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**ROLE MODELS:**

**CONCEPTUALIZATION AND SCALE DEVELOPMENT**

A Dissertation in

Mass Communications

by

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## ABSTRACT

Many media consumers find themselves looking to media figure as role models. This dissertation provides a first look at existing literature and conceptualizations of role models. Qualitative investigation involved interviewing participants about their mediated role models. Following the scale developmental process, the next steps involved creation and pretesting of scale items. Once an exploratory factor analysis identified a perceived role model scale consisting of three subscales (values, credibility, impression), a third study was conducted to complete a confirmatory analysis (CFA). Results of the CFA demonstrate the role model scale as a separate construct but highly related to similar theoretical constructs such as parasocial relationships and wishful identification.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Every child grows up looking towards their parents or older siblings for ideas about which behaviors to exemplify, feelings to embody, and values to internalize. As children grow up and become exposed to figures outside their immediate environment, including those from mass media, more examples of role models become available. For example, the Baby Boomer generation had celebrity icons such as Walter Cronkite and television shows like *The Partridge Family* and *Star Trek*. Generation X had *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (e.g., Bacon-Smith, 1992; Pearson, 2007; Tulloch & Jenkins, 1995) and *The Golden Girls* television shows, or athletes like Wayne Gretzky; and millennials grew up with the *Full House* television series and the book/movie series of *Harry Potter* (e.g., Gierzynski & Eddy, 2013) or various icons like LeBron James and Malala Yousifazi. Overall, the availability of role models in the media has served audiences as an alternative source of examples reflecting behaviors, personalities, morals, and identities that audiences can explore and adopt as their own.

Academic theories on fandom suggest the importance of role models, as some audience members actively seek out specific media references to find a deep and meaningful connection that allows them to explore their self-identities comfortably (see Bacon-Smith, 1992; Gierzynski & Eddy, 2013; Greene & Adams-Price 1990; Jenkins 2012). In her book, Bacon-Smith (1992) argues that women's involvement with the Star Trek fandom empowered them and encouraged them to explore aspects of their identities they were previously unable to do because of the progressive content and openness of the fandom community. Duffet (2013) investigates fandoms role in assisting viewers in exploring other genders and their sexual orientation. Jenkins' (2012)

book *Textual Poachers* dissects the various fandom activities and how people utilize them to explore their current and potential self-identities. Overall, he argues that audience members seek out or find role models in their fandom(s) to explore or support their self-identities in new ways that they could not find in their immediate environments. Gierzynski and Eddy (2013) did not study the active fandom of audience individuals, but rather how a generation was influenced by growing up with a massively popular book and movie series. Their large-scale investigation found a strong correlation between the prevalent morals and values in the *Harry Potter* series and those of the millennial generation compared to other generations.

Recently, the research-based, non-profit Geena Davis Institute on Gender in the Media<sup>1</sup> published their findings on what they and their partners call “The Scully Effect.” In the 1990s, Dr. Dana Scully of the hit science-fiction television show *The X-Files* was one of the first media representations of a complex female character in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). “The Scully Effect” (2018) conducted a systematic study of the influence of Dr. Scully on women, finding that a strong and intelligent female representation influenced surveyed women’s attitudes toward STEM and gave them the confidence to pursue STEM. The majority of women in the study familiar with Scully’s character identified Dr. Scully as a role model. The media coverage of this study brought more attention to the importance of gender representation in entertainment media, particularly for women interested in STEM (Guzior, 2018; Lane, 2018).

Media psychology research has additionally investigated how publicized coverage of a famous individual can be influential in various ways (e.g., Brown, 2010; Brown & Basil, 1995; Brown et al., 2003; Dix et al., 2010). Multiple health communication studies have indicated that

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<sup>1</sup> The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in the Media is dedicated to funding research on the importance of gender balance, inclusion, and reduction of negative stereotyping in entertainment media.

public role models in the media can influence audience members' attitudes, behaviors, and health intentions (e.g., Carpentier & Parrott, 2016; Brown & Basil, 1995; Kosenko et al., 2016). Hoffner and Cohen (2012, 2015, 2017) conducted multiple studies that examined various aspects of the representation of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) in the television series *Monk*, including audiences' attitudes towards OCD, the impact on OCD stereotypes, intentions to disclose, representational impact on audiences who have anxiety disorders, and perceptions of mental disorders in general. Other studies have shown public figures' positive influences on wildlife conservation (Brown, 2010), the prevention of child abuse (Brown & Basil, 1995), and purchase intentions and behaviors (Dix et al., 2010).

While the study of the effects of mediated personae<sup>2</sup> remains important because audience individuals can look toward them as role models, there is not a succinct or agreed-upon construct of a mediated role model. The existing literature problematically relies on culturally understood vernacular rather than using an academically developed concept. For example, Brown (2010) argued that Steve Irwin's status as a "hero and role model for wildlife conservation" would influence audiences' behaviors in their own lives. He found that audience members' involvement with the death of Steve Irwin directly influenced their increased support for wildlife conservation, but the extent to which Steve Irwin was perceived as a role model was not measured. Additionally, multiple studies on the "Angelina Effect" (similar to the "Scully Effect") suggest that Angelina Jolie's status as a celebrity put her in a position as a role model for women facing breast cancer, ultimately impacting their awareness and decision-making (Borzekowski et al.,

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<sup>2</sup> A "persona" is defined by Horton and Wohl (1956) as "the typical and indigenous figure of the social scene presented by radio and television" (pg. 216). Existing researchers have adopted part of the term, referring to "mediated persona" for figures in the media (see Dibble, Hartmann, & Rosaen, 2016; Fraser & Brown, 2002; Klimmt, Hartmann, & Schramm, 2006; Ramasubramanian & Kornfield, 2012).

2014; Evans et al., 2015; Kosenko et al., 2016). Again, while there is a clear impact on audiences, these studies are measuring involvement with the mediated persona.

A large portion of existing literature on character attachment concepts such as identification, wishful identification, and parasocial interaction/relationship colloquially refer to role models in their research (e.g., Brown, 2010; Carpentier & Parrott, 2016); however, they are often referring to a culturally prominent celebrity in their study who could disseminate information, modeling attitudes or behaviors for audiences. Studies such as these rely on common cultural meanings of mediated role models (i.e., celebrities or famous fictional characters). This leads to the inconsistent understanding of whether audiences are perceiving mediated personae as role models or if they are influenced by recent media attention to an event such as AIDS (Brown & Basil, 1995), breast cancer (Kosenko et al., 2016), wildlife conservation (Brown, 2010), or mental illnesses and disorders (Hoffner & Cohen, 2012; 2015; 2017; 2018). Instead, mediated role models should be more clearly explicated, making future research more consistent by bringing a valid and reliable measure and understanding to the concept.

Existing conceptual frameworks such as social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001), character attachment (see Moyer-Gusé, 2008), and celebrity endorsements (see Ohanian, 1990) have attempted to document the impact of mediated role models. By highlighting the importance of continuity in studying how role models influence audiences, the explication and testing of a measure will benefit these theoretical areas of research. This dissertation will henceforth refer to this measure as a *role model* (RM). The present dissertation will argue that theoretical applications and concepts of character attachment should not loosely refer to role models in the media but rather conceptually separate and measure RM as a distinct construct.

The explication of this concept will contribute to media psychology theories such as character attachment and involvement and marketing research on celebrity endorsers by giving media scholars a new variable to utilize in understanding the audience's perspectives and the

impacts of their involvement with media personae. A preponderance of research focuses on the psychological processes leading to an audience's attachment to mediated personae; however, the certainty of genuinely studying the effects of an RM does not exist in any formal definition of methodological practice. Having a distinctive and measurable concept will help researchers understand how the strength of one's perception of a role model affects their belief systems, behaviors, and more. Furthermore, research on the impact of positive representation could be valuable in using an RM scale to analyze various properties of media portrayals.

To fully understand the psychological and representative impact of an RM, it is necessary to explore the existing literature, build a well-explicated conceptual understanding, and develop a valid and reliable measure. The following content begins the explication process by examining the current literature related to models and role models in the media. Chapter 2 discusses existing literature acknowledging that role models in the media exist and impact audiences. This chapter explicitly covers how an RMs relates to Social Cognitive Theory and its application to research that focuses on the effects of celebrity media coverage and their roles in product endorsements. It then considers concepts related to role models, such as identification, wishful identification, parasocial interaction/relationship, and opinion leadership literature. Chapter 3 then explicitly discusses the existing literature on defining and measuring role models before proposing a definition for an RM. Chapter 4 begins to outline the scale development methodological steps taken.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Media Research Evoking Role Models as a Concept**

Academic interest on the influence of role models in the media is evident throughout existing literature. Starting with the cognitive structure of learning from models, the theoretical development of RMs builds upon this fundamental origin to study how mediated personae affect audiences in the contexts of media coverage, endorsements, and attachment. The following literature review considers the existing areas of research used to study the idea of role models in the media and concepts to role models. Each section addresses how existing theories overlap or allude to role models in the media but do not classify RMs as a wholly distinct conceptualization.

First, the theoretical framework of Social Cognitive Theory is suggested as a potential foundation for role model research. Second, the use of celebrities in research on persuasion and involvement is considered potentially relevant; this includes celebrity endorsements and situational media coverage of a timely event (e.g., health diagnosis, a death, etc.). Third, the literature reviews existing common character attachment concepts – identification, wishful identification, and parasocial interaction/relationship – while discussing the overlaps and differences between them and RMs. Lastly, a review of the similarities of opinion leaders in persuasive literature is discussed and differentiated from RMs.

### **The Use of Role Models in Social Cognitive Theory**

Psychologist Albert Bandura developed one of the more popular research approaches in mass communications called Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). SCT's framework is meant to “analyze the determinants and psychosocial mechanisms through which symbolic communication

influences human thought, affect, and action” (Bandura, 2001, pg. 265), developing the first systematic understanding of what it means to be a model and how people are learning from “modeled” behavior. Theorizing that people are agentic (i.e., self-organizing, self-reflecting, self-regulating, etc.) and reliant on socio-structural influences, he argued that people have the cognitive capacity to symbolically learn from direct or observational experiences (Bandura, 2001). As a result of individuals’ agentic capabilities, Bandura argues that through vicarious verification (one of the four modes of self-reflecting capabilities), individuals’ “observing other people’s transactions with the environment and the effects they produce provides a check on the correctness of one’s own thinking” (pg. 269). He argued that this *symbolic modeling* helped “expand the range of verification experiences that cannot otherwise be attained by personal action” (pg. 269). In particular, Bandura emphasized the importance of mass media supplying symbolic models to which audience individuals can apply vicarious capabilities.

The cognitive function of vicarious verification thus allows individuals to acquire knowledge from the observation of others, which Bandura (2001) refers to as observational learning. By observing a model—an individual in a specific social situation—the observer can comprehend cues on how to feel, think, or act when placed in a similar social situation. The model demonstrates the actions and outcomes for the observer through vicarious verification (Bandura, 2001). This observational learning can encompass learned values, morals, beliefs, attitudes, and social norms. Revisiting SCT, Bandura (2001) emphasizes the importance of viewing mass media as an infinite source of observational learning.

SCT suggests that we naturally turn to the media for provided examples of emotional and behavioral socialization. Audiences view personae in the media and choose to imitate behavior or adopt attitudes. Authors citing or applying SCT often use language such as “modeling” or “role modeling” to emphasize this process (e.g., Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Ramasubramanian & Kornfield, 2012). For example, Ferguson (2012) used an experimental method to manipulate

stimuli of sexually violent media, using strong female leads as what he calls a “role model.” The outcome of this study demonstrated that a strong female model present in violent media helps ease women’s anxiety because they feel less helpless and more capable of handling the situation. SCT depicts role models as a stimulus for audiences to mimic but typically does not consider existing attitudes toward this “model” or individual variations in such attitudes. The notion of an RM includes the audience’s prior understanding, knowledge, or involvement with the role model, but the SCT framework does not provide this context.

Moreover, SCT’s reference to a “role model” risks theoretical confusion. While some studies that concern SCT unequivocally uses the term “role model,” it does not represent or stand for a concisely or universally defined concept with unique characteristics. SCT’s terminological use of “role model” merely means understanding a model at face value, without additional context or distinguishing features other than the behavior or attitude performed for the audience. For example, Bui’s (2017) study using an SCT approach investigates how much college students want to adopt the behaviors and attitudes of their favorite celebrity. There is a developed involvement with the television character who serves as the model in this study. Whereas Suggs and Guthrie (2017) examined if parasocial contact can decrease an audience member’s social distance from the disabled community. In this experiment, athletes (injured or disabled condition) overcoming hardship were meant to model a particular behavior (i.e., perseverance); however, the athletes used are not mediated personae with which the audience would have had prior involvement. While both Bui (2017) and Suggs and Guthrie (2017) are studying the impact of a mediated persona modeling particular behavior, the process of each model’s effect on the audience differs based on preexisting knowledge and involvement of each model. Literature must begin distinguishing a “model” without context versus a “role model,” which includes distinctive characteristics resulting from audience involvement.



### **Celebrity Influence as a Role Model**

While the SCT approach has proven effective in providing a general description of the impact of modeled behavior or attitudes, research specifically studying the persuasive nature of models has primarily taken two forms. One approach consists of a study design centered around situational media coverage of a celebrity's specific news or announcement (health, career, etc.), leading audiences to adopt or mimic the celebrity's behavior or decisions. The second is through targeted celebrity influence, such as endorsements and persuasion research. The existing literature covering these two research approaches frequently refers to the phrase "role models;" however, it is often used as an idiomatic term rather than as a distinctive and explicated concept.

The first research application requires the authors to design a study in a timely manner that relies on relevant or prevalent media coverage of the celebrity of focus in their study. Most studies that use this approach collect data either the specific year of the media coverage or within the next few years (e.g., Brown & Basil, 1995; Brown et al. 2003; Brown & de Matviuk, 2010; DeGroot & Leith, 2018; Kosenko et al., 2016). For example, Brown (2010) chose to study Steve Irwin's influence because he was often culturally accepted as a role model in the media for his wildlife conservation efforts; however, this study focused on audiences' emotional attachment and involvement through identification and parasocial interaction, not the degree to which his role model status determined his influence. Additionally, Carpentier and Parrott (2016) chose to focus on Robin Williams in a study about attachment because audience individuals who perceive a celebrity as a role model often have some form of attachment to them.

These studies present two limitations for expressly researching role models. First, these examples and many other studies are not measuring their participants' perceptions of the celebrity of focus as a role model, but rather the participants' involvement with or attachment to the celebrity. This is problematic because the authors are conflating fame or familiarity with the

actual perception of a role model. Without confirming whether or not audiences perceive the mediated persona as an explicit role model, these types of studies are not developing a theory of role models as distinct from other kinds of mediated figures. This assumption that the celebrity status of mediated personae like Irwin and Williams automatically grant them the status of a role model is associated with the second issue, the casual use of the term “role model.” Such researchers refer to celebrities as role models based on their cultural status (see Boone & Lomore, 2001; Brown, 2010; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005) rather than using an academically or theoretically founded term. The lack of a formal theoretical term brings the same vernacular issue as was discussed with research applying Social Cognitive Theory.

Furthermore, the central findings of these studies concern how trending media coverage of a single mediated persona can influence audiences, with involvement functioning as a mediator. While a formal meta-analysis has not been conducted, a review of this literature demonstrates that they informally tie together audience attachment and involvement with perceptions of a mediated persona as a role model. Interestingly enough, similar research designs and variables have been applied to anti-heroes and villains, and the language in these studies does not reference them as role models (Black et al., 2019; Dibble & Rosaen, 2011; Janicke & Raney, 2018). This demonstrates the assumption or priority to study positive representations under the assumption that they are role models when they are actually studying the general media influence of a celebrity person of fame.

Since celebrity’s influence audiences because of their fame and “role model” status, they are frequently used for endorsements of products or services. A celebrity endorser is defined as an individual who uses their celebrity status to promote a consumer good through advertisements (McCracken, 1989; Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999). The effectiveness of persuasion using celebrity endorsement has been widely studied (e.g., Bush et al., 2004; Erdogan, 1999; Fleck, Korchia, & Le Roy, 2012; Ohanian, 1990; Silvera & Austad, 2004; Yoo, 2016). Erdogan (1999)

states there are two models regarding the efficacy of celebrity endorsement: source credibility and attractiveness. According to these two models, audience attitudes towards the product/brand and behavioral intentions to purchase are driven by the audience's perspective of the celebrity endorser's source credibility and attractiveness.

Source credibility focuses on the audience's perceived level of the celebrity endorsers' trustworthiness and expertise (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1990). Audience members' perception of a celebrity endorser's trustworthiness and expertise can influence attitudes and behavioral intentions (Erdogan, 1999). Trustworthiness refers to whether individuals find an endorser believable, honest, and possessing integrity. Expertise refers to the degree to which audiences perceive the endorser to be a "source of valid assertions" (pg. 289, Erdogan, 1999). This use of expert does not rely on the endorser as an actual expert about the product or brand, but rather the audience's perception that the endorser is an expert; possessing product knowledge, experience, or skills (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1990).

The attractiveness model focuses on the endorser's attractive characteristics (physical, intellect, values, etc.). This model is often broken down into three components: likability (audience's affection towards endorser), similarity (audience perceives resemblance with self and endorser), and familiarity (audience having prior exposure to the endorser) (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1990). Erdogan (1999) additionally mentions identification as an important predictor of audience members' increased perceptions of celebrity endorsers as credible and attractive (Dix et al., 2010). More recent research has also tied in the role of parasocial relationships to increase these audience perceptions of celebrity endorsers (Munnukka et al., 2019; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Shariffadeen & Manaf, 2020).

Celebrity endorsement literature repeatedly shows that celebrities are figures of admiration and influence, much like most understandings of how we define/perceive role models. Research focusing on celebrities' influence and persuasion as endorsers has found effects

regarding purchase intentions and behaviors, public opinion, and even health intentions and behaviors. For example, Bush et al. (2004) found that athlete role models have a positive influence on buying intentions/behaviors. Pease and Brewer's (2008) study found that the "Oprah Effect"—her endorsement of Barack Obama, specifically—did not necessarily increase the liking of the candidate, but it did impact voting intentions and prospects of Obama winning the election. In a health context, Yoo (2016) focused on celebrity endorsement's influence as exemplars, finding that using a campaign that portrays celebrities facing negative consequences of smoking led to decreased smoking intentions in college students. Furthermore, identification played an important role in mediating college students' health attitudes/behaviors.

Despite these important findings, this literature is also problematic regarding its assumption that participants view the celebrity expressly as a role model. Celebrity endorsement studies rely on the idea that the unique stimuli are the act of a celebrity delivering a persuasive message. Through this application and the informal vernacular use of role models in this literature, it implies that a celebrity's status as a role model leads to persuasion in addition to the other variables discussed above. Rather, it is the celebrity's role as an endorser – not as a role model—that leads to persuasion. As an endorser, the celebrity is seeking to be perceived as an expert on a product. They are not particularly modeling a behavior or attitude for audiences to seek to adopt into their own self-identity. Furthermore, this assumption of celebrities functioning as role models in endorsement literature is untested because there is no theoretical or operationalized method for measuring a role model. The celebrity endorsement literature's frequent presumptions that equate endorsers to role models lead to more of the same ambiguity in terminology discussed above. Arguably, it would provide more clarifications in the two fields discussed if the mediated personae of focus were referred to as models as opposed to role models. This then still communicates the SCT approach to these research areas while also distinguishing it from the theoretical understanding of RMs.

### **Character Attachment**

The third context related to RMs is research on character attachment. Many studies rely on concepts related to character attachment to approximate the impact of an RM. For example, two studies investigated the impact Robin Williams's death had in relation to suicide (Carpentier & Parrott, 2016; Hoffner & Cohen, 2018), arguing Williams's status as a cultural role model would mean that many audiences with higher involvement hold an emotional attachment to the celebrity, and are ultimately more aware of him (Carpentier & Parrott, 2016) or are more aware of mental health issues (Hoffner & Cohen, 2018). Furthermore, research on fictional characters contends that exposure to representations of certain traits such as homosexuality (Schiappa et al., 2006) or mental disorders (Hoffner & Cohen, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2018) impact audiences' attitudes and beliefs about those subjects. Studies like these imply that celebrities and fictional character representations are role models; however, they do not actually determine if the audiences consider these media figures role models or whether such judgments matter for the tested influences.

While bonding with celebrities is considered a common type of attachment, concepts such as identification, wishful identification, and parasocial interaction/relationship are conceptually distinct from that of perceiving a RM. Character attachment concepts imply that audiences build an emotional bond and that this association leads to various effects, including the adoption of the persona's beliefs or behaviors. These concepts are typically psychological processes and pseudo-interactions that help increase one's involvement with a media persona, which over time could lead to them viewing the persona as an RM. In summary, character attachment concepts measure types of involvement with a mediated persona, not the perspective that the audience directly considers the persona a RM. These various types of involvement with characters can be emotionally and cognitively involved; however, they do not depict the

impression that audience members may have a feeling of admiration towards and a desire to emulate particular characteristics or traits of the mediated persona. The following sections will individually define and address the similarities and differences between the RM and character attachment concepts.

### **Identification**

The first character attachment concept that is related to the concept of an RM is identification. A thoroughly investigated concept (e.g., Brown, 2015; Cohen et al., 2015; Moyer-Gusé, 2008; Slater & Cohen, 2017), identification is one of many variables studied in the context of understanding how audience attachment with mediated personae can lead to behavioral or attitude change. In Bandura's (2001) review of SCT, he discusses the "conception-matching processes" within the SCT framework and what Hoffner and Buchanan (2005) refer to as "psychological matching processes." In this subfunction of SCT's observational learning, Bandura argues the observer must match the processing of the model to fully comprehend how to execute and understand the consequences of the observed behavior. This means the observer needs to temporarily alter their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to parallel another's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

The conceptualization of identification, according to Cohen (2001), reflects this approach. Cohen defines it as "a process that culminates in a cognitive and emotional state in which the audience member is aware not of him- or herself as an audience member, but rather imagines being one of the characters in the text" (p. 252). He argues that audience members experience a loss of self-awareness because they are imaginatively assuming the identity of the mediated persona in order to adopt the perspective of the mediated persona (Cohen, 2001; Moyer-Gusé, 2008). In Cohen's (2001) efforts to operationalize identification, he identifies four

dimensions: (1) empathy with the character; (2) cognitive comprehension of the character's perspective and behavior; (3) internalization of the persona's goals, also known as motivational identification; and (4) absorption, or degree of loss of self-awareness during exposure to a mediated stimulus.

Oatley (2011) and Cohen (2001) both contend that as the audience member is able to assume the identity of a mediated persona, they become privileged to the mediated persona's feelings, experiences, and goals. Ultimately, this provides a richer understanding of the narrative and the persona in the narrative compared to if the audience member did not identify with a mediated persona. In the process of identifying with a mediated persona, audience members develop an emotional and cognitive connection with the mediated persona by adopting or mirroring the mediated persona's attitudes, emotions, and beliefs. The repeated exposure to the character can ultimately lead to identification beyond the moment of consumption, leading to long-term behavioral changes (Brown, 2015; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Ramasubramanian & Kornfield, 2012).

A strongly associated but distinct concept to identification is *similarity* (Cohen, 2001). Hoffner and Cantor (1991) argue that perceived similarity helps encourage the liking of media personae. Moyer-Gusé (2008) points out that similarity is the cognitive assessment of finding common characteristics between oneself and another, whereas identification requires the loss of oneself to take the perspective of the other (Cohen, 2001). However, similarity with the mediated persona can be an important predictor that influences if an audience member will identify with the mediated persona (particularly in persuasion literature) (e.g., Bui, 2017; Kreuter et al., 2007).

Cohen (2001) supports Bandura's theory of "conception-matching processes" and further clarifies identification in the following ways. First, Cohen (2001) argues that identification should be understood as a process and not be confused or defined as an attitude, emotion, or perception. Second, identification in this conceptualization is a response to "textual features that are intended

to provoke identification” (pg. 251), meaning the audience member is identifying with a mediated persona, not people in their immediate environment (i.e., a parent, teacher, etc.)<sup>3</sup>. The third attribute emphasizes the second and third dimension discussed above that identification should be understood as an audience response “marked by internalization of a point of view” (pg. 252) as opposed to the audience member inserting their own identity or perspective onto the mediated persona.

To reiterate Cohen’s (2001) third attribute, identification is a process and should not be confused with attitudes, emotions, or perceptions; and in this process, the audience member can emulate the thoughts, emotions, and/or behaviors of another. The conceptualization of an RM differs in that it is a perception of the audience. For example, Brown et al.’s (2003) reference to a “role model” is directed towards a specified mediated persona, athlete Mark McGwire. While they investigate audiences’ identification with McGwire, they are operationally measuring a *process*, whereas the *perception* of the audience considering McGwire as a role model is not operationalized but assumed based on the fame and prominence of the player. A preponderance of literature studying identification tends to tie in the assumption that if the audience is identifying with a mediated persona, they probably perceive them as an RM too (e.g., Brown 2010; Bush et al., 2004; Carpentier & Parrott, 2016). This informal referral of a “role model” in the literature studying identification can be misleading as it sounds like the two terms are synonymous. However, based on Cohen’s (2001) definition, identification should be distinguished from viewing someone as a RM. Presumably, the audience member may initially identify with a mediated persona at first, building towards wishful identification. Thus, it may be

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<sup>3</sup> Cohen’s (2001) conceptualization is focused on identification with fictional characters (see second paragraph of pg. 250); this paper refers to the concept of identification towards all types of personae in the media.



possible that wishful identification is more closely related to audience perceptions of role models than identification.

### **Wishful Identification**

Additionally, identification has a subset concept that also relates to mediated RM, called *wishful identification*. Similar but conceptually different from identification, wishful identification is defined by the audience member beginning to wish to be like the mediated persona they are identifying with. Feilitzen and Linné (1975) were among the first to describe this process, connecting it to children. Additionally, Adams-Price and Green (1990) focused on studying adolescents, reporting on adolescents' desire to be like a celebrity as an "identificatory attachment." Hoffner and Buchanan (2005) defined wishful identification as "a psychological process through which an audience member desires or attempts to become like another person" (pg. 327). The audience member wants to share the perspectives and vicariously participate in the mediated persona's life (Hoffner, 1996; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005).

Hoffner and Buchanan (2005) argue that wishful identification expands identification outside of the viewing experience and becomes a form of long-term identification (Hoffner, 1996; Kühne & Oprea, 2020; Rosengren et al., 1976). While Hoffner and Buchanan's (2005) definition refers to wishful identification as a *process*, Moyer-Gusé (2008) argues wishful identification is more of a *perception* instead of a *process* like identification (Cohen, 2001). Moyer-Gusé (2008) relates wishful identification back to SCT, in which people desire to be like the model or mediated persona. This approach comprises SCT's observational learning as audience members observe a model—the mediated persona—whom they desire to mimic. Bandura (2001) argues that viewers want to emulate appealing models, especially when they appear to reap appealing benefits or successful consequences. As audience members identify with a mediated persona and

see successfully executed behavior, they begin to not only want to psychologically merge with the mediated persona but also emulate the mediated persona (Hoffner, 1996; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005). Furthermore, Bandura (2001) argues that observation of a successful behavior from a model increases the observer's self-efficacy, the belief that they too can achieve similar success.

Wishful identification has a similar shortcoming in the literature as identification, in which the term "role model" has been used synonymously with wishful identification (Ramasubramanian & Kornfield, 2012). The same argument stands as above that substituting "role model" for a figure toward whom individuals direct wishful identification can create confusion, limiting the ability to evaluate the relationship between these concepts. The two concepts share the audiences' desire to emulate a mediated persona; however, wishful identification is defined as a unidimensional concept, whereas perceptions of audience individuals as RMs are potentially multidimensional. For example, measures of wishful identification consist of a limited, three-item (Hoffner, 1996) or five-item (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005) scale that asks about the audience member's desire to emulate the mediated person in a study.

Furthermore, emulation is often used to describe audience's desire to be like another person in their wishful identification. However, wishful identification is better described as aspirational as opposed to emulation. Aspiration reflects the attitudinal perception towards another person, while emulation reflects a behavioral aspect; the idea that someone is motivated and planning to change their behavior. The purpose of perceiving someone as a role model is that this individual demonstrates how an individual can change their behavior, while wishful identification is more desire to be like, without the active engagement to become like another.

