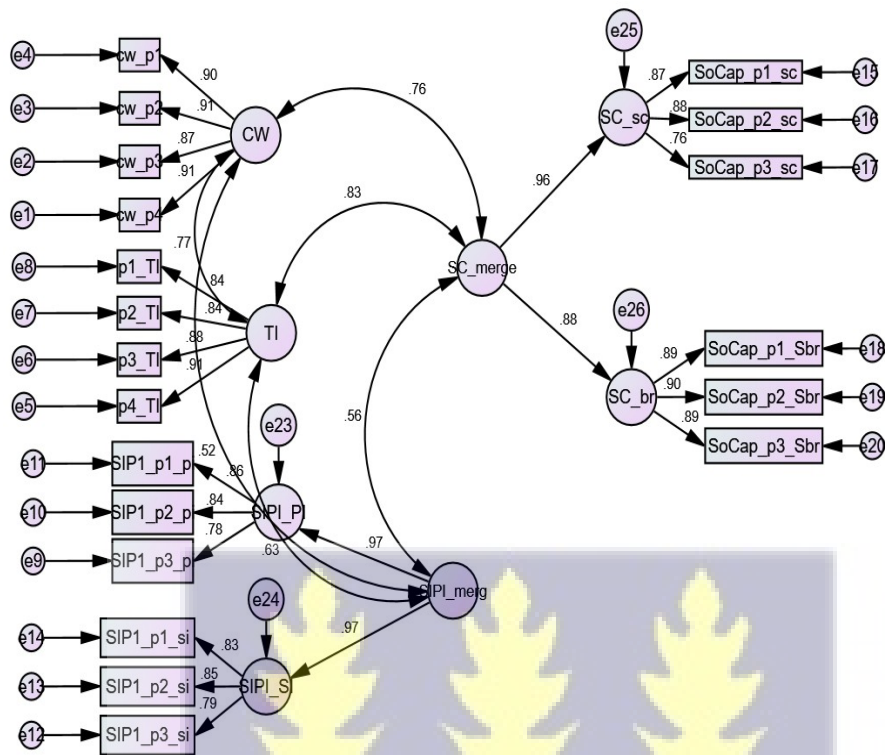
The four-factor model was re-specified with CAS treated as one dimension and social and personal identity and social capital treated as higher-order constructs. The results showed no validity concerns, and the model fit was good: CMIN/DF=2.622, CFI=.952, TLI=.943, RMSEA- an acceptable 0.074, SRMR=0.058. The chi-square difference test is typically used to determine which of the two models best fits the data (Byrne, 2016), with the model showing a lower chi-square value indicating a better fit. However, due to the limitations of the chi-square difference test (Kline, 2015), Cheung and Rensvold (2002) propose an alternative approach that uses the change in CFI ( $\Delta$ CFI) to compare competing models. They suggest a CFI ( $\Delta$ CFI) change of .01 or lower indicates model equality. In this study, the  $\Delta$ CFI was .004, below the .01 threshold, suggesting that both models could explain the data equally. However, model two was chosen as the better representation because model one had issues with discriminant validity. Additionally, model two's higher degrees of freedom suggested it was more parsimonious, which, if it fits the data well, could lead to a more generalisable model (Shumacker & Lomax, 2016).

**Table 12**  
*Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Measurement Models.*

<b>Model</b>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<b>SRMR</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	$\chi^2/df$	<b>RMSEA</b>
Model 1	394.525	155	0.071	.956	.946	2.545	0.072
Model 2	419.550	160	0.058	.952	.943	2.622	0.074

The results in Table 13 support the convergent and discriminant validity of the measures employed in this study. The convergent validity also showed that all the items aggregate to measure their latent construct.

**Figure 2**  
Measurement Model



**Table 13**  
Summary of Validity Assessment for the Various Constructs

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	TI	CA	SIPI_HO	SC_HO
<b>TI</b>	0.93	0.76	0.69	0.93	<b>0.87</b>			
<b>CA</b>	0.94	0.80	0.53	0.94	0.77***	<b>0.89</b>		
<b>SIPI_HO</b>	0.97	0.94	0.39	0.97	0.63***	0.52***	<b>0.97</b>	
<b>SC_HO</b>	0.91	0.84	0.69	0.93	0.83***	0.76***	0.56***	<b>0.92</b>

TI= Team Identification; CA=Celebrity Attachment; SIPI\_HO=Social and Personal Identity (Higher order); SC\_HO= Social Capital (Higher order) \*\*\* p < .001

## 5.8 Objective Three: Hypothesis Testing

The last two objectives of this study phase were to examine the relationships between celebrity attachment, social capital, and social and personal identity and whether team identification mediates these relationships. SPSS AMOS 24 for IBM was used to test the relationships among the variables in the structural model. The structural model's fit was assessed using the same indices as the CFA. The model was specified with celebrity attachment as the predictor variable, team identification as the mediator variable, and social capital and social and personal identity as the outcome variables. The model was specified as a partial mediation model.

The mediation model was tested using the bootstrapping approach which is recommended for testing mediation effects. The bootstrap method is effective with both normal and non-normal data. When there is no zero between the lower and upper bound intervals, the indirect effect is said to be significant (Hair et al., 2014). The mediation model fit the data well:  $\chi^2 = 419.550$ ,  $df = 160$ .  $CMIN/DF = 2.622$ ,  $CFI = .952$ ,  $TLI = .943$ ,  $SRMR = .058$ ,  $RMSEA$  was acceptable at  $.074$ .

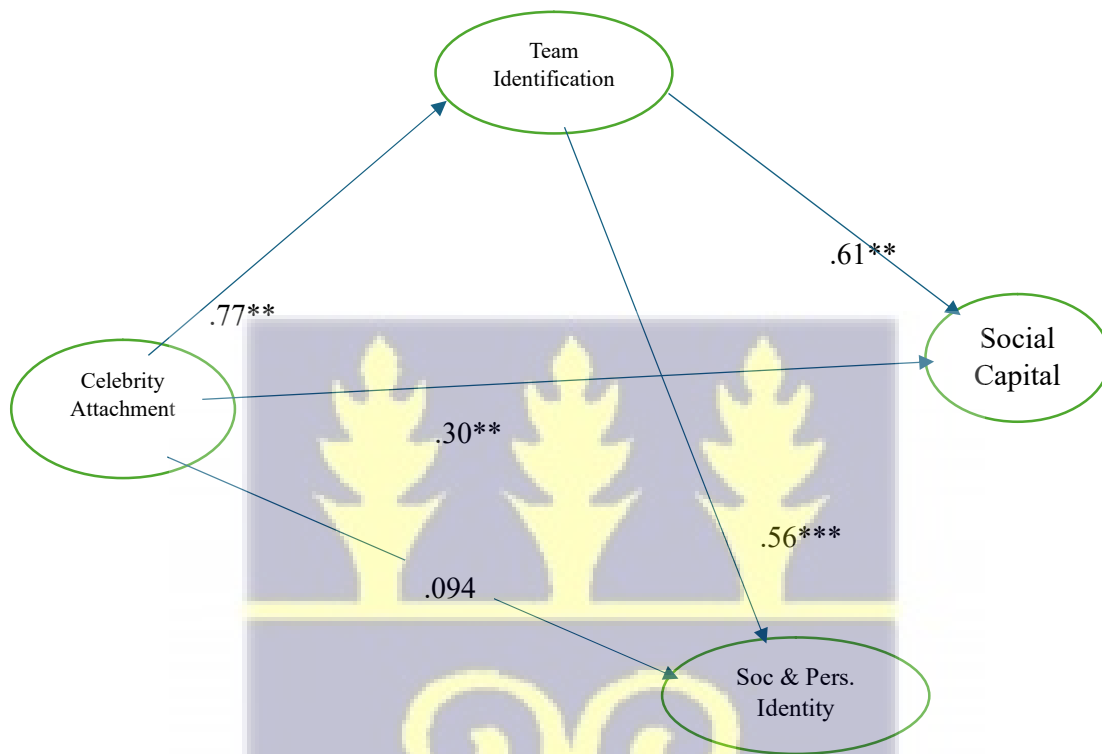
The hypotheses tested were:

1. Celebrity attachment will have a significant positive relationship with social capital.
2. Celebrity attachment will have a significant positive relationship with social and personal identity
3. Higher levels of celebrity attachment will be associated with higher team identification
4. Team identification will mediate the relationship between celebrity attachment and social capital

- Team identification will mediate the relationship between celebrity attachment and social identity and personal identity.

**Figure 3**

*Standardised path estimates for updated hypothesised model*



The standardised path estimates of the model are presented in Figure 3. The direct path from celebrity attachment to team identification was positive and significant ( $\beta = .77$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This demonstrates that higher celebrity attachment (CA) is associated with higher team identification (TI). Also, the path from CA to social capital was positive and significant, although with a moderate effect ( $\beta = .30$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, CA has a significant direct relationship with social capital, indicating that high levels of CA are associated with

high social capital (SC). Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the direct path from CA to social and personal identity (SIPI) was positive but not significant ( $\beta = .094, p = 0.296$ ). Given the significant bivariate correlation between CA and SIPI reported earlier, the non-significant direct relationship suggests that the relationship between CA and SIPI is mediated. Also, the direct relationship between team identification and social capital was ( $\beta = .61, p < .001$ ) thus, team identification significantly predicts social capital. Finally, the relationship between TI and SIPI was also positive and significant, indicating that team identification significantly predicts SIPI ( $\beta = .56, p < .001$ ).

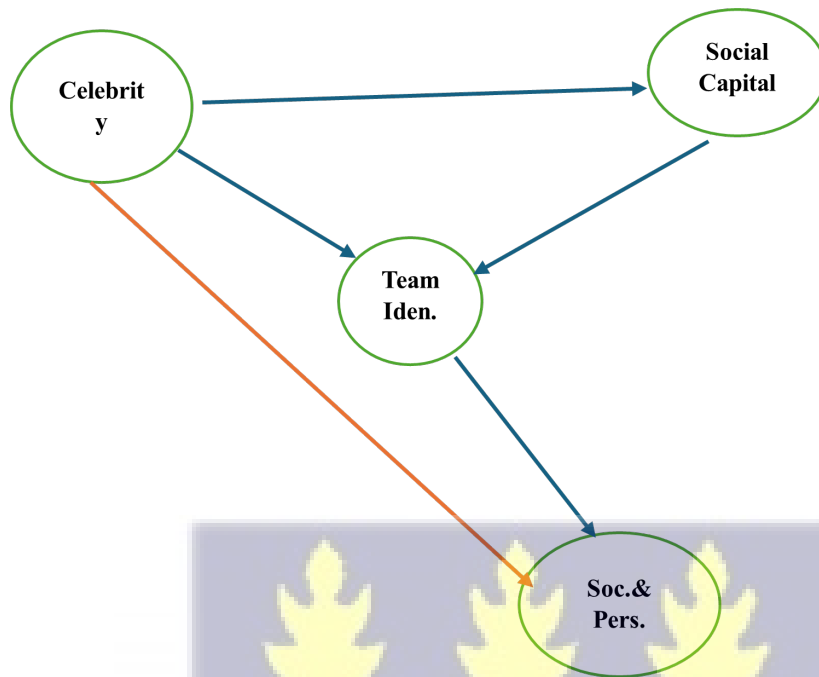
The model shows that the direct path from CA to SC was positive and significant in the hypothesised direction ( $\beta = .030, p < .001$ ). The analysis supported hypothesis 1, which stated that, “Celebrity attachment will have a significant positive relationship with social capital. This means that as celebrity attachment increases, social capital also increases. The relationship between celebrity attachment and social and personal identity was also positive but not significant ( $\beta = .094, p = .296$ ). Hence, Hypothesis 2, which stated that “celebrity attachment will have a significant positive relationship with social and personal identity”, was not supported. Hypothesis 3, which stated that “higher levels of celebrity attachment will be associated with higher team identification”, was supported ( $\beta = .77, p < .001$ ), indicating that celebrity followers in fan groups are people who identify very closely with their group.

Hypotheses 4 and 5 tested the role of team identification as a mediator in the relationship between celebrity attachment (the predictor variable) and social capital and social and personal identity (the outcome variables). These hypotheses were tested by examining the significance of the indirect paths from celebrity attachment to social capital and social and personal identity. The confidence intervals for the indirect effects were estimated using the bias-corrected percentile method with 5000 bootstrapped samples.

For hypothesis 4, the results showed that the standardised indirect effect of celebrity attachment on social capital through team identification was .47, with 95% confidence intervals ranging from .341 to .621. These results show that the indirect effect is significant, thus showing a mediation effect and that hypothesis 4 is supported. Therefore, team identification mediates the relationship between celebrity attachment and social capital. Hypothesis 5 stated that “team identification will mediate the relationship between celebrity attachment and social and personal identity”. The standardised indirect effect of celebrity attachment on SIPI through team identification was .431 with 95% intervals from .276 to .636. This shows that the indirect effect is significant. However, because the direct path from CA to SIPI is insignificant, the significance of the indirect effect shows that the entire effect is explained through team identification. This means that the relationship between CA and SIPI occurs through TI, indicating a full mediation. Thus, hypothesis 5 is also supported.



**Figure 4**  
*Observed Model*



Notes: Red line indicates not supported.

**Table 14**  
*Summary of Mediation Effect on Team Identification*

Relationship	Estimates	Indirect Effect	95% CL		P-value	Conclusion
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
CA>TI>SC	.301***	.466***	.341	.621	.000	Partial mediation
CA>TI>SIPI	.094	.431***	.276	.636	.000	Full Mediation

CA=Celebrity attachment; TI=Team Identification; SC=Social Capital; SIPI=Social and Personal Identity. \*\*\*p< .001

## 5.9 Summary of Findings

The objectives of the quantitative phase of the study were to assess the level of celebrity attachment in music-based fan group members, to determine the extent to which members of the fan groups identify with their group, to examine the association between celebrity attachment, team identification, social capital, social and personal identity and finally to examine the mediating role of team identification and the outcomes of celebrity worship. The findings through cutoff scores and SEM analysis revealed the following:

1. Most members scored highly on the entertainment-social and Intense-personal stages, in contrast to the borderline-pathological ones. However, scores on the borderline-pathological stage exceeded 50%.
2. Fan group members scored high on team identification.
3. Team identification significantly partially mediated the relationship between CA and SC and fully mediated the relationship between CA and SIPI.



## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION

#### 6.0 Introduction

This thesis aimed to explore celebrity followership in Ghana by examining fanship and fandom within celebrity fan groups. Using a sequential exploratory research approach, study one, the qualitative design, examined motives for celebrity attachment, why celebrity fan groups are formed, fans' experiences and outcomes within these groups, and the influence of followership on fans' behaviours. Study two employed a quantitative design to investigate the prevalence of variables such as social capital, team identification, and social and personal identity derived from the qualitative research across broader fan groups. Team identification was also explored as a mediator between celebrity attachment and social capital as well as celebrity attachment and social and personal identity.