## **Parasocial Interaction**

The third character attachment concept that is related to RMs is parasocial interaction (PSI) and the related concept of a parasocial relationship (PSR). While identification and wishful identification cover a psychological process and perception, PSI involves an interpersonal pseudo-interaction with a mediated persona. Coined by Horton and Wohl (1956), PSI is understood as a nonreciprocal interaction between audience members and mediated personae during the time of consumption (Giles, 2002; Horton & Strauss, 1957; Klimmt et al., 2006). Audience members essentially experience a one-sided interaction with the mediated persona while consuming media, despite the lack of reciprocation (Dibble et al., 2016; Giles, 2002; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011; Klimmt et al., 2006).

As research on PSI continued to grow, scholars called for the differentiation of PSI and PSR (e.g., Dibble et al., 2016; Dibble & Rosaen, 2011; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011; Schramm & Hartmann, 2008). Typically, PSI is understood as a short-term experience of perceived reciprocated awareness, whereas PSR describes the long-term enduring relationship extending beyond the viewing experience (Dibble et al., 2016). The conceptualization of a PSR thus describes the long-term psychological response held after and between exposures to a mediated persona whom the audience member can or has already developed complex feelings and emotions towards, much like they would within a reciprocated social relationship (Dibble et al., 2016; Giles, 2003; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011; Klimmt et al., 2006). Ultimately, audiences experience what feels like an intimate and personal social interaction with a mediated persona, creating the illusion of having a social interaction with the mediated persona and potentially generating a parasocial relationship.

Most PSI and PSR literature contends that increased consumption or repetitive consumption of content with the target persona leads to stronger PSIs and PSRs (e.g., Grant et al.,

1991; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Kühne & Oprea, 2020; Perse & Rubin, 1988; Rubin et al., 1985). It is assumed that the repeated exposure helps the audience member develop a sense of familiarity and similarity (Turner, 1993) with the mediated persona, leading the audience members to feel as if they are getting to know the persona, much like they would with a reciprocal interaction with a person with whom they have an actual, two-sided relationship.

Even differing types of mediated personae have been identified and studied. Giles (2003) categorized the following three types of mediated personae: first-order PSI (newscaster, athlete, actress, etc.; Auter, 1992; Derrick et al., 2008; Rubin & McHugh, 1987; Turner, 1993), second-order PSI (a fictional character such as soap actor/tress; Eyal & Cohen, 2006; Schiappa et al., 2006; Schmid & Klimmt, 2011; Sood, 2002; Sood & Rogers, 2000), and third-order PSI (cartoon figures such as Garfield or Bugs Bunny; Ramasubramanian & Kornfield, 2012). This amalgamation of PSI and PSR research applied to various media, and character types further demonstrate how PSIs and PSRs ultimately are a natural function and reaction to a perceived social interaction.

PSI has less overlap with RMs compared to PSR because it is conceptualized as an in-the-moment phenomenon, while PSR and RMs are outcomes of a long-term and repetitive exposure to a specific mediated persona. PSR and RMs are both forms of audience attachment to mediated personae, but there are clear distinctions between these concepts. One commonality between PSRs and RMs is the idea that audiences have a post-viewing relationship with a persona. PSRs and RMs exist outside of consumption; however, PSRs arguably require more active engagement on the audience member's end. Additionally, audiences develop a PSR with a variety of mediated figures, but that does not mean they might necessarily perceive that persona to be a role model or even admire the persona (Dibble & Rosaen, 2011; Rosaen & Dibble, 2016). It is quite possible, though, that PSRs function as a preliminary step that can lead to admiring some mediated figures as role models as the audience gets to know them.

Furthermore, parasocial literature again runs into the same conflict as literature on SCT, celebrity influence, and identification through the idiomatic use of the term “role model.” For example, Ramasubramanian & Kornfield (2012) refer to anime heroines as role models when actually measuring wishful identification and parasocial relationships. Sometimes the term “role model” is not blatantly stated, but there are insinuations of PSRs being viewed as role models. For example, Bond (2018) implies that the self-reported favorite LGB media personae of LGB adolescents function as role models by communicating important sources of information related to socialization. Overall, these studies are alluding to the idea of role models through casual conversation rather than using an academically based conceptualization. Based on the following evidence, RMs should be regarded as a separate concept from PSI and PSR.

### **Opinion Leaders vs. Mediated Role Models**

The fourth area of research that overlaps with the concept of an RM is opinion leadership. The concept of opinion leadership can be traced back to the 1940s when scholars such as Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) were developing the two-step flow theory, which sought to explain the dissemination of information and ideas through media and interpersonal communication of opinion leaders (Batinic & Appel, 2013). Opinion leaders were understood to be the individuals with perceived expertise and knowledge of a certain area who would disseminate information to their social networks (Weimann et al., 2007). Often, they communicate persuasive messages to others to respond or act in a certain way through advice and recommendations (Weimann, 1991, 2008; Weimann et al., 2007).

Weimann et al. (2007) discuss five key components or what the authors call “special advantages” of what distinguishes an opinion leader. First, they are perceived by their community as an “expert.” Second, they are viewed as unbiased and knowledgeable sources. Third, they have

social standing or power in their community. Fourth, they are more likely to give a balance of both positive and negative information about a product or subject, unlike paid communication. And lastly, opinion leaders have referent power, meaning individuals' established admiration or respect of the opinion leader functions as an influential factor (also see Weimann, 1991, 2008).

Additionally, Weimann (2008; Weimann et al., 2007) outlines what type of people are able to be opinion leaders. To summarize, opinion leaders can be of any gender, age, or social class. They often hold central positions within community organizations that give them networking power. They are considered experts in their field and are more invested in being involved or updated within that field, giving them that expertise status. They tend to be more involved in interpersonal communication and are usually well aware of the influence of their opinions.

Given the identified characteristics that make an opinion leader and who can be considered one, there are some parallels with the concept of an RM. First, opinion leaders are often tethered to the individual through connections that are direct and established (Batinic & Appel, 2013; Childers, 1986), whereas an RM is indirectly connected through the media itself. Although there is increasing research towards online influentials functioning as opinion leaders (Martínez-López et al. 2020; Reinikainen et al., 2020), these online influencers are still regarded as established connections because the audiences specifically seek them out to learn from them. This type of opinion leader is still distinctive from an RM, as the concept of an RM is not based solely on preexisting or established connections with the audience individual, but rather upon the audience individual choosing the persona over time to look up to in admiration.

Furthermore, the concepts have similarities in that they are perceived by individuals as persons of expertise or mastery (Brace-Govan, 2013; Weimann, 1991, 2008; Weimann et al., 2007). The theoretical motivations of these perceptions differ in that individuals attribute expertise characteristics to opinion leaders as a form of source credibility, while for RMs, it is

more so an indication of their reputation. There is a commonality of persuasiveness with both opinion leaders and RMs, but the process of persuasion differs between the two. Weimann (2008) suggests that opinion leaders' expertise status is often related to the content in which they are disseminating and making recommendations, whilst an RM's description as an expert is based on the persona's overall accomplishments (i.e., professional career, family, etc.) with no intentions of communicating a specific persuasive message. Additionally, with RMs, their mastery or expertise can help individuals feel that their own personal goals are more attainable, increasing one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997, 1999; Jenkins et al., 2016).

Admiration as well differs between opinion leaders and RMs in regard to the relevance of audience perception. Again, admiration is a characteristic that attributes to the opinion leader's credibility of a recommendation, while individuals' perception of admiration for an RM is more reflective of the emotions of encouragement and aspiration, which in turn motivates individuals to emulate the role model. Individuals do not necessarily want to emulate their opinion leaders; they are looking towards them to be informed. However, an RM could possibly be a source of information, potentially become an opinion leader. Thus, not all opinion leaders are role models, but any role model could become an opinion leader.

Admiration also differs between opinion leaders and RMs regarding the relevance of audience perception. Again, admiration is a characteristic that attributes to the opinion leader's credibility of a recommendation, while individuals' perception of admiration for an RM is more reflective of the emotions of encouragement and aspiration, which, in turn, motivates individuals to emulate the role model. Individuals do not necessarily want to emulate their opinion leaders; they are more so looking towards them for information and guidance. However, an RM could possibly be a source of information as well, potentially becoming an opinion leader. Thus, not all opinion leaders are role models, but any role model could become an opinion leader.

## Conclusion

The objective of Chapter 2 was to demonstrate the common allusion to role models in the media. The foundational theory establishes that audiences do learn from mediated personae through social and observational learning. Additional research demonstrates that specific actions or product endorsements of and by famous individuals bring prominent attention to certain subject areas (health, environment, consumer products, etc.), and this impacts the mass population's awareness, attitudes, and behaviors. Furthermore, emotional attachments to these famous individuals in the media can lead to a stronger degree of influence upon the audience individuals' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. All of these aspects that literature has uncovered about the influence of prominent models in the media demonstrates the importance of understanding how people perceive those individuals exclusively and if they do regard them as role models.

The existing body of literature provides valuable insights towards building a concept that demarcates a mediated role model and a quantitative scale that measures the degree to which an audience individual perceives a mediated persona as a role model. Several studies concentrate on the impact of individual celebrities' news through the audience's degree of involvement and attachment. The prevalence of these variables in research possibly indicates that audience individuals keep a "mental radar" on mediated personae. If this is the case, and Bandura (2001) would argue that audiences look towards media for examples of socialization, it stands to reason that someone in the media could be perceived as a role model.

As this review confirms, this chapter outlines how role models in the media are not fully classified or distinguished as an independent conceptualization. The evaluation of concepts – particularly regarding those of character attachment—demonstrates that these are not appropriate substitutes for determining perceptions of role models. Upon this review of literature related to



role models, Chapter 3 evaluates literature that has attempted to define and measure role models, concluding with a proposed conceptualization of the unique characteristics of RMs and a quantifiable operationalized scale.

## **Chapter 3**

### **A Model of Mediated Role Models**

The following chapter explores the theoretical and methodological literature across various fields that have attempted to directly explicate the concept of “role models.” Chapter 2 evaluated the theoretical literature that relates to or alludes to role models and discusses concepts that have similar components to the general considerations of role models. This review is important to establish the value of studying the effects of role models in media studies. Furthermore, Chapter 2’s review demonstrates that, while there are related concepts and theories, RMs are a distinct concept.

Chapter 3 reviews literature that has directly studied and measured role models thus far, including conceptual material on role models presented or studied in contexts outside of media. This examination suggests a comprehensive conceptualization for future investigation on RMs. The first section reviews definitions and theoretical models of role models in the existing literature. The next section discusses the methodology applied in existing role model research, including scales used. The last section proposes a distinctive definition for an RM model, outlining key attributes that make mediated role models: *vicarious relationship*, *values of role model*, *credibility of role model*, and *inspiration* .

### **A Review of Existing Conceptualizations**

The following section reviews the existing conceptualizations of role models. Upon a review of role modeling literature, this section is organized by type of literature based on non-mediated and mediated conceptions of role models. In the non-mediated conceptualizations,

various approaches such as social comparison, theory of planned behavior, social cognitive theory, and more are used to study role models in the workplace or in a certain career position (e.g., Boissin et al., 2011; Cheryan et al., 2011; Collins & Cook, 2013; Hoyt & Simon, 2011). Furthermore, Morgenroth et al. (2015) and Rich's (1997) theoretical work offers two perspectives of role models regarding careers or workplaces. Additionally, Brace-Govan (2013) tackled the concept of role models across different disciplines, conducting a qualitative review of existing literature to build a theory of types of role models that incorporates direct and vicarious role models. Beyond this, the existing literature focusing on vicarious or mediated RMs is explored. Throughout this section, specific shared features and distinctions of RMs are noted, leading to the discussion of the value in merging various aspects of the existing literature, and common characteristics present throughout the research are outlined.

### **Workplace and Career Conceptualizations of Role Models**

A common academic approach to studying role models is how they impact perceptions of work environments, career choices, and motivations to complete work-related tasks. Using a social comparison approach, Lockwood and Kunda's (1997 & 1999) study of role models lacks an academically defined concept of a role model or what they refer to as a "superstar." Rather, their theoretical approach of social comparison was focused on seeking to understand how one's relevance to the role model and attainability of that role model's career and goals led to self-enhancement or self-deflation. Furthermore, Lockwood and Kunda (1999) demonstrated that having a "star" to look toward generates hope and achievements that they would not have otherwise developed on the way towards self-enhancement, but if the "star" generates feelings of self-deflation, the individual will feel discouragement towards replicating the goals or achievements of that "star." Hoyt and Simon (2011) support Lockwood's (2006) findings of the

importance of female role models in career positions, further demonstrating those female role models of “mid-level leaders” are more self-enhancing for other women because their goals are viewed as attainable, in contrast to a “high-level leader” who might have been an exception to the work norm in how they reach their achievements.

While these studies use social comparison as a theoretical approach to understanding the motivational factors of others striving for similar career aspirations proves valuable, they require more precision regarding the distinction between a role model and other types of comparative or aspirational models. Rather, they are relying perhaps too heavily on the social learning approach of vicarious learning through the viewing of the achievements of others. Collins and Cook (2013) rely on this approach primarily to depict the influence of creative supervisors as role models. They find that creative supervisors influence subordinates to be more creative, standing in as models from whom subordinates can learn themselves. The learning is vicarious through a stimuli example of a made-up individual achieving certain career goals, but this differs from RMs because, as it does not specify a persona in the media, it negates the influential relationship audiences build with their RM.

Another theory used to study role models is the theory of planned behavior. Boissin et al. (2011) apply this theory to understand how one’s gender and one’s role models in their personal environment can influence entrepreneurship. They argue that the role model influences the “attitudes toward behavior” aspect of Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behavior model through the individuals’ professional values and vision of entrepreneurship. Like the social comparison theory approach, the applicability of this model to mediated situations is uncertain. This theory is designed to understand a specific behavioral intention, not to measure perceptions of role models. While having mutually shared characteristics or traits (e.g., gender, morality, etc.) may be important predictors for perceiving an RM or watching a model, there is still a stark difference

when it comes to involvement. The individual has previous involvement and a vicarious relationship with the RM, and the model is just a “being” modeling desirable behavior.

One commonly used characterization of role models in media studies comes from Gregory Rich’s (1997) conceptualization and operationalization (e.g., Buksa & Mitsis 2011; Dix et al., 2010; Makgosa, 2010; Peters et al., 2018). Rich (1997) developed a conceptual framework of role-modeling behavior in the context of a work environment, specifically salesperson and sales manager performances. His application of role-modeling strongly relies on literature related to leadership in the workplace. Thus, he defines role-modeling as “behavior on the part of the sales manager perceived by the salesperson to be an appropriate example to follow that is consistent with both the values the sales manager espouses and the goals of the organization” (pg.320). Rich’s (1997) definition and contextual use of role models draw from theories of leadership, SCT, and reinforcement theory. The leadership theories focus on how the role model should engage in exemplary acts in the workplace, ultimately inspiring coworkers to imitate their behavior. Rich then relates role modeling back to Bandura’s SCT to explain the motivational effects of a leader’s modeling on followers or employees. Lastly, Rich argues that through reinforcement theory (also known as operant learning theory), followers or employees watch their leader’s behavior receive desirable outcomes, teaching them that they too will experience positive outcomes if they mimic the behavior.

While Rich’s (1997) approach to the conceptualization of role models is thorough, there are contextual issues when it is applied to media. Rich relies on theories of leadership to develop his concept, which requires interaction in the workplace. The role model has direct communication in which they can manage, interact, and express themselves with the role aspirant (individuals who view the role model as such, Morgenroth et al., 2015). Whereas role models in the media do not have this accessibility, thus their influence as role models must occur through a different process than direct, interpersonal communication. Rich’s conceptualization of a role

model lacks the vicarious relationship aspect that is a fundamental dimension to a mediated RM; however, media scholars have found value in utilization of a modified version of his scale (see Makgosa, 2010; Martin & Bush, 2000; Peters et al., 2018).

A more recent conceptualization of role models is proposed by Morgenroth et al. (2015). They approached their conceptualization of a role model through the expectancy-values theories of the motivational approach. Much like Rich's work (1997), this theory is primarily focused on role aspirants' use of role models for career or workplace inspiration. Morgenroth et al.'s (2015) classification reflects three functions of role models, defined as: "individuals who influence role aspirants' achievements, motivation, and goals by acting as behavioral models, representations of the possible, and/or inspirations" (p. 468). As behavioral models, role models serve as examples of *how* to perform/achieve a skill/goal; as immediate representations of the attainable, they demonstrate that said skill/goal is *possible* to achieve; and lastly, as inspirations, they make the skill/goal *desirable*. They further distinguish what motivations and goals are, primarily focusing their definitions on an established endpoint (e.g., to secure a management position) or achieving a possible self (e.g., to *being* a manager) within the context of workplaces or careers.

The expectancy-values theory of motivation approach argues an individual's motivation is determined by two factors: expectancy and value (Morgenroth et al., 2015). Expectancy focuses on the individual's understanding or perceptions of success in a certain task or area, and value focuses on the individual's perception of desirability of success in said task or area. The two concepts function together to determine the motivational state of an individual. If an individual perceives themselves able to perform well on a task and desires to successfully complete a task, they will. If the individual perceives themselves able to perform well on a task but does not desire to complete the task, motivation is lower. Peters et al. (2018) adds to Morgenroth et al.'s (2015) theoretical approach by investigating the importance of the role model's morality.

Surmising Morgenroth et al.'s (2015) three functions as emulation, self-efficacy, and inspiration, Peters et al. (2018) suggest that moral values are also important to choosing work role models.

Much like Rich's (1997) conceptualization, Morgenroth et al.'s (2015) is also inapplicable to mediated settings because this theory is focused on achievement settings in which the goals that the role aspirant wants to achieve are quite literal and career-focused. In contrast to when audiences view a mediated RM, they do not seek to emulate the exact or literal path and status in which that role model has achieved. Audiences choose characteristics and traits of the role model because their status is already understood or assumed to be unattainable. By picking specific characteristics or traits of the role model, audience individuals find that emulating that characteristic or trait is more attainable. For example, Lebron James serves as a role model for many in regard to giving back to his community, one way being that he started a school for underprivileged children. This actual goal is unattainable to the average individual, which according to Morgenroth et al.'s (2015) model, would decrease the motivation of the goal aspirant. However, audience individuals can bypass this literal goal by finding smaller ways to make a difference, such as donating to their local public schools. Ultimately, Morgenroth et al.'s (2015) focus on motivation and goals serves too literal a definition to be applied to mediated contexts.

While the above conceptualizations lack the components of mediated contexts for role models, Brace-Govan (2013) attempted to tackle the endeavor of proposing a typology of role model interactions, focusing on social marketing and celebrity endorsement in her approach. This investigation considered role modeling research in a range of disciplines, including sociology, social psychology, marketing, management, education, and youth research. Unlike Rich (1997) and Morgenroth et al. (2015), Brace-Govan (2013) addressed the concept of vicarious role models. The literature primarily focuses on the impact of non-mediated role models; however,

she acknowledges the possibility of communication between the individual and their role model, ranging from direct to vicarious role models.

One starting variable that Rich (1997) and Morgenroth et al. (2015) would agree with is that in order to be considered a role model, one must exhibit behavior patterns that are admirable or exemplary. Once making this point, Brace-Govan (2013) introduces her typology of role models. The typology is organized by interaction types starting with direct and vicarious role models. Direct role models often have a high level of interaction, and vicarious role models have low-level of interaction, meaning there is minimal possibility of two-way communication with the individual. Direct role models are those who are involved in the individual's life (e.g., parent, boss, friend), and vicarious role models refer to mediated personae, such as athletes, celebrities, or even fictional characters. The three main details mentioned regarding vicarious role models is (1) in reference to the other ten types of role models being vicarious; (2) that mediated personae are those role models; and (3) that vicarious role models are "limited by the sphere of relevance and attainability" (pg. 117). She argues similarity or identification could lead to an individual's choosing vicarious role models, but she does not expand upon this consideration (Brace-Govan, 2013). The following Table 1 outlines types of role models with the potential interaction types and the theory it derives from.

Table 1 Brace-Govan (2013) Typology

Role Model Type	Theory	Description
Direct	Sociocultural	Someone in close proximity with high-level potential for interaction
Indirect/Vicarious	Social Learning	Individual with no direct proximity chosen by similarities with low-level for potential interaction
Mastery	Social Learning	Person who displays exemplary and high achievements based on pertinent skills
Coping	Social Learning	Person who displays effective practices or efforts of recovery or fixing mistakes
Relevant	Social comparison	Person of personal similarities with coinciding interests; interaction could be high- or low-level



Attainable attributes	Social comparison	Person in a domain of excellence whose achievements feel feasible to role aspirant; interaction could be high- or low-level
Positive-inspirational	Sociological Social & Comparison Theory	Person to desire to emulate achieving behavior or attitude; high- or low-level of interaction
Positive-aspirational	Sociological Social & Comparison Theory	Person who reinforces/confirms desire to achieve; high- or low-level interaction, but more likely to be indirect
Negative villains	n/a	People who exhibit undesirable behaviors/attitudes; usually vicariously viewed in media; low-level of interaction
Negative-unattainable	Social Learning & Social Comparison	Person in a domain of excellence whose achievements feel unattainable to role aspirant; high- or low-level of interaction; deters motivation to pursue domain of excellence
Negative preventative	n/a	Person who performs behaviors with poor outcomes to demonstrate what to avoid; low level of interaction; results in subtractive behaviors
Reflection	Humanist sociocultural	Person who is perceived as valuable identity to an identified collective; high level of interaction as engagement is necessary for inculcation of values

Based on the language in the literature, the remaining ten role models can hypothetically be direct or vicarious role models. The following role model types are listed based upon their function; however, it is not clear if each role model is mutually exclusive or if they can overlap. For example, it seems that almost any of the types of role models listed could be direct or vicarious role models (e.g., direct mastery role model or vicarious mastery role model). The variance in communication type (high vs. low interaction) somewhat implies a possibility that some of those role models can be vicarious, but it is not explicitly stated. Her typology does not provide the clearest solution on how to understand vicarious role models.

Despite these critiques, Brace-Govan's (2013) typology provides helpful and important groundwork for the development of a concept for mediated and non-mediated role models. The conceptualization of role models and acknowledgment of the different types of these models (attainable attributes vs. unattainable attributes) could prove beneficial in the process of

understanding the effectiveness of the persuasiveness of role models. However, these function as categories of role models, not what variables are essential to be viewed as role models. She does mention relevance as an interaction type—which, based on previous literature, is a germane variable to perceiving one as a role model (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997, 1999; Morgenroth et al., 2015)—but she does not provide much more detail or a firm definition of relevance, but she cites Lockwood and Kunda’s (1997, 1999) studies specifically to make this point. To surmise, she has explicitly stated the importance of a role model being a master or expert of a trade or skill and alluded to the importance of relevance with a role model.

From this review, these approaches to studying role models lack the applicability to media context and aspect of a vicarious relationship with their respective role models. The two primary variables covered in this section discussed expertise and relevance/values as aspects of role models (Rich, 1997; Morgenroth et al., 2015; Brace-Govan, 2013), but there is still more conceptualizing needed to be done. The following section addresses literature that approaches the study of role models as vicarious relationships.

### **Mediated Conceptualizations of Role Models**

Currently, there is a lack of explicit definitions of role models in literature related to media studies. A few scholars have provided definitions of an RM, such as Fraser and Brown (2002), who define role models as “as people whose values, beliefs, and behavior are likely to be adopted by others within their sphere of influence” (pg. 186). Also, Chan (2008) defines vicarious role models as “figures or celebrities who gain popularity among individuals through mass media channels” (pg. 9). Moreover, Jenkins et al. (2016) elaborated on characteristics associated with role models, including the idea that they are well-known professionals of authority or respect, have senior experience or influence, and the individual perceiving them as a role model looks up

to them and wishes to emulate them. These characteristics strongly stem from role modeling research on work environments (Collins & Cooke, 2011; Gretzel & Bowser, 2013). Stever (2011) does not offer a concise definition of role model but argues fan behavior can be better understood through an SCT, life stage theories, and attachment theory approach.

Overall, there seems to be a general agreement in the literature that role models can be found in media (Caughey, 1978, 1984, 1994), a feature that was lacking in previous definitions. Additionally, there is the shared assumption that role models in the media exhibit behavior or value in which the audience member finds relevant or important, usually leading to emulation. However, one must note the clear differences in these definitions, Chan (2008) does not touch upon the nature of a role model, just who qualifies as an RM, and Jenkins et al. (2016) do not supply a clear definition, but a series of descriptions pulled from work environment literature. Fraser and Brown (2002) do provide one of the more detailed definitions; however, it is not distinct enough from SCT's definition of role modeling. While there are shared components in these definitions, the obvious distinctions between them make necessary the need for a clearer and more standardized approach.

As discussed in Chapter 2, SCT and social learning are foundational approaches in which to study role models. As Bandura (2001) establishes that individuals learn vicariously through modeled behavior, SCT functions as a strong theoretical base to study RMs models. Chapter 2 discussed how SCT posits that people base their behaviors and attitudes through modeling, often referred to as role modeling, and considers the distinctions between SCT's term for role modeling versus a role model. The following discussion draws attention to authors who explicitly use the term role model in their research using an SCT approach. For example, Bush et al. (2004) take a consumer socialization and SCT approach to role models, arguing anyone with the possibility of influencing consumer's decisions can be a role model. Dix et al. (2010) replicate Bush et al. (2004) on the influence of sports celebrities as role models for young adults' consumer behavior

and intentions in Australia. Buksa and Mitsis (2011), Martin and Bush (2000), and Makgosa (2010) draw from Bandura's work on social learning theory with a consumer's approach, defining a vicarious role model as "any individual that appears in electronic or print media that has the potential to influence consumer-related behavior and attitudes despite having little or no direct contact with a consumer." (Buksa & Mitsis, 2011, pg. 339) Makgosa (2010) further reflects the social learning approach by emphasizing the importance of an audience's acquisition of norms, values, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors from interactions and modeling. There are several investigations into the impact of role models in the media using the same theoretical approach; however, there is a lack of consensus of specific character traits that make a role model. These approaches and definitions regarding role models in the media are vastly generalized and provide no academic sustenance to what qualifies as a role model other than being a celebrity.

Some research alludes to role models by using different terminology and differentiating types of vicarious relationships in the media. In Yue and Cheung's (2000) and Cheung and Yue's (2003) studies on celebrity worship in China, they identified luminaries and stars: luminaries reflecting individuals "regarded as eminent because of the intellectual and moral quality and achievements" (North et al., 2005, pg. 41) while stars are regarded as individuals solely visible in entertainment and sports. North et al. (2005) draw from Yue and Cheung (2000) and Cheung and Yue (2003) retitling them *heroes* and *celebrities*, with heroes leaning towards the idea of a role model in its definition of "having produced ideas or objects of considerable and lasting importance to a society, and who may or may not be well-known" (pg.40).

Boone and Lomore (2001) tackle the same idea as Morgenroth et al. (2015) by attempting to develop a theory of vicarious role models. Their research heavily relies on Caughey's (1978, 1984, 1994) work focusing on imaginary or vicarious relationships with mediated personae. His general body of work presents the similarities of social and parasocial relationships with mediated personae and further contends that media figures can affect audiences through role modeling.

While not necessarily providing a demarcation for the term RM, Caughey (1978; 1984; 1994) argues the importance of people's relationships with media figures and how those figures can serve as role models to explore one's self-identity. Boone and Lomore (2001) rely on Caughey's understanding of a celebrity idol in their study, arguing they function "as idealized self-images for their admirers because they possess qualities or traits admirers would like to develop—or refine—in themselves" (Boone & Lomore, 2001, pg. 435). This approach to understanding the audience-admirer relationship differs from prior conceptualizations as Caughey emphasizes the importance of the individual's selection process. Throughout his work, Caughey argues individuals select their media figures based on relevant qualities that the individual is interested in exploring and possibly adopting themselves. Because individuals select media figures as role models based on appealing and relevant aspects, Caughey argues this ultimately shapes the individuals' identity and feelings towards themselves directly.

Caughey's (1978; 1984; 1994) work comes from ethnographic research, which is why Boone and Lomore (2001) attempted to test his model quantitatively. Overall, it supported Caughey's work, indicating the celebrity-admirer relationship did, in fact, influence identity, self-regard, and self-evaluation. Based on Caughey's work, Boone and Lomore (2001) concluded that their results occur through the process of celebrities inspiring audiences to emulate certain traits of the celebrity.

Regardless, Boone and Lomore's (2001) quantification of a qualitative theorized model provides a critical foundation with which to move forward in future theorization and conceptualization of RMs. The way in which their findings demonstrate how celebrity idols impact an individual's self-identity is particularly important. This is an important aspect to keep in mind when conceptualizing RMs; they are distinct, especially in the fundamental purpose of a mediated RM versus a direct RM.