This chapter discusses the study's findings with respect to the research questions. It synthesises the findings of the qualitative and quantitative studies, where applicable, for a comprehensive discussion of celebrity worship in Ghana. It summarises the findings by linking the objectives, research questions, theories and related literature. It also discusses the points of convergence and or divergence between the qualitative and quantitative studies, the study's contribution to knowledge, and implications for psychologists, media watchers, celebrities and fanbase leaders. Based on the findings, recommendations and suggestions for future research and conclusions are provided.

Using the qualitative approach, this study explored the experiences of fan group executives and fan group members as fans (fanship) and as members of their favourite celebrities' fan groups (fandom). Thirty-three participants from three male musician and two female musician fan groups were interviewed using semi-structured interviews.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) was used in the data analysis. Findings revealed why individuals join fan groups, the benefits they derive, the challenging experiences they encounter by being fan members and the perceived impact of followership on their behaviours. The findings demonstrate that in contrast to the dominant literature on celebrity worship (Maltby et al., 2003; McCutcheon et al., 2003; McCutcheon & Maltby, 2002; Zsila et al., 2021), fan group members in Ghana enjoyed many positive outcomes from being members of the fan group, and celebrity attachment appeared to boost the social identity and social capital of fan group members. Also, results revealed that fan members who closely identified with the group, experienced social and psychological benefits from the fan group. Results also indicated that passionate fans were likely to engage in potentially harmful behaviours in defending the name of their celebrities.

### **6.1 Reasons for Attachment to Celebrity and Group**

The study revealed that fans attached themselves to celebrities because of their profound admiration for them. The reasons given bordered on the personal dispositions of the celebrity, which made the artiste more personable and inspired the fans to want to emulate them. The celebrity's craft, namely exceptional musical talents, lyrics of songs and stagecraft, also drew fans to love their favourite celebrities and become more attached to them. These results are supported by other research on celebrity admirers. For instance, in investigating motivations for parasocial attraction, Stever (1994, 2009), described three main categories for attraction to celebrities. These included social, physical and task motivations. Task attraction (Stever, 2009) meant that celebrities were loved because of their professional talents and abilities (Halim et al., 2022). Likewise, Ang and Chan (2018) themed this attraction to the craft of the celebrity "celebrity products," where fans

reported being drawn to the celebrity because of their music, the videos accompanying them and the music's effect on them. Hirt and Clarkson's (2011) investigation of sports fans supports these motives. Fans loved the work of their sports celebrities precisely because of the entertainment it brought them.

Regarding personal dispositions, this study supports Stever's (2009) labelling of social motivation as "identificatory attachment A", in which the fans admire the individual characteristics of celebrities, such as their honesty and generosity, and desire to be like them, and "identificatory attachment B", where the fan identifies with the celebrity and sees themselves and their lives mirrored in the celebrity's own journey or identifies with the lyrics of their music. In this study, the craft and personal disposition of the celebrity were the motivations for attraction and following. Similar to Ang and Chan (2018), this study also found that personal characteristics of the celebrity, such as care for fans, humility and positive attitudes, motivated celebrity followership, although Ang and Chan focused on adolescents. Interestingly, Ang and Chan's (2018) participants commented on the celebrity's physical attributes as a reason for attraction to celebrities, such as their handsomeness, beauty, and voice. This romantic attachment (Stever, 2009) was not prominent in the current study. This may suggest a deep respect for the artiste and their craft particularly where the artiste is not seen as a sex symbol. Only one respondent referred to their favourite celebrity as "my darling, my boyfriend, my husband". However, some participants commented that a romantic attraction, especially to male celebrities, was likely for some female fans.

Fans' profound admiration for the artiste may be explained by fans seeing celebrities as a reflection of their aspirational selves. Fans are drawn to celebrities who reflect important or desirable qualities, such as self-esteem, forming relationships, and attaining social and financial heights. Since celebrities embody stories of rising from

humble beginnings, they serve as symbols of social mobility, resilience, success against all odds, and global recognition that young people aspire to. Celebrity followership thus appears to be value-driven.

The desire to belong to a group associated with the artiste they loved was another motive for joining a fan group. This identification with the group made fans feel like fans by connecting with others who shared the same passion. The need to belong is positively and significantly linked to celebrity attachment among adolescents (Morgan et al., 2024; Pirzade et al., 2024). As social beings, the need to belong, thus forming and maintaining close relationships, is innate and an actual need, much like a basic need (Baumeister, 2012 versus Maslow, 1968; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Stever, 2017). This need is essential to our psychological well-being, as expressed by several participants, who shared how they had met people in the group who had become like family and how the group had provided emotional support for them. This motivation of joining the fan group to feel like a fan can be understood by social categorisation within social identity theory (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012; Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), where social identity is created by people categorising themselves into groups, such as joining fan groups (Kim & Kim, 2017), which helps them make sense of their social environment, constructing shared meanings in the groups and working towards something bigger than themselves (Hirt & Clarkson, 2011). The group becomes integrated into the fan's self-concept, leading them to refer to themselves in alignment with the group, using phrases like "SM for life", "Sark till casket", etc.

Social categorisation also underscores the rivalry between some fan groups, where some perceive their fan groups as better than others and their artistes as more talented and superior to others' (Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Membership in these groups allowed fans to stay informed about the artistes' lives, learn song lyrics and actively

promote the brand they loved. This finding is supported by Hirt and Clarkson (2011), who suggested that companionship and group affiliation were some of the motives underlying sports fanship, thus corroborating Reysen and Branscombe (2010), who posit that there are no differences between sports fans and other types of fans, in terms of motivation for followership and the psychological processes within groups. This desire to belong and feel like a fan is due to the fan's identification with the group. It suggests that fan groups are not only spaces for social activities but also places where fans may anchor their identity and find collective meaning in life. These fan groups may serve as proxy families in urban settings where traditional social support may be weak. Some may interpret this finding through the lens of the absorption-addiction model, which frames celebrity followership as psychologically problematic and a symptom of social deficits (McCutcheon et al., 2002). However, this study moves beyond the absorption addiction model to posit that fan group participation may serve adaptive rather than maladaptive functions. Celebrity followership offers meaningful social connections and belonging, which are valuable in urban communities.

In this study, forming a fan group helped promote the artiste's brand and preserved their legacy. Whilst it is generally understood that fan groups exist to support their favourite artistes, this study uncovered an additional deeper purpose. Beyond simply socialising, gathering or attending concerts, fans were found to work collaboratively and strategise to elevate their artiste's fame. This included deliberate efforts such as purchasing data specifically for streaming hours of music to boost viewership, making the artiste trend, and ultimately aiming for international recognition and potential award wins. Sometimes, DJS were offered monetary incentives by ardent fans to play only their favourite artiste's songs in bars and other social gatherings. Groups felt proud to see that their artiste's songs had hit a million "likes" on music platforms and were trending on the

entertainment news portals. To the best of my knowledge, this finding appears unique, as no comparable findings have been documented within the literature. It reflects not just admiration but a deep sense of personal and collective responsibility that fans feel for the success of their celebrity. It also demonstrates Ghanaian fans' commitment to contributing to a cause bigger than themselves. Some fan groups concentrated significant effort towards ensuring that the legacy of their artiste continued by engaging in humanitarian work in the artiste's name to ensure that their names will always be mentioned whenever the "monument" is referenced. Although some existing research references fans and their artiste raising money for charity (Stever, 2009), this study demonstrated that fans often initiated charity work without the help of their artiste and completed these projects driven by love for their artiste. Belonging to a fan group and contributing to a superordinate goal, such as ensuring the popularity of the artiste's music or engaging in community projects in the artiste's name, ultimately helps build closer bonds in the groups and raises the self-esteem of members, creating a strong social identity. The high level of commitment to promote the artiste could be explained by collectivist cultural orientations that value loyalty to the group, which explains why fans feel personally responsible for their artiste being recognised internationally, leading to personal and group pride and basking in the reflected glory of the artiste (Cialdini et al., 1976). Here, fans are proud not just of the celebrity but of what they achieve together with them.

Basking in reflected glory (BIRGing), a concept coined by Cialdini and his colleagues in 1976, explains the psychological rewards fans experience. Making pronouncements like "we made it" when their favourite celebrity achieves a feat, reflects a shared victory and enhances the fan's self-esteem. By associating with high-status individuals or even having the opportunity to appear in pictures with the celebrity, individuals who may be described as ordinary per social standing, gain micro-celebrity

status through proximity. Interestingly, the fan is not the only partner who gains from this relationship. By endearing themselves to their fans, the celebrities benefit from being seen as down-to-earth. This reciprocity may further motivate fans, who feel seen and appreciated, to continue to advocate for the celebrity.

Motivations for attachment to celebrities and forming fan groups to cement these attachments may be explained by various reasons, but the underlying cause is admiration for the artist. Many factors may explain this admiration, as discussed above. The behaviour of celebrities attracts their fans because fans identify with and aspire to be like their favourite celebrities. By making themselves more personable and relatable to fans through their connections in person, online, or by directly helping individual fans or their fan groups, they endear themselves to their fans. Celebrities who seem indifferent to their fans risk missing out on the invaluable support fans can provide in promoting and elevating the artist's status. Despite their talents and work, celebrities owe their existence to their fans. This study demonstrated that admiration for an artist, stemming from their skills and personal characteristics, motivated fans to create groups and engage in activities to amplify their artist's fame.

The qualitative insights revealed several factors influencing celebrity attachment, including behaviours explained by profound admiration for the artist. To quantify fan members' attachment to the celebrity, objective one of the quantitative study measured the degree of intensity they had for their celebrity using the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS). The quantitative study revealed that fans' attachment to their favourite celebrities transcended mere admiration to deep emotional investments, mirroring the patterns described in celebrity worship research. Akin to McCutcheon et al.'s (2002) classification of celebrity worship, this study showed that 66% of respondents scored high on the borderline-pathological category of the CAS and 86% and 94% on the entertainment-

social and intense-personal subscales, respectively. Generally, this is unsurprising as all participants belong to celebrity fan groups, as confirmed by a study in Lebanon that showed a positive correlation between fanship and celebrity worship (AlHarouny & El Khoury, 2022). This contrasts sharply with Stever's (2011) study, which administered the CAS to Star Trek fans and the singer Josh Groban's fans. The results indicated that these dedicated fans did not score highly on any of the subscales of the CAS, supporting her argument that being a fan does not necessarily equate to being a celebrity worshipper. However, in this study, responses on the CAS revealed that all members of the celebrity fan groups could be classified as celebrity worshippers (McCutcheon, 2002).

The high scores on the CAS initially appear concerning as previous research links the intense-personal and borderline-pathological subscales to maladaptive behaviours. From this perspective, the scores may warrant further scrutiny as they may hint that some fans' experience of celebrity attachment may be moving into dangerous zones. However, an alternative understanding emerges from the team identification social psychological health model lens. Such high attachment to celebrities may indicate the fulfilment of social needs such as belonging, emotional support and social capital, which the individual obtains from within the group. Whilst the CAS captures individual attachment to the celebrity, the fan group is the domain where the attachment is given meaning. Collectively supporting the artiste creates the social capital that manifests the social and personal identity and financial and social support, which leads to well-being. These two perspectives may generate questions about where intense fanship ends and problematic fanship begins. Further research can explore not only intense attachment but also the contextual factors that may influence whether intense celebrity attachment is healthy or dangerous.

## 6.2 Impact of Followership on Behaviour

Expressions of profound admiration for the artiste were often demonstrated in striking behaviours, reflecting fans' deep emotional investment. Accounts of travelling long distances, enduring discomfort or replacing wedding pictures with pictures of the celebrity, point to an intense level of engagement that borders on the intense-personal spectrum of CW or even borderline pathological (McCutcheon et al., 2002) or as a level six out of eight on the fan intensity level (Steever, 2009). However, these seemingly obsessive behaviours did not appear to interfere with the day-to-day activities of fans to be considered pathological. Most fans lived ordinary lives. Fans were either formally employed or owned their businesses; others were students, and about 17% were unemployed. Even the unemployed were engaged in “hustling” (odd jobs here and there to make ends meet) as inspired by their celebrities. Therefore, these acts may demonstrate high emotional involvement by stable individuals and may represent meaningful, even expected, expressions of profound admiration. These extreme behaviours also confirm and extend the existing literature on team identification in sports, which suggests that team identification, while offering significant benefits to fan members, also has a darker side. Wann (2006) theorises that individuals who strongly identify with their sports teams are more prone to spectator violence and aggression.

Similarly, in this study, dedicated fans displayed aggressive behaviours on social media through their interactions with others who criticised their celebrity or fan group. Social identity theory explains these behaviours through the concept of social identity threat. This theory suggests that when fans internalise the group's identity, making it a part of their self-concept, they may act defensively to protect it when threatened (Belmi et al., 2015; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity threat often leads to heightened arousal and anxiety (Wann, 2006). In response to the threat, fans may engage in out-group derogation

to restore their self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Thus, although this study is on music fan groups, it aligns with findings from sports literature showing similar behaviour patterns among fans who strongly identify with their groups.

The tension between fan behaviour that builds identity and social connections and actions that may be seen as pathological reflects the complex nature of fan experiences; hence, as discussed earlier, context may be key to understanding the implications of these behaviours.

In terms of implications, McCutcheon et al. (2002) posit that individuals who score highly even on the entertainment-social scale could be at risk of progressing to the more severe pathological stage. This progression would suggest an escalation from relatively harmless social admiration to an intense, potentially harmful fixation with celebrities. Considering that some fans had admitted to violent behaviour, such as beating up people who criticised their favoured celebrities and arguing passionately with those who opposed the celebrity, this could indicate some underlying pathology. The intense way they spoke about their favourite celebrity aligns with high scores on the Celebrity Attitude Scale, the highest significantly being, the intense-personal stage. Per the absorption-addiction model of McCutcheon et al. (2004), high scores on the celebrity attitude scale, especially on the intense-personal and borderline-pathological stages, are accompanied by poor psychological well-being and associated with signs of neuroticism and psychoticism (Maltby et al., 2003). However, it may be helpful to consider the possibility that these responses by fans may be expressions of youthful exuberance, reflecting the passion fans feel towards their favoured celebrities and as part of usual fan group behaviours rather than pathology. Using insulting language to describe rival fan members on social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter) feeds or replacing wedding photos could merely be symbolic of deep admiration for the artiste or typical social media

banter rather than a sign of pathology. This highlights the need to differentiate between enthusiastic actions and harmful obsessions.

### 6.3 Experiences of Fan Group Members

The study revealed a strong tendency for fans to pedestalise their favourite celebrities, often elevating them to god-like status. This form of celebrity deification moves beyond mere admiration into a quasi-religious realm where celebrities are viewed as having some special powers. While hero worship has been reported in the literature, where fans see their celebrities as gifted, having a purpose to bless others with their talents, and being more than just ordinary humans (Lofton, 2018; Stever, 2009), participants in this study used religious language to describe and elevate their favourite celebrities to god-like status and prominence. Some described them as gods on earth, deserving of worship and referred to them using religious terms like healer, prophet and saviour. For others, the words of their favourite celebrity, through their music, were more valuable and relevant to their present situation than any pastor's sermon. Even the fan groups were regarded by their members as some form of religious group. This finding aligns with research suggesting that celebrity followership can resemble a form of quasi-religion, weak religion or even para-religion (Jindra, 1994; Ward, 2017; Weinstein & Weinstein, 2003) associated with the decline of formal religion (Rojek, 2001), although this characterisation is debatable. Critics argue that celebrity worship lacks the structured elements of a formal religion, such as the belief in a Supreme Being and formalised rituals (Heinich, 2014). For instance, Nicholas Meyer, a Star Trek writer, as cited in Jindra (1994), describes Star Trek as "religion without theology" (p. 33), highlighting how such devotions can resemble religious practices without fitting traditional definitions. Regardless, participants in this study regarded themselves as no different from religious organisations and saw their favourite celebrity as some kind of god. This is not unusual as

religious groups like fan groups offer a parallel system of support, rituals and identity. Thus, fan groups satisfy psychological needs similar to religious communities. In the same vein, participants reported experiencing stigma or social disapproval for their devotion to celebrities, a response that mirrors persecution sometimes faced by followers of established religions. This confirms research that highlights the misperception and stereotyping of celebrity worshippers. For example, Lewis (2002) argues that in movies, fans of celebrities are often portrayed as irresponsible, lacking social skills or even deranged or dangerous individuals. Similarly, a study conducted in the UK and the USA found that participants viewed celebrity admirers as foolish and irresponsible, reinforcing Hollywood's stereotypical depictions of fans (McCutcheon & Maltby, 2002).

Participants in this study rated themselves as highly religious, as is typical of many Ghanaians, rating themselves six or above out of 10. Their tendency to deify their favourite celebrities thus contrasts with findings by Maltby (2004), Maltby et al. (2002) and Sitasari et al. (2021), who reported a negative correlation between religiosity and celebrity worship. Although the participants' actions demonstrate celebrity worship and the quantitative findings support this, most participants strongly rejected being labelled "celebrity worshippers". This contradiction highlights the tension between participants' religious beliefs and their actions. It possibly suggests that people tend to compartmentalise their lives, failing to recognise that celebrity worship can be considered a form of polytheism and that "Thou shalt worship no other gods" also extends to celebrities (Maltby et al., 2002). This compartmentalisation can also be explained by Moscovici's cognitive polyphasia, where individuals simultaneously hold contradictory beliefs and values without feeling dissonance (Moscovici, 2000). Another possible explanation for this pedestalisation of celebrities, especially in a religious country like Ghana, could be that while religion generally provides spiritual guidance, it may not speak

directly to the lived experiences of young people with modern struggles and aspirations for upward mobility. The celebrity's life stories and their closeness to their fans through various media channels may make the celebrity more easily accessible to individuals than a pastor or religious leader. The fans then may not be necessarily rejecting religion but making use of a more immediate and “real” source of inspiration and meaning than Bible stories they can't immediately identify with.

Fans were especially inspired by the artistes' stories of humble beginnings, which spurred them on and gave them hope to overcome their personal challenges and work towards achieving their life goals. Some also spoke about how they had picked up admirable qualities from the celebrity and tried to incorporate them into their lives. The findings of the celebrity as a role model are supported by Stever (2009) in discussing the motivation for parasocial attraction. Ang and Chan's (2018) study in Malaysia also confirmed that adolescents looked up to celebrities as role models. Also, in a study in Ghana of adolescents' perceptions of celebrities, adolescents mentioned how they admired their favourite celebrities and desired to be like them (Morgan et al., 2024). The theme of pedestalisation, with deification and role model as subthemes, is explained by the identification-emulation idolatry (IEI) model (Cheung & Yue, 2019). This model demonstrates that celebrities inspire their fans, thus creating identification. This identification is a normal developmental process where celebrities are admired for their personality, talent and accomplishments (Greene & Adams-Price, 1990). This model comprises five components: emotional connection to artiste, engaging with the artiste's work, identifying with artiste, perceiving the artiste as extraordinary, and romanticised engagement (Cheung & Yue, 2019; Greene & Adams-Price, 1990). The identification component explains how the idols/celebrities are conceived as god-like with special powers, similar to what this study identified. Identification also describes how the idol is

seen as a role model to be emulated for personal growth. According to the model, identification-emulation predicts higher self-esteem and identity formation. This idea is confirmed by Rojek (2001), who suggests that celebrities as role models, inspire trends, shape cultural attitudes and help people form their identities.

This model contrasts with the Addiction-Absorption model by McCutcheon et al. (2002), which pathologises identification and attachment to celebrities. However, it would appear from the literature that being a solo fan may contribute to, or even be, a risk factor for the pathology described by McCutcheon and colleagues. In contrast, being part of a well-established fan group could act as a protective buffer against the adverse outcomes of celebrity worship, as fandom proves to be a significant predictor of well-being (Reysen et al., 2022). The leadership qualities and personal growth reported by some fans in this study seem to stem from their group involvement rather than being solo fans.

Fan group participation served as a mechanism for identity construction and affirmation. Celebrity fan group members in this study reported many positive experiences they had had personally and within the group. Many noted that their self-identity had been enhanced by associating with the celebrity and the fan group. A plausible explanation of this is that recognition and the ensuing opportunities it brings reinforce a sense of purpose and belonging. Being known as the president or organiser of a fan group brings visibility. The structured nature of the fan groups, the hierarchies, platforms for visibility and being part of a larger cause create a sense of meaning, especially when members' contributions are recognised. Also, the job of promoting an artiste requires knowledge of specific skills like coordination, event planning, and online promotion. These are skills that are necessary in real-world settings. The fan group also acts as a safe place for social learning.

The love for and popularity of the celebrity seemed to rub off on fans who actively promoted the celebrity online or in person. Additionally, some participants reported

experiencing personal growth, highlighting how their involvement in the fan group helped them develop leadership skills, overcome shyness and acquire social media skills to promote their favourite artistes. This study fills a gap in the literature by demonstrating the potential for enhanced self-concepts, personal growth and leadership development through active engagement in fan groups, an area that has received little attention in previous research.

Fan members' self-esteem and self-identity are boosted by supporting the celebrity, their involvement in the fan group, and when their favourite celebrity wins awards or releases a hit song, aligning with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity theory suggests that individuals derive some of their self-esteem and identity from group membership. When fans report feeling good, receiving congratulations from others and being recognised as part of the winning team, when the celebrity succeeds, it highlights how their sense of identity and pride in the group's success influences their self-worth. This is because their self-identity is closely linked to the group. Social identity theory explains why some people "lose their names" and are instead called by the celebrity's name or some other name which incorporates the celebrity's name into their online identity or as a nickname that becomes more recognised than their actual names. When fan group members attack or respond angrily to people who insult or demean the artiste, they experience a social identity threat (Ashe et al., 2005; Benson & Adinlewa, 2021; Brooks, 2018; Charles, 2011). Here, the group's foundation is the artiste, making up the group identity, which impacts self-identity. Thus, when the group's identity is threatened, fans may react to protect the artiste's name, thereby protecting their own identity (Wann, 2006). Additionally, to preserve their group's identity, members employ distinctive paraphernalia to set themselves apart and speak unfavourably about other groups.

### 6.3.1 Celebrity followership Outcomes: Social Support and Social Capital

One of the most profound findings the interviews revealed was the social capital and ensuing social support among the fan group members. These contrasted sharply with what the dominant research postulates about “celebrity worship’s” negative impact, thereby pathologising it (Benson & Adinlewa, 2021; Brooks, 2018; Brown & Tiggemann, 2022; Zsila & Demetrovics, 2020). Fan group members viewed themselves as family and provided support for each other. Welfare support was organised for the bereaved or to celebrate new mothers within the group. Members travelled to attend funerals or birthday parties, where donations were given from the members' welfare fund. On a personal level, members shared that joining the group helped them form valuable friendships. These connections provided financial and emotional support in crises and provided others with job opportunities, highlighting the group’s role in providing supportive relationships. Active group members who had established connections were more likely to receive help when in need. Unlike anything documented in previous research, the social capital and social support reported by fans in this study were insightful. Whilst Stever's (2009) references Williams' (1995) dissertation on Led Zeppelin fans, where fans described their group as a family and mentioned helping one another, it did not specify whether this support extended to active physical assistance or was limited to a sense of belonging.

In contrast, participants in this study reported not only the social capital gained from being members of these fan groups but also highlighted numerous physical and emotional benefits from this involvement. These findings align with the team identification social psychological health model that Wann (2006) hypothesises for sports teams. According to Wann, identifying, connecting and engaging in activities with team members, and not just mere group membership with a team, facilitates well-being due to

the social connections the fan receives. If sports team identification is positively related to social-psychological health in sports fan groups, and similar psychological processes are present in non-sport fan groups (Stephen Reysen & Branscombe, 2010), then this study reinforces existing knowledge about the positive connections that arise from identifying and bonding with fellow fan members. The concept of social capital also contributes to explaining these relationships. Membership in the fan groups contributed substantial social capital for participants. Members formed strong family-like bonds that offered emotional support, exemplifying bonding social capital. Fan group members' ability to access help or job opportunities through connections with other fan members indicates bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). On a community level, elements of trust and reciprocity were demonstrated within the groups as they acted as welfare systems, showcasing how collective social capital enables members to pool resources and aid those in need. The positive interactions and shared experiences facilitated emotional support, which participants cited as valuable to their overall well-being. The strong sense of community and mutual aid exemplifies how social capital translates into tangible social support, leading to positive mental outcomes and enhancing quality of life.

Research on celebrity worship and well-being has produced mixed findings. Some studies indicate that celebrity worship enhances psychological benefits, while others suggest it negatively impacts well-being. For instance, Laffan (2021) found that K-pop (pop music from South Korea) fanship was associated with improved psychological benefits, contrasting with other studies, such as Maltby et al. (2001), where even the entertainment-social level of celebrity worship was associated with poor psychological well-being (Maltby et al., 2010), where intense personal celebrity worship was associated with poor mental health and Parawangsa et al. (2023), which found no significant relationship between psychological well-being and celebrity worship for K-pop fans in

Indonesia. Since in the world of work, social support is associated with employees' psychological well-being (Rahama & Izzati, 2021), it can be inferred from participants' experiences that the support they received from their groups most likely contributed to some enhanced well-being.

This sense of closeness within the group led the group to pursue humanitarian activities. Some groups had a structured "secretariat" that organised members to donate to societal causes. These made members feel that they were contributing to a worthy cause while at the same time putting their artiste out there. Stever (2009) discusses celebrities who created charity initiatives and encouraged their fan group to contribute to these causes. While this study confirms certain aspects of this phenomenon, it also reveals a unique twist: fan group members often took the lead in championing these causes independently, without direct involvement from the celebrity. For example, the Die-Hard Fans of Daddy Lumba made it a primary goal to engage in humanitarian activities in honour of their idol, Daddy Lumba.

#### **6.4 The Widespread Nature of Fan Experiences**

In addition to examining fans' attachment to celebrities, as discussed in section 6.1, this study aimed to assess the level of team identification, experiences of social capital, and social and personal identity among fan group members. The qualitative phase and participants' responses indicated that most participants could be described as the group's core fans, making the reactions somewhat unsurprising. The quantitative study thus explored whether these experiences were shared across the broader fan group and whether those who closely identified with the group experienced more benefits than fans who did not.

Team identification has been studied extensively in sports teams, leading to various outcomes, including high self-esteem (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Lianopoulos et al., 2020); feelings of self-worth and life satisfaction (Branscombe & Wann, 1991); increased well-being (Reysen et al., 2022; Wann, 2006) and even negative behaviours like high derogation to opposition groups (Branscombe & Wann, 1993). Team identification has been known to impact an individual's emotions and behaviours. In this study, team identification is applied within the context of fan groups rather than in its conventional use in sports, as sports and non-sports teams share numerous similarities (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). In this study, team identification was primarily seen in how participants felt about the celebrity (fanship) and how they felt about the group (fandom). Some participants felt a closer connection to the celebrity than the group and vice versa.

Conversely, some participants argued that the celebrity was indistinguishably linked to the group and its identity, asserting that the formation of the group and the collective benefits were tied to the celebrity. Thus, the quantitative phase of the study sought to examine how closely fan group members identified with the group or whether it was just those close to the centre, such as the group's executives and others close to them, who identified with the group. The study revealed that 85.7% of fans scored high on team identification and 14.3 % scored low. The cultural context of these fan groups in Ghana may provide a possible explanation for this finding. As a generally collectivist society, there is a strong emphasis on communal identity and social belonging. Fan groups are social units just like sub-groups in religious settings. Thus, the desire to belong may draw people to join groups like celebrity fan groups and be closely identified with them, just like people join their alma mater groups. Team identification may be the glue that helps mobilise groups to advocate for their favourite celebrity and/or undertake humanitarian activities.

The study additionally investigated the role of team identification in the connection between celebrity worship, social capital, and social and personal identity. Specifically, the study aimed to determine whether individuals who strongly identified with the group were those experiencing positive outcomes. The study revealed that higher celebrity attachment was associated with higher team identification, supporting hypothesis three. Group members who highly identified with their groups also scored higher on celebrity attachment. Celebrity attachment had a positively significant yet moderate relationship with social capital supporting hypothesis one, and an insignificant relationship with social and personal identity, showing that hypothesis 2 was not supported. Also, team identification had a moderate positive relationship with social and personal identity and a significant positive relationship with social capital. However, when Team identification was introduced as the mediator variable, it was found to partially mediate the relationship between celebrity attachment and social capital and fully mediate the relationship between celebrity attachment and social and personal identity, supporting hypotheses four and five. These results contribute valuable insights into understanding the perceived impacts of celebrity attachment on individual and social outcomes. As the social identity theory posits, individuals who were deeply attached to celebrities tended to align themselves with a fan community. The relationship between celebrity attachment and social capital, which was moderately significant, supports the idea that affiliating with a celebrity can facilitate access to social resources and networks. In contrast, CA alone did not predict SIPI, suggesting that attachment to the celebrity alone is not sufficient to influence an individual's broad sense of self. Team identification becoming the predictor of both SC and SIPI showed its significance as the mechanism through which celebrity attachment operates.