Furthermore, a blend of Morgenroth et al.'s (2015) and Caughey's (1978; 1984; 1994) models might provide beneficial insight as they can be perceived as complementary to one another. Morgenroth et al.'s model lacks the vicarious relationship aspect, whereas this is central to Caughey's conceptualization. Additionally, Caughey does not make a note of a mastery skill or expertise variable, which is a commonly acknowledged variable in role model literature (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

Overall, this review of existing literature investigating role models provides foundational work to propose a conceptualized definition of RMs. This section outlined theoretical commonalities and shared features across existing conceptualizations of role models. This review led to consistently identifiable variables which shed light on the important aspects of what makes an RM. Perhaps the most important factor in understanding existing literature on role models in the media is that this relationship is very much vicarious. The relationship between the role aspirant and role model is purely one-sided. The second common variable in this literature demonstrates the importance of the role aspirants' perceptions and relevance of the role model's values. The conceptualizations discussed would emphasize that their role models of focus were often relevant regarding the role model's values or traits. Furthermore, it is thoroughly discussed that role models encourage emulation and self-efficacy, often referred to in the literature as inspiring or inspirational. Lastly, an important variable prevalent in the literature is the perception of the role model as a master or expert. Through this review, four shared factors seemed to appear: *vicarious relationship*, *relevance and values*, *inspiration*, and *mastery and growth*. The shared features across the literature discussed are outlined in Table 2. Upon review of the existing conceptualizations, the next section explores ways in which role models were operationalized. Variables associated with role models and types of measures used are explored and critiqued.

Table 2 Comparing Existing Role Model Literature to Mediated Role Models

Authors	Existing conceptualizations	Proposed Dimensions
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		Vicarious Relationship	Relevance & Values	Inspiration	Mastery & Growth
Boissin et al., 2011	Theory of planned behavior		X		X
Brace-Govan, 2013	Typology	X	X	X	X
Boone & Lomore, 2001	Caughey's admirer- celebrity relationships	X	X	X	
Buksa & Mitsis, 2011	SCT	X	X		
Chan 2008	SCT	X			
Cheryan et al., 2011	SCT				X
Cheung & Yue, 2003	Social learning theory	X		X	X
Chia & Poo, 2009	Involvement with Celebrities	X	X	X	
Collins & Cook, 2013	SCT				~X
Fraser & Brown 2002	SCT	X	X		
Gretzel & Bowser, 2013	SCT	X		X	X
Hoyt & Simon, 2011	Social Comparison			X	X
Jenkins et al., 2016	N/A	X			
Lockwood, 2006	Social Comparison		X	X	X
Lockwood & Kunda, 1997	Social Comparison		X	X	X
Lockwood & Kunda 1999	Social Comparison		X	X	X
Makgosa, 2011	Social Learning theory	X			
Martin & Bush, 2000	Social Learning theory	X	X		
Morgenroth et al., 2015	Motivational Theory of Role Modeling		X	X	X
North et al.	Heroes & Celebrities	X (Both)			X (Heroes)
Peters, Steffens, & Morgenroth, 2018	Motivational Theory of Role Modeling		X	X	X
Rich, 1997	Role Model		X?	X	X
Steuer, 2011	SCT	X	X		
Yue & Cheung, 2000	Social learning theory				

Zielinska &  
Chambers, 1995

SCT

X

### Existing Operationalizations of Role Models

While the existing literature has a preponderance of references and potential definitions of mediated and non-mediated role models, there are notably fewer attempted operationalizations of the concept. This lack of operationalization of an RM provides further incentive to establish a definition and measure for RMs. While there is not much consistency or agreement on how to measure RMs, the following literature outlines what currently exists or has been used in research to measure role models in general within the media.

Existing quantitative approaches investigating role models typically used one or both techniques of self-reporting (asking the participant to name a mediated figure) and/or completing a scale related to role models or involvement with celebrities. While a lot of role model literature on careers and workplace often provided a stimuli role model for the study (e.g., Boissin et al., 2011; Cheryan et al., 2011; Hoyt & Simon, 2011), scholarship focusing on mediated RMs often instructed participants to identify a favorite celebrity, idol, athlete, hero, or fictional character (e.g., Boone & Lomore, 2001; Cheung & Yue, 2003; Jenkins et al., 2016; North et al., 2005), presumably to increase the study's construct validity. While this is a logical approach to studying the audiences' favorite persona, the language of the instructions does not necessarily mean the participants in the study are selecting their RM specifically. Most often, the instructions ask to list a "favorite," "celebrity idol," "hero," or "luminary" rather than list a "role model" in the media. This is problematic because the investigators are no longer measuring perceptions of a role model; having a favorite mediated persona does not guarantee that the audience individual also



perceives them as a role model. There is no way of demonstrating whether the participants viewed their selected mediated persona as a role model or not.

For example, Chia and Poo (2009) asked participants to name a “favorite celebrity” while implying that celebrities serve as influential role models. Boone and Lomore (2001) conducted a study of celebrity influence, asking participants if they had an attraction to or admiration of an “idol” in the media. Chia and Poo’s (2009) and Boone and Lomore’s (2001) instructions to name a favorite celebrity or idol are not the same as asking participants to name a role model. The participant’s favorite persona or idol could possibly be a role model, but that does not necessarily mean that they are definitely a role model. Being specific in procedure instructions by asking distinctly for “role models in the media” rather than a “favorite persona” is crucial to the face and construct validity of the study. Jenkins et al.’s (2016) is an example of appropriate procedure instruction, specifically asking participants to identify their “role model.”

Another approach that is accompanied by one of the more thought-out conceptualizations of a role model is Rich’s (1997) Role Model scale. It was designed for the context of work environments (Rich, 1997) and has been modified to be utilized in media research studies (Buksa & Mitsis 2011; Dix et al., 2010; Makgosa, 2010; Peters et al., 2018). Rich (1997) created a 15-item Role Model Scale, which measures four dimensions of a workplace role model: 1) role modeling, 2) trust in manager, 3) job satisfaction, 4) overall performance. In the context of the work environment, this scale is applied to measure employee perspectives of managers and bosses as role models. The scale reflects its conceptualization as items are designed for measuring the leadership roles of working professionals, employee satisfaction, and the evaluation of bosses as role models.

The overall context of this scale seems to mostly focus on overall manager effectiveness. Three of the four subscales *job satisfaction* (“All in all, I am satisfied with my job”), *overall performance* (“Performs his or her job the way I like to see it performed”), and *trust in manager*

(“I feel a strong loyalty to my manager”) are subscales more affiliated with measuring performance and effectiveness of a manager. Since three of the four items do not appear to measure the status of the manager being a role model, it brings the question to the construct validity of the entirety of the scale.

Furthermore, the scale loses its construct validity when it is modified and applied to RMs in media studies. The majority of studies that applied Rich’s (1997) scale dropped the first three subscales since it is not applicable or even easily adjusted to suit an RM’s situation. The fourth subscale *role modeling* (“Provides a good model for me to follow,” “leads by example,” etc.) includes items that are more easily adjusted and made applicable to RMs; however, it still seems to be missing components of what makes an RM, thus losing validity when applying these scales. These studies that utilize the role modeling subscale consisting of 5 items still achieved acceptable reliability (Buksa & Mitsis 2011; Dix et al., 2010; Makgosa, 2010; Peters et al., 2018); however, this subscale arguably measures a minimal and unidimensional idea of a role model (similar to wishful identification). Since the conceptualization of an RM is multidimensional, operationalization of a scale must also have multiple subscales to reliably and validly measure RMs.

Furthermore, scales alluding to role models have been used, including the Presence of Creative Supervisor (Collins & Cook, 2013), which is a modification of Scott and Bruce’s (1994) innovative behavior scale. Chia and Poo (2009) also technically measured *celebrity involvement* with the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS). While these publications are discussing role models, their scope is limited in that they are not quite measuring role models. The Presence of Creative Supervisor scale, for example, asks participants to rate the creativity of their supervisors. While the specific trait of creativity may be desirable, the measure focuses on a specific trait of a supervisor, not an overall perception of a role model. Additionally, there is an operationalization

gap with using CAS, given this scale is focused on a type of identification with a mediated persona, one in which the individual does not necessarily have to perceive a role model.

Taking a different approach, Yue and Cheung (2000) utilized a semantic differential scale, which North et al. (2005) adopted as well. Similarly, Lockwood (2006) and Lockwood and Kunda (1997, 1999) developed a 40-item semantic differential scale of adjectives called “impact of role models on the self.” Lockwood and Kunda’s (1997, 1999) method in associating adjectives with role models seem to have a logical approach; however, it appears the general listing of adjectives without clearly identified dimensions in which each adjective is associated with lacks construct validity because it does not connect the conceptualization and operationalization of the concept. Furthermore, both Yue and Cheung’s (2000) and Lockwood and Kunda’s (1997, 1999) measurement methods measure attitude towards a mediated persona, rather than applying a conceptually supported scale depicting the emotional and cognitive processing involved in perceiving a mediated persona as a role model.

Boon and Lomore (2001) utilized a series of dichotomous items and a modified version of Roberto and Stoes’ (1993) 9-item values checklist to ask participants what ways they felt their favorite idols had influenced them. Overall, the content of their items has similar flaws as the semantic differential scale: it measures responses to a role model, not actually measuring to what degree the participants perceive the mediated persona as a role model.

In summation, there are a variety of operationalizations of role models. Commonly, researchers have relied on a stimuli model to serve as a role model, and some have developed measures of the perception of a role model, attitude towards a role model, or self-reported ways in which a role model has altered their lives. However, upon evaluation of the existing operationalizations of RMs, none of the above measures match the existing conceptualizations. Disputably, the closest match between conceptualization and operationalization in this literature would be Rich’s (1997) Role Model Scale; however, as was discussed, it lacks the primary factor

that these role models are vicarious, and it is not multidimensional. Due to this lack of uniformity between conceptualization and operationalization of an RM, the following section postulates a fully explicated definition of a Role Model (RM).

### **Defining Role Model**

Given the existing literature, it is apparent that a lot of scholarship is dedicated to studying role models; however, there does not seem to be a universally shared concept, especially in media studies. This study proposes the definition of a role model (RM) as a mediated persona who is looked towards for examples of select desirable values, expertise, or behaviors in which one feels inspired to emulate an aspect of the desired values and behaviors observed. RMs represents an ideal of what the audience member wishes to emulate in their own lives, such as a career path, values, beliefs, behaviors, and more. Regardless of who the RM is (e.g., professional athlete, fictional character, etc.), audience members seek an archetype who is seen as an expert or figure of authority, encompasses a desirable set of values, and serves as inspiration; they are qualified to be viewed as a role model. This RM epitomizes how the audience member wants to function in society and ultimately becomes an example of how the audience member wants to behave.

There are characteristics of admiration, similarity, and wishful identification, involved in the process to eventually view a persona as a role model. The differentiation of RM from these similar constructs is the behavioral consequences. When individuals are perceiving others as role models, they are looking to them as examples of how to change their behavior. Constructs such as admiration, similarity, and wishful identification are attitudinal, while perceiving a role model implies one has actively changed their behaviors based on the role models' example. As audience members continue their long-term engagement with the RM, they could embody over time the

values, beliefs, or behaviors of the RM (Gierzynski & Eddy, 2013). Perhaps the most important distinction about mediated RMs is that it is *vicarious* for the audience individual. The following section clarifies unequivocally what that means.

### **Vicarious Interactions**

*Vicarious interactions* are an important variable that a large portion of the role model literature did not address. Since the interaction between the role aspirant and the role model is *vicarious*, that leads to a completely different impact on the role aspirant compared to a non-mediated or direct role model. A direct line of communication as a means to influence is an important aspect for non-mediated role models; they can inform, advise, directly discuss goals or characteristics that role aspirants find desirable. Whereas, because RMs are vicarious, this direct line of contact is impossible. As non-mediated role models can influence the role aspirant through direct communication, RMs aura of influence is genuinely central to the experience of the audience individual. This distinction is important to address because this indicates the process of influence is not the same between the two. Based on the existing literature reviewed throughout Chapters 2 and 3, the impact of RM is ubiquitous, making it imperative to understand what, how, and why vicarious interactions with RMs lead to changes in oneself.

This term is largely influenced by fandom literature that addresses types of vicarious interactions with mediated personae. According to Jenkins (2012), audience individuals can be active consumers of media, seeking out specific media archetypes for the individual to find a meaningful connection with that allows them to explore their self-

identities (also see Bacon-Smith, 1992; Gierzynski & Eddy, 2013; Greene & Adams-Price 1990). Caughey (1984) supports this claim as he argues audiences develop and utilize these vicarious interactions or even relationships to mimic the different types of values or behaviors of the role model in an effort to explore new aspects of one's identity (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Duffet, 2013; Jenkins et al., 2016; Stever, 2011).

Since the audience individual has to learn about the persona through media, their relationship is more distant than a direct role model (Brace-Govan, 2013). Thus, the audience individual probably would rely on more emotional connections such as similarity, identification, or PSI/R with the mediated persona to initially start the relationship. As the audience individual finds a mediated persona to focus on for a personal set of reasons, they may become an RM over time.

### **Familiarity**

Through long-term and goal-oriented behavior to learn about a mediated persona, audience members develop a sense of *familiarity* with the mediated persona. The foundation of this *familiarity* relies on the participant to "follow" the mediated persona in the media. Often the audience member has taken an interest in the RM through long-term consumption either as a passive or active fan. Before an audience individual can perceive a mediated person as an RM, they must have engaged in some degree of goal-oriented consumption intent to learn and become familiar with the RM. This could include following on social media, reading news articles, and more. Through repeated consumption, the audience individual gets to *know* the mediated persona. They become privy to happenings and events about the role model's life. This could include personal details such as birthdays, college alma mater, current/past partners, or career details such

as a sports player's statistics, a newscaster's previous places of employment, or an actress/actor's film credits.

Once the audience individual *knows* the mediated persona, they begin to see ways the persona exhibits desirable or inspirational values, expertise, or behavior. It is also important to explicitly state that individuals might not always be conscious of their predispositions to follow their role models. Their consumptive behaviors could be unconsciously selective due to their developed penchant toward the mediated persona. Consumption of media surrounding the RM eventually centers around reinforcing or continuing viewing ways in which the persona continues to perform the desirable values or behaviors.

### **Proposed Factor Structure for Perception of a Role Model**

The purpose of developing this scale is to measure the degree to which audience individuals perceive a media persona being a role model for them. The following section outlines the common themes that emerged through the literature analysis and pilot qualitative data. It is likely that the three constituent elements that determine if a mediated persona is viewed as a role model are the following: (1) *value and relevance*, (2) *inspiration*, and (3) *mastery and growth*. The vicarious nature of the relationship has scarcely been addressed in prior literature but is an integral variable to the study of mediated RMs. The three dimensions, *relevance and values*, *inspiration*, and *mastery and growth*, are thoroughly investigated in the existing literature and discussed below. These variables demonstrate the important traits related to viewing a mediated persona as a role model. A preliminary factor structure will determine if the qualitative analysis is supported. It is possible that the key concepts may change as the qualitative phase of scale development continues. For the time being, the following are proposed dimensions that make the latent variable RM.

## Relevance and Values

The first predicted factor of the RM scale includes *relevance and values*. The audience member is attracted to an RM based on their perceived similarities of *relevance* and *values*. According to Lockwood and Kunda (1997, 1999), *relevance* is an important factor to a role model being effective for an audience member, and *values* or morality often come up as an important characteristic of a role model (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Peters et al., 2018). This proposal defines *relevance and values* as shared or desirable characteristics and interest's individuals view role models embody.

Lockwood and Kunda (1997, 1999) demonstrated the important role of *relevance* in perceiving someone as a role model. Gender plays a role as well in reference to *relevance*, as Lockwood (2006) contends that matching gender between women and other female role models is important to determine whether they consider the role model germane. Additionally, Cheryan et al. (2011) found that non-stereotypical portrayals of women in STEM were more relatable and relevant to participants feeling they could be successful in the field of STEM<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, Morgenroth et al. (2015) argue that in order for one to embody a goal, the role model must be relevant.

*Values* are a core motive for audiences looking to perceive another persona as a role model. Boon and Lomore (2001) repeatedly emphasized in their literature review the importance of audiences matching or selecting mediated personae based on their personal values. Conceptually, *values* are often what determine if an individual perceives another as a role model. Perception of the mediated personae values is important in the process of initially viewing them as role models (Fraser & Brown, 2002). Additionally, Peters et al. (2018) demonstrated that

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<sup>4</sup> It is relevant to note this relationship was mediated by perceived dissimilarity from stereotypical role models. The role model's gender was less important, contradicting Boissin et al.'s (2011) and Lockwood's (2006) findings.



morality is important in the decision-making of the role aspirant perceiving another as a role model. Boissin et al. (2011) also demonstrated that similar values with a role model are more impactful towards intent to pursue entrepreneurship.

*Relevance and values* as an observable variable would most likely relate to similarity. The main premise of *relevance and values* is that the participant views parallels between themselves and the mediated persona, usually related to characteristics they find *relevant* and *values* they embrace. Thus, this variable is expected to demonstrate convergent validity in the analysis process through a positive correlation with wishful identification.

### **Inspiration**

The second aspect of an RM is *inspiration*. Morgenroth et al. (2015) define inspiration as “what role aspirants see as desirable and worth striving for” (pg. 468); it is an example of what can be done. Often the RM is displaying desirable behaviors and attitudes in which the individual wants to emulate (Brace-Govan, 2013; Cheung & Yue, 2003; Gretzel & Bowser, 2013; Morgenroth et al., 2015), and this desire to emulate is often paired with attainability (Lockwood, 1997; 1999). Furthermore, qualitative interviews with women found that positive representation of women helped empower them and explore aspects of their self-identities (Bacon-Smith, 1992). If the RM’s accomplishments generate feelings of emulation and a sense of self-efficacy, then it inspires the individual. For example, Lockwood (2006) found gender differences for college women having role models; having a college female role model to look towards was more inspiring compared to male role models. As individuals view a role model achieve something, they experience a sense of motivation or ability to also strive for the same thing.

Amending Morgenroth et al.’s (2015) approach, this study defines *inspiration* as a summation of individuals’ desire to emulate the RM when they feel they are capable of

completing an exact or modified version of the demonstrated behavior or value. Often because personae in the media are famous due to very high achieving and difficult to attain goals or careers (i.e., actress/actor, musician, etc.), the role aspirant will find modified attainable versions. For example, often, celebrities are perceived to have a platform to make a difference for charity, and role aspirants are not provided this same privilege. Thus, the emulation of a role model cannot be an exact replication of behavior. If emulation of mediated personae were always a strict imitation or mimicry, the feelings of attainability would diminish motivations to change behaviors or attitudes (Hoyt & Simon, 2011; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997, 1999). Referring back to the example: in order to emulate their celebrity role model, the role aspirant modifies their behavior to do something attainable, such as donate to the same cause.

When determining factorability, *inspiration* as an observable variable is expected to load as a separate dimension. To prove convergent validity, *inspiration* is predicted to positively correlate with wishful identification.

### **Mastery and Growth**

The fourth aspect of an RM is *mastery and growth*. Perhaps the most cited variable of a role model (e.g., Boissin et al., 2011; Cheung & Yue, 2003; Hoyt & Simon, 2011; Peters et al., 2018), *mastery and growth* refer to the audience's perceptions of the RM's qualifications or authority to represent what they are meant to. Often individuals look towards an archetype that has shown expertise or achievement in some way as an example to strive towards (Brace-Govan, 2013; Morgenroth et al., 2015; Rich, 1997). Morgenroth et al.'s (2015) approach to mastery and growth demonstrates how to achieve a behavior or value. When a mediated persona is perceived as an RM, they have deemed leaders who have demonstrated through their personal growth and/or accomplishments and how it can be done (Morgenroth et al., 2015). This proposal defines

*mastery and growth* as the perceived qualifications to the status of a role model through their achievements or publicly known self-development over time. To clarify, achievements can include those relating to one's career, charity work, family life, or activism.

This specific variable of an RM can also be important to an individual's perceptions of self-efficacy as well. Much of the social comparison literature (Hoyt & Simon, 2011; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997, 1999) found that if the model appears too high achieving, then individuals will feel deflated in their ability to achieve the same goals and Boissin et al. (2011) found an increased interest in pursuing entrepreneurship if their role models were successful. Knowing Steve Irwin as an expert of conservational efforts, Brown (2010) found that audience involvement with Irwin led to increased support of wildlife. This finding points to the possibility of audiences viewing Irwin as a role model. Thus, through the process of establishing construct validity, attitude homophily is also predicted to correlate with *mastery and growth*.

### **Discriminant Validity**

Predictions of convergent validity have been discussed individually with each proposed dimension. Based on theoretical similarities, this proposal predicts the following variables to related but statistically show that they are distinct constructs, demonstrating discriminant validity: wishful identification (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005), multiple-parasocial relationship (Tukachinsky, 2011), Attitude Homophily Scale (McCutcheon et al., 2002) and Role Model Scale (Rich, 1997).

It is possible that in the final phase of data collection, some of these items are determined to be predictors of audiences perceiving a mediated persona as a role model. For example, similarity with the mediated persona might predict stronger perceptions of RM; or identifying with the mediated person might as well predict perceptions of RM. Factor analysis and tests of

convergent and discriminant validity will demonstrate that perception of a role model will statistically differentiate as its own separate concept. In conclusion, Chapter three outlines role model literature and existing operationalizations. Based on this review, a definition for RMs was proposed, including four variables in which are possible dimensions for a quantitative measurement scale.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methods**

### **Study 1: Qualitative Interviews**

#### **Qualitative Interviews**

Theoretical conceptualization of role models has been explored and established in Chapter 3. The next step in the explication process is to develop a quantitative scale. The following chapters reflect the methodological approach to scale development of perceived role models as recommended (Carpenter, 2018; DeVellis, 2016; ) and as applied in the field of mass communication (Kohring & Matthews, 2007; Oliver & Raney, 2011; Peifer, 2018; Weber et al., 2014).

Scale development involves the process of explicating the latent variable to measure a theoretical concept. Because the proposed concept is not observable, developing a latent variable involves creating a collection of items or statements that reveal the theoretical concept with statistical variability when combined into a composite score (DeVellis, 2012). DeVellis argues that a theoretical model should guide scale development; in this case, the preceding chapters built upon the existing literature and proposed a theoretical characterization of role models.

The first step recommended for scale development is to “research the intended meaning and breadth of the theoretical concept” (pg. 27, Carpenter, 2018). This step was partly achieved through an in-depth literature review and complemented with a qualitative investigation to gauge dimensions and develop items for the scale, establishing Study 1 of data collection. The purpose of this step was to further explore audiences’ perceptions of what role models in the media are like and identify any subdimensions of a role model that might exist. The findings from this step led to study 2 of data collection by contributing to the design of the item pool to reflect better the language and perceptions of the audience’s thoughts about role models. After quantitative data

collection, study 2 completes an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and factor extraction and rotation (Carpenter, 2018; DeVellis, 2016). Upon successful findings of the EFA, Study 3 conducts confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to establish measurement validity (DeVellis, 2016).

### **Qualitative Interviews**

**Procedure.** Semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the research question: What factors are associated with the concept of a role model? This data collection method allows the researcher to create a systematized analysis of the study while also asking additional or follow-up questions to gain insight into participants' thoughts. Since this study sought to investigate what makes a role model from the individual's perspective, a semi-structured interview was appropriate to understand the complexity and depth of why an individual would view someone as a role model. See Appendix B for the structured questions. Respondents were required to provide verbal consent after evaluating the consent form, following IRB protocol.

Part of the semi-structured interview method requires predesigned question prompts. Another feature of these interviews is that it allows the interviewee to ask impromptu questions based on the direction or natural flow of the conversation based on the participants' responses (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2020). For example, if a participant made a statement that required further clarification or was of particular interest towards the topic, the interviewer can ask follow-up questions. This method proves to be optimal when interviewing because individuals might focus on specific questions due to their personal experiences. Given the adaptability of semi-structured interviews, this can be an advantage in collecting varying depths of quality data based on individual responses and reactions.

The interviewer also engaged in "member-checking" (Candela, 2019), a qualitative research strategy designed to confirm further or solidify the participants' reactions or responses. Member-checking can be viewed as a form of validity as the interviewee reconfirms that they

clearly understand and interpret the conversation (Candela, 2019). This involves the interviewee repeating back what a respondent said for confirmation and serves as verbal verification that the interviewee fully understood the participant's statements. Member-checking during interviews overall helps the researcher more accurately analyze the meanings of the participant's statements post-interview.

Participants were initially asked how they would define a role model. The interview questions asked about the necessary criteria to be identified as a role model, why role models are important, and if there is a difference between role models in their personal life versus the media. The subsequent questions required participants to focus on a mediated figure they identified as a role model. This series of questions specifically asked about participants' relationship with their self-identified role model. Questions were designed to gauge their perceived importance of the role model and traits or characteristics that make a role model. Additional questions asked if participants felt they identified with, were friends with, and desired to be like the role model. Additional questions then asked about negative features of role models and media figures they like but do not consider to be role models.

**Sample.** A total of 20 participants completed a one-on-one semi-structured interview with the researcher. Participants' age ranged from 19-40 years old, and most participants were identified as women (N = 15). Participants were recruited via multiple methods, including course recruitment, convenience sampling, and snowball sampling, by asking participants to share the research's information with any acquaintances that would be interested in participating. Recruitment ended after 20 participants, when the preliminary analyses began showing "saturation" of data, meaning the interviewee was finding more repetition of patterns as opposed to new information (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2020).

**Analysis.** All interviews were transcribed verbatim then coded for content using open and axial coding to present a thematic analysis (Strauss, 1987). The transcriptions were initially

coded using open coding, which consists of the researcher identifying “keywords” and “phrases” into periodic codes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This technique allows the researcher to analyze the material while looking for recurring codes and open to new codes that can appear while analyzing (Strauss, 1987). Compartmentalization of frequent codes provides new insights and allows the researcher to move on to conduct axial coding. This process involves categorizing the open codes into broader overarching themes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The researcher looked for common themes on the participant’s idea of what makes a role model and what their relationship with their role model is like. Using grounding technique, the researcher completed multiple assessments using open and axial coding to identify themes until no new ones occurred (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2020). This analysis allowed the researcher to determine three core themes related to audience perceptions of what makes a role model.

### **Qualitative Interview Results**

**Defining Role Model.** The first two questions participants were asked at the start of the interview were: “how would you define a role model?” and “what determines if they are a role model?” Participants commonly defined their role models with terminology such as admiration, aspiration, embodiment, phrases such as “look up to,” and more. Sample statements include “someone you admire, and you want to be like” or “someone you could look up to...and embody what they do and how they are,” were frequently expressed by participants. Aspiration was used as well to describe when defining a role model, for example two participants stated, “ someone you kind of aspire to be like,” and “someone you can aspire to be like.” Overall, there was a common theme that as a prerequisite of being a role model, they must embody a “positive influence” over others<sup>5</sup>. The aspect of a positive influence depended on the intersection of

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<sup>5</sup> While discussion of “bad role models” did occur later in the interviews, participants initial definition and determination of if someone is a role model focused on the positive influence in which an individual is seeking from another (the role model).



specific characteristics, traits, or goals the role model has already mastered or achieved, and that it matches characteristics, traits, or goals that the individual aspires for based on their idea of personal growth. The participants repeatedly mentioned the idea of emulating or admiring the role model; however, throughout the interviews, this came with the specification that individuals emulate their role models in a modified way that stays true to their identities. This specific theme is discussed in **Theme 3** below.

Furthermore, the second question asked participants to further elaborate on how role models exemplify a “positive influence” or personify what a “good person” should be. This conversation was quite broad with participants, as it could be regarding their goals in their personal life or careers. Determination of a role model depended on if the person is a “good person,” or if they are “someone who does good things,” or “somebody who’s successful.” There was a common consensus across interviews that this idea of perceiving another person as “good” or “successful” was dependent on the aspirant’s goals. Meaning, participants had to see another person already achieve the goals they themselves are looking to achieve. It is important for an aspirant to recognize a shared goal or outcome with a potential role model for them to be established as a role model. If there is no shared goal, then the potential role model holds no relevance to the individual and is just another figure in the media. A few ways in which participants established shared goals were based on the role aspirants’ perceptions of the role model’s values – if they were desirable or “good” values – and the role aspirants’ awareness of the role model’s path to embracing shared goal.

***Theme 1: The Role Model’s Perceived Values.*** During open coding, one of the most prevalent themes was the importance of the role model’s moral compass and core values. A list of over thirty adjectives describing their role model’s traits, values, morals seemed to focus on the idea of an “overall goodness,” or selflessness that makes them worthy of being a role model.

Some of the most repeated values included: positivity, goodness, kindness, honesty, admiration, leadership, and some variation of a sense of selflessness.

Participants routinely stated the importance of their role model being the epitome of a good person; for example, one participant said, "... they're the ingredients for what I think a good person is, a good human." Another participant referred to their role model's core values as centered around "ethical goodness." It was imperative to participants that their role models were "a good person" and often stated it was important that their role models not only cared about themselves but that "they care about the good of others." Statements such as these were usually paired with various adjectives to depict further what makes someone a good role model, such as compassion, empathy, benevolence, and more. Another recurring value had to do with perseverance, leadership, and even responsibly using their public platform. One participant stated a role model must be "...able to stand up for yourself [themselves] and fight for what you [they] believe is right."

When asking participants to distinguish the difference between liking a mediated figure and viewing them as a role model, it often came down to the difference in selflessness and vulnerability. For example, one participant discussed the importance of selflessness by using Christina Yang from Grey's Anatomy as a mediated figure they liked but could not be a role model. They stated, "She's very intelligent...very self-driven...But sometimes she's kind of so in it for just herself that she's not thinking about everything else around her." This participant felt that Yang's selfish characteristics took away from her capability to be a role model.

Participants also expressed importance in their role model being vulnerable or authentic. Often mediated figures who they like but are not considered role models were described as "entertainment" or "...just liking someone's face or photos or products." To be viewed as a role

model, participants described needing a more “in-depth connection<sup>6</sup>” and looking towards “someone that you have shared interests with maybe, have similar goals or outlooks.” Role models needed to be open; as one participant stated, it was essential to her that her role model is publicly open with her strengths and weaknesses.” The role model’s open communication helped the participant perceive the role model as more authentic because it allowed them to view a vulnerable side of them. It was a common theme that participants felt that “...celebrities who communicate more, come off as more authentic or...as role models.”

Another way role models could demonstrate their authenticity and values was by using their platform to speak up about injustices in society. Some participants wanted to see their role models “use their voice” for good. For example, one participant identified Ashton Kutcher as a role model because of his efforts to fight sex trafficking. The participant discussing the importance of Kutcher’s values making him a role model mentioned it is essential to them that “he uses his platform for good...His end goal is to actually put something out in the world that can do good.” Another participant stated they gained even more respect for their role model for speaking up about the Black Lives Matter Movement. Referring to a vlogger influencer, the participant said, “I think a lot of YouTubers were scared to [speak up]...so for her to speak out, it shows that she was making an effort and she wasn’t afraid to speak out about the injustices that were happening.” This participant also mentioned that if their role model had not spoken up, she would have probably lost respect and her title as a role model in their eyes. Generally, participants generally wanted to see their role models demonstrate their values through public statements or directive action. Without these acts of demonstration, the role models risk being perceived as performative and not genuine or authentic to audiences.

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<sup>6</sup> The exact quote is “There’s more depth to the connection.”

The common theme of needing to see a) an authentic media figure, b) someone with depth, and c) vulnerability points to whether participants can gauge the moral compass or core values. If media figures are “open” and allow the participant’s space to “get to know them,” that gives participants the ability to assess the media figure’s core values and determine the potential a media figure has to be a role model. Participants repeatedly mentioned Kylie Jenner as a media figure participants liked but would not consider a role model because participants could not determine her true personality or values. As one participant compared Jenner to her role model, “One’s more real, Emma Chamberlain’s more real while Kendall Jenner is this perfection of a human. You don’t really see flaws, which I feel like a role model you need to see flaws in order to relate to them.”

The Role Model’s Values theme represents the audience’s view of the role model and the subjective idea of what makes a role model. Through the open coding process, identifying common values or traits participants prioritized in their perception of a role model led to the conclusion that a specific type of person—a good person—is what makes a role model. Another round of analysis via axial coding found that this idea of a “good person” is mainly subjective and relied on at least one of the following attributes: the role model’s sense of selflessness and care for others, a demonstration of authenticity, and the responsible use of their voice on the public platform. These recurring themes primarily point to the importance of participants’ ability to perceive a mediated figure’s values. Through this knowledge, they can determine if the mediated figure qualifies to be a role model.

***Theme 2: The Role Model’s Perceived Credibility.*** Throughout the interviews, participants repeatedly discussed that a role model must have some preexisting experience, ability, or mastery in an area of importance to the participant. This experience or mastery can vary; for example, some participants discussed role models for their careers (i.e., political career), as a shared moral value (i.e., helping others), or as a lifestyle (i.e., accomplishing various social

hurdles). As one participant described, a role model is “an individual who has accomplished a goal or goals that you are also looking to accomplish.” The participants consistently choose a mediated figure to be a role model based on their perceived achievements or demonstrated expertise in a central area of interest.

The participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of a role model, having already achieved a specific set of standards which makes them a credible person to look towards for an example. One participant stated that overall role models are “someone that you look up for, sets an example for another...” or as another participant stated they are a role model if they are someone “I’m going to listen to what you say.” In this way, participants need to view another person who has achieved the same goals they are looking to achieve, thus earning the role model title because they have a sense of credibility because of their achievement.

To perceive the role model as credible or experienced, the participant describes seeing the media figure’s “growth” or “progress.” Many participants expressed the “need to see flaws in order to relate to them [role models].” Role model’s flaws or struggles could include witnessing failures, as a participant detailed referring to their role model Ashton Kutcher, “Even if you fail, if you just have the drive to keep going, you’re going to eventually overcome what you keep failing.” This philosophy helped the participant view Kutcher as a person who has overcome obstacles and is an excellent example to refer to when facing an obstacle.

Furthermore, by seeing these failures, many participants stated that this leads to role models gaining experience, another critical trait. As one participant said, “Not even necessarily expertise, but having an experience in it, but definitely having a background in it, seeing that they’ve done it...” Another participant intricately detailed the “growth” of LeBron James, who has been a professional athlete since 2003. They stated, “... we’ve been able to witness his growth for almost 20 years....a part of that growth has been that, in the sense that he’s acknowledged his privilege as being a CIS straight male...” This participant identified that James visibly

demonstrated his personal growth over time and now speaks up about his own experiences responsibly using his public platform. Lastly, some participants mentioned “they [role models] could have outside affirmation... a lot of awards...humanitarian stuff...” that could secure an individual as a role model; but is less important than the role model’s character.

While the role models demonstrated expertise or experience, the role models represent a personal interest or goal for the participant. This interest or goal could include their career or personal lifestyle, but this was solely subjective upon what the participant was looking for as the role model to model. For example, Michelle Obama was mentioned multiple times as a role model for her career in politics. As one participant stated,

“Seeing how women have been able to progress in politics over the last 30, 40 years and seeing her specifically do a lot of great work as the First Lady makes me feel confident that other women are going to want to continue to work in politics and aren’t going to feel like they’re going to get shut down.”

Some participants admired the way their role models lived their lives, for example, one participant named a vlogger whom she views as a role model because “She’s very open... she’s very open for other mothers. If I were a mom, I would be so grateful for her.” While these testimonies focus on the individual’s subjective domain of interest, they demonstrate that the individuals perceive the role models as having achieved goals and thus are qualified to be looked towards as an example. By identifying the individual who has achieved these goals, the role model becomes qualified or makes an example to look towards on how to achieve similar goals.

When comparing role models to media figures participants liked but did not consider role models, a common theme was apparent: the liked figure does not have the expertise or experience in a shared goal with the participant. They could not have accomplished the goals or show they are qualified to speak or represent a shared goal or idea. For example, one participant was discussing why she likes Chrissy Teagan but does not consider her a role model: “I mean, that’s

fine, she has her platform, and that's cool that she uses her social media, but again, especially the politics really bothers me because I'm like, 'What do you even know about any of this?'...Maybe she has a degree in political science, but I don't think so." This participant felt that Teagan was speaking outside of their area of expertise and thus was not qualified to be a role model.

Participants also distinguished role models from just liked media figures based on seeking advice. The audience's perception of the role model as a credible person to look towards for guidance often mentioned that role models are people (if they could meet) they would want to have a conversation about how to achieve their goals. As one participant stated, "I think it can be entertained by an individual without wanting to be like them. So like, "Wow, that was a really interesting thing you did or that was a very... I enjoyed that attribute of you. But I do not look up to you or want advice from you in any sense of the word."

These recurring themes of participants looking toward someone who has already achieved a like-minded goal led the researcher to identify that the participants sought a media figure who had the credibility to be a role model. The role model must have accomplished a like-minded goal and have the experience to be perceived as an example for the participants to achieve their goals. The role model must be perceived as credible, which is achieved through their public struggles and accomplishments. Like the *Values* theme, *Credibility* is the participant's perception of the role model. *Credibility* describes what the participant thinks the role model has achieved to earn them the role model title.

***Theme 3: Role Model's Impression on Oneself.*** The final overarching theme in the analyses focused on how the participants felt the role model impacted them. Often participants discussed how they felt inspired and motivated by the values and credibility of the role model. The role model's experience influenced participants' emotions and thoughts about obtaining a particular goal. Participants repeatedly mentioned how their role model encouraged them to pursue a goal because the role model showed them the goal is "feasible," "attainable," or

“possible.” For example, one participant discussed how without a particular role model in their life, “They don’t think they would have been encouraged to do some of the things they did in their life without having...guidance,” and because they were able to “...watch her do that and [I] was like, ‘I can do this too.’” It was important to participants that role models had attained goals relevant to them.

By having a role model to strive to be like—mainly if they are a good person—participants felt they too could become good people or achieve the moral or career goals of the role model. One participant commented that role models “gives you like a good person to strive to be...if I am good like them, then maybe the same things will happen.” One participant specifically referenced how seeing Michelle Obama’s work in politics “makes me feel like there’s a possibility that I can do it” (to clarify, this statement is about being a woman in politics, not being the First Lady). Another participant discussed how her role model helped her cope and open up about her father’s death, as the role model and participant both lost their fathers around the same age. She described that “being able to see how she has reacted to that and how she still lives a positive life and everything, that is what I really admire about her.... for her to talk about it so openly showed me that it was okay to talk about it.” Participants generally found it essential to look towards a role model for inspiration on feeling, thinking, or behaving when facing certain obstacles or goals. The role model’s actions made participants feel a sense of self-efficacy and the ability to achieve a personal goal similar to that of the role models.

In regard to this newly perceived attainable subjective goal, participants describe their role models as a “blueprint,” “guide or guiding light,” “barometer,” “north star,” or “an example of how to.” However, this personal goal is usually a moderated version of the role models’ achievement tailored by the participants. Participants are acutely aware that their mediated role models are achieving goals that are often out of their capabilities or reach. For example, many role models were celebrities such as LeBron James, Jane Fonda, or Lizzo, all media figures of



great success in the sports, film, and music industry. The participants choose aspects perceived as successful within these role models and emulate their role models in a modified manner that suits their needs. Rather than emulating them literally to be in those industries, they find core values that helped them succeed in these ways. For example, one participant discussed Lizzo: “Like, I’m not going to go and be a ‘boss-ass’ flute player and musician like Lizzo, but her lyrics inspire me to try to emulate self-love in my own way, not the exact way as her.”

Additionally, public figures often have resources and sway of public opinion that the participants do not have. All the participants were cognizant of this difference and thus created tailored goals that were more attainable but still adhering to the theme of the original goal. For example, one participant discussed how their role model—who is a wealthy influencer—will “...donate money to kids in need or stuff like that. So, instead of selling my clothes on Poshmark, I’ll donate them to girls in need in my neighborhood who need them.” This particular participant felt they could emulate aspects of their role model by finding a modified and achievable goal. Another participant discussed how watching their role model, Ashton Kutcher, led them to seek out options in which she can also combat sex trafficking. Kutcher is known to use his public platform to advocate for laws and invest in companies that help combat sex trafficking (Thorn, n.d.). Because they recognize they cannot do the same thing as Kutcher because of his celebrity status, instead they tailored their ability to become a trafficking victim’s advocate by going to school for criminal justice.

Another reason why participants do not seek to emulate their role models exactly is because they hold on to their self-identities. Many participants discussed how it is essential to maintain a sense of themselves when having a role model. For example, one participant stated,

“I think it’s okay to emulate parts of your role model...I think in the end you are your own person and you should use them as, “Okay, this person is really incredible, I really like all the work they do. They are my role model.” But that

doesn't mean I'm going to do every single thing that they do and try to match my life towards them.”

Another participant discussed that role models valued traits are essential, so they can strive to harness the same characteristics: “I think it's important to not try to be exactly like somebody and to make those traits your own...So having someone to look up to can help push you to push yourself.” Comments like this were frequently made by participants as they wanted to harness their self-identity while embracing a desirable trait in someone that was modeling the behavior they appreciated. As one participant stated, “because she's a role model to me, I would like to work on my kindness and my forgiveness if that makes sense.” In this case, the participant used the role model as an example to develop or build upon her self-identified values.

These recurring themes of participants identifying how they were motivated to change their behaviors and attitudes to emulate aspects of their role model led to identification that those participants sought a role model whom they felt inspired and motivated by the thoughts, feelings, and actions by this media figure. Many participants discussed how they adjusted their lives to emulate their role model, but in a way that contributed to their identity. Participants did not want to mimic precisely their role models, just aspects of them.

The Feelings of Inspiration represent the participants' internal observation of how their role models impacted them affectively, cognitively, and behaviorally. As discussed under *Role Model's Values* and *Credibility*, transparency, and authenticity in their values and struggle or process at achieving the goal is necessary to identify a role model. Upon analyzing this data and hopefully further supporting initial themes collected, the author will continue the scale development process by generating an initial item pool and examining it for face validity.

### **Additional Themes**

Interviewees frequently discussed the idea of “knowing” or being “familiar” with their role models. It appears a sense of knowing and familiarity with the media figure are important to view them as a role model. Without prior knowledge about the potential role model, participants were unable to perceive them as a role model. Often, when discussing media figures, they only liked, they often expressed their lack of knowledge of what that media figure might be doing to deserve to be identified as a role model. Given these findings, it would be interesting for future research to investigate the role of simply knowing a media figure and how that can differentiate individuals from identifying them as a role model or not.

The role of vicariousness occasionally also came up. Participants admitted role models in their personal lives were more influential than their mediated ones. However, it was still clear that interviewees felt their mediated role models impacted them. This further demonstrates the importance of developing a scale which is inclusive of vicarious role models.

In conclusion study 1 supported the theoretical expectations of three distinct dimensions involved in assessing how individuals perceive a role model. Participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of the role model’s values and that these values are what the individuals subjectively identify as “good.” There was also the importance of having experience or expertise to validate the status of being a role model. This could include a successful career path or personal growth. Interviewees repeatedly established the importance of their role models having some form of credibility and used this standard to distinguish role models from non-role models. Lastly, participants discussed how role models were sources of inspiration and how they would modify their behaviors to be more like their role models. Furthermore, the role of being familiar with a media figure was important to establishing a role model. The results of the qualitative analysis indicate these three distinct factors are essential in perceiving someone as a role model.

## **Chapter 5: Research Methods**

### **Study 2: Scale Item Development and Analysis**

Upon the explication of theory and findings from the interviews in study 1, a list of items was developed and tested to create the role model scale. Scale items were written with the following subdimensions identified in study 1: Value System of Role Model, Role Model Credibility, and Impression of Role Model. Additionally, scale items were written with the other themes identified in study 1 related to role models, but not a dimension of the concept: familiarity and consumption. The design of scale items included the dimensions of a role model and related characteristics of the concept.

#### **Item Development**

The results of study 1 functioned as a guide to writing the items for the role model scale. The themes identified in study 1 were adopted as subdimensions of the scale, and these findings guided item development. The interview transcriptions assisted in the development of statements related to each subdimension. Initially, 62 items were written for the scale, 12-items for values system, 17-items for credibility, and 33-items for impression. The entire pilot perceived role model scale and each subdimension can be found under Appendix C.

The format of the scale is a Likert scale. This format appears best to measure audience perception of a role model because many psychological scales of audience attitudes or beliefs are measured in a Likert form (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2020). Responses to each item are measured on a 7-point Likert scale, similar to that of other attitudinal scales (DeVellis, 2017). Value system and impression dimensions instructed participants to rate their agreement with the statements. The ratings were paired with words such as “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7) to assist the participants in assessing their rating.

### **Pretest of Items**

After writing, editing, and eliminating the items, the scale was peer-tested with other researchers (DeVellis, 2017). Peers included four full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty in a college of mass communication, and three were working professionals. A Qualtrics survey was administered to these seven individuals and eight others to receive feedback on wording, clarity, and the level of agreement in categorizing the statement within each predicted factor structure.

Survey questions were in multiple-choice format, asking participants to categorize a statement. Participants were only allowed to select one answer. The instructions for these questions provided a short definition of each factor structure the experts and participants chose<sup>7</sup>. After sorting the statement into a category, two questions were asked in open-text format: 1) How would you describe the quality of this statement? Was it clear, confusing, etc.? and 2) Why did you choose the following category? The last two questions allowed for qualitative feedback on each item.

Based on the recommendations from the peer-review, the subscale Credibility was redesigned to reflect adjectives in which instructions ask to rate how well the adjectives described the media figure on a scale of “Not well at All” (1) to “Extremely Well” (7). This change sought to better measure perceived credibility based on scales that measure a similar concept related to perceived credibility (Ohanian, 1990). Furthermore, extensive elimination of items ensued, leaving a total of 32 items for the full scale, 5-items for Value System of Role Model, 11-items for Role Model Credibility, and 16-items for Impression of Role Model. The full scale can be found in Appendix D.

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<sup>7</sup> The four definitions displayed were as follows: 1) Values System describes the values you perceive your role model to embody; 2) Credibility describes your perceptions of your role model’s qualifications or credibility to represent or serve as an example of certain behaviors or achievements; 3) Impression describes what you find worthy and desirable to strive to embody from your role model; 4) Unsure means you do not feel the statement clearly fit into one category. If the participant selected “Unsure,” it was encouraged that they explained why in a text box.

## Variables

The questionnaire's item development variables included the three subdimensions of a role model as determined by Study 1. Then the two concepts identified as relating to role models but not as a dimension in study 1 were also included. This study also included the variable wishful identification because of the overt theoretical overlap discussed in Chapter 2. The full version of study 2's survey can be found in Appendix E.

***Perceived Role Model Subdimensions.*** The three themes identified in study 1 guided the development of the subdimensions of the perceived role model scale: Value System of Role Model, Role Model Credibility, and Impression of Role Model. Each subscale represented an aspect of perceived role models and was designed to ask participants to rate how well the statements or adjectives describe a role model. A description of the item development process can be found in the sections above.

***Wishful Identification.*** Study 2 included the wishful identification scale (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005) in determining content validity by evaluating potential correlations and assessing factor loadings related to the proposed perceived role model scale. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are theoretical overlaps between wishful identification and perceived role models. Thus, it was determined that including the wishful identification scale in the item development stage of the perceived role model scale was essential. The commonly used 3-item modified version of this scale was used and can be found under the full version of study 2's survey in Appendix E.

***Familiarity.*** Since study 1 identified themes related to the concept of a role model, these themes were also adopted for the quantitative measure in study 2. A five-item Likert formatted scale was written for this study. The instructions asked participants to think of a media figure while reading the statements and rate on a 7-point scale how well they do or do not agree with each statement. Statements included such as "I feel familiar with this media figure" and "I feel I

know a good bit about this media figure.” The scale was found to be reliable across all three conditions: role model ( $M = 5.16$ ,  $SD = 0.30$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.88$ ), liked media figure ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.87$ ), and disliked media figure ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.88$ ). This variable was included as a part of the item validation to assure the qualitative results align with the quantitative results, proving content validity. All five items of this scale can be found under the full version of study 2’s survey in Appendix E.

**Consumption.** Consumption is another variable identified in study 1 related to the concept of a role model but not as a dimension. The instructions of this variable asked participants to determine the number of hours of media about the media figure they consumed within the past month. The options started with less than one hour and increased by 2-hour increments, maxing out to 9 or more hours of consumption (less than 1 hour = 1; 1-3 hours = 2; 3-5 hours = 3, etc.). This variable was included as well to assert content validity. The qualitative results determined consumption was a related variable and not a dimension of the perceived role model. Including this variable in item validation helps corroborate the qualitative findings of study 1 and establish content validity.

### **Sampling and Data Screening**

Study 2’s scale development data was collected primarily through college student samples and snowball sampling through social media. Before analysis, the data were screened for univariate outliers. One participant was removed for excessive time spent on the survey; three were removed for selecting the same rating for all questions (e.g., all Strongly Agree). The minimum amount of data for factor analysis was satisfied, with a final sample size of 168, providing a ratio of 5 cases per variable as recommended by Carpenter (2018).

The participants were recruited via a college student sample and various social media sites to take an online survey through Qualtrics, which averaged 26.65 minutes in length. They were compensated through extra credit or entered a raffle to win a gift card. The average age of

participants was 25 years old ( $SD = 7.57$ , Range 46), 54.5% of participants were women ( $N = 91$ ), and majority of participants were white (68.5%,  $N = 115$ ), 15.5% identified as Black ( $N = 26$ ), 4.8% Hispanic/Latino ( $N = 8$ ), 3% Asian/Pacific Islander ( $N = 5$ ), 7.1% as Native American ( $N = 12$ ), 1.2 as Middle Eastern ( $N = 2$ ). 8.3% of the overall participant pool identified as multi-racial ( $N = 14$ ).

### **Procedure**

Qualtrics served as the host website for study 2's survey. Starting with an IRB-approved consent form followed by demographic questions, participants were then asked to identify three types of media figures. The instructions asked participants to think of a media figure they consider a role model, one they like a lot but do not consider a role model, and a celebrity or public figure they do not like. Participants then entered the media figure's name in a text box. Participants were additionally instructed not to name media figures who were fictional characters or cartoons. After naming their three media figures, the survey asked a series of questions representative of the variables discussed above. The respondents answered these series of questions three times, one for each type of media figure. The survey randomly presented the order of each media figure condition. The purpose of this study design was to establish a difference between the participant's selected media figures. Theoretically, the statistical averages for the media figures identified as role models should be higher than the other two conditions. Additionally, the survey format randomized the order of individual questions.

## **Results**

### **Scale Descriptive Statistics**

Each item's mean, standard deviation, and variance were examined. The means for all the subscales about a mediated role model tended to be in the 5 to 6 range, while the mean for the subscales Liked and Disliked media figure usually ranged no higher than 4. Theoretically, the average means should be higher when participants are answering questions regarding their role



model, as opposed to liked and disliked media figures. Additionally, scale development aims to show the items variances, and standard deviations vary (DeVellis, 2017), to which they did. Most items showed standard deviations no higher than 2, indicating scores were relatively similar but varying enough. As well, the items' skewness and kurtosis were examined. All items passed criteria set forth by Kline (2016) for skewness ( $<3$ ) and kurtosis ( $<10$ ), indicating that their distributions were normal. See Table 3 for complete results of individual items statistics and item wording for each media figure condition. The following sections discuss the correlation matrix and exploratory factor analyses. Only the role model condition's data is reported because it best represents the construct of this scale.

*Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Role Model Scale*

<u>Item Wording</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Skew</u>	<u>Kurtosis</u>
<u>Value System for Role Models</u>						
I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.	1	168	5.95	1.23	-1.44	1.75
I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.	2	168	5.95	1.22	-1.36	1.77
I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.	3	168	5.89	1.15	-1.33	2.44
I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.	4	168	5.99	1.28	-1.75	3.10
This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.	5	168	5.89	1.26	-1.53	2.83
<u>Value System for Liked Media Figures</u>						
I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.	1	168	4.77	1.54	-0.49	-0.25
I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.	2	168	4.74	1.49	-0.61	-0.18
I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.	3	168	4.43	1.60	-0.33	-0.49
I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.	4	168	4.89	1.51	-0.50	-0.24
This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.	5	168	4.45	1.66	-0.34	-0.62
<u>Value System for Disliked Media Figures</u>						
I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.	1	168	2.66	1.84	0.80	-0.57
I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.	2	168	2.63	1.84	0.88	-0.42
I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.	3	168	2.54	1.81	0.91	-0.40
I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.	4	168	2.82	1.91	0.70	-0.79
This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.	5	168	2.56	1.83	0.91	-0.39
<u>Credibility for Role Models</u>						
Accomplished	1	168	6.24	1.25	-2.07	4.30
Expert	2	168	5.89	1.24	-1.55	3.22
Experienced	3	168	6.17	1.20	-1.90	3.82
Knowledgeable	4	168	6.01	1.36	-1.64	2.31

Qualified	5	168	6.12	1.22	-1.79	3.20
Skilled	6	168	6.14	1.21	-1.69	2.85
Successful	7	168	6.38	1.16	-2.47	6.66
Capable	8	168	6.18	1.30	-2.01	3.91
Sets an example	9	168	6.04	1.33	-1.55	2.15
Sincere	10	168	6.16	1.27	-1.87	3.51
Honest	11	168	5.93	1.22	-1.44	2.26

Credibility for Liked Media Figures

Accomplished	1	168	6.01	1.20	-1.38	1.73
Expert	2	168	5.25	1.50	-0.66	-0.22
Experienced	3	168	5.60	1.37	-1.03	0.78
Knowledgeable	4	168	5.24	1.47	-0.78	0.25
Qualified	5	168	5.43	1.44	-0.99	0.74
Skilled	6	168	5.61	1.44	-1.02	0.46
Successful	7	168	6.10	1.15	-1.39	2.01
Capable	8	168	5.67	1.30	-1.01	0.79
Sets an example	9	168	4.63	1.81	-0.48	-0.74
Sincere	10	168	5.20	1.54	-0.69	-0.28
Honest	11	168	5.23	1.49	-0.57	-0.39

Credibility for Disliked Media Figures

Accomplished	1	168	4.33	1.95	-0.35	-1.06
Expert	2	168	3.34	1.87	0.22	-1.10
Experienced	3	168	3.77	2.03	-0.05	-1.33
Knowledgeable	4	168	3.51	1.99	0.16	-1.30
Qualified	5	168	3.37	1.97	0.17	-1.33
Skilled	6	168	3.36	1.95	0.22	-1.27
Successful	7	168	4.40	2.03	-0.46	-1.04
Capable	8	168	3.60	1.93	0.02	-1.19
Sets an example	9	168	2.83	1.95	0.69	-0.92
Sincere	10	168	2.93	1.89	0.54	-0.97
Honest	11	168	3.09	1.88	0.42	-1.08

Impression of Role Models

I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.	1	168	5.18	1.48	-0.72	-0.22
I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.	2	168	5.08	1.51	-0.58	-0.21
This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.	3	168	5.13	1.67	-0.80	-0.07
I look towards this media figure for inspiration.	4	168	5.55	1.34	-0.88	0.33

I find this media figure to be inspiring.	5	168	5.96	1.29	-1.56	2.45
This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.	6	168	5.01	1.73	-0.82	-0.18
This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.	7	168	5.36	1.44	-0.73	-0.20
This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.	8	168	5.51	1.44	-1.00	0.71
Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.	9	168	5.42	1.47	-0.98	0.45
Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.	10	168	5.49	1.33	-0.90	0.48
This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.	11	168	5.11	1.54	-0.73	-0.16
This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.	12	168	5.38	1.51	-0.99	0.49
Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.	13	168	5.15	1.54	-0.89	0.36
Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.	14	168	5.20	1.53	-0.79	0.24
Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.	15	168	5.40	1.50	-0.90	0.19
This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.	16	168	4.68	1.86	-0.38	-0.99
<i><u>Impression of Liked Media Figure</u></i>						
I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.	1	168	4.10	1.80	-0.21	-1.00
I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.	2	168	3.97	1.86	-0.05	-1.16
This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.	3	168	3.85	1.82	0.03	-1.01
I look towards this media figure for inspiration.	4	168	4.21	1.75	-0.23	-0.96
I find this media figure to be inspiring.	5	168	4.47	1.60	-0.36	-0.51
This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.	6	168	3.93	1.85	-0.05	-1.10
This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.	7	168	4.14	1.75	-0.22	-0.83
This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.	8	168	4.27	1.77	-0.30	-0.94
Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.	9	168	4.35	1.70	-0.35	-0.76

Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.	10	168	4.29	1.71	-0.22	-0.97
This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.	11	168	4.13	1.75	-0.20	-0.95
This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.	12	168	4.34	1.72	-0.30	-0.86
Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.	13	168	4.36	1.75	-0.40	-0.79
Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.	14	168	4.31	1.74	-0.24	-0.88
Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.	15	168	4.22	1.71	-0.22	-0.88
This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.	16	168	3.91	2.02	-0.04	-1.38
<i><u>Impression of Disliked Media Figure</u></i>						
I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.	1	168	2.60	1.92	0.88	-0.55
I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.	2	168	2.55	1.86	0.86	-0.57
This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.	3	168	2.51	1.87	0.96	-0.38
I look towards this media figure for inspiration.	4	168	2.58	1.91	0.92	-0.41
I find this media figure to be inspiring.	5	168	2.61	1.94	0.89	-0.61
This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.	6	168	2.45	1.82	0.98	-0.34
This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.	7	168	2.72	1.94	0.78	-0.74
This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.	8	168	2.85	1.97	0.71	-0.82
Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.	9	168	2.68	1.93	0.85	-0.60
Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.	10	168	2.90	2.07	0.64	-1.07
This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.	11	168	2.70	1.87	0.74	-0.72
This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.	12	168	3.02	2.09	0.56	-1.14
Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.	13	168	2.65	1.90	0.84	-0.56
Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.	14	168	2.75	1.94	0.67	-0.98

Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.	15	168	2.61	1.98	0.91	-0.53
This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.	16	168	2.53	1.88	0.93	-0.50
<i><u>Wishful Identification with a Role Model</u></i>						
I'd like to do the kinds of things this media figure does on the show.	1	168	5.27	1.6	-0.97	0.20
This media figure is the sort of person I want to be like myself.	2	168	5.48	1.4	-0.97	0.65
I wish I could be more like this media figure.	3	168	5.32	1.5	-0.96	0.81
<i><u>Wishful Identification with a Liked Media Figure</u></i>						
I'd like to do the kinds of things this media figure does on the show.	1	168	4.19	1.9	-0.28	-1.13
This media figure is the sort of person I want to be like myself.	2	168	4.06	1.8	-0.13	-1.00
I wish I could be more like this media figure.	3	168	4.12	1.9	-0.17	-1.06
<i><u>Wishful Identification with a Disliked Media Figure</u></i>						
I'd like to do the kinds of things this media figure does on the show.	1	168	2.67	2	0.805	-0.74
This media figure is the sort of person I want to be like myself.	2	168	2.43	1.9	1.071	-0.22
I wish I could be more like this media figure.	3	167	2.41	1.9	1.119	-0.09
<i><u>Familiarity with a Role Model</u></i>						
I feel familiar with this media figure.	1	168	5.28	1.5	-0.96	0.50
This media figure feels like an acquaintance.	2	168	4.62	1.8	-0.42	-0.84
I feel I know a good bit about this media figure.	3	168	5.37	1.4	-0.88	0.74
I feel like I know what it would be like to meet this media figure.	4	168	5.27	1.4	-0.75	0.39
I feel like I know this media figure's personality.	5	168	5.23	1.6	-0.99	0.55
<i><u>Familiarity with a Liked Media Figure</u></i>						
I feel familiar with this media figure.	1	168	5.01	1.4	-0.76	0.34
This media figure feels like an acquaintance.	2	168	3.92	1.8	-0.07	-1.09
I feel I know a good bit about this media figure.	3	168	4.9	1.6	-0.58	-0.47
I feel like I know what it would be like to meet this media figure.	4	168	4.87	1.6	-0.48	-0.44
I feel like I know this media figure's personality.	5	168	4.85	1.6	-0.77	0.26
<i><u>Familiarity with a Disliked Media Figure</u></i>						
I feel familiar with this media figure.	1	168	3.38	1.9	0.271	-1.15
This media figure feels like an acquaintance.	2	168	2.64	1.9	0.881	-0.42
I feel I know a good bit about this media figure.	3	168	3.77	1.9	-0.09	-1.25
I feel like I know what it would be like to meet this media figure.	4	168	3.69	1.9	-0.02	-1.12
I feel like I know this media figure's personality.	5	168	3.95	1.9	-0.21	-1.06

## Correlation Matrix

Next, a correlation tables were computed for all the role model items and wishful identification scale. No negative correlations were present, which successfully reflects theory and the positive valence of the items constructed. Yet, there were some weak to moderate correlations between subscales. According to Clark and Watson (1995) criteria, inter-item correlations ranged from  $r = .15$  (weak) to  $.50$  (moderate), with  $.80$  and above ideal correlations (Pett et al., 2003). A few fell within the  $.4$  to  $.5$  range (low to moderate).