The partial mediation of team identification between celebrity worship and social capital suggests that while direct benefits to social capital can result from celebrity attachment, a substantial portion of that effect is channelled through the fan group. The group is the vehicle for transforming CA into tangible social bonds. Conversely, team identification fully mediated the relationship between CA and Social and personal identity, indicating that it is not celebrity attachment alone but group affiliation that helps individuals derive meaning from their group membership. Thus, celebrity attachment does not necessarily or significantly lead to social and personal identity, but when the individual is closely identified with the team, team identity brings those outcomes. Team identity transforms parasocial admiration into social outcomes, demonstrating that fan groups are important intermediaries in the celebrity followership dynamic.

This aligns with social identity theory, which emphasises the formation of self-concepts based on group affiliations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The findings support research by Wann (2006), who found that team identification leads to positive emotions because of formed social connections. Also, group belonging brings about greater well-being through the material and social support members receive (Reysen et al., 2022). In this study, although well-being was not directly measured, we can infer from how participants spoke about the benefits of being in the group that they experienced some levels of life satisfaction. The team identification social psychological health model also supports these findings by suggesting that team identification through participation in group activities, camaraderie with others, and a sense of identification with others, not mere identification, leads to social psychological health (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). The qualitative study further corroborates the evidence that the individuals who were very active in the group, through participation in activities of the group, gained more social connections and social capital and received social support from others and the group.

These findings can be explained by the fact that being attached to a celebrity is individualised, but team identification is social. On its own, CA can bring some meaning and gratification, but it does not create interpersonal relationships. However, when this admiration is shared with others, it develops into team identification. Team identification enables social interactions which build friendships and provide mutual support, which are elements of social capital. While those who belong to a fan group may gain some social capital, those who strongly identify with the group experience more social benefits. Also, those who strongly identify with the group experience enhanced self-esteem, personal growth, leadership opportunities and a stronger sense of belonging. Thus, this study demonstrates that celebrity followership can only be socially and psychologically beneficial when embedded in team identification.

### **6.5 General Discussion**

This study employed a sequential exploratory mixed-method design to investigate fans' experiences within fan groups associated with five popular musicians in Ghana. Members of the fan groups, while recounting some challenges they faced from family and friends due to their affiliations with the celebrities or their active participation in the fan groups, acknowledged the benefits they derived from the celebrity: their songs, life stories, the impact of their personalities, and their attitudes toward life. These elements served as a source of inspiration for fans and motivated them in their own lives. By actively participating in fan groups, individuals gained a sense of identity, social connections, job opportunities, leadership skills, and support during significant life events. Some members even shared how their relationship with the celebrity and involvement in the group had aided them in dealing with shyness. These findings are generally in sharp contrast to the predominant literature regarding the impact of celebrity worship. By employing the

celebrity attitude scale to assess fans' levels of attachment, fan members exhibited significant levels of celebrity worship, including what is interpreted as the “danger zones” of the scale. Regardless, members generally appeared to balance their fandom with normal life responsibilities and social functioning. Even those behaviours they exhibited in defence and support of their idols are not altogether unusual with passionate supporters, whether in sports or politics. Brooks (2018) presents an intriguing point that merits further exploration: it may not be the level of attachment that renders celebrity worship detrimental, but rather the underlying motivation. Moreover, this study suggests that it is not the degree of attachment to a celebrity that results in positive outcomes, but instead, whether individuals strongly identify with a group as opposed to being a solitary fan. This study, however, did not explore fans' psychological or physical backgrounds to examine the relationships between these variables and their adoration for celebrities, as prior studies have done. The earlier studies, which predominantly utilised cross-sectional correlational data, have limitations as they cannot ascertain the direction of the associations (Brooks, 2018).

This study is similar to Yan and Yang's (2021) study in China. Fan group members, especially those who highly identify with their group, do not regard themselves as just part of the group for entertainment purposes. They recognise that they have duties to perform in helping their artiste to do well on the music charts. In the example from China, fan members "cultivate" the celebrities, so to speak, by taking on responsibilities similar to kin or relatives of the artiste, looking out for the idol, and commenting on and influencing their private and social lives to ensure that their favourite celebrities do not self-destruct. This is somewhat different from certain groups in Ghana who support their idols regardless of the circumstances and view their actions and utterances as “always right”. In a sense, Ghanaian celebrities are also “cultivated” by their fans and fan groups,

who aid in making them trend on social media by posting about them on their personal timelines, sharing and streaming their music, defending idol behaviour on social media, and perceiving themselves as responsible for the celebrity's success.

This study also confirms that cultural nuances shape celebrity worship across the world. For instance, the concept of parakin relationships in China is deeply rooted in the Chinese cultural emphasis on kinship and familial bonds (Yan & Yan, 2021). In contrast, the social welfare systems present in Ghanaian fan groups exemplify the traditional practice of *nnoboa*. *Nnoboa* is a communal cooperative system in which individuals work together to provide assistance and resources for one another (Afriyie et al., 2014; Amoah-Mensah, 2021). These examples highlight how socio-cultural practices influence the nature and expression of fan group dynamics and how celebrity worship manifests differently globally.

Another difference between this present study and the one conducted in China is that identity acquisition and self-achievement are self-oriented motives for idol worship. In contrast, they are viewed as outcomes in the Ghanaian context. Admittedly, it is likely that some individuals and fans in Ghana may follow celebrities for their own selfish motives and may be reluctant to disclose this.

### **6.5.1 Points of Convergence and Divergence**

This section highlights the key findings from the qualitative and quantitative studies, discussing how the two studies converge or diverge to provide us with a deeper and more balanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The qualitative study addresses contextual issues in celebrity studies and fan groups. In contrast, the quantitative study offers empirical evidence to validate the widespread and broader nature of the experiences shared in the qualitative phase.

Both studies agree that fan groups offer significant social capital and social and personal identity. The qualitative findings about fan group members providing emotional support, job opportunities through social connections and a kind of welfare system to members who closely identified with the group were confirmed quantitatively by the correlation and the SEM model.

In the qualitative study, members of fan groups recounted how their involvement had connected them with others who had become like family and friends. These relationships provided numerous benefits, including financial assistance, job opportunities, and practical support. As most participants in the qualitative study were either executives or core fans, social capital among celebrity followers was examined across a broader range of fan members during the quantitative study phase. The results showed a positive relationship between celebrity attachment and social capital. Furthermore, team identification partially mediated the link between celebrity attachment and social capital. The results indicate that other factors beyond team identification may account for the relationship between CW and SC. From the study, we observe that the quantitative research reinforces the qualitative study regarding the vital role of social capital due to celebrity followership. Social capital, a vital resource drawn from an individual's network of relationships (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), was one of the main benefits highlighted by the interviewees. The friendships they had formed and the help they received by associating with the celebrity and the celebrity fan group were invaluable. This finding aligns with the qualitative work of Ang and Chan (2018) and Morgan et al. (2024), whose adolescent participants reported enhanced social relationships with other fan members and better relationships with family as one of the benefits of celebrity worship. This study further extends the discussion of social relationships to the benefits and positive outcomes that adult fan group members receive from each other.

The quantitative findings also partially support the qualitative findings on the relationship between celebrity attachment and social and personal identity. In the quantitative analysis, the relationship was not significant. However, team identification fully mediated the relationship between the two variables. This confirms the qualitative study that those who closely identified with their fan groups experienced a positive social and personal identity.

Although the social well-being scale performed poorly and was removed from the study, fan group members reported positive outcomes, such as social connections, social support and enhanced sense of identity, suggesting that being part of a fan group contributed to positive social and psychological well-being.

The role of team identification as a key factor between celebrity worship and social outcomes like social capital and social and personal identity was observed across both phases of the research. The strength of the correlations and significant mediation effects related to team identification and outcomes like social capital and social and personal identity speak to this fact.

The two phases of the study agree that celebrity followership, especially in groups, is not solely about obsessive behaviours but also has positive social outcomes such as increased social belonging, networking and well-being.

Regarding the points of divergence, the qualitative study revealed more culturally nuanced relationships within the fan groups, which the standardised quantitative measures could not fully capture. For example, the subjective interpretations of social capital or what it means to be a core fan member may not be fully captured by the quantitative measures; hence, the importance of mixed methods is to reveal both the nuanced and cultural contexts and the broader measurable patterns.

## 6.6 Recommendations and Conclusions

### 6.6.1 Contributions of the Study

Within the last decade, the influence of celebrities and exposure to celebrity culture has risen in Ghana. With the increase in smartphone use, many young people can assess the pages of celebrities to admire them and seek to be like them. Young people may spend hours browsing the pages of their favourite idols. Sometimes, through social media apps, some get to know about artiste fan clubs or groups and join them. Other times, they privately enjoy the commodities of the celebrity. Research reports that these attachments to celebrities can become excessive obsessions, leading to adverse outcomes. This obsession is what research refers to as celebrity worship. This research explored fan group members' experiences of being in fan groups and the impact it had had on their lives. This study has contributed to advancing knowledge in various ways: understanding celebrity followership more broadly than previously known, contributing to the discourse on celebrity worship and celebrity followership in the Ghanaian context, and methodological and theoretical contributions.

What sets this study apart is its contribution to the discourse on celebrity followership within a Ghanaian context, specifically within music celebrity fan groups whose activities have never been explored. Through this investigation, various cultural nuances have been uncovered, contrasting with the experiences of celebrity worship and celebrity followership previously studied in other contexts, underscoring the pivotal role of context in the expression of celebrity followership. Some of the outcomes and perceived impacts expressed by participants capture the different workings of celebrity fan groups in Ghana.

Borrowing from research on sports fan groups, this study challenges the traditional Absorption-Addiction model by using Social Identity theory to explain the dynamics

within celebrity fan groups. By highlighting how identification and social connections operate in fan groups, the focus is shifted from a pathological understanding of celebrity worship to viewing fan groups as sources of social capital and identity formation.

Methodologically, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches demonstrates the benefits of mixed-method studies. This combination allows for a deep understanding of the phenomenon by combining the rich narratives of the qualitative with the structured analysis of the quantitative methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This integration departs from the dominant quantitative and few qualitative studies that have often been used to study this phenomenon. Also, the sequential exploratory design used in this research allows for a deeper and broader exploration of celebrity worship and possible generalisations.

Departing from the usual participants of solely adolescents or undergraduate students provides a broader understanding of fandom from the perspective of adults. Previous studies have chiefly used adolescents and university students in celebrity worship and fandom research and reported adverse effects on these populations. However, using adults in the qualitative phase, especially those in identifiable fan groups, reveals that celebrity worship or being attached to celebrities need not be pathological; done right, it may actually help individuals flourish.

#### **6.6.2 Practical Significance for Stakeholders: Celebrities, Fan Group Managers, Media Psychologists and Psychologists**

This work uses social psychological theories like team identification and social identity theory to explore how media figures like celebrities and their fan groups cultivate a sense of belonging and well-being. Celebrities should recognise their fans' critical role in “their creation”, understanding that while talent elevates and exposes them, their fans

project them to the broader world. Celebrities, therefore, must consider giving back and nurturing a positive, reciprocal relationship with their fan bases. For example, showing gratitude and acknowledging fan contributions fosters loyalty among fans and connections between fan and celebrities.

Moreover, celebrities must remain mindful of their influence over their fans. Their words and actions, particularly as shown in existing literature, can inspire and impact fans, especially adolescents. This influence means that celebrities should exhibit exemplary behaviour as artists and citizens, as their fans will likely model their actions. Celebrities can promote positive messages, such as mental health awareness, positive body image appreciation, and the importance of education, amongst others, on their social media platforms or engagement with fans.

Celebrities and their managers should acknowledge the dual role of fan groups: not only do they promote the artist, but they also serve as a space where members can connect, fostering social capital, offering social support and encouraging personal growth. Thus, celebrities can engage with their fans more to promote charitable causes and social initiatives. This will boost the celebrity's image while allowing the fans to channel their collective energies into something impactful.

Fan group managers and executives should be aware of the immense benefits their members derive from being part of these groups and prioritise structuring and managing them effectively, not solely for the celebrity's benefit but also for the well-being of the members. Implementing proper structures and care for fan group members will ensure their well-being and satisfaction with the group and the celebrity, ensuring long-term loyalty and sustained support. This approach shifts the concept of fandom from being purely recreational to one that fosters meaningful social relationships.

Media psychologists often focus on Western concepts in their approaches to the discipline. This study provides invaluable insights into how media and celebrity culture operate in non-Western contexts. Thus, media psychologists should be culturally sensitive by considering the socio-cultural frameworks that shape media consumption to foster a more inclusive understanding of the discipline.

Psychologists should pay close attention to individuals deriving their identity from celebrities. It raises significant questions about the potential psychological effects on fans when a celebrity's status changes, such as retirement, cessation of music production, or even death. How will these shifts affect the fan's sense of self and emotional well-being tied to their identification with the celebrity? Thus, psychologists must consider developing interventions for healthy fan involvement. Seeing that fan groups can offer positive experiences and sometimes fans can be obsessed, psychologists can create interventions to encourage balanced participation in fan groups, helping to identify areas of enhancement versus when it becomes unhealthy.

Psychologists can play a crucial role in helping celebrities navigate their relationships with fans by offering guidance on managing fan expectations and fostering healthy engagement. By assisting celebrities to understand the depth of their influence on fans, psychologists can equip them to act more responsibly and thoughtfully.

The findings from this study on celebrity followership have important implications for policy, particularly in the areas of media literacy and influencer marketing regulation. To mitigate uncritical engagement with celebrity culture, structured media literacy programs should be developed to help young audiences and fans distinguish between healthy admiration and harmful over-identification with celebrities and how social media marketing constructs idealized but often unrealistic perceptions of fame. These initiatives can be integrated into school curricula or public awareness campaigns to

foster critical media consumption from an early age. Secondly, given the broad reach of celebrities, policymakers can collaborate with fan communities and celebrities in national campaigns, especially those that address social issues. For example, in combating youth opioid abuse in Ghana, celebrities could use their platforms to promote messages on prevention, leveraging their persuasive power over their followers. Through this, fan groups could also be used as community mobilizers to help spread public health or social initiatives. Additionally, to protect vulnerable audiences, there should be stricter regulations and ethical advertising practices regarding influencer marketing- how celebrities advertise products and which products they promote.

### **6.6.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

This section discusses the limitations of the study. The study's qualitative phase employed the snowball sampling technique because the population was hard to reach. Despite its advantages, this technique has the potential for sampling bias, since initial participants are likely to recruit other participants they know, like, or who are in their immediate social networks. For one group, the fan group's board discussed the study and gave a list of people to contact. To counter some of these challenges, the researcher used her personal contacts to get additional people, not from the main fan group contacts. Also, the qualitative approach was used to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, not necessarily to generalise its findings.