Generally, the values subscale and credibility subscale items correlated strongly, ranging between  $0.37$  to  $0.82$ . The items for the impression scale were a bit lower in correlations in relationship with its related factors, ranging from  $0$  (Impression 16 and Credibility 1) to  $0.58$ . Wishful identification correlated with all role model items of the role model scale on a range from  $0.22$  to  $0.56$ . See Table 4 for the correlation table of each predicted dimension.

*Table 4: Role Model's Correlation Matrix with Wishful Identification*

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
V1	1.00														
V2	0.69	1.00													
V3	0.69	0.74	1.00												
V4	0.77	0.74	0.69	1.00											
V5	0.73	0.76	0.70	0.71	1.00										
C1	0.62	0.58	0.46	0.64	0.62	1.00									
C2	0.42	0.45	0.37	0.44	0.44	0.59	1.00								
C3	0.53	0.54	0.43	0.59	0.56	0.74	0.74	1.00							
C4	0.55	0.51	0.43	0.60	0.53	0.78	0.70	0.76	1.00						
C5	0.64	0.60	0.50	0.64	0.55	0.76	0.70	0.75	0.78	1.00					
C6	0.53	0.58	0.43	0.54	0.53	0.80	0.62	0.73	0.74	0.80	1.00				
C7	0.54	0.57	0.43	0.53	0.56	0.80	0.55	0.70	0.73	0.74	0.82	1.00			
C8	0.64	0.65	0.52	0.61	0.61	0.82	0.71	0.76	0.81	0.79	0.78	0.83	1.00		
C9	0.63	0.59	0.54	0.61	0.60	0.75	0.59	0.70	0.69	0.77	0.71	0.69	0.72	1.00	
C10	0.59	0.58	0.53	0.57	0.58	0.77	0.56	0.66	0.64	0.70	0.68	0.63	0.71	0.78	1.00
C11	0.56	0.53	0.44	0.58	0.47	0.73	0.60	0.62	0.70	0.72	0.72	0.73	0.77	0.67	0.72
I1	0.38	0.30	0.31	0.30	0.31	0.24	0.30	0.31	0.41	0.34	0.29	0.31	0.39	0.27	0.23

I2	0.31	0.24	0.27	0.31	0.31	0.20	0.26	0.31	0.35	0.31	0.26	0.23	0.28	0.26	0.23
I3	0.33	0.18	0.25	0.28	0.26	0.20	0.23	0.25	0.34	0.26	0.19	0.23	0.27	0.18	0.18
I4	0.45	0.38	0.40	0.49	0.37	0.36	0.41	0.41	0.48	0.46	0.34	0.34	0.43	0.37	0.25
I5	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.61	0.52	0.48	0.43	0.45	0.52	0.46	0.50	0.51	0.54	0.48	0.39
I6	0.29	0.26	0.35	0.25	0.34	0.10	0.17	0.18	0.25	0.21	0.13	0.17	0.22	0.19	0.14
I7	0.46	0.39	0.45	0.44	0.38	0.28	0.32	0.33	0.39	0.43	0.31	0.32	0.38	0.35	0.28
I8	0.39	0.40	0.39	0.44	0.42	0.35	0.37	0.38	0.48	0.40	0.36	0.41	0.41	0.37	0.26
I9	0.44	0.42	0.40	0.42	0.39	0.35	0.47	0.42	0.45	0.41	0.37	0.37	0.50	0.30	0.29
I10	0.48	0.47	0.46	0.49	0.46	0.38	0.42	0.41	0.43	0.47	0.37	0.41	0.47	0.38	0.34
I11	0.41	0.36	0.40	0.41	0.37	0.26	0.33	0.33	0.38	0.36	0.28	0.28	0.38	0.32	0.29
I12	0.55	0.52	0.49	0.49	0.46	0.43	0.37	0.42	0.44	0.44	0.41	0.45	0.55	0.41	0.42
I13	0.34	0.25	0.30	0.38	0.29	0.27	0.33	0.33	0.40	0.36	0.30	0.28	0.35	0.28	0.24
I14	0.30	0.27	0.35	0.31	0.31	0.21	0.20	0.23	0.29	0.33	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.21	0.18
I15	0.41	0.40	0.42	0.39	0.35	0.25	0.26	0.28	0.38	0.38	0.29	0.32	0.36	0.30	0.23
I16	0.15	0.19	0.24	0.10	0.22	0.00	0.10	0.09	0.16	0.12	0.06	0.12	0.17	0.11	0.06
WI1	0.40	0.33	0.40	0.36	0.35	0.33	0.31	0.40	0.38	0.41	0.32	0.39	0.40	0.41	0.35
WI2	0.49	0.49	0.46	0.48	0.44	0.52	0.49	0.55	0.57	0.56	0.50	0.47	0.55	0.53	0.55
WI3	0.48	0.42	0.38	0.41	0.39	0.45	0.44	0.48	0.53	0.54	0.47	0.47	0.52	0.48	0.51

Table 4: Role Model's Correlation Matrix with Wishful Identification Continued

	C11	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9	I10
C11	1.00										
I1	0.31	1.00									
I2	0.24	0.74	1.00								
I3	0.20	0.66	0.72	1.00							
I4	0.34	0.55	0.64	0.60	1.00						
I5	0.49	0.49	0.45	0.37	0.51	1.00					
I6	0.20	0.61	0.70	0.62	0.58	0.40	1.00				
I7	0.37	0.66	0.70	0.60	0.64	0.52	0.61	1.00			
I8	0.39	0.63	0.67	0.56	0.59	0.55	0.60	0.75	1.00		
I9	0.41	0.68	0.68	0.66	0.64	0.62	0.57	0.73	0.70	1.00	
I10	0.33	0.60	0.65	0.52	0.61	0.54	0.55	0.65	0.69	0.72	1.00
I11	0.27	0.67	0.71	0.61	0.60	0.52	0.63	0.79	0.71	0.72	0.66
I12	0.44	0.64	0.60	0.52	0.57	0.59	0.50	0.68	0.66	0.72	0.74
I13	0.24	0.62	0.68	0.64	0.61	0.46	0.50	0.61	0.60	0.61	0.62
I14	0.18	0.59	0.61	0.63	0.55	0.37	0.56	0.56	0.50	0.54	0.52
I15	0.29	0.67	0.65	0.59	0.62	0.57	0.67	0.74	0.72	0.72	0.71
I16	0.14	0.59	0.60	0.59	0.41	0.26	0.71	0.52	0.49	0.50	0.48
WI1	0.35	0.42	0.36	0.39	0.35	0.35	0.39	0.40	0.36	0.37	0.38

WI2	0.50	0.45	0.37	0.34	0.46	0.42	0.34	0.44	0.43	0.48	0.45
WI3	0.43	0.52	0.44	0.44	0.47	0.43	0.36	0.47	0.43	0.50	0.50

Table 4: Role Model's Correlation Matrix with Wishful Identification Continued

	I11	I12	I13	I14	I15	I16	WI1	WI2	WI3
I11	1.00								
I12	0.74	1.00							
I13	0.66	0.62	1.00						
I14	0.56	0.51	0.75	1.00					
I15	0.73	0.65	0.60	0.62	1.00				
I16	0.53	0.51	0.44	0.52	0.59	1.00			
WI1	0.35	0.39	0.36	0.40	0.41	0.43	1.00		
WI2	0.40	0.42	0.33	0.31	0.41	0.22	0.57	1.00	
WI3	0.47	0.51	0.43	0.36	0.51	0.30	0.59	0.80	1.00

### Correlation Matrix Tests

Analysis continued to the entire correlation matrix after identifying no problematic items in the correlation matrix. This included analysis of the correlation matrix, Bartlett's test of sphericity, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, and the measures of sampling adequacy (MSAs).

***Role Model Condition without wishful identification.*** Conducting the correlation matrix test without the wishful identification scale had a determinant of 1.27e-15, and since this is greater than 0, the matrix has an inverse, and the analysis can proceed (Field, 2013). Bartlett's test was significant, meaning the matrix is not an identity matrix ( $\chi^2(496) = 5298.36, p < 0.00$ ). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.95, above the commonly accepted value of 0.5 (Field, 2013). The MSA values of the anti-image correlation matrix ranged from 0.91 to 0.97, all well over the 0.5 minimum (Field, 2013). The MSA results indicate suitability for factor analysis also using Kaiser's criteria. Most of the off-diagonal measures were close to 0, ranging from |0| to |0.35|. The analysis moved forward with the factor analysis because the off-diagonal values were low compared to the MSAs. At this point, no individual items were removed. Correlation Matrices can be seen in Table 5.



Table 5: Role Model's Anti-Image Matrices without Wishful Identification

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
V1	.943a												
V2	0.05	.950a											
V3	-0.14	-0.25	.955a										
V4	-0.27	-0.28	-0.15	.935a									
V5	-0.33	-0.31	-0.15	-0.11	.939a								
C1	0.00	0.13	0.13	-0.13	-0.18	.956a							
C2	0.10	0.00	-0.03	0.19	-0.09	0.16	.922a						
C3	0.09	0.04	0.05	-0.17	-0.08	-0.08	-0.34	.964a					
C4	0.05	0.13	0.01	-0.14	0.03	-0.19	-0.16	-0.12	.965a				
C5	-0.18	-0.07	0.07	-0.14	0.16	0.02	-0.24	-0.07	-0.13	.951a			
C6	0.04	-0.15	-0.01	0.14	0.01	-0.19	-0.03	-0.07	-0.04	-0.30	.958a		
C7	0.09	-0.02	0.03	0.13	-0.09	-0.15	0.23	-0.13	0.02	-0.04	-0.35	.933a	
C8	-0.10	-0.15	-0.04	0.12	-0.03	-0.17	-0.18	-0.05	-0.26	-0.08	0.09	-0.37	.951a
C9	-0.15	0.03	-0.05	0.03	0.00	-0.06	-0.06	-0.08	-0.02	-0.18	0.00	-0.10	0.03
C10	0.06	-0.08	-0.19	0.12	-0.08	-0.28	-0.02	-0.09	0.02	-0.03	-0.01	0.19	0.01
C11	-0.06	0.07	0.07	-0.25	0.21	-0.04	-0.13	0.19	-0.01	-0.06	-0.08	-0.19	-0.18
I1	-0.14	-0.03	0.04	0.12	0.05	0.07	0.01	-0.02	-0.12	0.04	0.01	0.03	-0.11
I2	0.10	0.07	0.14	-0.02	-0.09	0.09	0.16	-0.10	0.01	-0.01	-0.14	0.10	0.07
I3	-0.20	0.10	0.02	-0.04	0.06	-0.06	0.00	0.05	-0.09	0.03	0.08	-0.17	0.08
I4	-0.02	-0.04	-0.03	-0.10	0.11	-0.09	-0.09	-0.02	-0.08	-0.04	0.05	0.07	-0.03
I5	-0.02	-0.07	-0.18	-0.19	0.05	-0.02	-0.08	0.06	-0.05	0.19	-0.10	-0.12	0.06
I6	-0.03	0.04	-0.08	0.10	-0.14	0.05	0.01	-0.02	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.00	0.00
I7	-0.07	0.04	-0.16	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.07	-0.01	0.08	-0.19	0.06	-0.03	0.11
I8	0.16	-0.04	0.01	-0.04	-0.15	-0.04	-0.07	0.05	-0.21	0.11	0.02	-0.13	0.18
I9	0.01	-0.04	0.03	0.07	0.00	-0.05	-0.21	-0.09	0.12	0.12	-0.04	0.16	-0.17
I10	0.01	0.01	-0.04	-0.11	-0.01	-0.08	-0.15	0.09	0.11	-0.14	0.08	-0.12	0.01
I11	0.05	0.04	0.04	-0.11	0.01	0.03	-0.06	0.03	0.00	0.02	-0.03	0.08	-0.11
I12	-0.22	-0.12	0.02	0.08	0.14	-0.04	0.12	-0.06	0.10	0.13	0.02	-0.05	-0.12
I13	0.04	0.14	0.07	-0.15	0.05	0.08	-0.10	0.02	-0.03	0.07	-0.07	0.05	-0.08
I14	0.10	-0.03	-0.17	0.04	-0.10	-0.08	0.08	0.03	0.05	-0.19	-0.01	-0.03	0.11
I15	-0.05	-0.07	0.04	0.07	0.10	0.06	0.17	0.05	-0.08	-0.12	0.00	-0.02	0.05
I16	0.19	-0.05	-0.04	0.08	-0.11	0.15	0.03	0.01	-0.02	0.01	0.04	0.03	-0.08

Table 5: Role Model's Anti-Image Matrices without Wishful Identification

C9	C10	C11	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8
----	-----	-----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

C9	.961a											
C10	-0.38	.919a										
C11	0.03	-0.35	.929a									
I1	0.04	0.04	-0.04	.970a								
I2	-0.05	-0.12	-0.02	-0.30	.945a							
I3	0.10	-0.13	0.14	-0.08	-0.19	.934a						
I4	-0.08	0.22	0.01	0.11	-0.15	-0.13	.968a					
I5	-0.13	0.13	-0.04	-0.08	-0.07	0.09	-0.01	.957a				
I6	0.03	0.00	-0.11	0.01	-0.21	-0.07	-0.20	-0.06	.945a			
I7	-0.02	0.05	-0.14	-0.07	-0.09	0.01	-0.12	0.08	0.04	.959a		
I8	-0.11	0.21	-0.13	-0.02	-0.09	0.00	0.06	0.03	-0.08	-0.24	.955a	
I9	0.18	0.07	-0.16	-0.01	-0.06	-0.30	-0.04	-0.23	0.09	-0.16	-0.07	
I10	0.03	-0.03	0.24	0.02	-0.19	0.14	-0.04	0.08	-0.04	0.07	-0.12	
I11	-0.03	-0.10	0.22	-0.02	-0.11	-0.01	0.06	0.01	-0.13	-0.34	-0.08	
I12	0.06	-0.14	-0.03	-0.08	0.06	0.10	-0.06	-0.07	0.12	-0.03	-0.11	
I13	-0.03	-0.03	0.06	-0.02	-0.12	-0.12	-0.07	-0.08	0.10	-0.01	-0.08	
I14	0.06	0.04	0.03	-0.10	0.02	-0.14	-0.06	0.09	-0.07	0.03	0.10	
I15	0.00	-0.07	0.05	-0.09	0.16	0.06	-0.07	-0.19	-0.14	-0.10	-0.17	
I16	-0.13	0.12	-0.13	-0.09	-0.04	-0.24	0.10	0.12	-0.35	0.01	0.06	

Table 5: Role Model's Anti-Image Matrices without Wishful Identification

	I9	I10	I11	I12	I13	I14	I15	I16
I9	.948a							
I10	-0.20	.950a						
I11	-0.06	0.10	.956a					
I12	-0.11	-0.28	-0.29	.950a				
I13	0.10	-0.13	-0.10	-0.14	.935a			
I14	-0.04	0.10	0.05	-0.01	-0.53	.920a		
I15	-0.17	-0.23	-0.15	0.10	0.06	-0.19	.955a	
I16	0.05	-0.05	0.04	-0.22	0.08	-0.08	-0.13	.910a

**Role Model Condition with wishful identification.** The determinant was  $7.35e-17$ , and since this is greater than 0, the matrix has an inverse, and the analysis can proceed (Field, 2013). Bartlett's test was significant, meaning the matrix is not an identity matrix ( $\chi^2(595) = 5702.40, p < 0.00$ ). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.95, above the commonly accepted value of 0.5 (Field, 2013). The MSA values of the anti-image correlation matrix ranged from 0.91 to

0.97, all well over the 0.5 minimum (Field, 2013). The MSA results indicate suitability for factor analysis also using Kaiser's criteria. Most of the off-diagonal measures were close to 0, ranging from |0| to |0.36|, and as high as |.62| including the wishful identification scale. The analysis moved forward with the factor analysis because the off-diagonal values were low compared to the MSAs. At this point, no individual items were removed, and the three wishful identification items are still being included in this analysis. Correlation Matrices can be seen in Table 6.

*Table 6: Anti-image Matrices for Role Model and Wishful Identification*

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
V1	.947a												
V2	0.04	.951a											
V3	-0.13	-0.24	.957a										
V4	-0.27	-0.28	-0.14	.939a									
V5	-0.33	-0.31	-0.16	-0.11	.939a								
C1	0.00	0.13	0.15	-0.12	-0.19	.957a							
C2	0.10	0.00	-0.03	0.19	-0.09	0.16	.928a						
C3	0.10	0.03	0.07	-0.16	-0.09	-0.06	-0.33	.963a					
C4	0.05	0.15	0.01	-0.14	0.02	-0.19	-0.16	-0.12	.967a				
C5	-0.17	-0.08	0.06	-0.15	0.16	0.00	-0.24	-0.08	-0.12	.952a			
C6	0.03	-0.14	-0.02	0.14	0.02	-0.19	-0.03	-0.08	-0.03	-0.29	.960a		
C7	0.10	-0.03	0.03	0.13	-0.09	-0.16	0.23	-0.12	0.02	-0.03	-0.35	.936a	
C8	-0.10	-0.15	-0.05	0.12	-0.03	-0.17	-0.18	-0.05	-0.26	-0.08	0.09	-0.36	.955a
C9	-0.14	0.03	-0.04	0.03	-0.01	-0.05	-0.06	-0.06	-0.02	-0.18	-0.01	-0.09	0.03
C10	0.07	-0.06	-0.19	0.10	-0.09	-0.29	-0.02	-0.09	0.04	-0.01	0.00	0.18	0.01
C11	-0.06	0.07	0.08	-0.24	0.21	-0.02	-0.13	0.20	-0.01	-0.08	-0.08	-0.20	-0.18
I1	-0.13	-0.01	0.04	0.11	0.03	0.07	0.01	0.00	-0.09	0.04	0.01	0.03	-0.12
I2	0.09	0.06	0.13	-0.01	-0.08	0.08	0.16	-0.11	0.00	-0.01	-0.14	0.10	0.08
I3	-0.18	0.09	0.01	-0.04	0.07	-0.08	0.00	0.04	-0.09	0.05	0.07	-0.15	0.08
I4	-0.02	-0.02	-0.04	-0.11	0.11	-0.09	-0.09	-0.03	-0.06	-0.04	0.06	0.06	-0.03
I5	-0.02	-0.08	-0.18	-0.19	0.05	-0.02	-0.08	0.06	-0.06	0.19	-0.11	-0.11	0.06
I6	-0.03	0.05	-0.07	0.10	-0.15	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.06	0.00	0.00
I7	-0.07	0.03	-0.14	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.07	0.00	0.07	-0.19	0.06	-0.03	0.11
I8	0.15	-0.03	0.02	-0.03	-0.15	-0.02	-0.07	0.05	-0.21	0.09	0.02	-0.14	0.18
I9	0.00	-0.02	0.04	0.07	0.00	-0.04	-0.21	-0.08	0.13	0.11	-0.03	0.14	-0.18
I10	0.00	0.02	-0.04	-0.12	-0.02	-0.08	-0.15	0.09	0.12	-0.15	0.08	-0.13	0.01
I11	0.04	0.05	0.03	-0.11	0.02	0.03	-0.07	0.02	0.00	0.02	-0.02	0.07	-0.10
I12	-0.21	-0.13	0.00	0.07	0.15	-0.06	0.11	-0.08	0.08	0.15	0.03	-0.04	-0.11
I13	0.05	0.12	0.05	-0.16	0.06	0.06	-0.10	0.00	-0.04	0.09	-0.07	0.06	-0.08
I14	0.10	-0.03	-0.13	0.06	-0.11	-0.06	0.08	0.05	0.04	-0.21	-0.02	-0.04	0.10
I15	-0.03	-0.08	0.02	0.06	0.10	0.03	0.17	0.03	-0.08	-0.08	-0.01	0.00	0.05
I16	0.20	-0.08	-0.01	0.09	-0.12	0.14	0.04	0.04	-0.04	0.01	0.01	0.05	-0.08
WI1	-0.07	0.10	-0.11	-0.05	0.06	-0.03	-0.01	-0.14	0.07	0.01	0.11	-0.10	0.01
WI2	0.03	-0.12	-0.08	-0.01	0.08	-0.09	0.00	-0.09	-0.08	0.10	-0.02	0.10	0.04
WI3	-0.05	0.01	0.11	0.07	-0.04	0.13	0.00	0.10	-0.03	-0.14	-0.02	-0.09	-0.01

Table 6: Anti-image Matrices for Role Model and Wishful Identification Continued

	C9	C10	C11	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8
C9	.964a										
C10	-0.37	.923a									
C11	0.04	-0.36	.933a								
I1	0.04	0.09	-0.05	.969a							
I2	-0.06	-0.12	-0.02	-0.31	.947a						
I3	0.10	-0.11	0.12	-0.07	-0.19	.938a					
I4	-0.09	0.24	0.01	0.13	-0.16	-0.13	.967a				
I5	-0.13	0.12	-0.04	-0.09	-0.06	0.10	-0.02	.959a			
I6	0.04	0.00	-0.10	0.02	-0.21	-0.08	-0.19	-0.07	.947a		
I7	-0.01	0.04	-0.13	-0.06	-0.09	0.00	-0.12	0.08	0.04	.961a	
I8	-0.11	0.20	-0.12	-0.01	-0.09	-0.02	0.06	0.03	-0.07	-0.23	.957a
I9	0.18	0.08	-0.16	0.01	-0.07	-0.30	-0.02	-0.24	0.10	-0.16	-0.06
I10	0.03	-0.02	0.24	0.03	-0.19	0.13	-0.03	0.07	-0.03	0.07	-0.11
I11	-0.03	-0.09	0.21	-0.02	-0.10	-0.01	0.07	0.01	-0.13	-0.34	-0.07
I12	0.05	-0.13	-0.05	-0.09	0.07	0.12	-0.06	-0.06	0.10	-0.04	-0.12
I13	-0.03	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	-0.11	-0.10	-0.07	-0.07	0.08	-0.02	-0.10
I14	0.07	0.01	0.05	-0.10	0.01	-0.15	-0.07	0.09	-0.05	0.05	0.12
I15	-0.01	-0.04	0.03	-0.09	0.16	0.08	-0.07	-0.17	-0.15	-0.11	-0.19
I16	-0.11	0.08	-0.11	-0.10	-0.04	-0.22	0.06	0.13	-0.34	0.02	0.05
WI1	-0.09	0.10	-0.03	0.03	0.01	-0.02	0.11	-0.04	-0.01	-0.05	0.02
WI2	-0.03	-0.05	-0.07	-0.12	0.07	0.10	-0.08	0.08	-0.11	-0.04	-0.10
WI3	0.06	-0.15	0.12	-0.05	-0.02	-0.13	-0.04	-0.03	0.08	0.07	0.10

Table 6: Anti-image Matrices for Role Model and Wishful Identification Continued

	I9	I10	I11	I12	I13	I14	I15	I16	WI1	WI2	WI3
I9	.950a										
I10	-0.19	.952a									
I11	-0.05	0.10	.959a								
I12	-0.12	-0.28	-0.28	.949a							
I13	0.08	-0.14	-0.10	-0.11	.935a						
I14	-0.04	0.10	0.04	-0.04	-0.53	.914a					
I15	-0.18	-0.24	-0.15	0.12	0.09	-0.21	.950a				
I16	0.02	-0.06	0.01	-0.21	0.08	-0.04	-0.12	.908a			
WI1	0.07	0.03	0.08	0.03	-0.01	-0.13	-0.01	-0.27	.945a		
WI2	-0.13	-0.07	-0.01	0.16	0.15	-0.10	0.17	0.09	-0.16	.919a	
WI3	0.04	0.02	-0.02	-0.13	-0.13	0.18	-0.20	0.06	-0.24	-0.62	.915a

## Exploratory Factor Analysis

### *Role Model Condition without wishful identification.*

A principle axis factor analysis was conducted from the Role Model condition on the 32 items role model scale with oblique rotation (Promax), excluding the wishful identification as it loaded as its' own factor in the first factor analysis. An analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for

each factor in the data. Three factors had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and explained 68.32% of the variance in combination. The scree plot showed inflections that would justify retaining three factors after rotation. The items that cluster on the same factor suggest that factor 1 represents impression, 2 represents credibility, and 3 represents value system. Impression item 5 loaded weakly on factors 1 (0.34) & 3 (0.38). However, this item remained a part of the scale for further testing. EFA results can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7: EFA Role Model Scale

Item Wording	Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Factor Loading			Alpha
				1	2	3	
<i><u>Impression of Role Models</u></i>							0.96
I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.	2	5.08	1.51	<b>0.93</b>			
This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.	3	5.11	1.54	<b>0.85</b>			
I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.	1	5.40	1.50	<b>0.83</b>			
This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.	11	5.13	1.67	<b>0.83</b>			
This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.	6	5.42	1.47	<b>0.82</b>			
Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.	15	5.15	1.54	<b>0.82</b>			
Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.	13	5.36	1.44	<b>0.79</b>			
This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.	16	5.18	1.48	<b>0.79</b>			
This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.	7	5.51	1.44	<b>0.79</b>			
Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.	9	5.01	1.73	<b>0.78</b>			
Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.	14	4.68	1.86	<b>0.74</b>			

This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.	8	5.20	1.53	<b>0.74</b>	
Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.	10	5.49	1.33	<b>0.67</b>	
I look towards this media figure for inspiration.	4	5.55	1.34	<b>0.67</b>	
This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.	12	5.38	1.51	<b>0.63</b>	
I find this media figure to be inspiring.	5	5.96	1.29	0.34	0.38
<u>Credibility for Role Models</u>					0.97
Skilled	6	6.14	1.21	<b>0.93</b>	
Knowledgeable	4	6.01	1.36	<b>0.91</b>	
Accomplished	1	6.24	1.25	<b>0.89</b>	
Experienced	3	6.17	1.20	<b>0.88</b>	
Capable	8	6.18	1.30	<b>0.87</b>	
Successful	7	6.38	1.16	<b>0.87</b>	
Qualified	5	6.12	1.22	<b>0.86</b>	
Expert	2	5.89	1.24	<b>0.82</b>	
Honest	11	5.93	1.22	<b>0.81</b>	
Sets an example	9	6.04	1.33	<b>0.71</b>	
Sincere	10	6.16	1.27	<b>0.70</b>	
<u>Value System for Role Models</u>					0.93
I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.	3	5.89	1.15	<b>0.91</b>	
I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.	2	5.95	1.22	<b>0.83</b>	
This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.	5	5.89	1.26	<b>0.75</b>	
I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.	1	5.95	1.23	<b>0.71</b>	
I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.	4	5.99	1.28	<b>0.70</b>	
<u>Overall Scale</u>		5.67	0.45		0.97

Note: The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (Promax with Kaiser Normalization) rotation.