In the quantitative study, the use of psychological scales that had not been formally validated in Ghana is a potential limitation of this study. While the researcher took steps to ensure face validity and internal consistency, the lack of formal cross-cultural validation means some cultural elements may not have been captured by the instruments, although their wording was adapted. For example, concerns arose regarding the potential

social desirability bias of the CAS scale. Whilst Hitlan et al. (2021) report no social desirability concerns with the CAS, examining this issue within a context like Ghana, particularly among fan groups, might be helpful. Unlike their study, which focused on university students, respondents in this study might have felt compelled to express strong attraction or admiration for their favourite celebrity, possibly to enhance the perception of the group or celebrity. This may have contributed to the single-factor structure of the CAS scale (Fabrigar et al., 1999). The single-factor structure of the CAS instead of three could also have been impacted by possible homogeneity within the sample or highly engaged fans responding similarly, although preliminary analysis showed no common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Alternatively, there might be a cultural element to this, as a study from Hungary reported a two-factor structure of the CAS (McCutcheon, 2025; Zsila et al., 2024). Further studies should investigate and compare the social desirability of the CAS scale among fan groups and non-fan group admirers of celebrities to see if any differences exist and further factor analysis on the CAS scale.

Social well-being was initially intended to be an outcome variable to be measured quantitatively. However, due to its poor psychometric values, it was removed from the study. Possible reasons for the poor internal consistency could be contextual or cultural misalignment of the meaning of the scale or lack of understanding or relevance of the items by participants. Future research could look at adapting or developing a culturally appropriate version of Shapiro and Keyes (2007) social well-being scale. Finally, this study focused on fan groups of musicians, which may not fully capture the experiences of fans of other types of celebrities. Thus, future studies may explore fans of celebrities from different fields to determine whether any patterns exist.

#### 6.6.4 Suggestions for future research:

Further research on “celebrity worship” should include more African countries and regions with limited representation. This will provide a more nuanced understanding of how cultural factors shape celebrity attachment and fan behaviours.

In Ghana, research needs to be conducted on celebrities to find out how they view their fan bases and if fan behaviours and the pressure of being celebrities psychologically impact them. Also, longitudinal studies may be conducted to investigate how fan attachment changes over time and how changes in a celebrity's status, such as death or career shifts, impact the organisation of the fan group as well as fans' well-being and identity.

This study explored fan groups of secular musicians. Considering how some gospel artistes are viewed as celebrities, it would be intriguing to explore the world of gospel celebrities and their fans (if any) to see what insights may be gleaned from there. In addition, further studies can investigate the burgeoning influencer culture in Ghana to understand modern fandom.

Furthermore, quantitative studies need to be conducted in Ghana to explore how personality characteristics, attachment styles and the background of fans influence the nature and intensity of fans' attachment to celebrities. Further studies would also benefit from looking closely at some of the demographic correlates of celebrity followers. Additionally, the social desirability of the CAS needs to be explored further in the Ghanaian context to ensure its continued use. Finally, it will be useful for psychologists to explore intervention strategies to help fans learn more helpful ways of celebrity involvement and prepare fans for potential changes in celebrity statuses.

## 6.7 Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the phenomenon of celebrity followership within the cultural context of Ghana, exploring its manifestations, underlying motives, and implications for fan behaviour and group dynamics. By employing a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, the research bridges the gap between qualitative narratives and quantitative analysis, offering a holistic understanding of the relationship between fans and their idols.

The findings highlight the motivations for creating fan groups, including unique aspects such as engaging in humanitarian work in the celebrity's name and specific practices like streaming parties to boost the celebrity's music on online platforms. The study also underscores the multifaceted role of fan groups, not only as platforms for promoting the celebrity but also as spaces for fostering social capital, emotional support, and personal growth among members. Thus, these groups serve as powerful social units that provide a sense of belonging and community, reflecting broader cultural dynamics. From a practical perspective, the research offers insights to celebrities, fan group managers, and executives on structuring their fan groups to support stronger team identification, ultimately enhancing loyalty to the group and the celebrity.

Looking ahead, the study lays the foundation for future research avenues, including longitudinal studies, examining various types of celebrities, and employing quantitative methods within Ghana to ensure generalisability and insights into peculiar issues that further studies may unearth. As discussions on celebrity followership continue, this study provides fresh insights from a Ghanaian perspective, contributing to advancing knowledge.

Furthermore, this research enriches the literature on celebrity worship by shifting the focus from predominantly pathological perspectives to those considering positive

dimensions, such as fostering social connections. Celebrity worship is not solely an individual phenomenon but also a socially and culturally embedded process, offering valuable insights into media psychology and managing celebrity-fan relationship.



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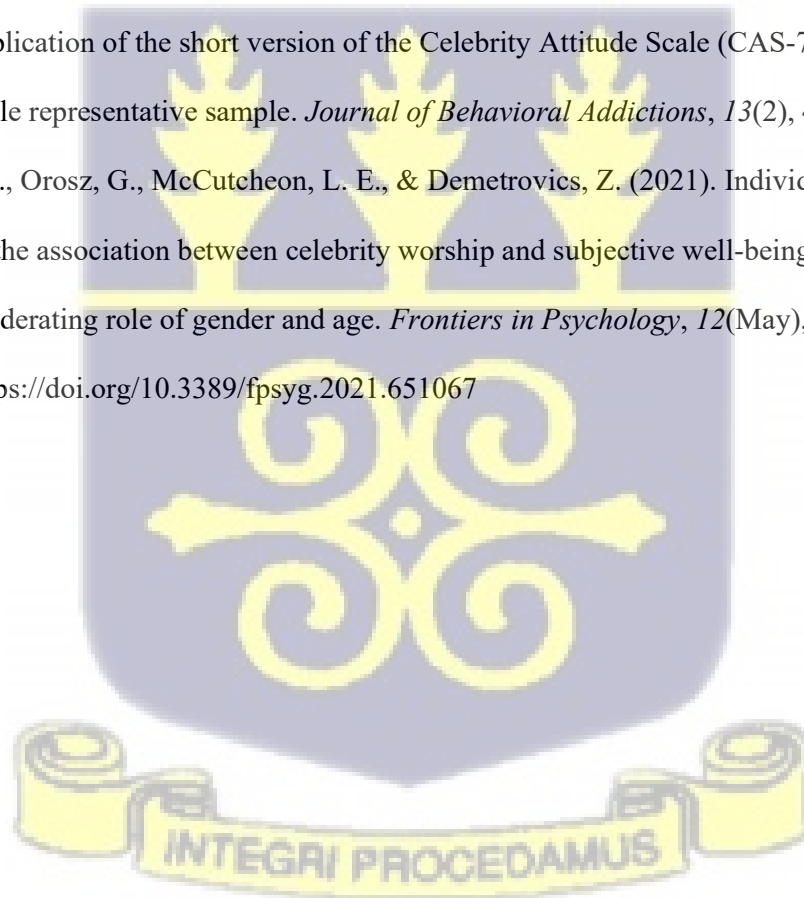
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## APPENDICES

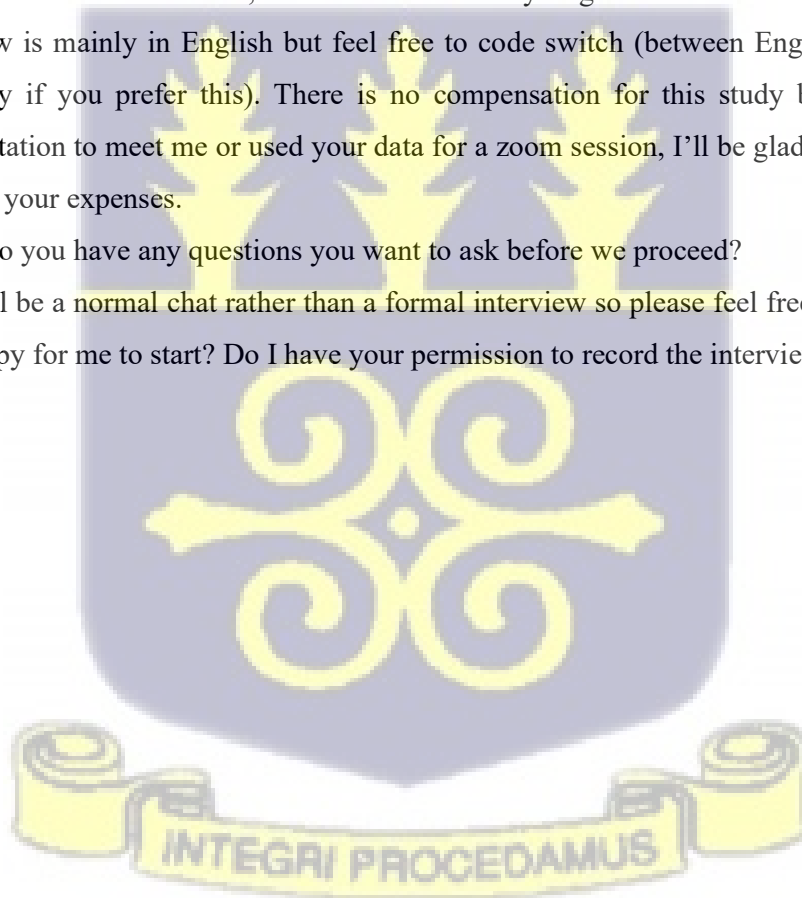
### Appendix A: Research Instruments

#### Appendix A1: Interview guide.

My name is Lillian Phillips-Kumaga. I am a PhD student at the University of Ghana, Department of Psychology. I am researching the topic of “celebrity worship”. The study aims to explore why people follow celebrities and the impact they have on their lives. My study will help social scientists to understand this growing phenomenon of celebrity followership. There are no risks to this study, I just want to understand things from your point of view. If there is a question you feel you do not want to answer, please feel free to let me know so we can stop or move on to another question. This interview is purely for academic purposes and will be audio recorded. The interview will be between forty minutes and about one hour, and the information you give will be well protected. The interview is mainly in English but feel free to code switch (between English and Twi or Twi only if you prefer this). There is no compensation for this study but if you took transportation to meet me or used your data for a zoom session, I’ll be glad to give a token to cover your expenses.

Please do you have any questions you want to ask before we proceed?

This will be a normal chat rather than a formal interview so please feel free and relax. Are you happy for me to start? Do I have your permission to record the interview?



Section C : Participant Agreement

“I have read or have someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding participation in this study and I am willing to give consent for me, to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon Signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records.”

Name of participant.....

Signature.....

Date.....

**I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.**

Name of Person who obtained consent.....

Signature of person who obtained consent.....

Date.....

---

Section C: Participant Agreement

“I have read or have someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding participation in this study and I am willing to give consent for me, to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon Signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records.”

Name of participant.....

Signature.....

Date.....



## Qualitative (semi-structured) Interview guide.

### 1. General Background Information (Demographics): Tell me a bit about yourself

Solicit information about Age/age range, educational status, religion (probe: what denomination? How religious/serious with your religion are you? On a scale on 1-10 (ten being very religious), ethnicity, occupation, marital status? length of time in fan group, any positions held? Where do you live (where are you based?)

### 2. The Fan Group (Executives only)

- a. Can you tell me about this fan group? Why was it formed? When was it formed?
- b. How many members you have?
  - i. Probe: do you have branches or groups? Are they independent of each other or you have common executives?
- c. Tell me about your membership in this group. How long have you been a member of this group?
- d. Tell me about the other members of this group? How does one become a member of this group?
  - i. Probe: any special qualification or social-economic status?
- e. What kind of duties do members perform (are expected to perform) in this group?
- f. What are the activities of this fan group?

### 3. Relationship with Celebrity

- a. Why do you follow this artiste?
- b. What's so special about him/her compared to another person (name a rival)
  - i. Probe: how does he/she inspire you?
- c. How do you interact with this artiste?
  - i. Probe: Do you follow them on social media?
  - ii. Which social media platforms?
  - iii. Why do you follow them on social media?
  - iv. Probe what kind of information do you seek about them on social media? Is there anything more?
  - v. Do they interact back to you? How?
  - vi. How often do you interact with them say in a day?
    1. Probe: how often do you check them out on social media?

4. How do you ensure that you're aware of their posts?
  - a. Have you met him/her personally before?
  - b. (If Yes) Describe your first encounter/meeting with him/her. Describe how you felt.
  - c. (If No) How do you think you will feel when you meet them. Is this something you look forward to?
  - d. Have you attended any of his/her concerts or shows?
  - e. How much do you usually pay for the concerts?
    - i. Probe: do you usually get free tickets, what is the highest amount you have ever paid for a show? What is the highest amount you are willing to pay for a concert?
  - f. Do you own any fan paraphernalia, merchandise (merch) or memorabilia?
    - i. Probe which types and how many.
  - g. Do you belong to any other fan groups?
  - h. How you feel when you hear bad news/bad press about your favourite celebrity [mention their name] in the news or online.
  - i. Have you ever had an argument or fight with someone on an issue concerning this artiste? Can you tell me a bit about that time? What happened?
  - j. How do people outside the group- like your parents, friends, significant others feel about you following this celebrity?
  - k. Some people describe those who follow celebrities - like fans, as "celebrity worshippers". What do you think about this label? would you describe yourself that way? Why or why not?

**5. Psycho-social reasons for following celebrities**

- a. What has following this artiste done for you?
- The Group:**
- b. Why did you join this group?
  - c. Why are you in this fan group?
  - d. What has being in this fan group done for you?
  - e. Can you tell me about the benefits of being in this group?
    - i. Probe: How have you personally benefited from being in this group.
  - f. Do you know the other members of the group?

- i. Probe: have you formed any friendships or relationships from this group?
- g. Which has been more important or beneficial to you? Being in the group (with its benefits) or following the celebrity.
- h. Why do you like being in this group?
- i. Is there any thing more you want to add about following this celebrity of being in this fan group? Thank you.

**Qualitative (semi-structured) Interview guide for Members of fan group.**

**1. General Background Information (Demographics):** Tell me a bit about yourself Solicit information about Age, educational status, religion (probe: what denomination? Pause here let them explain How religious/serious with your religion are you? On a scale on 1-10 (ten being very religious), ethnicity, occupation, marital status? length of time in fan group, any positions held? Where do you live? (Where are you based?)

**2. Relationship with Celebrity**

- a. Why do you follow this artiste?
- b. What's so special about him/her compared to another person (name a rival)
  - i. Probe: how does he/she inspire you?
- c. How do you interact with this artiste?
  - i. Probe: Do you follow them on social media?
  - ii. Which social media platforms?
  - iii. Why do you follow them on social media?
  - iv. Probe what kind of information do you seek about them on social media? Is there anything more?
  - v. Do they interact back to you? How?
  - vi. How often do you interact with them say in a day?
    - 1. Probe: how often do you check them out on social media?
    - 2. How do you ensure that you're aware of their posts?
- d. Have you met him/her personally before?
- e. (If Yes) Describe your first encounter/meeting with him/her. Describe how you felt.
- f. (If No) How do you think you will feel when you meet them. Is this something you look forward to?