***Role Model Condition with wishful identification.***

Due to the close theoretical connection between role models and wishful identification, a principal axis factor analysis was conducted from the Role Model condition on the 32 items and Hoffner and Buchanan's (2005) 3-item wishful identification scale with oblique rotation (Promax). An initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues, or each factor in the data. 4 factors had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and explained 68.50% of the variance in combination. The scree plot showed inflections that would justify retaining three factors after rotation. The items that cluster on the same factor suggest that factor 1 represents *impression*, factor 2 represents *credibility*, factor 3 represents *value system*, and factor 4 *wishful identification*. EFA results can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8: EFA for Role Model and Wishful Identification Scales

Item Wording	Item	M	SD	Factor Loading				Alpha
				1	2	3	4	
<i>Impression of Role Models</i>							0.96	
I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.	2	5.08	1.51	<b>0.92</b>				
This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.	11	5.13	1.67	<b>0.85</b>				
Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.	15	5.15	1.54	<b>0.81</b>				
This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.	3	5.11	1.54	<b>0.81</b>				
Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.	9	5.01	1.73	<b>0.81</b>				
Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.	13	5.36	1.44	<b>0.81</b>				
This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.	7	5.51	1.44	<b>0.80</b>				

I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.	1	5.40	1.50	<b>0.79</b>	
This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.	8	5.20	1.53	<b>0.78</b>	
This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.	6	5.42	1.47	<b>0.77</b>	
This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.	16	5.18	1.48	<b>0.74</b>	
Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.	14	4.68	1.86	<b>0.72</b>	
Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.	10	5.49	1.33	<b>0.69</b>	
I look towards this media figure for inspiration.	4	5.55	1.34	<b>0.67</b>	
This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.	12	5.38	1.51	<b>0.66</b>	
I find this media figure to be inspiring.	5	5.96	1.29	0.38	0.37
<i>Credibility for Role Models</i>					0.97
Skilled	6	6.14	1.21	<b>0.95</b>	
Knowledgeable	4	6.01	1.36	<b>0.91</b>	
Accomplished	1	6.24	1.25	<b>0.90</b>	
Capable	8	6.18	1.30	<b>0.88</b>	
Successful	7	6.38	1.16	<b>0.87</b>	
Experienced	3	6.17	1.20	<b>0.86</b>	
Qualified	5	6.12	1.22	<b>0.84</b>	
Expert	2	5.89	1.24	<b>0.82</b>	
Honest	11	5.93	1.22	<b>0.81</b>	
Sets an example	9	6.04	1.33	<b>0.67</b>	
Sincere	10	6.16	1.27	<b>0.65</b>	
<i>Value System for Role Models</i>					0.93
I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.	3	5.89	1.15	<b>0.92</b>	



I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.	2	5.95	1.22	<b>0.82</b>	
This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.	5	5.89	1.26	<b>0.75</b>	
I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.	1	5.95	1.23	<b>0.70</b>	
I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.	4	5.99	1.28	<b>0.70</b>	
<u><i>Wishful Identification with Role Models</i></u>					0.85
I wish I could be more like him/her	3	5.32	1.47	<b>0.66</b>	
He/she is the sort of person I want to be like myself	2	5.48	1.45	<b>0.63</b>	
I'd like to do the kinds of things he/she does on the show	1	5.27	1.64	<b>0.57</b>	

Note: The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (Promax with Kaiser Normalization) rotation.

A series of exploratory factor analyses were conducted to investigate better fitting alternatives to the role model scale. The two exploratory factor analyses investigated if each subscale has a single loading factor and compared the efficiency of an established value scale (Schwartz, 2005) with the proposed *value system* subscale. Results indicate each subscale represents a single factor<sup>8</sup>. Examining the factor structure for Schwartz's (2005) scale concluded that the proposed *value system* subscale is a better fit for the proposed Role Model Scale (see Appendix F for data results).

### Reliability Testing

<sup>8</sup> EFA results demonstrate *credibility* and *value system* load as single factors with reported eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 (see Appendix G for data results). An analysis *impression* indicated there are 2 factors with eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and in combination explained 65.33% of the variance. However, the second factor's eigenvalue of 1.07 barely achieved Kaiser's criterion of 1. Additionally, the scree plot showed inflexions that would justify retaining 1 factor after rotation. As a result, it was determined that the *impression* subscale is best fit as a single item scale.

Having analyzed correlational matrices and exploratory factor loadings, analysis continued with construction of indices of role model (sub)scale and wishful identification items to continue with reliability testing. The *wishful identification scale* consisted of 3 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across all three conditions: role model ( $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 0.11$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.85$ ), liked media figure ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.06$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.91$ ), and disliked media figure ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.14$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.95$ ).

***Role Model Scale.***

The *impression* subscale consisted of 16 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across all three conditions: role model ( $M = 5.29$ ,  $SD = 0.29$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.96$ ), liked media figure ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.18$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.98$ ), and disliked media figure ( $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 0.15$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.99$ ). Since the EFA results demonstrated weak loadings of item 5, reliability testing was also conducted on the *impression* subscale without the item to investigate if the alpha would improve. Results of reliability for the role model condition show no differences ( $M = 5.24$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.96$ ), indicating removing the item neither improved nor made the subscale worse. It is possible removal of the item does not impact the scale because of the low variance with item 5 ( $M = 5.96$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ; "I find this media figure to be inspiring").

The *credibility subscale* consisted of 11 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across all three conditions: role model ( $M = 6.11$ ,  $SD = 0.14$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.97$ ), liked media figure ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = 0.42$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.92$ ), and disliked media figure ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.96$ ). The *values system subscale* of the Role Model scale consisted of 5 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across all three conditions: role model ( $M = 5.93$ ,  $SD = 0.04$ ,

Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.93$ ), liked media figure ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 0.20$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.92$ ), and disliked media figure ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 0.11$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.97$ ).

The overall *Role Model scale* consisted of 32 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across all three conditions: role model ( $M = 5.67$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.97$ ), liked media figure ( $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.97$ ), and disliked media figure ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.98$ ). Since the EFA results demonstrated weak loadings of item 5, reliability testing was also conducted on the Role Model scale without item 5. The scale was found to be reliable across all three conditions, with moderate changes in means, standard deviations, and reliability: role model ( $M = 5.66$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.96$ ), liked media figure ( $M = 4.70$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.97$ ), and disliked media figure ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.98$ ).

### **Exploratory Analyses**

In addition to testing the role model and wishful identification scale, familiarity and consumption were measured. Exploratory analyses were conducted to determine if there were significantly distinguishable differences between the conditions.

#### ***Role Model Subscales.***

Another series of repeated measures ANOVAs employing a multivariate approach was conducted to answer hypothesis<sub>1</sub>: Media figures identified as *role models* will be higher in perceived values, credibility, impression, and overall role model than *liked media figures* and *disliked media figures*.

There was a significant difference of the type of media figure and values, Wilks' Lambda = 0.33,  $F(2, 166) = 166.77$ ,  $p < 0.00$ . The mean scores overall were significantly different: role models ( $M = 5.93$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ), liked but not a role model ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ), and disliked ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ). The participants' perceived values of media figures differed for each type,

indicating they attribute values to media figures starting more favorably with role models and gradually less with liked and disliked media figures.

There was a significant difference of the type of media figure and credibility, Wilks' Lambda = 0.38,  $F(2, 166) = 135.92$ ,  $p < 0.00$ . The mean scores overall were significantly different: role models ( $M = 6.12$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ), liked but not a role model ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) and disliked ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ). The participants' perceived credibility of media figures differed for each type, indicating they attribute credibility to media figures starting more favorably to role models and gradually less with liked and disliked media figures.

There was a significant difference of the type of media figure and impression, Wilks' Lambda = 0.39,  $F(2, 166) = 128.94$ ,  $p < 0.00$ . The mean scores overall were significantly different: role models ( $M = 5.27$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ), liked but not a role model ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ), and disliked ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ). The participants' perceived impression of media figures differed for each, indicating they attribute perceived impression to media, starting more favorably with role models and gradually less with liked and disliked media figures.

A fourth repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on the overall Role Model scale. There was a significant difference of the type of media figure and impression, Wilks' Lambda = 0.33,  $F(2, 166) = 169.61$ ,  $p < 0.00$ . The mean scores overall were significantly different: role models ( $M = 5.66$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ), liked but not a role model ( $M = 4.70$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ), and disliked ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ). The participants' perceived role model of media figures differed for each type, indicating they identify each media figure of varying standings as a role model, starting more favorably with role models and gradually less with liked and disliked media figures.

### ***Familiarity and Consumption.***

Participants were asked to estimate how much media coverage of the media figure they identified they consumed in the past month. A series of repeated measures ANOVAs employing a multivariate approach established differences between prompts. The following study found

significantly different findings between the individual's reported familiarity and consumption with each media figure condition. These findings are a good indicator that the people are choosing media figures fitting to each condition as theory would predict audiences are more familiar and consume more media relating to media figures they like versus dislike. The scales appropriately measure the individual's perspective of whether these media figures are role models. While not treated as a manipulation check, these variables validate that the participants correctly understood the three individual prompts.

***Variance of difference in Values between Participants and Conditions.***

Although EFA testing demonstrated the short-values scale (Schwartz, 2005) would not make a suitable alternative to measuring the values of a role model, there was also interest in understanding how participants identify their values compared to each type of media figure. Maintaining the same computed variable—calculating the difference between the participant's values of themselves compared to that of each media figure—a series of repeated measure ANOVAs employing a multivariate approach was conducted. This test was conducted for each value type: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. Overall, results show significant differences between conditions, indicating participants attribute values differently to themselves and different types of media figures. See Table 9 for specific identification of which values and media figures were significantly different.

*Table 9: Repeated Measures of Schwartz Values Scale Across Four Conditions*

	Self		Role Model		Not Role Model		Dislike		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Power	4.20 <sub>a</sub>	1.45	5.11 <sub>b</sub>	1.55	5.16 <sub>b</sub>	1.53	5.13 <sub>b</sub>	1.96	21.36	0.00
Achievement	5.30 <sub>a</sub>	1.41	5.94 <sub>b</sub>	1.26	5.50 <sub>a</sub>	1.42	4.60 <sub>c</sub>	2.03	23.70	0.00
Hedonism	4.75 <sub>a</sub>	1.52	5.09 <sub>b</sub>	1.57	5.19 <sub>c</sub>	1.46	4.67 <sub>b</sub>	1.91	6.75	0.00
Stimulation	4.87 <sub>a</sub>	1.42	5.59 <sub>b</sub>	1.28	5.34 <sub>c</sub>	1.45	3.97 <sub>d</sub>	1.95	38.83	0.00

Self-direction	5.48 <sub>a</sub>	6.25	6.10 <sub>b</sub>	1.21	5.54 <sub>a</sub>	1.36	3.96 <sub>c</sub>	1.97	58.14	0.00
Universalism	5.12 <sub>a</sub>	1.47	5.88 <sub>b</sub>	1.21	5.02 <sub>a</sub>	1.47	3.26 <sub>c</sub>	1.89	73.72	0.00
Benevolence	5.63 <sub>a</sub>	1.25	5.99 <sub>b</sub>	1.13	4.78 <sub>c</sub>	1.52	3.17 <sub>d</sub>	1.90	82.64	0.00
Tradition	4.85 <sub>a</sub>	1.52	5.30 <sub>b</sub>	1.42	4.55 <sub>a</sub>	1.58	3.33 <sub>c</sub>	1.89	46.87	0.00
Conformity	5.02 <sub>a</sub>	1.58	5.09 <sub>b</sub>	1.62	4.241 <sub>b</sub>	1.68	3.41 <sub>c</sub>	1.94	36.26	0.00
Security	5.01 <sub>a</sub>	1.44	5.37 <sub>b</sub>	1.35	4.63 <sub>a</sub>	1.62	3.79 <sub>c</sub>	1.93	29.99	0.00

Note: a-d: Different letters in the same row indicate significant statistical differences ( $p < 0.05$ , Tukey's test)

Of the ten values, participants rated themselves as having significantly different values from their role model for all values but conformity. Regarding liked media figures, participants rated themselves significantly different for only five of the values, indicating that they view half of the media figures' values as similar to their own. As expected, disliked media figures' values were rated significantly different than that of the self across all ten values.

### Study 2 Discussion

Exploring the existing literature on role models suggests that three dimensions make a role model: the role models' values, credibility, and the individual's perception of the role model's impression of them. These three aspects of a role model are identified in the scale's factor structures: value system, credibility, and impression. The aim of study 2 was to conduct exploratory factor analysis and reliability tests on the role model scale. Given the results of these tests, additional analyses were run to investigate how the three media figure conditions differed across the dependent variables.

#### ***Role Model Scale.***

Data based on the exploratory factor analyses suggest that the role model scale should have three dimensions, supporting the initial qualitative data collection. While one item of the impression scale loaded weakly in the factor analysis, it additionally did not statistically impact the reliability of the overall role model scale. Due to its minimal variance and statistical contribution to the scale, it is recommended that impression item 5 be removed from the scale.

The other two factors individually loaded as their own, demonstrating no underlying constructs and loaded cleanly for the full role model scale. Wishful identification was also included in a factor analysis, which loaded as a fourth factor, indicating a different factor from the other role model subscales. The subscales and overall role model scale demonstrated strong reliability.

***Ascription of Values to Oneself and Media Figures.***

Across the media figure conditions, there was a pattern of rating role models the highest for each value, then themselves and liked media figures second, and disliked media figures rate the lowest. It appears that participants consistently rate their values lower than that of their role model. These results possibly suggest that participants look to their role models as a standard to aspire to be. Since the participants have not reached their role model's standards, they are imposed to rate themselves lower.

It is also the possibility of an anchoring effect (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), in which participants recalled how they rated themselves and later rated their role models higher than themselves. This ultimately influences the participants' estimate of the role model, given they answered the values questions for themselves first. Rather than capturing the aspect that participants would identify a shared identity regarding their values, the Schwartz (2005) short-values scale possibly captured how participants compare themselves to their role models.

In addition, participants rated half their values more similarly with media figures they liked. This perhaps demonstrates that participants view liked media figures as more equally comparable to themselves. Unlike role models, liked media figures are probably closer in identity to participants than role models. As expected, disliked media figures' values were always significantly different from participants' self-attributed values. This serves as another validation that participants were paying attention and appropriately understood the prompt.

## Chapter 6: Research Methods

### Part 3: Scale Validation

Study 3 involves a formal questionnaire to determine how the role model scale performs across different conditions and with similar concepts. Determining whether the scale performs consistently across two conditions (Role Model and Liked media figure) should demonstrate conceptual distinction and scale validation of the Role Model Scale.

#### Item Development

The results of study 2 functioned as an exploratory factor analysis for development of the role model scale. As Chapter 5's discussion indicated, item 5 of the role model impression subscale was not included in study 3<sup>9</sup>.

#### Procedure

Qualtrics served as the host website for study 3's survey. Starting with an IRB-approved consent form followed by demographic questions, a between-subjects questionnaire randomly placed participants into one of two conditions. One condition's instructions asked participants to think of a media figure they consider a role model, and the other condition asked participants to name a media figure they like a lot but do not consider a role model. Participants then entered the media figure's name in a text box. Participants were additionally instructed not to name media figures who were fictional characters or cartoons. After naming a media figure, the survey asked a series of questions representative of the variables discussed below. Variables operationalized as a Likert scale were grouped together under a single webpage and presented in random order. Variables operationalized by rating an adjective were grouped together under a separate webpage and presented in random order.

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<sup>9</sup> An additional reason item 5 was not included in study 3 is a result of a clerical error which omitted the item from the questionnaire.



Theoretically, the statistical averages for the media figures identified as role models should be higher than the liked media figure condition. Additionally, it is predicted that the statistical outcomes of the role model scale will demonstrate convergent and discriminant validity.

### **Sampling and Data Screening**

**Data Screening.** Study 3's scale development data was collected through Amazon Mechanical Turk surveyors. Initially the questionnaire collected 394 responses. 123 participants were eliminated after determining they did not properly respond to the prompts. Acceptable prompt responses included naming a famous person that could be found in a Google search. Before analysis, the data were screened for univariate outliers. 8 participants were removed for excessive time spent on the survey. In order to conduct SEM analysis, 4 more participants were eliminated for having missing data. The minimum amount of data for factor analysis was satisfied, with a final sample size of 260.

**Demographics.** The online survey through Qualtrics averaged 9.60 minutes in length. They were compensated with \$0.50 for completing the study. The average age of participants was 36.83 years old ( $SD = 11.48$ , Range 19-89), 47.30% of participants were women ( $N = 123$ ), and majority of participants were white (67.70%,  $N = 179$ ), 12.30% identified as Black ( $N = 32$ ), 4.6% Hispanic/Latino ( $N = 12$ ), 4.6% Asian/Pacific Islander ( $N = 12$ ), 7.70% as Native American ( $N = 20$ ), and 2.8% of the overall participant pool identified as multi-racial or other ( $N = 7$ ).

### **Variables**

The questionnaire's item development variables included the three subdimensions of a role model as determined by study 1. Then the two concepts identified as relating to role models but not as a dimension in study 1 were also included. This study also included the variable wishful identification because of the overt theoretical overlap discussed in Chapter 2. The full version of study 2's survey can be found in Appendix E.

### ***Perceived Role Model Subdimensions***

Study 3 continued to use the three subscales of the role model scale measured and tested in study 2: Value System of Role Model, Role Model Credibility, and Impression of Role Model. Each subscale represented an aspect of audience perception of a role model and was designed to ask participants to rate how well the statements or adjectives describe a role model on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

### ***Establishing Construct Validity***

Assessment of construct validity requires comparison of scale measures to variables external to the scale to ensure the tested scale measures behave as expected in relationship to the external variables (Kline, 2016). This involves assessment of correlations between measures and its items which helps establish convergent and discriminant validity (DeVellis, 2017; Kline, 2016).

***Convergent Validity.*** Convergent validity establishes that variables that should be theoretically related are in fact correlated (DeVellis, 2017). Study 3 included the wishful identification scale (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005) in determining convergent validity by evaluating potential correlations and assessing factor loadings related to the proposed perceived role model scale. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are theoretical overlaps between wishful identification and perceived role models. Thus, it was determined that including the wishful identification scale in the item development stage of the perceived role model scale was essential. The full 5-item version of this scale was used and can be found under the full version of study 2's survey in Appendix E.

***Discriminant Validity.*** Discriminant validity ensures that these theoretically related variables are not correlated so strongly that they are measuring a single concept; it ensures that the measures are separate concepts. Study 3 included multiple-parasocial relationship (Tukachinsky, 2011), attitude homophily scale (McCroskey et al., 2006), and a preexisting role

model scale (Rich, 1997) to determine discriminant validity. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are theoretical overlaps between these variables and perceived role models. Thus, it was determined that including the scale items of these variables in the confirmatory analysis of the perceived role model scale was essential. The full survey and each scale with its items and can be found in Appendix H.

***Familiarity.*** A five-item Likert formatted scale was written for this study to measure familiarity. The instructions asked participants to think of a media figure while reading the statements and rate on a 7-point scale how well they do or do not agree with each statement. Statements included such as “I feel familiar with this media figure” and “I feel I know a good bit about this media figure.” The scale was found to be reliable for both role model ( $M = 5.34$ ,  $SD = 0.14$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.79$ ) and liked media figure conditions ( $M = 5.06$ ,  $SD = 0.07$ , Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .87$ ). This variable was included as a part of the item validation to assure the results of study 1 and 2 align with the confirmatory analysis, proving content validity. All five items of this scale can be found under the full version of study 3’s survey in Appendix H.

## Results

### Scale Descriptive Statistics

Each item’s mean, standard deviation, and variance were examined. The means for all the subscales about a mediated role model tended to be in the 5 to 6 range, while the mean for the subscales Liked Media Figure usually ranged no higher than 4. Theoretically, the average means should be higher when participants are answering questions regarding their role model, as opposed to Liked Media Figures. Additionally, scale development aims to show the items variances and standard deviations vary (DeVellis, 2017), to which they did. Most items showed standard deviations no higher than 2, indicating scores were relatively similar but varying enough. As well, the items’ skewness and kurtosis were examined. All items passed criteria set forth by Kline (2016) for skewness ( $|<3|$ ) and kurtosis ( $|<10|$ ), indicating that their distributions

were normal. See Table 10 for complete results of individual items statistics and item wording for both conditions. The following sections discuss the correlation matrix and exploratory factor analyses.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics for Role Model Scale

<u>Item Wording</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Skew</u>	<u>Kurtosis</u>
<u>Value System for Role Models</u>						
I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.	1	128	5.65	1.084	-0.616	-0.281
I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.	2	128	5.62	1.191	-0.638	-0.321
I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.	3	128	5.52	1.236	-0.659	-0.303
I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.	4	128	5.65	1.127	-1.082	1.353
This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.	5	128	5.57	1.208	-0.562	-0.413
<u>Value System for Liked Media Figures</u>						
I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.	1	132	5.24	1.404	-0.845	0.358
I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.	2	132	5.17	1.433	-1.007	1.135
I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.	3	132	5.11	1.52	-0.898	0.67
I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.	4	132	5.33	1.328	-0.918	1.16
This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.	5	132	4.96	1.469	-0.681	0.199
<u>Credibility for Role Models</u>						
Accomplished	1	128	6.02	1.015	-1.01	1.114
Expert	2	128	6.02	1.015	-0.827	-0.022
Experienced	3	128	5.91	1.213	-1.108	0.822
Knowledgeable	4	128	6.12	1.098	-1.141	0.483
Qualified	5	128	6.09	1.072	-1.263	1.368
Skilled	6	128	6.02	1.15	-1.104	0.5
Successful	7	128	6.09	0.984	-0.897	0.222
Capable	8	128	6.06	1.114	-1.202	1.062
Sets an example	9	128	5.87	1.261	-1.196	0.958
Sincere	10	128	6.04	1.068	-1.064	0.668
Honest	11	128	6.12	1.032	-1.025	0.246
<u>Credibility for Liked Media Figures</u>						
Accomplished	1	132	5.98	1.015	-1.333	3.515
Expert	2	132	5.77	1.299	-1.454	2.483
Experienced	3	132	6.14	0.994	-1.224	1.132
Knowledgeable	4	132	5.91	1.108	-1.082	1.257
Qualified	5	132	5.84	1.222	-1.245	1.64
Skilled	6	132	5.95	1.197	-1.646	3.746
Successful	7	132	6.29	0.985	-2.117	6.736
Capable	8	132	6	1.056	-1.067	0.726
Sets an example	9	132	5.44	1.564	-1.101	0.504
Sincere	10	132	5.67	1.362	-1.23	1.748
Honest	11	132	5.76	1.255	-1.107	1.183
<u>Impression of Role Models</u>						

I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.	1	128	5.33	1.305	-0.761	0.363
I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.	2	128	5.29	1.443	-1.176	1.532
This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.	3	128	5.24	1.303	-0.939	0.89
I look towards this media figure for inspiration.	4	128	5.34	1.33	-0.844	0.695
This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.	5	128	5.17	1.392	-0.597	0.11
This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.	6	128	5.25	1.414	-1.031	1.193
This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.	7	128	5.41	1.423	-1.365	2.071
Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.	8	128	5.37	1.425	-1.119	1.279
Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.	9	128	5.31	1.396	-0.911	0.912
This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.	10	128	5.14	1.576	-0.947	0.413
This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.	11	128	5.32	1.369	-0.861	0.77
Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.	12	128	5.28	1.463	-1.114	1.069
Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.	13	128	5.24	1.396	-0.637	0.07
Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.	14	128	5.18	1.389	-0.597	0.172
This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.	15	128	5.08	1.477	-0.732	0.254
<i>Impression of Liked Media Figure</i>						
I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.	1	132	4.73	1.676	-0.773	0.062
I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.	2	132	4.77	1.742	-0.67	-0.397
This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.	3	132	4.84	1.634	-0.806	0.2
I look towards this media figure for inspiration.	4	132	4.83	1.668	-0.714	-0.171
This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.	5	132	4.88	1.786	-0.794	-0.204
This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.	6	132	4.86	1.658	-0.828	0.089
This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.	7	132	4.95	1.707	-0.91	0.02
Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.	8	132	4.98	1.646	-0.933	0.332
Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.	9	132	4.92	1.611	-0.797	0.221
This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.	10	132	4.95	1.601	-0.832	0.215
This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.	11	132	5.06	1.615	-0.984	0.495
Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.	12	132	4.92	1.724	-0.744	-0.246
Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.	13	132	5	1.703	-0.81	-0.179
Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.	14	132	4.87	1.613	-0.685	0.03

This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.	15	132	4.71	1.784	-0.719	-0.328
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### Reliability Testing

Prior to CFA testing, the construction of indices of role model (sub)scale, wishful identification, multiple-parasocial relationship scale (Tukachinsky, 2011), attitude homophily (McCroskey et al., 2006), and Rich's (1997) role model items were completed to continue with reliability testing.

#### *Role Model Scale.*

The *impression* subscale consisted of 15 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The subscale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 5.26$ ,  $SD = 0.09$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.96$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 4.90$ ,  $SD = 0.10$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .97$ ). The *values system subscale* of the Role Model scale consisted of 5 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The subscale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 5.60$ ,  $SD = 0.05$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.83$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 5.16$ ,  $SD = 0.14$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .90$ ). The *credibility subscale* consisted of 11 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The subscale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 6.03$ ,  $SD = 0.08$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .93$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 5.89$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .92$ ). The overall *Role Model scale* consisted of 31 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 5.60$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 5.29$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .97$ ).

#### *Wishful Identification Scale.*

The *wishful identification scale* (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005) consisted of 5 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across the two

conditions: role model ( $M = 5.22$ ,  $SD = 0.25$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.70$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 4.85$ ,  $SD = 0.08$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ). The wishful identification scale's Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was found to improve with deletion of Item 5 (Role Model Cronbach's  $\alpha = .73$ ; Liked Media figure Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ ). Thus, item 5 was not included in subsequent analyses.

#### ***Multiple-Parasocial Relationship Scale.***

The *friendship communication subscale* of the *parasocial relationship scale* (Tukachinsky, 2011) consisted of 6 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The subscale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 5.33$ ,  $SD = 0.13$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .86$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 4.90$ ,  $SD = 0.13$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ). The *physical love subscale* consisted of 4 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The subscale was found to be reliable across all three conditions: role model ( $M = 5.07$ ,  $SD = 0.09$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 0.07$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ ). The *emotional love subscale* consisted of 7 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The subscale was found to be reliable across all three conditions: role model ( $M = 5.01$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = 0.28$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .93$ ). The *friendship support subscale* consisted of 7 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The subscale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 5.38$ ,  $SD = .11$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 5.01$ ,  $SD = 0.11$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.92$ ). The *parasocial relationship scale* consisted of 24 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = 0.22$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 4.88$ ,  $SD = 0.21$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .97$ ).

#### ***Attitude Homophily Scale.***

The *attitude homophily scale* (McCroskey et al., 2006) consisted of 15 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 5.05$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ) and liked media figure ( $M =$

4.87,  $SD = 0.16$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ). Only the Liked Media Figure condition demonstrated that deletion of item 11 would increase the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (.92). Another reliability test was conducted including both conditions, demonstrating similar results as the role model condition, that deletion of items would not improve scale reliability. As a result, item 11 remained a part of the subsequent analyses.

### ***Rich's (1997) Role Model Scale.***

The *role model scale* consisted of 5 items and responses were recorded on a 7-point scale. The scale was found to be reliable across the two conditions: role model ( $M = 5.53$ ,  $SD = 0.12$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .80$ ) and liked media figure ( $M = 5.01$ ,  $SD = 0.16$ , Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ ).

### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

After achieving acceptable exploratory factor analysis results, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS 26 software with maximum likelihood estimation. Since the EFA demonstrated three factors in its analysis, the CFA consisted of three latent variables to determine how well the data fits the model. For the first model run, analysis evaluated the model fit between the role model and liked media figure conditions. A second model run was conducted with the entire sample as well. Model fit, localized areas of strain, and modification indices were three levels of analysis evaluated to assess the model.

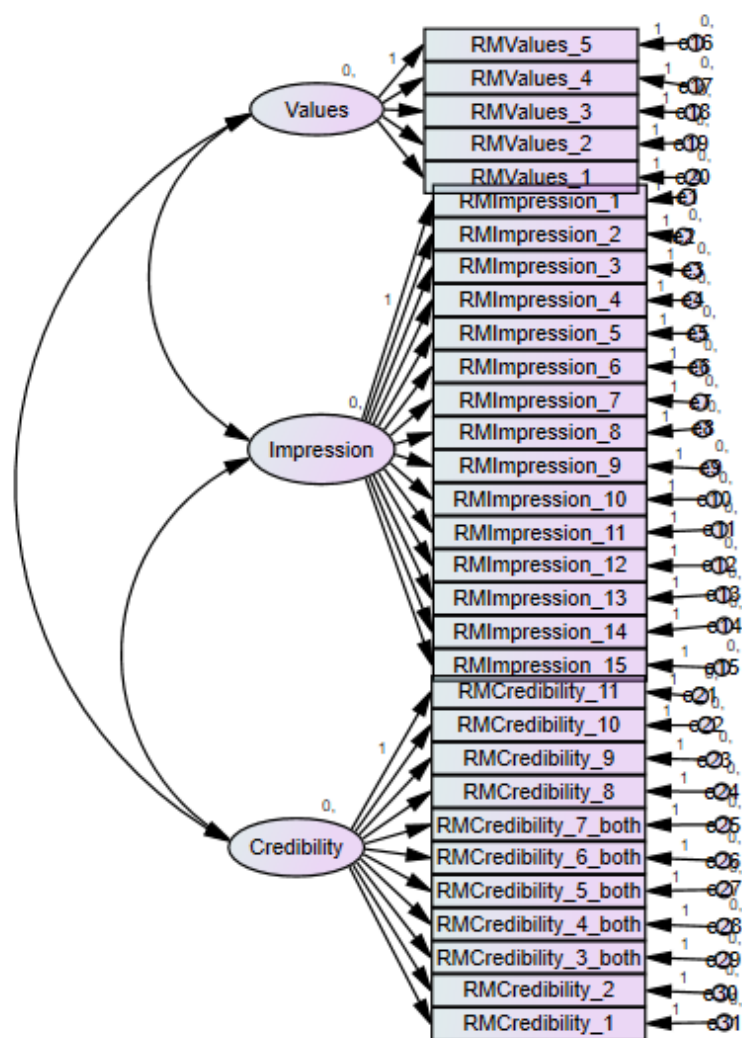
### ***Model Fit of Grouped Conditions.***

Initially, the criteria for model fit were judged according to Kline's (2016) standards. This involves looking at the parsimony correction index RMSEA which should be below .06 with nonsignificant probability values, and the Comparative Fit Indices (CFI and TLI) which can accept values as low as .90 but preferred to be above .95. Additionally, SRMR is evaluated and should be less than .08 for a good model fit. The first CFA was a grouped model, resulting in an acceptable model fit:  $\chi^2(862) = 1658.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.92$ , CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RMSEA =



.04 (90% CI: .05 - .06), SRMR = .07 (see Figure 1). The following model indicates a decent fit, thus analysis continued with assessing localized areas of strain and modification indices.

Figure 1: Model Fit of Grouped Conditions



**Localized Areas of Strain.** Next, the model was examined for localized areas of strain. No Heywood cases were found in the standardized regressions ( $<1$ ) and no negative covariances. Standardized path coefficients of indicators to latent variables should be  $>.7$  to indicate strong fit (Kline, 2016). In the CFA model, all the variables loaded on their respective latent variables at approximately .6. The lowest loading was for Values item 4 at .83, but this was still a strong

loading and other areas of the model were examined to see if this was a problem item. See Table 10 for standardized regressions.

*Table 11: Standardized Factor Loadings for Each Condition*

Item Number	Latent Variable	Estimate
1	Impression	1.00
2	Impression	1.11***
3	Impression	0.96***
4	Impression	0.99***
5	Impression	1.11***
6	Impression	1.06***
7	Impression	1.10***
8	Impression	1.06***
9	Impression	1.00***
10	Impression	1.02***
11	Impression	1.03***
12	Impression	0.99***
13	Impression	0.87***
14	Impression	0.98***
15	Impression	1.09***
5	Values	1.00
4	Values	0.83***
3	Values	0.97***
2	Values	0.94***
1	Values	0.87***
11	Credibility	1.00
10	Credibility	1.11***
9	Credibility	1.25***
8	Credibility	1.05***
7	Credibility	0.88***
6	Credibility	1.07***
5	Credibility	1.05***
4	Credibility	1.11***
3	Credibility	0.95***
2	Credibility	1.09***
1	Credibility	0.89***

\*\*\* =  $p > 0.001$

Localized areas of strain can additionally be identified in the standardized residual matrix. The matrix can be interpreted like z scores in which residuals greater than  $|1.96|$  may indicate that the model estimate is significantly different from the data (Reinard, 2007). Examination of the standardized residuals for this data showed some residuals above the  $|1.96|$  threshold, specifically multiple credibility items such as 7, 8, 9, and 10. Further analysis continued to assess the model fit. See the correlations of the latent variables (factors) in Table 11.

*Table 12: Standardized Residual Covariances For Each Condition*

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9
C1	0								
C2	-0.592	0							
C3	0.519	-0.295	0						
C4	0.064	0.22	0.059	0					
C5	-0.14	1.109	-0.83	0.015	0				
C6	1.068	-0.498	0.404	0.648	-0.661	0			
C7	1.108	-0.173	0.615	0.033	0.138	0.074	0		
C8	0.671	0.42	0.728	-0.234	1.396	-0.277	0.754	0	
C9	-0.73	0.514	-0.571	-0.467	-0.679	-0.14	-0.929	-0.439	0
C10	-0.75	-0.282	0.241	-0.216	-0.759	-0.285	-0.122	-1.4	1.015
C11	-1.343	-0.598	-0.859	-0.039	0.079	-0.086	-0.59	-0.803	0.945
V1	0.677	1.185	0.911	0.262	0.336	0.655	-0.392	-0.128	2.855
V2	-1.144	-1.938	-1.412	-0.98	-1.139	-1.438	-3.231	-2.338	0.951
V3	-0.467	-1.012	-0.882	0.848	-0.926	0.53	-1.176	-2.232	2.205
V4	0.768	0.468	1.053	0.062	0.841	0.835	0.236	1.176	2.014
V5	-1.206	0.477	-1.258	-0.577	-1.074	-1.732	-1.67	-0.571	2.334
I15	-1.204	0.806	-0.503	-0.145	-0.353	-0.416	-1.455	-1.236	2.572
I14	-1.699	-0.396	-0.794	-0.353	-1.226	-0.557	-2.774	-1.013	2.542
I13	-1.102	1.249	1.559	1.183	0.799	0.35	-1.03	0.069	3.761
I12	-0.974	1.504	-1.073	0.66	0.127	-0.139	-0.9	-0.191	2.802
I11	-1.191	0.997	-0.235	0.327	0.653	-0.713	-1.254	-0.48	2.952
I10	-1.834	0.42	-1.721	-0.472	-0.558	-0.551	-2.176	-1.375	2.245
I9	-0.693	2.072	-0.583	1.09	0.933	-0.272	-0.47	-0.268	2.786
I8	-1.64	-0.014	-0.466	0.2	-0.083	-0.932	-1.604	-1.321	2.205
I7	-2.487	0.551	-2.228	-0.707	-0.746	-1.633	-3.024	-2.138	2.56
I6	-1.537	0.946	-1.149	0.094	-0.071	-1.126	-1.258	-0.838	3.372

I5	-1.847	0.383	-1.144	-0.176	0.155	-0.546	-1.686	-0.52	2.234
I4	-0.927	0.898	-0.291	0.138	0.035	-0.139	-1.327	-1.087	3.882
I3	-2.035	0.246	-1.455	-0.415	-0.107	-1.58	-2.387	-1.684	1.959
I2	-2.223	0.458	-1.557	-0.491	0.296	-1.663	-2.223	-1.792	1.872
I1	-1.811	0.041	-0.417	0.212	-0.121	-1.251	-1.681	-0.816	2.028

Table 11-2: Standardized Residual Covariances For Each Condition Continued

	C10	C11	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	I15	I14	I13
C10	0									
C11	2.364	0								
V1	1.714	0.432	0							
V2	0.751	0.985	0.265	0						
V3	1.348	1.953	0.297	0.453	0					
V4	2.211	1.83	-0.228	0.648	-0.661	0				
V5	1.28	1.395	-0.336	-0.322	-0.387	0.398	0			
I15	2.212	2.286	-1.01	0.341	0.557	-1.505	0.777	0		
I14	1.129	1.322	-0.017	0.316	0.314	-0.401	0.935	-0.387	0	
I13	2.414	2.509	1.071	2.366	1.434	0.592	1.396	0.282	-0.128	0
I12	1.478	1.833	-0.273	0.314	0.804	-0.751	0.786	0.144	-0.376	1.105
I11	1.672	1.706	-0.455	-0.017	-0.318	-1.272	0.389	-0.314	-0.104	0.248
I10	0.459	0.997	-0.568	0.027	0.014	-2.145	0.17	0.734	0.304	-0.821
I9	1.544	0.893	0.214	-0.301	0.557	-0.986	1.541	0.213	-0.201	-0.247
I8	2.305	2.274	-0.798	-0.4	0	-0.889	0.189	-0.524	0.068	0.09
I7	0.805	0.72	-0.742	-0.162	-0.434	-1.696	0.745	0.061	-0.154	-0.278
I6	1.519	1.789	-0.9	-0.141	-0.206	-0.721	0.764	-0.223	0.12	-0.426
I5	1.973	2.242	-1.229	0.209	0.474	-0.987	0.631	-0.221	-0.102	-0.022
I4	2.011	1.515	0.982	1.243	0.366	0.233	1.312	0.437	0.15	0.23
I3	1.733	1.883	-1.084	0.304	0.449	-0.935	0.87	0.145	0.546	-0.374
I2	0.808	1.57	-0.686	-0.254	0.203	-1.542	0.21	0.307	0.054	-0.164
I1	2.536	2.258	-1.049	0.221	0.609	-0.321	1.428	-0.063	-0.029	-0.159

Table 11-3: Standardized Residual Covariances For Each Condition Continued

	I12	I11	I10	I9	I8	I7	I6	I5	I4	I3	I2	I1
I12	0											
I11	-0.206	0										
I10	0.06	0.023	0									
I9	0.083	0.021	0.579	0								
I8	-0.265	0.235	0.3	0.405	0							

17	0.036	-0.202	0.109	0.525	-0.399	0						
16	0.151	0.269	-0.22	-0.39	0.195	0.421	0					
15	0.446	0.108	-0.093	-0.151	0.31	-0.291	-0.188	0				
14	0.066	-0.089	-0.22	0.159	-0.697	0.719	-0.216	-0.067	0			
13	-0.643	-0.151	-0.189	-0.522	-0.105	0.045	-0.328	0.28	-0.117	0		
12	0.033	0.035	0.137	-0.369	-0.02	0.034	0.225	0.064	-0.699	0.501	0	
11	-0.446	0.275	-0.899	-0.436	0.534	-0.332	0.262	0.152	0.046	0.507	-0.065	0

**Modification Indices.** Next, the table of modification indices was examined to determine how much the parameter estimate would change. The indices are interpreted as  $\chi^2$  statistics with a difference of 1 degree of freedom, and the values of 3.84 or greater would indicate a significant change in  $\chi^2$ . If changes are to be made based on the modification indices, these changes should be guided by theory as opposed to prioritizing a better model fit (Kline, 2016). This data set's modification indices show many above 3.84, and three were large enough to indicate a major parameter change (<13.5 for regression weights and <21.6 for error correlations). Three covariances were drawn between error variables within the credibility subscale. The suggested error correlations and regression changes did not make any theoretical improvements to the understanding of the model. Therefore, no changes were made to the model with the parameter estimates

**Validity Testing.** Establishing construct validity is the next step in the analysis. This involves assessment of correlations between measures and its items which helps establish convergent and discriminant validity (DeVellis, 2017; Kline, 2016). In this analysis, wishful identification scale (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005) was tested to determine convergent validity, and multiple-parasocial relationship (Tukachinsky, 2011), attitude homophily scale (McCroskey et al., 2006), and a preexisting role model scale (Rich, 1997) were tested to establish discriminant validity. Correlational testing separated the conditions to assess construct validity with both conditions: role model and liked media figure.

**Role Model Condition.** A correlation test was conducted to compare the listed factors above. Correlations did not appear to follow expected patterns: Variables meant to describe perceived role model status did not correlate highest with one another compared to other variables. Theoretically, the subscales of the perceived role model scale (values, credibility, and impressions) should encompass audience's perception of a role model. Some of the correlations were moderate to strong ( $>.6$ ; Pett et al., 2003), however multiple scales had higher significant correlations than ideal with the Role Model Scale (see Wishful Identification, Rich's Role Model Scale, PSF Communication Subscale, and Friend Support Subscale). Regardless these findings demonstrate that the variables are theoretically and statistically related to perceived role model, thus, achieving convergent validity. See Table 12 for scale correlations.

Table 13: Correlations with Role Model Condition

	Role Model Scale	Values Subscale	Impressions Subscale	Credibility Subscale	Wishful Id Scale	Rich RM Scale
Role Model Scale	1	.797**	.889**	.729**	.825**	.821**
Values Subscale	.797**	1	.537**	.710**	.727**	.826**
Impressions Subscale	.889**	.537**	1	.353**	.748**	.687**
Credibility Subscale	.729**	.710**	.353**	1	.541**	.589**
Wishful Id Scale	.825**	.727**	.748**	.541**	1	.764**
Rich RM Scale	.821**	.826**	.687**	.589**	.764**	1
Att Hom Scale	.655**	.425**	.737**	.245**	.685**	.497**
PSF Comm Subscale	.818**	.627**	.836**	.412**	.748**	.737**
Phys Love Subscale	.542**	.387**	.611**	.185*	.573**	.418**
Emot Love Subscale	.616**	.315**	.768**	0.137	.603**	.457**
Friend Support Subscale	.830**	.674**	.805**	.478**	.783**	.735**
PSR Scale	.796**	.554**	.866**	.333**	.765**	.661**

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

Table 12-2: Correlations with Role Model Condition Continued

	Att Hom Scale	PSF Comm Subscale	Phys Love Subscale	Emot Love Subscale	Friend Support Subscale	PSR Scale
Role Model Scale	.655**	.818**	.542**	.616**	.830**	.796**
Values Subscale	.425**	.627**	.387**	.315**	.674**	.554**
Impressions Subscale	.737**	.836**	.611**	.768**	.805**	.866**

Credibility Subscale	.245**	.412**	.185*	0.137	.478**	.333**
Wishful Id Scale	.685**	.748**	.573**	.603**	.783**	.765**
Rich RM Scale	.497**	.737**	.418**	.457**	.735**	.661**
Att Hom Scale	1	.715**	.720**	.826**	.695**	.848**
PSF Comm Subscale	.715**	1	.583**	.706**	.820**	.884**
Phys Love Subscale	.720**	.583**	1	.740**	.626**	.818**
Emot Love Subscale	.826**	.706**	.740**	1	.688**	.914**
Friend Support Subscale	.695**	.820**	.626**	.688**	1	.888**
PSR Scale	.848**	.884**	.818**	.914**	.888**	1

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

**Liked Media Figure Condition.** Correlations for the Liked Media Figure condition followed similar patterns as the role model condition. These findings demonstrate that the variables are theoretically and statistically related to perceived role model, thus, achieving convergent validity. See Table 13 for correlations between variable indices.

Table 14: Correlations with Liked Condition

	Role Model Scale	Values Subscale	Impressions Subscale	Credibility Subscale	Wishful Id Scale	Rich RM Scale
Role Model Scale	1	.890**	.950**	.737**	.867**	.897**
Values Subscale	.890**	1	.810**	.606**	.782**	.845**
Impressions Subscale	.950**	.810**	1	.507**	.887**	.874**
Credibility Subscale	.737**	.606**	.507**	1	.492**	.585**
Wishful Id Scale	.867**	.782**	.887**	.492**	1	.887**
Rich RM Scale	.897**	.845**	.874**	.585**	.887**	1
Att Hom Scale	.820**	.781**	.818**	.488**	.769**	.775**
PSF Comm Subscale	.866**	.814**	.897**	.450**	.826**	.817**
Phys Love Subscale	.556**	.488**	.521**	.430**	.472**	.479**
Emot Love Subscale	.852**	.717**	.910**	.430**	.839**	.814**
Friend Support Subscale	.909**	.814**	.905**	.576**	.848**	.865**
PSR Scale	.906**	.803**	.926**	.524**	.856**	.851**

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

Table 13-2: Correlations with Liked Condition Continued

	Att Hom Scale	PSF Comm Subscale	Phys Love Subscale	Emot Love Subscale	Friend Support Subscale	PSR Scale
Role Model Scale	.820**	.866**	.556**	.852**	.909**	.906**

Values Subscale	.781**	.814**	.488**	.717**	.814**	.803**
Impressions Subscale	.818**	.897**	.521**	.910**	.905**	.926**
Credibility Subscale	.488**	.450**	.430**	.430**	.576**	.524**
Wishful Id Scale	.769**	.826**	.472**	.839**	.848**	.856**
Rich RM Scale	.775**	.817**	.479**	.814**	.865**	.851**
Att Hom Scale	1	.856**	.693**	.849**	.805**	.897**
PSF Comm Subscale	.856**	1	.579**	.873**	.892**	.948**
Phys Love Subscale	.693**	.579**	1	.587**	.557**	.716**
Emot Love Subscale	.849**	.873**	.587**	1	.847**	.947**
Friend Support Subscale	.805**	.892**	.557**	.847**	1	.938**
PSR Scale	.897**	.948**	.716**	.947**	.938**	1

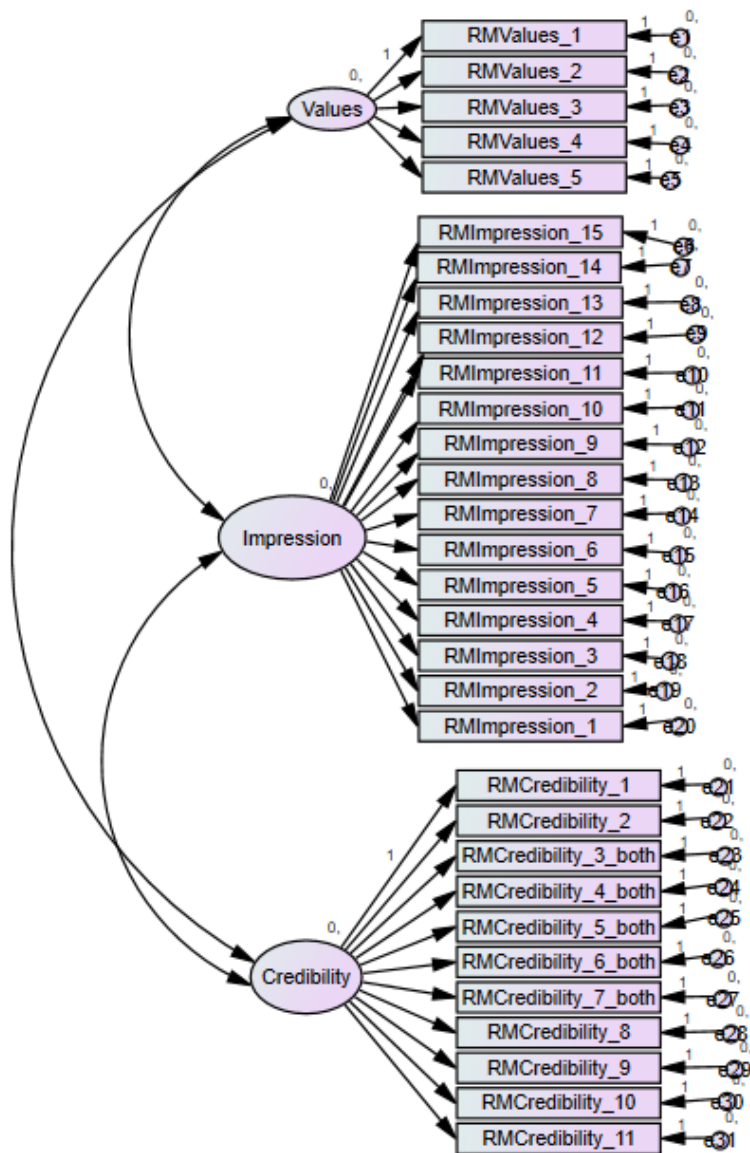
\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

### ***Model Fit with Both Conditions.***

Upon finding acceptable model fit between conditions, another CFA was conducted on the entire data set. The second CFA model including both conditions resulted in an acceptable model fit:  $\chi^2(431) = 829.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.92$ , CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .06 (90% CI: .05 - .07), SRMR = 0.07 (see Figure 2). The following model indicates a decent fit, thus analysis continued with assessing localized areas of strain and modification indices.

*Figure 2: Model of Both Conditions*





**Localized Areas of Strain.** Next, the model was examined for localized areas of strain. No Heywood cases were found in the standardized regressions ( $<1$ ) and no negative covariances. Standardized path coefficients of indicators to latent variables should be  $>.7$  to indicate strong fit (Kline, 2016). In the CFA model, all the variables loaded on their respective latent variables at approximately  $>.6$ . See the standardized regressions in Table 14.

Table 15: Both Conditions Standardized Factor Loadings for CFA Model

Item Number	Latent Variable	Estimate
1	Values	1.00
2	Values	1.08***
3	Values	1.12***
4	Values	0.95***
5	Values	1.15***
15	Impression	1.00
14	Impression	0.9***
13	Impression	0.81***
12	Impression	0.91***
11	Impression	0.95***
10	Impression	0.94***
9	Impression	0.92***
8	Impression	0.98***
7	Impression	1.01***
6	Impression	0.98***
5	Impression	1.03***
4	Impression	0.91***
3	Impression	0.89***
2	Impression	1.02***
1	Impression	0.92***
1	Credibility	1.00
2	Credibility	1.23***
3	Credibility	1.07***
4	Credibility	1.25***
5	Credibility	1.19***
6	Credibility	1.20***
7	Credibility	0.99***
8	Credibility	1.18***
9	Credibility	1.40***
10	Credibility	1.26***
11	Credibility	1.13***

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\*\*\* =  $p > 0.001$

Localized areas of strain can additionally be identified in the standardized residual matrix. The matrix can be interpreted like z scores in which residuals greater than  $|1.96|$  may indicate that the model estimate is significantly different from the data (Reinard, 2007).



I1	0.116	-1.788	0									
I2	0.537	-2.199	-0.065	0								
I3	0.32	-2.012	0.506	0.5	0							
I4	0.974	-0.904	0.045	-0.7	-0.117	0						
I5	0.462	-1.823	0.152	0.064	0.28	-0.067	0					
I6	1.026	-1.513	0.262	0.224	-0.328	-0.215	-0.188	0				
I7	0.63	-2.464	-0.332	0.034	0.045	0.718	-0.291	0.421	0			
I8	0.064	-1.616	0.534	-0.021	-0.105	-0.697	0.31	0.196	-0.4	0		
I9	2.149	-0.669	-0.436	-0.369	-0.522	0.159	-0.151	-0.39	0.525	0.406		
I10	0.494	-1.811	-0.899	0.137	-0.189	-0.22	-0.093	-0.22	0.108	0.3		
I11	1.076	-1.167	0.275	0.035	-0.151	-0.088	0.108	0.27	-0.202	0.235		
I12	1.576	-0.952	-0.446	0.033	-0.643	0.066	0.447	0.151	0.036	-0.264		
I13	1.315	-1.082	-0.159	-0.164	-0.374	0.23	-0.022	-0.426	-0.279	0.09		
I14	-0.323	-1.677	-0.029	0.054	0.546	0.15	-0.102	0.12	-0.154	0.067		
I15	0.882	-1.181	-0.063	0.307	0.145	0.437	-0.221	-0.223	0.06	-0.524		
V5	0.518	-1.235	1.428	0.209	0.87	1.311	0.631	0.764	0.745	0.189		
V4	0.508	0.741	-0.32	-1.54	-0.934	0.234	-0.985	-0.719	-1.695	-0.887		
V3	-0.971	-0.494	0.611	0.205	0.451	0.368	0.477	-0.204	-0.432	0.002		
V2	-1.895	-1.168	0.227	-0.248	0.309	1.248	0.214	-0.136	-0.157	-0.394		
V1	1.219	0.642	-1.056	-0.693	-1.092	0.975	-1.236	-0.907	-0.749	-0.805		

Table 15-3: Standardized Residual Covariances For Both Conditions Continued

	I9	I10	I11	I12	I13	I14	I15	V5	V4	V3	V2	V1
I9	0											
I10	0.579	0										
I11	0.022	0.024	0									
I12	0.083	0.06	-0.205	0								
I13	-0.247	-0.821	0.249	1.106	0							
I14	-0.201	0.303	-0.104	-0.376	-0.128	0						
I15	0.213	0.735	-0.314	0.144	0.282	-0.387	0					
V5	1.541	0.169	0.389	0.786	1.396	0.935	0.776	0				
V4	-0.984	-2.143	-1.27	-0.749	0.593	-0.399	-1.504	0.399	0			
V3	0.559	0.016	-0.315	0.806	1.436	0.316	0.56	-0.386	-0.657	0		
V2	-0.296	0.032	-0.011	0.319	2.371	0.321	0.346	-0.316	0.655	0.461	0	
V1	0.207	-0.575	-0.462	-0.28	1.065	-0.024	-1.017	-0.346	-0.234	0.291	0.262	0

**Modification Indices.** Next, the table of modification indices was examined to determine how much the parameter estimate would change. The indices are interpreted as  $\chi^2$  statistics with a difference of 1 degree of freedom, and the values of 3.84 or greater would indicate a significant change in  $\chi^2$ . If changes are to be made based on the modification indices, these changes should be guided by theory as opposed to prioritizing a better model fit (Kline, 2016). This data set's

modification indices show many above 3.84, and three were large enough to indicate a major parameter change ( $<13.5$  for regression weights and  $<21.6$  for error correlations). Three covariances were drawn between error variables within the credibility subscale. The suggested error correlations and regression changes did not make any theoretical improvements to the understanding of the model. Therefore, no changes were made to the model with the parameter estimates

**Validity Testing.** Validity testing of the perceived role model scale encompassing both conditions was repeated with both conditions. Again, this analysis tested construct validity by testing correlations of the perceived role model scale with wishful identification (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005), multiple-parasocial relationship (Tukachinsky, 2011), attitude homophily scale (McCroskey et al., 2006), and a preexisting role model scale (Rich, 1997).

Similar to the individual conditions, correlations did not appear to follow expected patterns: Variables meant to describe perceived role model status did not correlate highest with one another compared to other variables. Theoretically, the subscales of the perceived role model scale (values, credibility, and impressions) should encompass audience's perception of a role model. Some of the correlations were moderate to strong ( $>.6$ ; Pett et al., 2003), however inclusion of the liked media figure condition increased the strength of the correlation relationships between variables. Regardless these findings demonstrate that the variables are theoretically and statistically related to perceived role model, thus, achieving convergent validity. See Table 16 for correlations between variable indices.