- g. Have you attended any of his/her concerts or shows?
- h. How much do you usually pay for the concerts?
  - i. Probe: do you usually get free tickets, what is the highest amount you have ever paid for a show? What is the highest amount you are willing to pay for a concert?
- i. Do you own any fan paraphernalia, merchandise (merch) or memorabilia?
  - i. Probe which types and how many.
- j. Do you belong to any other fan groups?
- k. How you feel when you hear bad news/bad press about your favourite celebrity [mention their name] in the news or online.
- l. Have you ever had an argument or fight with someone on an issue concerning this artiste? Can you tell me a bit about that time? What happened?
- m. How do people outside the group- like your parents, friends, significant others feel about you following this celebrity?
- n. Some people describe those who follow celebrities - like fans, as “celebrity worshippers”. What do you think about this label? would you describe yourself that way? Why or why not?

### 3. Psycho-social reasons for following celebrities

#### The Group:

- a. What has following this artiste done for you?
- b. Why did you join this group?
- c. Why are you in this fan group?
- d. What has being in this fan group done for you?
- e. Can you tell me about the benefits of being in this group?
  - i. Probe: How have you personally benefited from being in this group.
- f. Do you know the other members of the group?
  - i. Probe: have you formed any friendships or relationships from this group?
- g. Which has been more important or beneficial to you? Being in the group (with its benefits) or following the celebrity.
- h. Why do you like being in this group?
- i. Is there any thing more you want to add about following this celebrity of being in this fan group? Thank you.

# Call for Responder

**Is Daddy Lumba your favourite icon?**

**Are you in his fan group?**

**How would you like to share your experience as a fan and a fan group member and the impact it has had on you?**

*Join me in my research to explore the fan base world by clicking this link and filling this questionnaire.*

*It will take about 15 minutes.  
Thank you.*

**Link to questionnaire**

**CLICK HERE**



# Call for Respondents

**Is Shatta Wale your favourite icon?  
Are you in his fan group?  
How would you like to share your  
experience as a fan and a fan group  
member and the impact it has had on you?**

*Join me in my research to  
explore the fan base world by  
clicking this link and filling this  
questionnaire.*

*It will take about 15 minutes.  
Thank you.*

**Link to questionnaire**

**CLICK HERE**

I am Lillian Phillips-Kumaga  
PhD student  
Psychology Department  
University of Ghana

## Contact Us

0244620506 - Lillian  
0558865519 - Collins  
0549580926 - Nhyira

*If you need help filling the questionnaire*

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

# Call for Respondents

**Is Sarkodie your favourite icon?**

**Are you in his fan group?**

**How would you like to share your experience as a fan and a fan group member and the impact it has had on you?**

*Join me in my research to explore the fan base world by clicking this link and filling this questionnaire.*

*It will take about 15 minutes.  
Thank you.*

**Link to questionnaire**

**CLICK HERE**

I am Lillian Phillips-Kumaga  
PhD student  
Psychology Department  
University of Ghana

## Contact Us

0244620506 - Lillian  
0558865519 - Collins  
0549580926 - Nhyira

*If you need help filling the questionnaire*



## **Appendix A2: Quantitative Survey Instrument**

**Title of Research: “Celebrity Worship” and Perceived Impacts: A psychological study of music-based fan groups in Ghana.**

**Principal Investigator: Lillian Phillips-Kumaga**

Date: October 2023

Dear participant,

You are invited to take part in this research study by Lillian Phillips-Kumaga a PhD student at the University of Ghana Legon. The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons why people follow celebrities and the possible impact it has on their lives. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to choose whether to participate or not. If you decide not to participate, you can withdraw at any time without any penalty.

If you agree to participate, you will be required to:

1. Complete a questionnaire. This will take about 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Provide accurate and honest responses to the questions.

### **Risks and Benefits:**

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. Your participation will help gain insights into celebrity followership.

### **Confidentiality:**

Your responses will be kept confidential. Your name will not be asked and any other information you give will not be associated with your response. Data collected will be stored securely and only accessible to the research team.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me on 026 4620506.

### **Consent:**

By proceeding with the survey, you're indicating that:

1. You have read and understood the information provided.
2. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
3. You are 18 years of age and above.

If you wish to participate, please Check the box below or click the “Next” button to begin.

The following statements measure your attitude towards a celebrity. For each statement, choose one response. There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer as openly and thoughtfully as you can.

1. Who is your favourite celebrity? (Please choose one famous person as defined below).

Daddy Lumba

Sarkodie

Shatta Wale

Efyra (Nocturnal)

Sista Afia

Akwaboah

Stonebwoy

Other (please state): .....

2. Are you an executive of the celebrity fan group you belong to? Yes  No

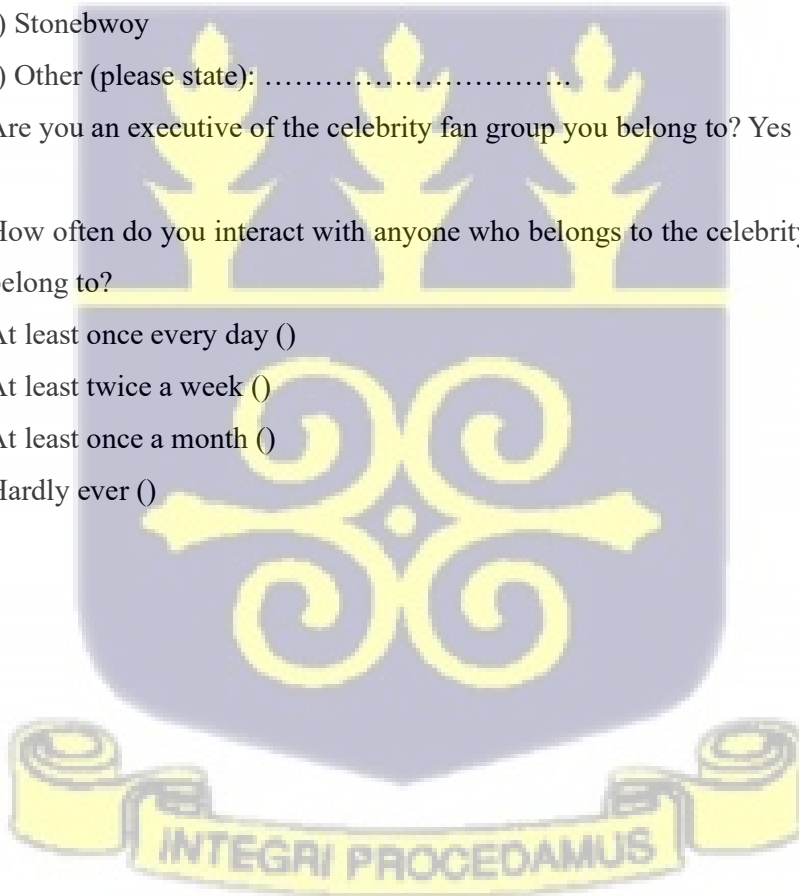
3. How often do you interact with anyone who belongs to the celebrity fan group you belong to?

At least once every day

At least twice a week

At least once a month

Hardly ever



**Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement about your favorite celebrity. For each statement, indicate how you think about your favorite celebrity.**

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	If I were to meet my most favorite celebrity in person, he/she would already somehow know that I am his/her biggest fan.	1	2	3	4	5
2	One of the main reasons I maintain an interest in my favourite celebrity is that doing so gives me a temporary escape from life's problems.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I share with my favourite celebrity a special bond that cannot be described in words.	1	2	3	4	5
4	When something bad happens to my favourite celebrity I feel it happened to me.	1	2	3	4	5
5	When my favourite celebrity fails or loses at something I feel like a failure myself.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The successes of my favourite celebrity are my successes too.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I consider my favourite celebrity as my soul mate.	1	2	3	4	5
8	When my favourite celebrity dies, I will feel like dying too.	1	2	3	4	5
9	If someone gave me several thousand cedis to do with as I please, I would consider spending it on a personal possession (like a t-shirt or other attire) once used by my favourite celebrity.	1	2	3	4	5
10	When something good happens to my favourite celebrity I feel like it happened to me.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I am obsessed with the details of my favourite celebrity's life.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I have pictures and/or souvenirs of my favourite celebrity which I always keep in exactly the same place.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I love to talk with others who admire my favourite celebrity.	1	2	3	4	5

14	Keeping up with news about my favourite celebrity is an entertaining pastime.	1	2	3	4	5
15	It's enjoyable just to be with others who like my favourite celebrity.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I enjoy watching, reading, or listening to my favourite celebrity because it means a good time.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Learning the life story of my favourite celebrity is a lot of fun.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I like watching and hearing about my favourite celebrity when I am with a large group of people.	1	2	3	4	5
19	My friends and I like to discuss what my favourite celebrity has done	1	2	3	4	5
20	If I were lucky enough to meet my favourite celebrity, and he/she asked me to do something illegal as a favour, I would probably do it.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I have frequent thoughts about my celebrity, even when I don't want to.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I often feel compelled to learn the personal habits of my favourite celebrity.	1	2	3	4	5
23	News about my celebrity is a pleasant break from a harsh world.	1	2	3	4	5



For each statement, please provide a response that best reflects **how central or important that description is to your sense of who you are.**

		Not at all important to who I am	Not important to who I am	Indifferent	Important to who I am	Extremely important to who I am
1	The similarity I share with others in my group(s).	1	2	3	4	5
2	My rebelliousness.	1	2	3	4	5
3	My family nationality or nationalities.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My need to be completely distinct and unique from everyone else.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The memberships I have in various groups.	1	2	3	4	5
6	My creativity.	1	2	3	4	5
7	The places where I have lived.	1	2	3	4	5
8	My sense of being different from others.	1	2	3	4	5
9	My sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
10	My complete individuality.	1	2	3	4	5
11	My gender group.	1	2	3	4	5
12	My boldness.	1	2	3	4	5
13	My native language.	1	2	3	4	5
14	My nonconformity.	1	2	3	4	5
15	My being a citizen of my country.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My sense of independence from others.	1	2	3	4	5
17	My being a member of my favourite celebrity's fan group-	1	2	3	4	5

**Please indicate the extent to which you identify with your celebrity fan group.**

		Not at all	Slightly	Indifferent	To some extent	To a great extent
1	My celebrity fan group is an important part of who I am	1	2	3	4	5
2	I put my fan group above everything else	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am passionate about my fan group	1	2	3	4	5
4	When there is negative news about the fan group, I feel terrible	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am devoted to the fan group	1	2	3	4	5
6	It is very important for me to support my celebrity fan group	1	2	3	4	5
7	I talk about my fan group all the time	1	2	3	4	5
8.	At every opportunity, I show to others that I support my fan group	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I wear the fan group merch/paraphernalia whenever I attend group events	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I often overreact when it comes to the performance of my celebrity fan group.	1	2	3	4	5



Please use the following scale in response to the items below.  
(bonding)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. There are several people in this group I trust to help solve my problems	5	4	3	2	1
2. There is someone in this group I can turn to for advice about making very important decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
3. There is no one in this group that I feel comfortable talking to about intimate personal problems. *	5	4	3	2	1
4. When I feel lonely, there are several people in this group I can talk to.	5	4	3	2	1
5. If I needed an emergency loan of 500 Ghs, I know someone in this group I can turn to	5	4	3	2	1
6. The people I interact with in this group would put their reputations on the line for me.	5	4	3	2	1
7. The people I interact with in this group would be good job references for me	5	4	3	2	1
8. The people I interact with in this group would share their last cedis with me.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I do not know people in this group well enough to get them to do anything important. (reversed)	5	4	3	2	1
10. The people I interact with in this group would help me fight an injustice.	5	4	3	2	1

**Please use the following scale in response to the items below.  
(bridging)**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Interacting with people in this group makes me interested in things that happen outside of my town.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Interacting with people in this group makes me want to try new things.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Interacting with people in this group makes me interested in what people different from me are thinking.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Talking with people in this group makes me curious about other places in the world.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Interacting with people in this group makes me feel like part of a larger community.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Interacting with people in this group makes me feel connected to the bigger picture.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Interacting with people in this group reminds me that everyone in the world is connected	5	4	3	2	1
8. I am willing to spend time to support general group activities.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Interacting with people in this group gives me new people to talk to.	5	4	3	2	1
10. In this group, I come in contact with new people all the time.	5	4	3	2	1

**Please use the following scale in response to the items below.**

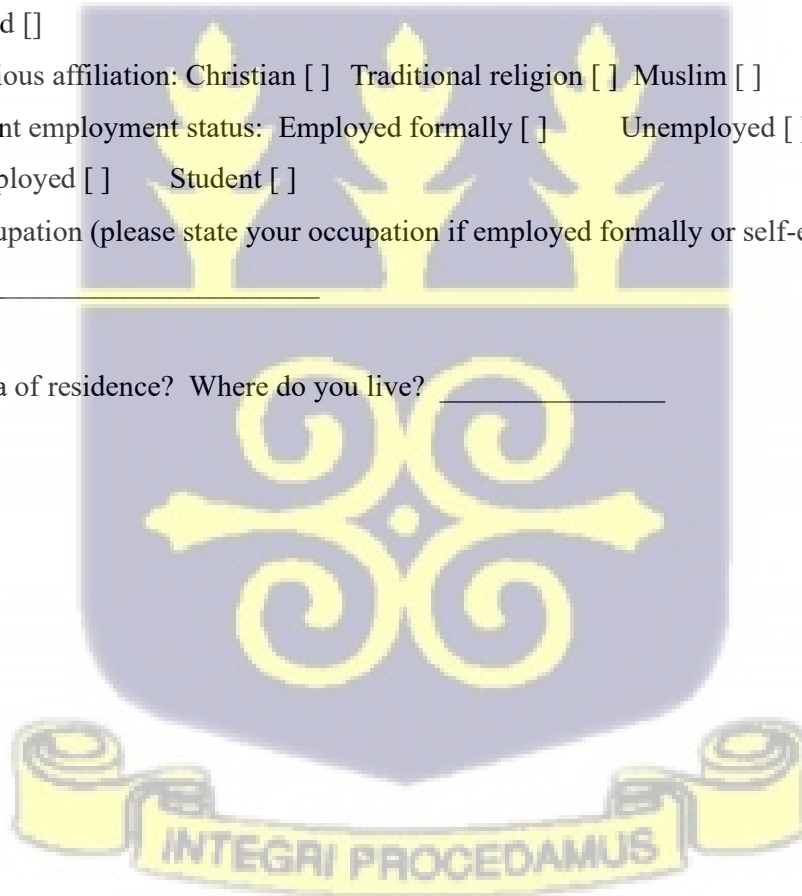
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. The world is too complex for me.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I cannot make sense of what's going on in the world.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I find it easy to predict what will happen next in society.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I don't feel I belong to this fan group.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I feel close to other people in this fan group	5	4	3	2	1
6. This fan group is a source of comfort for me	5	4	3	2	1
7. I have something valuable to give to the world.	5	4	3	2	1
8. My daily activities do not produce anything worthwhile for my community.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I have nothing important to contribute to society.	5	4	3	2	1
10. The world is becoming a better place for everyone.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Society has stopped making progress.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Society isn't improving for people like me.	5	4	3	2	1





## Demographics

1. Sex: Male  Female
2. Age: 18-25  26- 33  34- 41  42 – 49  50 and above
3. Education Level: No school  Primary  Middle/JHS  Secondary   
Tertiary
4. In what region is your hometown?  Greater-Accra Region  Volta Region  Oti  
Region  Eastern Region  Central Region  Ashanti Region  Bono-East Region   
Ahafo Region  Bono Region  Savannah Region  North-East Region  Western-  
North Region  Western Region  Northern Region  Upper-East Region  Upper-  
West Region
5. Marital status: Single  Married  Co-habiting  Divorced   
Widowed
6. Religious affiliation: Christian  Traditional religion  Muslim  No religion
9. Current employment status: Employed formally  Unemployed   
Self-employed  Student
10. Occupation (please state your occupation if employed formally or self-employed)  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Area of residence? Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix B: Summarised Tables of Analysis**

**Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS)**

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component		
	1	2	3
CW18_es	.869		
CW19_es	.840		
CW21_es	.802		
CW20_es	.767		
CW17_es	.742		
CW16_es	.702		
CW6_ip	.683	.320	
CW15_es	.569	.540	
CW7_ip	.560	.479	
CW4_ip	.478	.456	
CW23_b p		.807	
CW11_b p		.752	
CW10_ip		.732	
CW31_b p		.705	
CW26_b p	.321	.680	
CW25_ip		.638	
CW8_ip	.431	.634	
CW14_ip	.454	.604	
CW13_ip	.524	.545	
CW12_ip	.510	.543	
CW9_ip	.428	.506	.479

CW2_ip	.322	.432	
CW1_es			-.903

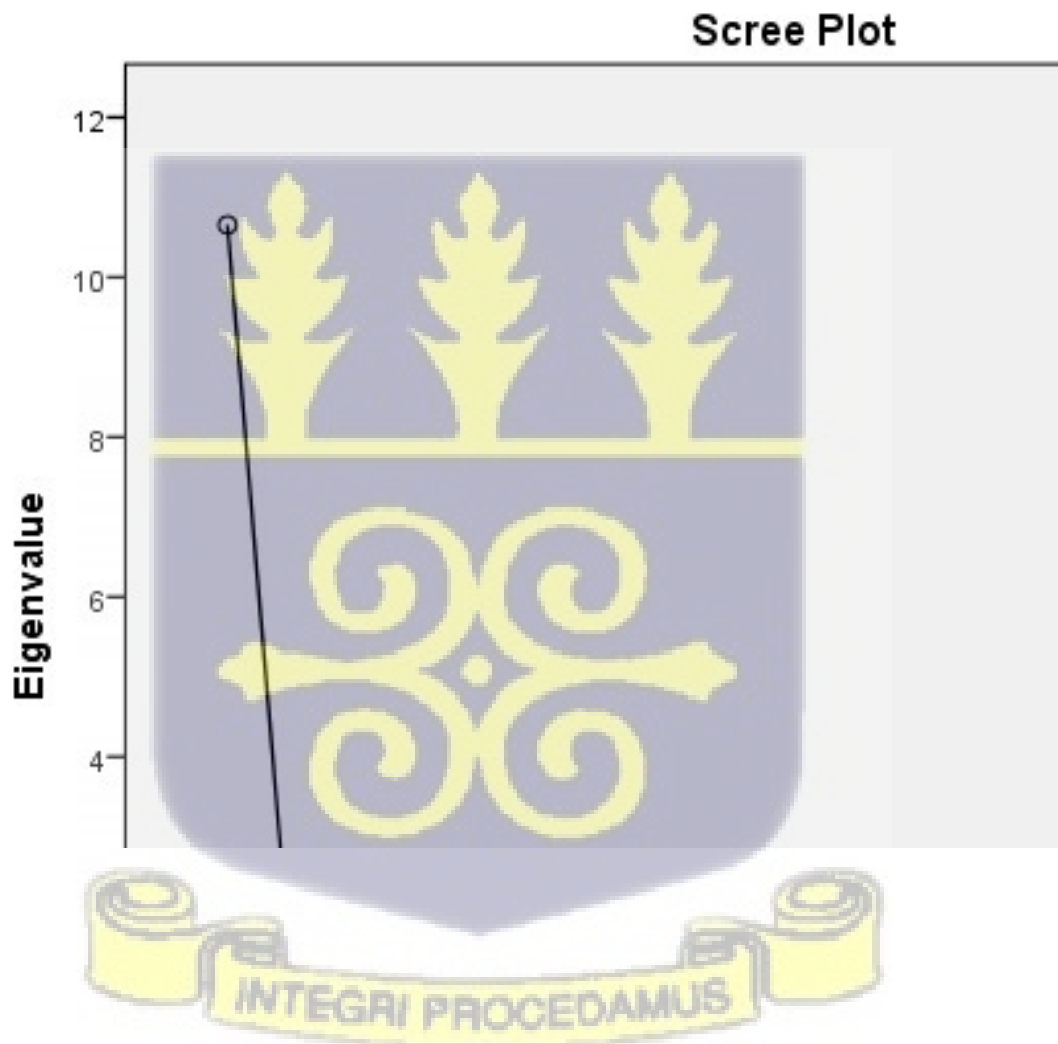
Extraction Method: Principal Component

Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser

Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.



**CW one factor comparison**

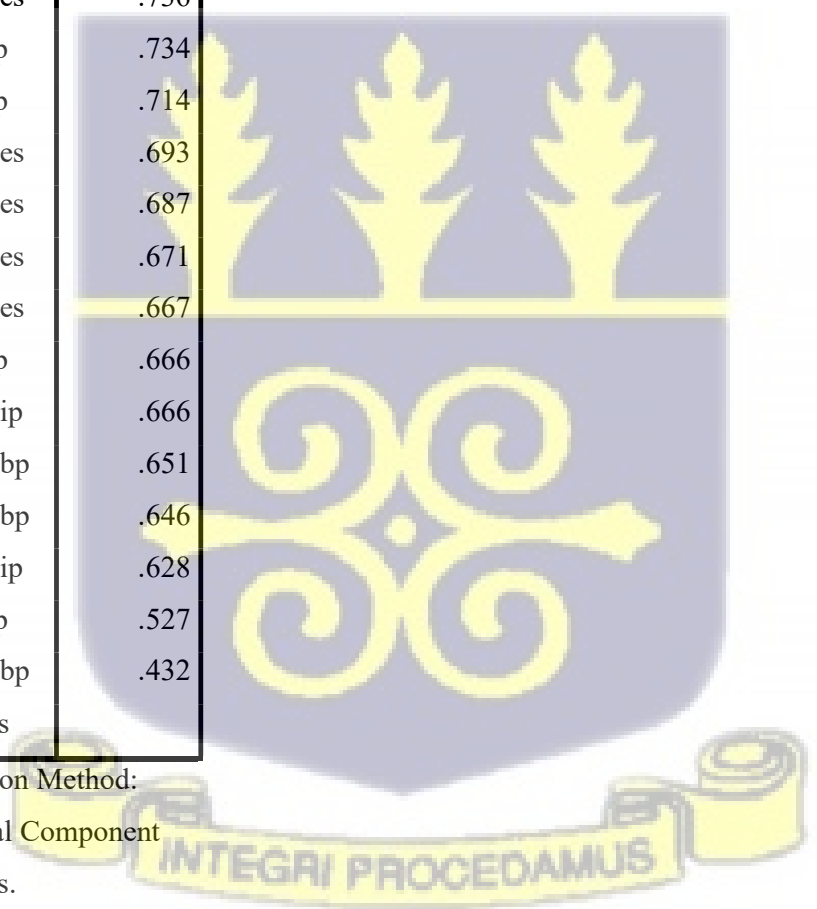
### Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component
	1
CW13_ip	.790
CW15_es	.768
CW7_ip	.761
CW14_ip	.759
CW20_es	.745
CW12_ip	.744
CW8_ip	.744
CW26_bp	.736
CW18_es	.736
CW9_ip	.734
CW6_ip	.714
CW19_es	.693
CW21_es	.687
CW16_es	.671
CW17_es	.667
CW4_ip	.666
CW10_ip	.666
CW23_bp	.651
CW11_bp	.646
CW25_ip	.628
CW2_ip	.527
CW31_bp	.432
CW1_es	

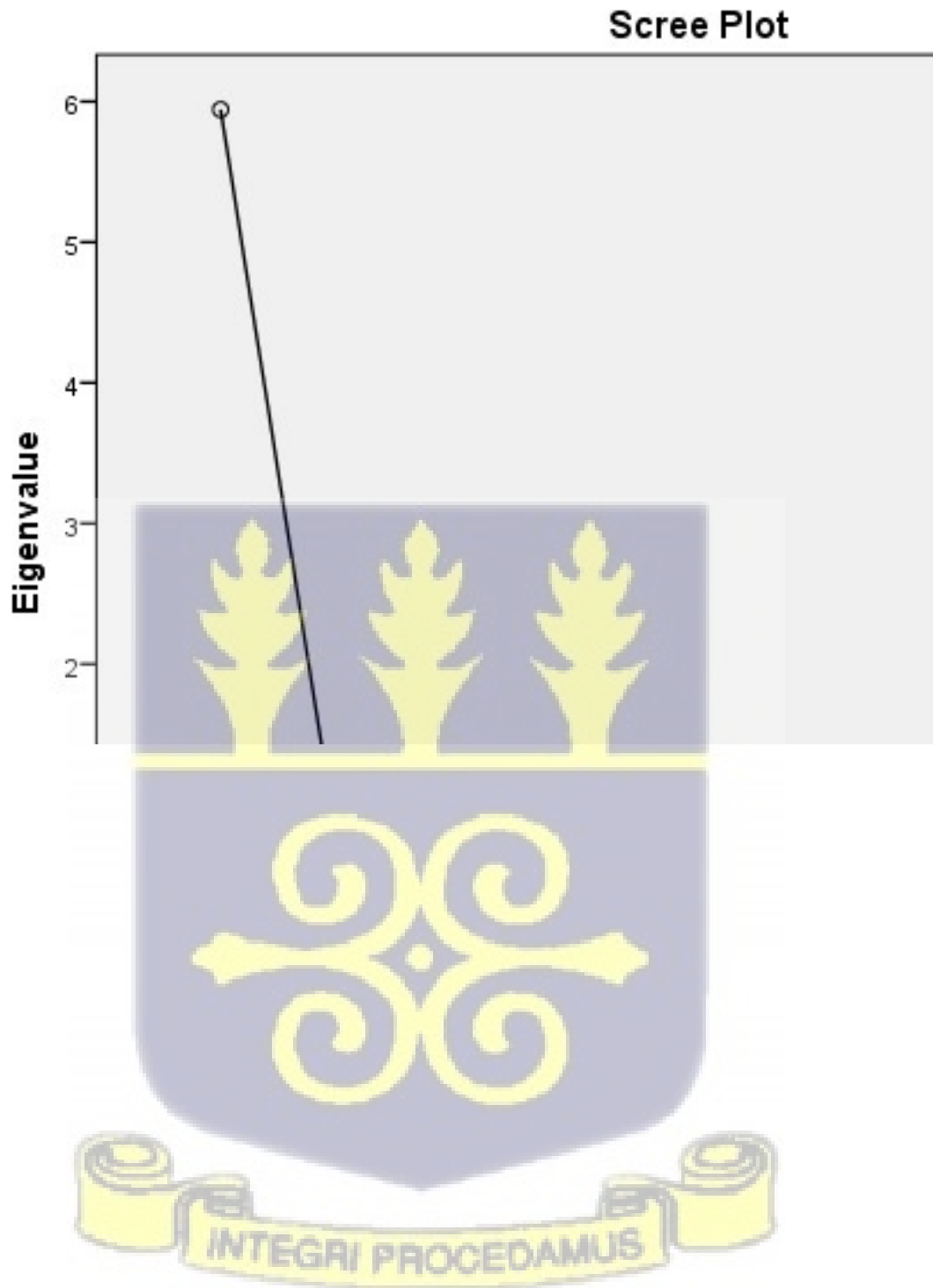
Extraction Method:

Principal Component  
Analysis.

a. 1 components  
extracted.



EFA for Team Identification scale



Component  
Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component
	1
FanI4	.832
FanI7	.832
FanI9	.809
FanI8	.791
FanI6	.780
FanI2	.776
FanI5	.764
FanI3	.719
FanI10	.710
FanI1	.682

Extraction Method:

Principal Component  
Analysis.

a. 1 components  
extracted.

### EFA for Social Identity and Personal Identity (SIPI)

**Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component	
	1	2
SIPI16	.811	
SIPI14	.780	
SIPI12	.756	
SIPI11	.742	
SIPI13	.741	
SIPI10	.711	
SIPI17	.708	
SIPI9	.705	
SIPI4	.698	

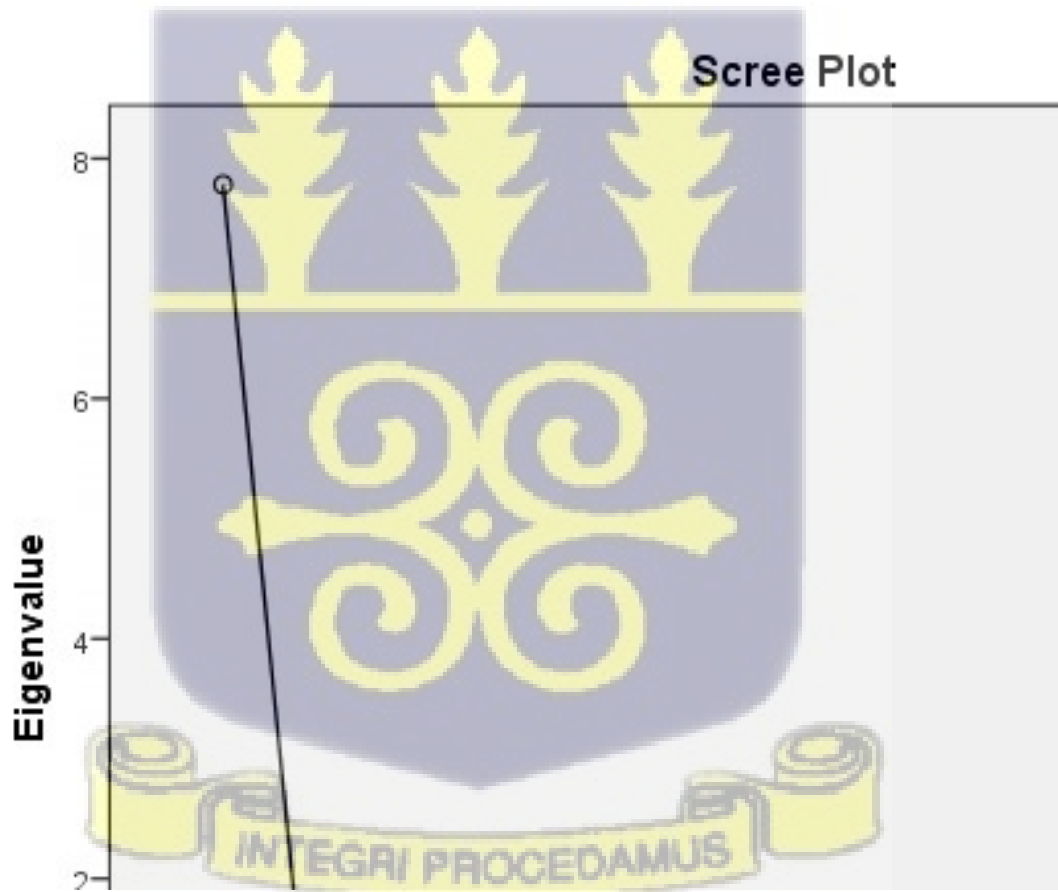
SIP17	.680	
SIP15	.660	
SIP18	.653	
SIP15	.637	
SIP16	.633	.350
SIP12	.552	.473
SIP13	.550	.475
SIP11	.343	.473

Extraction Method:

Principal Component

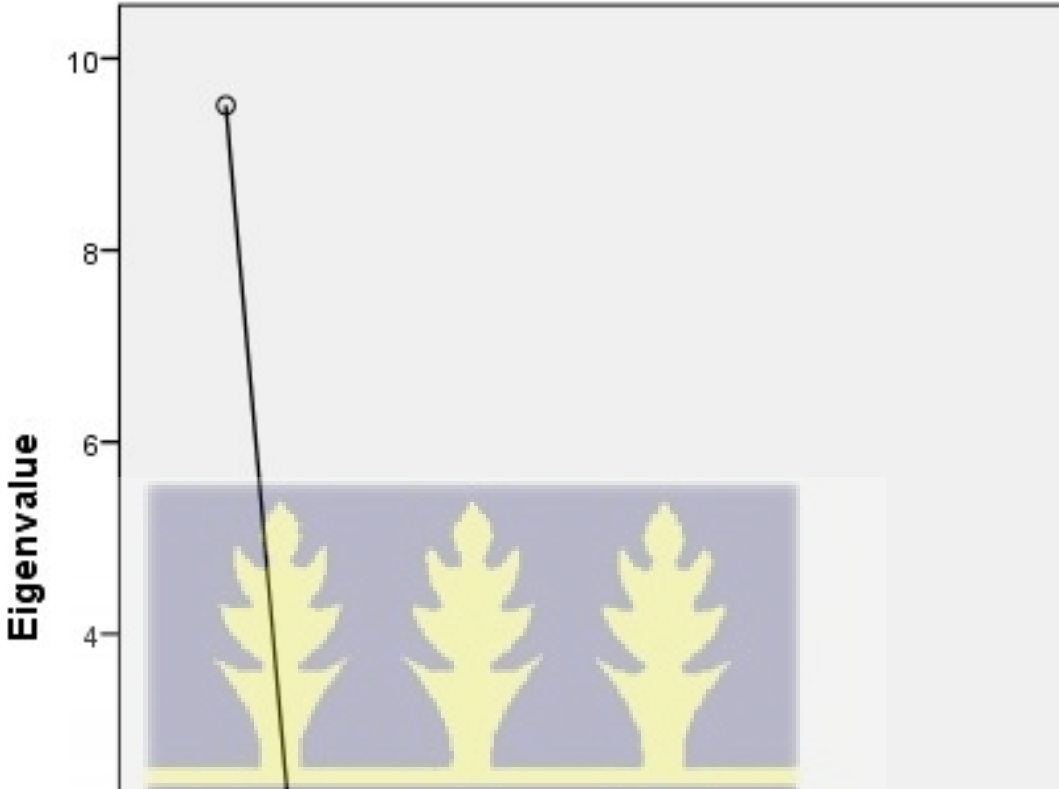
Analysis.

a. 2 components extracted.



**EFA for Social Capital**

# Scree Plot



**Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component		
	1	2	3
SCb9	.824		
SCb8	.783		
SCb10	.780		
SC8	.761		
SC5	.760		
SCb6	.757		-.378
SCb7	.754		-.333
SCb3	.744		
SC2	.739		
SCb2	.735		
SCb5	.710	.312	
SCb4	.707	.351	
SCb1	.707		
SC6	.680	-.346	.304
SC3r	-.676	.312	
SC7	.671		.392
SC9r	-.648	.322	
SC1	.591		
SC4		.708	.430
SC10		.685	.455

Extraction Method: Principal

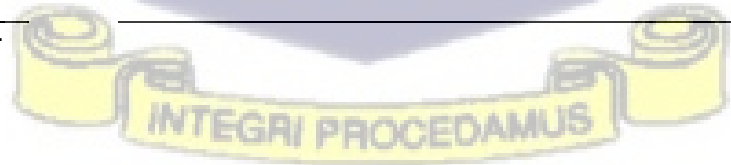
Component Analysis.

a. 3 components extracted.



	Male	Female	Age	No formal educ	Primary	Middle/ JSS	Secondary	Tertiary	Formal_Employment	Unemployed	Self_employed	Student	Celebrity Attachment	Team Iden.	Social Capital	Soc& Pers.Iden
Male	1.00	1.000*	-0.04	-0.08	0.08	0.07	.132*	-.140*	0.00	0.09	0.05	-.135*	0.03	-0.03	-0.01	-0.04
Female	1.000**	1.00	0.04	0.08	0.08	-0.07	-.132*	.140*	0.00	-0.09	-0.05	.135*	-0.03	0.03	0.01	0.04
Age	-0.04	0.04	1.00	0.01	0.07	.156**	-0.02	-0.05	.356**	-.145*	0.10	-.391**	0.08	.189**	.149**	0.04
No formal educ	-0.08	0.08	0.01	1.00	0.00	-0.01	-0.04	-0.07	-0.04	.126*	-0.03	-0.03	0.01	0.00	0.01	-0.05
Primary	-0.08	0.08	-0.07	0.00	1.00	-0.01	-0.04	-0.07	-0.04	.126*	-0.03	-0.03	-0.06	-0.05	-.138*	-0.09
Middle/ JSS	0.07	-0.07	.156**	-0.01	0.01	1.00	-.175**	-.314**	-0.05	0.00	.146*	-0.10	-0.06	-0.03	-0.07	0.01
Secondary	.132*	-.132*	-0.02	-0.04	0.04	-.175**	1.00	-.865**	-.115*	.133*	.206**	-.205**	0.08	0.04	0.10	-0.02
Tertiary	-.140*	.140*	-0.05	-0.07	0.07	-.314**	-.865**	1.00	.143*	-.155**	-.261**	.251**	-0.04	-0.02	-0.05	0.03
Formal_Employment	0.00	0.00	.356**	-0.04	0.04	-0.05	-.115*	.143*	1.00	-.347**	-.437**	-.394**	0.01	.151**	0.10	0.01
Unemployed	0.09	-0.09	-.145*	.126*	.126*	0.00	.133*	-.155**	-.347**	1.00	-.263**	-.237**	-0.11	-.130*	-.151**	-0.02
Self_employed	0.05	-0.05	0.10	-0.03	0.03	.146*	.206**	-.261**	-.437**	-.263**	1.00	-.299**	0.05	-0.09	0.02	-0.06
Student	-.135*	.135*	-.391**	-0.03	0.03	-0.10	-.205**	.251**	-.394**	-.237**	-.299**	1.00	0.03	0.03	-0.01	0.07
Celebrity Attachment	0.03	-0.03	0.08	0.01	0.06	-0.06	0.08	-0.04	0.01	-0.11	0.05	0.03	1.00	.673**	.679**	.484**
Team Iden.	-0.03	0.03	.189**	0.00	0.05	-0.03	0.04	-0.02	.151**	-.130*	-0.09	0.03	.673**	1.00	.681**	.566**
Social Capital	-0.01	0.01	.149**	0.01	.138*	-0.07	0.10	-0.05	0.10	-.151**	0.02	-0.01	.679**	.681**	1.00	.508**
Social & Pers. Iden	-0.04	0.04	0.04	-0.05	0.09	0.01	-0.02	0.03	0.01	-0.02	-0.06	0.07	.484**	.566**	.508**	1.00

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).





## Appendix C: Departmental Approval



# UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

## DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

### SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Ref. No.: PSYC 2/33/03  
.....

June 8, 2022

The Administrator  
Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH)  
Office of Research Innovation and Development  
University of Ghana  
Legon

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**  
**MISS LILIAN PHILLIPS KUMAGA I.D: 10092907**

The above-named student is a PhD Psychology student in the University of Ghana.

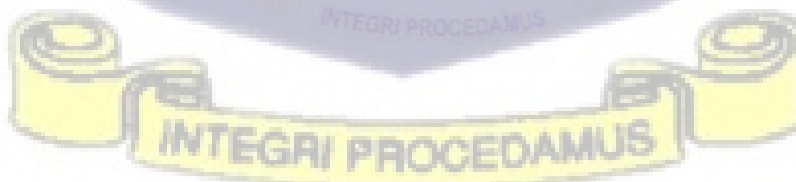
As part of the requirement, Miss Lillian Phillips Kumaga has to write and submit an original thesis. The title of her thesis is “Celebrity Worship” and impacts: A psychological investigation of music fan-based groups in Ghana”. She is planning to conduct her study with fan groups in Accra in the Greater Accra Region and Kumasi in the Ashanti Region.

She is applying to your board for institutional approval/clearance to enable her carry on with her research work.

She has received approval from our department. Your assistance in reviewing her proposal is appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. Joseph Osafo  
(Head of Department)



COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

• P. O. Box Lg 84, Legon, Accra-ghana. • Telephone: +233 (0) 509 144 101 / 055 634 6580  
• Email: psychology@ug.edu.gh • Website: www.ug.edu.gh

## Appendix D: Ethical Clearance Letter



# UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

P. O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana

My Ref. No: ECH.352/21-22

October 20, 2023

Lillian Phillips-Kumaga  
Department of Psychology  
University of Ghana  
Legon

### ETHICAL CLEARANCE (ECH 352/ 21-22)

The Ethics Committee for the Humanities (ECH) conducted a renewal review and approved your protocol titled:

#### **“CELEBRITY WORSHIP” AND IMPARTS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF MUSIC FAN-BASED GROUPS IN GHANA**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: **LILLIAN PHILLIPS-KUMAGA**

Please note that the final review report must be submitted to the Committee at the completion of the study. Your research records may be audited at any time during or after the implementation. Any modification of this research project must be submitted to ECH for review and approval prior to implementation.

Please report all serious adverse events related to this study to ECH within seven (7) days verbally and in writing within fourteen (14) days.

This certificate is valid until October 19, 2024. You are required to submit annual reports for continuing review.

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

**Professor C. Charles Mate-Kole**  
ECH Chair

Cc: Dr. Annabella Osei-Tutu, Department of Psychology, UG  
Dr. C. B. Wiafe-Akenteng, Department of Psychology, UG

Tel: +233-303933866

Email: [ech@ug.edu.gh](mailto:ech@ug.edu.gh)

## Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH)

Official Use only

Protocol number

### PROTOCOL CONSENT FORM

#### Section A- BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Title of Study:	“Celebrity Worship”: An exploration of psycho-social factors in fan-based groups in Ghana.
Principal Investigator:	Lillian Phillips-Kumaga
Certified Protocol Number	

#### Section B– CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

##### General Information about Research

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons why people follow celebrities and how it impacts their lives.

The Interview is expected to last about an hour, while the survey will last approximately 20 minutes.

The study involves an interview, which will be recorded and a questionnaire, which will be given to participants to answer some questions.

### **Benefits/Risks of the study**

This study will help social scientists especially psychologists understand the growing phenomenon of celebrity followership and provide any interventions where necessary. No serious risks are anticipated in this study.

In completing the survey, you may or may not experience some anger or annoyance at some of the questions. This is normal and will not pose any risk to you. Your reactions and answers will provide the researcher an understanding of impact from a psychological point of view. Your participating in this study will help you understand your emotions but more importantly you will help us, and society better understand the relationship between fans and celebrities.

There are no serious risks or potential hazards in participating in this study. However, participants who break down or show extreme anger will be counseled to stop the interview or filling the questionnaire or referred to a clinical psychologist if they request it.

### **Confidentiality**

Audio recordings of all interviews will be kept securely by the researcher. Only the researcher and their assistant will know which groups participants belong to. No participant will be identified by name.

Participants are assured of strict confidentiality. Pseudo names will be used in the thesis when the interview is transcribed to protect the participants

### **Compensation**

There is no compensation for the study. However, where interviews are done online or by telephone, participants will be compensated for their data or airtime used with GHC 10 data or airtime.

## **Withdrawal from Study**

Participation in this study is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time they wish to without penalty.

Participants will not be adversely affected if they decline to participate or later stops participating.

Participants or the participant's legal representative will be informed in a timely manner if information becomes available that may be relevant to the participant's willingness to continue participation or withdraw.

Participation may be terminated by researcher if participants indicate their unwillingness to participate in the study.

## **Contact for Additional Information**

Kindly contact the principal investigator for answers to any questions and clarifications about this study and any research related injury.

Kindly contact the principal investigator: Ms. Lillian Phillips-Kumaga; University of Ghana-Department of Psychology, email: [lephillips@st.ug.edu.gh](mailto:lephillips@st.ug.edu.gh) or on mobile number 0264620506

- If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant in this study you may contact the Administrator of the Ethics Committee for Humanities, ISSER, University of Ghana at [ech@ug.edu.gh](mailto:ech@ug.edu.gh) or 00233- 303-933-866.

Section C- PARTICIPANT  
AGREEMENT

**"I have read or have had someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding participation in this study, and am willing to give consent for me, my child/ward to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records."**

---

Name of Participant

---

Signature or mark of Participant

Date

**If the participant cannot read and or understand the form themselves, a witness must sign here:**

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer. All questions were answered, and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

---

Name of witness

---

Signature of witness / Mark

Date

I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

---

Name of Person who Obtained Consent

---

Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

Date