*Table 17: Correlations for Entire Data Set*

	Role Model Scale	Values Subscale	Impressions Subscale	Credibility Subscale	Wishful Id Scale	Rich RM Scale
Role Model Scale	1	.861**	.929**	.731**	.856**	.874**
Values Subscale	.861**	1	.719**	.646**	.772**	.845**
Impressions Subscale	.929**	.719**	1	.448**	.842**	.813**
Credibility Subscale	.731**	.646**	.448**	1	.511**	.583**

Wishful Id Scale	.856**	.772**	.842**	.511**	1	.854**
Rich RM Scale	.874**	.845**	.813**	.583**	.854**	1
Att Hom Scale	.751**	.636**	.783**	.382**	.730**	.661**
PSF Comm Subscale	.853**	.755**	.878**	.439**	.805**	.796**
Phys Love Subscale	.548**	.447**	.554**	.325**	.504**	.452**
Emot Love Subscale	.763**	.570**	.856**	.309**	.752**	.683**
Friend Support Subscale	.884**	.772**	.872**	.538**	.831**	.826**
PSR Scale	.868**	.720**	.906**	.449**	.827**	.788**

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

Table 16-2: Correlations for Entire Data Set Continued

	Att Hom Scale	PSF Comm Subscale	Phys Love Subscale	Emot Love Subscale	Friend Support Subscale	PSR Scale
Role Model Scale	.751**	.853**	.548**	.763**	.884**	.868**
Values Subscale Impressions Subscale	.636**	.755**	.447**	.570**	.772**	.720**
Credibility Subscale	.783**	.878**	.554**	.856**	.872**	.906**
Wishful Id Scale	.382**	.439**	.325**	.309**	.538**	.449**
Rich RM Scale	.730**	.805**	.504**	.752**	.831**	.827**
Att Hom Scale	.661**	.796**	.452**	.683**	.826**	.788**
PSF Comm Subscale	1	.795**	.704**	.839**	.757**	.873**
Phys Love Subscale	.795**	1	.577**	.809**	.870**	.926**
Emot Love Subscale	.704**	.577**	1	.649**	.579**	.752**
Friend Support Subscale	.839**	.809**	.649**	1	.788**	.934**
PSR Scale	.757**	.870**	.579**	.788**	1	.922**
	.873**	.926**	.752**	.934**	.922**	1

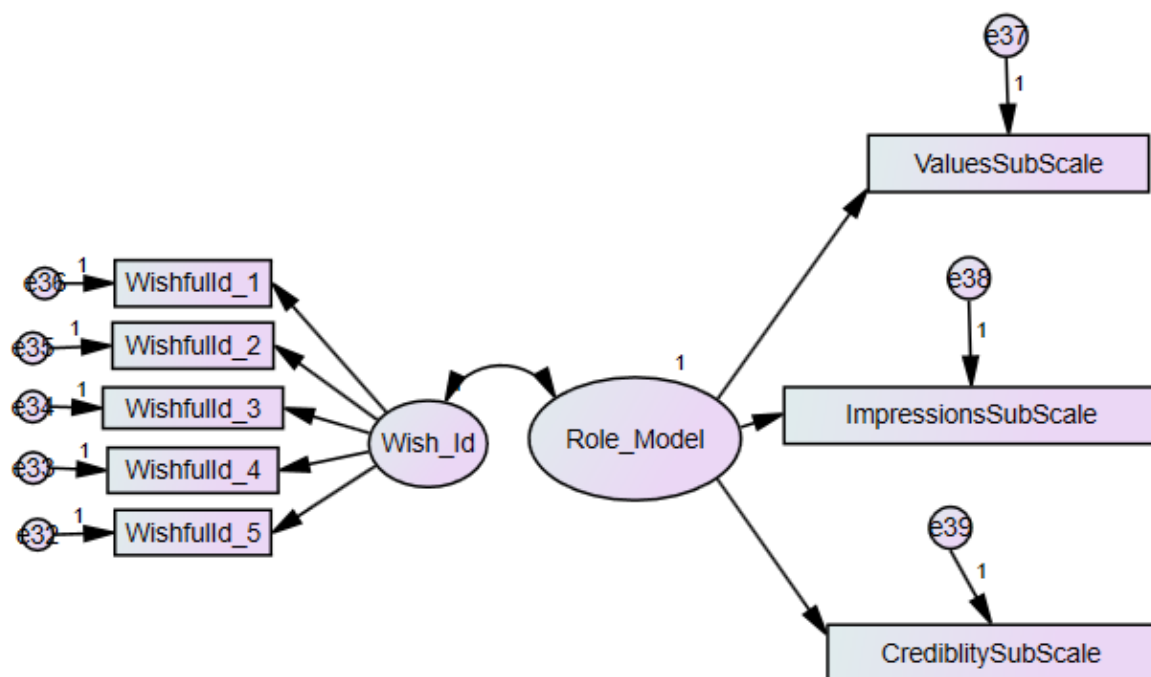
\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

### Further Discriminant Validity Testing

After achieving acceptable CFA and validity testing, an additional model was conducted to establish further discriminant validity between the role model scale and wishful identification. This model consists of correlating the wishful identification and role model scale (Hayes et al., 2005). Poor model fit would indicate discriminant validity and that the two constructs are conceptually different; a good model fit would indicate the concepts are closely connected conceptually.

According to Kline's (2016) standards, criteria for model fit were judged. This involves looking at the parsimony correction index RMSEA, which should be below .06 with nonsignificant probability values, and the Comparative Fit Indices (CFI and TLI), which can accept values as low as .90 but preferred to be above .95. The first CFA was a grouped model, resulting in an unacceptable model fit:  $\chi^2(19) = 101.74, p < .000, \chi^2/df = 5.36, CFI = .93, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .13$  (90% CI: .11 - .16). The following model indicates a good fit, indicating they are closely related concepts.

Figure 3: Discriminant Validity Model



### Variance Between Media Figure Conditions

In addition to CFA testing, additional exploratory tests were conducted to determine if participants distinguish the differences between the conditions.

#### *Familiarity.*

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in familiarity between identified role model and liked media figures. Familiarity

differed significantly between the role model ( $M = 5.34$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ) and liked media figure condition ( $M = 5.06$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $F(1, 258) = 4.17$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The following results aligns with the theoretical expectations that audiences would be more familiar with their role models than their liked media figure. This additionally supports part 2's data results.

### ***Role Model Subscales.***

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in perceived role model status between identified role model and liked media figures. Perceived Role Model status differed significantly between the role model ( $M = 5.59$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ) and liked media figure condition ( $M = 5.28$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ),  $F(1, 258) = 6.79$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The following results aligns with the theoretical expectations that audiences would rate their role models higher in perception of being a role model as opposed to those identified as only liked media figure. This additionally supports part 2's data results.

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in perceived value system between identified role model and liked media figures. Perceived value system differed significantly between the role model ( $M = 5.60$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) and liked media figure condition ( $M = 5.16$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ),  $F(1, 258) = 10.93$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The following results aligns with the theoretical expectations that audiences would rate their role models higher in perception values system as opposed to those identified as only liked media figure. This additionally supports part 2's data results.

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in perceived credibility between identified role model and liked media figures. Perceived credibility differed significantly between the role model ( $M = 6.03$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) and liked media figure condition ( $M = 5.90$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ),  $F(1, 258) = 1.87$ ,  $p < 0.5$ . The following results aligns with the theoretical expectations that audiences would rate their role models higher



in perception of credibility as opposed to those identified as only liked media figure. This additionally supports part 2's data results.

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in perceived impression between identified role model and liked media figures. Perceived impression system differed significantly between the role model ( $M = 5.26, SD = 1.10$ ) and liked media figure condition ( $M = 4.88, SD = 1.43$ ),  $F(1, 258) = 5.68, p = 0.018$ . The following results aligns with the theoretical expectations that audiences would rate their role models higher in perception impression system as opposed to those identified as only liked media figure. This additionally supports part 2's data results.

### **Study 3 Discussion**

Upon evaluation of the confirmatory analysis, the overall model fit was suitable. Localized areas of strain were evaluated. Standardized regressions suggest a good model fit; however, the standardized residual matrix indicated some of the credibility items might not be a good fit for the model. The modification indices showed four error variables within the Credibility subscale should covary to improve model fit. However, no improvements were found in the model fit when making these adjustments. These results were found with both individual conditions and the entire data set, and no changes were made with the model.

Furthermore, validity testing was conducted to see how much the Role Model Scale correlates with similar concepts such as wishful identification (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005), multiple-parasocial relationship (Tukachinsky, 2011), attitude homophily scale (McCroskey et al., 2006), and a preexisting role model scale (Rich, 1997). Results indicated an overall strong relationship between all variables, demonstrating all tested concepts are conceptually very similar. These results suggest that the role model scale construction is still strongly related to these concepts. All of these concepts might benefit from future research continuing to parse out

the differences between these concepts. Overall, construct validity appears to be validated in terms of being related to theoretically similar concepts.

Specific evaluation of the Role Model scale showed its weakest relationship with Physical Love PSR in both conditions. Looking at the subscales of the Role Model scale, it appears Values and Credibility have some of the weaker relationships with the related concepts, indicating most of the correlation for the full scale is a result of Impression's strong relationship with the other concepts. Correlation tests also show weaker relationships between its factors compared to relationships with related concepts, possibly indicating that the tested scale consists of a single factor. Credibility is the most divergent factor in the Role Model scale, perhaps indicating it is not as closely linked to other aspects of perceiving someone as a role model. However, this factor may be a key element in distinguishing a role model from only liked media figures. Future research should explore the role and relationship of credibility for role models compared to only liked media figures.

Exploratory tests were conducted to determine if there were significant differences found between conditions. While a between-subjects test, it appears respondents were able to differentiate a role model from a liked media figure.

## **Chapter 7:**

### **Overall Discussion**

#### **Literature Review of a Role Model**

The literature review and qualitative study establish the importance of audience perception in determining what makes a role model. Determination of the qualifications of a role model is subjective to an external perception that another has desirable or admirable values and past behaviors that make the potential role model credible. Another aspect of determining if someone is a role model is the audience's internal perspective, how they believe the possible role model impacted them.

Prior literature generally defines a role model as an individual of influence who is looked to for an example to either mimic or emulate (Fraser & Brown, 2002; Morgenroth et al., 2015; Rich, 1997). One clear finding in the qualitative study is that people who look towards media figures for role models are not looking to mimic or emulate these media figures exactly. Individuals are looking to emulate an aspect of the role model's behavior and adapt it into their personality. The adoption of any characteristic of a role model makes this relationship behavioral as opposed to attitudinal. If wishful identification is an attitudinal concept (Moyer-Gusé, 2008), it is possible wishful identification would be part of the process of eventually perceiving someone as a role model. Initially, an individual would wishfully identify with a media figure and, over time, learn and actively try to emulate the desirable characteristics of the role model.

It is essential for future literature to have a concise academic definition of a role model. Based on this study, it is proposed that role models be defined with the context in mind of a

“positive” or “good” role model<sup>10</sup>, as individuals who others aspire to partly emulate a desirable subjectable set of values, attitudes, or behaviors. The goal of the operationalization of this subject was to measure the construct of how strongly individuals perceive another person as a role model. The hypothesized definition and scale reflect an audience individual’s perception of another individual as a role model and does not necessarily identify the status of another individual as a role model in society.

### **Central Findings**

Initial findings through study 1 supported the theoretical expectations of three distinct dimensions involved in assessing how individuals perceive a role model. Participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of the role model’s values and that these values are what the individuals subjectively identify as “good.” There was also the importance of having experience or expertise to validate the status of being a role model. This could include a successful career path or personal growth. Interviewees repeatedly established the importance of their role models having some form of credibility and used this standard to distinguish role models from non-role models. Lastly, participants discussed how role models were sources of inspiration and how they would modify their behaviors to be more like their role models. The results of the qualitative analysis indicate these three distinct factors are essential in perceiving someone as a role model.

Study 2 continued evaluation of these three potential factors through item development and survey testing. EFA results suggest a three-factor scale, further supporting the qualitative findings. In addition, exploratory analyses determined that individuals do differently perceive media figures they identify as role models, liked, and disliked. These additional analyses support

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<sup>10</sup> This definition specifies the context of a positive role model because the scope of this study focused on role models who participants perceive as role models for themselves. Although instructions do not strictly ask participants to identify a “positive role model,” the results indicate they all reported positive role models based on the means of both study 2 and 3. Brace-Govan (2013) argues for typology of role models which includes positive and negative role models, however, this is outside of the scope of this study.

theoretical expectations that individuals would gradually have more positive views of others the more they perceive them as role models. At this point, both Study 1 and 2 indicate consistent support for three distinct dimensions.

The final round of data collection required CFA and validity testing. The model fit of the perceived role model scale was acceptable, and correlations with related concepts were significantly strong, indicating convergent validity. However, the scale may be confounded with other concepts in the literature. Support for the perceived role model scale is less evident in Study 3, but despite this, it still demonstrates a strong theoretical and empirical contribution. Specific discussion of the three distinct factors will be discussed individually below.

### **Final Proposed Factors of Perceived Role Model Scale**

Based on the literature review in chapter 2 and 3, the scale development process attempted to incorporate three factors that addressed the external and internal perspective of the audience. The initial proposal of factor structure identified three potential factors: (1) *value and relevance*, (2) *inspiration*, and (3) *mastery and growth*. After the qualitative phase and item development, the title of the factors was refined based on the interviews and item development to: (1) *Role Model's Value System*, (2) *Credibility of Role Model*, and (3) *Impression of Role Model*. These three factors represent individuals' perceptions of their RM's values and credibility as a role model and their self-reported perception of how this RM influences them.

#### ***Role Model's Values System***

As discussed in the qualitative study, one's values are fundamental to the audience's perception of being a role model. The subscale for values consisted of five items, gauging participants' thoughts on how much the self-reported role model's values were important and relevant to them. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated a relationship between values and the other two factors; however, the validity testing did not demonstrate as strong of a relationship as desired between the subscales. Although the results still indicate a

significant relationship between its factors, it may measure another construct similar to perceiving someone as a role model. It is possible that the perceived relevance and values of a role model are separate constructs to viewing one as a role model and could perhaps be a predictor of viewing someone as a role model.

### ***Credibility of Role Model***

The credibility of a role model had similar results as the values system. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated a relationship between values and the other two factors but had one of the lowest correlations with its predicted related subscale: perceived impressions of a role model. While the literature and qualitative study demonstrated the importance of their role model having a preexisting experience or credibility, the subscale did not appear to be strongly related to the other two factors. The credibility subscale may have been too broad for audiences to rate their perceived role model. The credibility scale was simplified after pretesting to a list of adjectives commonly identified by participants, while the rest of the scale was designed with statements. The credibility scale shared items within the *Trustworthiness* and *Expertise* dimension of the Celebrity Endorser-Credibility Scale (Ohanian, 1990), making discriminant validity testing difficult.

### ***Perceived Impression of Role Model***

An essential aspect of perceiving someone as a role model is motivating them to be more like them. Initially, this factor was identified as inspiration and defined as an individual's desire to emulate the RM when they feel they can complete an exact or modified version of the demonstrated behavior or value. After interviews and item development, the renaming of inspiration to the perceived impression of the role model seemed more fitting, as participants are self-reporting how the role model has left an impression on them or impacted them into changing their behavior.

The impression subscale did not strongly correlate with its predicted factors; however, significant relationships between impression and related constructs were found. Based on the following study, the impression of a role model may be the sole factor in measuring perceived role models. This subscale alone may not entirely measure the entire perception of viewing another person as a role model, especially since prior literature expresses the importance of the individual's perceived value and credibility of the role model.

### **Establishing Discriminant Validity**

This study believes participants understood the instructions and identification of a role model and liked media figures. Qualitative results support this claim as interviewees were able to distinguish the two. Study 2 and 3 support this as well, given the exploratory analyses demonstrating a significant difference between conditions. Given this, a consideration of this study's findings is how the instructions to name a role model versus a liked media figure restricted the potential variance within the role model scale. The limited variance in the role model condition could have impacted the correlations, leading to the following results confounding the role model dimensions with other variables.

The establishment of discriminant validity in study 3 indicated mixed results. As discussed before, the concepts demonstrated strong convergent validity; however, whether or not discriminant validity was established is of concern. Correlations of the role model subscales with related concepts were stronger than desired. It may be all variables were capturing an aspect of how audiences perceive role models, but no single measure was adequately capturing the concept. However, this does not necessarily mean the three dimensions are unrelated to perceiving role models. Instead, the related concepts are likely to capture aspects of how people perceive role models but not the full concept of a role model.

### **Limitations**

Study 1 consisted of semi-structured interviews, which were conducted via zoom. All interviews were virtual, and many participants did not turn on their cameras, further creating barriers with the interviewer from bonding with the interviewee. Additionally, the study would have benefited from more diversity in race, gender, and age. Further qualitative investigation should seek participant interviews that are in-person, and more diverse across race, age, and gender.

A potential issue with data collection for study 2 could be survey fatigue and multiple failed attention checks. The survey, on average, took more time and possibly led to fatigue and participants falling into a response pattern. Additionally, three attention check items were present in the survey, which most participants failed. However, because the predicted factor loadings were still present in EFA results, this data set was considered appropriate because the EFA results would be random if participants were not paying attention.

Although survey items were randomized in study 3, it is possible measurement bias was present because there were so many items listed at once and were overall asking about one's relationship with a media persona. Participants potentially began to fall into a response pattern after recognizing a common pattern in the question. A large portion of collect data was unusable due to participants not correctly answering the prompt. Future research would benefit from pretesting specific instructions to assure participants' complete comprehension of instructions. Future research would benefit from pretesting specific instructions to assure participants' complete comprehension of instructions. Furthermore, Amazon Mechanical Turk participation did not provide quality data (for study 2 or 3) as past research studies have experienced (Buhrmester et al., 2011) thus future research should consider other data collection resources.

### **Future Research**



The concept of role models requires much more investigation. Future research should continue investigating the theoretical connections between the three dimensions in this study. It is imperative to better understand the role of the audience's perceived values of media figures and how they differ with different media figures, especially with perceived role models. As well, credibility is an essential aspect of perceiving a role model. Further theoretical investigation should be conducted to continue parsing out the role of perceived credibility and investigate whether existing media figure credibility scales such as Ohanian's (1990) are suitable measures. For both dimensions, future research should consider whether perceived values and credibility are predictors of viewing someone as a role model or dimensions of viewing a role model. Additionally, the subscale perceived impression deserves further investigation, and it is recommended to investigate the subscale's relationship with related concepts such as inspiration as a psychological construct (Trash & Elliot, 2003).

While this study did not fully establish a three-factor scale, it is clear these concepts are theoretically related, and research should continue investigating how to operationalize these factors better. For example, it would be worthwhile to examine if the ideal approach to operationalize perceived role model status is by establishing a threshold in which a media figure needs to meet to be identified as a role model instead of averaging the scores.

Researchers should also consider a shortened version of the proposed scale as conceptualization and operationalization of perceived role models continue to develop. With an overall total of 31 items, scholars would find it valuable to use a shortened version to preserve participants' attention span during data collection. This methodological suggestion will benefit those utilizing the scale in academic and industry research.

Another area of exploration includes the differences in how the audience perceives different types of media figures. This study established that audiences could identify different types of media figures (ranging from role models to dislike) and view them all differently. How audience perceptions change based on their attitudes towards other media figures is an important area to continue exploring. Overall, the construct of perceiving a role model requires further investigation.

In addition to academia, this scale provides practical use in marketing. This scale could provide a helpful tool in campaign development for the marketing industry. Celebrities are common spokespersons and opinion-leaders used in marketing ads to sell products. Occasionally, marketing campaigns can miss the mark with an ill-chosen celebrity endorser (see reports of Kendall Jenner and Pepsi backlash), leading to negative perceptions towards the company brand and reputation. Initial market research could utilize this scale to identify role models that may serve as appropriate spokespeople for their brand.

In conclusion, this dissertation evaluated existing literature on role models through various works of literature to conceptualize and operationalize the audience's perception of viewing a media figure as a role model. Results of this study demonstrate the need for further evaluation and research to continue the process of conceptualization and scale development. Distinguishment of the concept from related concepts—particularly wishful identification—is necessary to establish. Furthermore, continued research on the best way to operationalize this construct is in need. The overall practicality of establishing a measurement of the audience's perceptions of another individual being a role model provides unlimited market industry and academic potential.

Media effects research in health communication, edu-entertainment, and more can better understand audiences' perceptions of celebrity influence. Market research could utilize the scale to gauge the target market's perception of celebrities of interest to be spokespersons.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Pilot Qualitative Data: Questionnaire Survey Questions**

General perceptions of role models:

- How would you define a role model?
- Why are role models important?
- Are there particular characteristics you look for in a role model?
- Should people strive to be more like their role models?

Specific role model (in the media) in mind:

- Who is a role model of yours?
- What makes them a role model?
- What about your role model do you value?
- Why is your role model important to you?
- Do you strive to be more like your role model?

## Appendix B

### Study 1: Qualitative Interview Questions

#### Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

How would you define a role model?

- What determines if someone is a role model?
  - o \*Are there particular characteristics or traits you look for in a role model?
    - \*
    - Overall goodness?
    - Any other traits?
- Why do you think role models are important?
  - o Should people have role models they emulate?
- Is there a difference between a role model in your real life versus the media?

Is there anyone in the media that you perceive as a role model **for people in general**?

- How about for yourself?
- What makes this person a role model?
- Why is your role model important to you, specifically?
- What characteristics or traits about your role model are important to you?
  - Overall goodness?
  - Any other traits?
- o Do you feel your values or beliefs are similar?
- Do you think your role model is someone who you identify with, unconsciously understand, or relate to?
- Do you ever think about what it would be like to be friends with your role model?
  - o ...or even carry-on imagined conversations?
- Do you strive to be more like your role model?

Can you think of any negatives to having role models in media?

Is there anyone in the media you really like or relate to but do not consider a role model?

- Is there a distinction between liking a mediated persona and viewing one as a role model?
- Is there a distinction between wanting to be like another person versus viewing them as a role model?
  - o I'd like to do the kinds of things he/she does on the show
  - o He/she is the sort of person I want to be like myself
  - o I wish I could be more like him/her

Thus far in my research, I suspect that familiarity, inspiration, mastery, and relevance and values are the main traits that apply to a mediated role model.

- What do you think of these traits?
- When I say these traits, what do they mean to you?

## Appendix C

### Pilot Item Development Sub Dimensions

#### Values

1. I admire certain traits about this media figure.
2. I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.
3. I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.
4. I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.
5. I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.
6. I respect this media figure.
7. This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.
8. I think I share values with this media figure.
9. I try to align my values with those of this media figure.
10. This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.
11. I admire that this media figure utilizes their platform for good.
12. I think this media figure helps others.

#### Credibility

1. I think this media figure has demonstrated personal growth in their domain.
2. I think this media figure has demonstrated maturity.
3. I consider this media figure to be mature.
4. I think this media figure has successfully achieved accomplishments in their domain.
5. I admire what this media figure has achieved in their domain.
6. I consider this media figure to be experts in their domain.
7. I consider this media figure to be experienced.
8. I consider this media figure to be knowledgeable.
9. I admire this media figure's skills.
10. I think this media figure is qualified.
11. I think this media figure sets an example.
12. I think this media figure is reliable.
13. I think this media figure is successful.
14. I think this media figure is dependable.
15. I think this media figure is capable.
16. I think this media figure gives great advice.
17. I consider this media figure to be trustworthy.

#### Impression of Role Model

1. I think this media figure is a source of encouragement to explore my domain of interest.
2. I think of this media figure as a blueprint of how to achieve my goals.
3. I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.
4. This media figure is someone I can look to for guidance.
5. I look towards this media figure for direction.
6. I embrace this media figure's principles in my own life.
7. This media figure shows me ways to improve myself.
8. This media figure provides an example of who I want to be.
9. I find this media figure to be inspiring.
10. I aspire to be like this media figure.

11. This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.
12. I look to this media figure for an example to explore my domain of interest.
13. This media figure sets an example for me.
14. I strive to embrace certain aspects that this media figure has.
15. I strive to be more like this media figure in certain ways.
16. There are characteristics of this media figure I would like to emulate.
17. This media figure has traits I want to embrace.
18. There are certain aspects of this media figure that I want to adopt in my own life.
19. This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.
20. This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.
21. Seeing this media figure's accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.
22. I was not confident I could achieve certain goals until I saw this media figure achieve theirs.
23. Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.
24. This media figure exhibits the kind of person I want to be.
25. This media figure demonstrates the behaviors I want to embrace in my own life.
26. This media figure demonstrates the values I want to embrace in my own life.
27. This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.
28. This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.
29. Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.
30. Seeing this media figure's flaws helps me deal with my flaws.
31. I really admire this media figure's values and am trying to become more like them.
32. Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.
33. The goals that this media figure has achieved are similar to the one's I have for myself.



## Appendix D

### Final Item Development Subdimensions

#### *Value System of Role Model*

1. I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.
2. I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.
3. I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.
4. I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.
5. This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.

#### *Role Model Credibility (Mastery & Growth)*

1. Accomplished
2. Expert
3. Experienced
4. Knowledgeable
5. Qualified
6. Skilled
7. Successful
8. Capable
9. Sets an example
10. Sincere
11. Honest

#### *Impression of Role Model*

1. I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.
2. I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.
3. This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.
4. I look towards this media figure for inspiration.
5. I find this media figure to be inspiring.
6. This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.
7. This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.
8. This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.
9. Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.
10. Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.
11. This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.
12. This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.
13. Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.
14. Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.
15. Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.
16. This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.

## Appendix E Study 2 Survey

### Demographics

What is your age? (text entry)

Please indicate the gender you identify with: (text entry)

Please indicate your race/ethnicity: (select all that applies)

- Caucasian / Middle Eastern
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American/American Indian
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Other \_\_\_\_ (open answer)

### Survey Items:

#### Familiarity, Instructions:

Continuing to think about XXX<sup>11</sup> please answer how well you agree with the following statements.

1. I feel familiar with this media figure.
2. This media figure feels like an acquaintance.
3. I feel I know a good bit about this media figure.
4. I feel like I know what it would be like to meet this media figure.
5. I feel like I know this media figure's personality.

#### Consumption, Instructions:

How many hours of media about XXX do you think you consumed in the past month?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-3 hours
- 3-5 hours
- 5-7 hours
- 7-9 hours
- +9 hours

#### Wishful Identification (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005) Scale, Instructions:

I want you to think of XXX when reading the following statements. Answer to the best of your ability how well they describe XXX on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Somewhat Disagree), 4 (Unsure/Neutral), 5 (Somewhat Agree), 6 (Agree) through 7 (Strongly Agree)

1. I'd like to do the kinds of things this media figure does on the show.
2. This media figure is the sort of person I want to be like myself.
3. I wish I could be more like this media figure.

#### Perceived Role Model Impact Scale, Instructions:

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<sup>11</sup> The "XXX" found within survey instructions are substitutes for Qualtrics embedding. Participants were instructed to type a name in a textbox identifying their role model, liked media figure, and disliked. I then used Qualtrics's unique embedding code to have the answer that were typed into the textbox to appear where each of the "XXX" is located. This often appears as "\$ {q://QID#/ChoiceTextEntryValue}"

I want you to think of XXX when reading the following statements. Answer to the best of your ability how well they describe XXX on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) through 7 (Strongly Agree)

*Value System of Role Model*

1. I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.
2. I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.
3. I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.
4. I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.
5. This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.

*Role Model Credibility (Mastery & Growth)*

1. Accomplished
2. Expert
3. Experienced
4. Knowledgeable
5. Qualified
6. Skilled
7. Successful
8. Capable
9. Sets an example
10. Sincere
11. Honest

*Impression of Role Model*

1. I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.
2. I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.
3. This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.
4. I look towards this media figure for inspiration.
5. I find this media figure to be inspiring.
6. This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.
7. This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.
8. This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.
9. Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.
10. Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.
11. This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.
12. This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.
13. Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.
14. Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.
15. Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.
16. This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.

## **Appendix F**

### **Alternative Conceptualizations of Values**

Participants answered the short-values scale regarding their own values and then three more times for their perceived values of each media figure they named. The authors computed a new variable calculating the difference between the participant's values and that of each media figure and conducted repeated measures ANOVA tests on each value: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security.

Another principle axis factor analysis was conducted from the Role Model condition on the 32 items role model scale with oblique rotation (Promax), including Schwartz's (2005) 10-item short-value scale. An analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor in the data. Eight factors had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and explained 64.97% of the variance in combination. However, factors 4-8 all had eigenvalues 1.06 or lower, barely achieved Kaiser's criterion of 1 were all items from the short-value scale. The scree plot showed inflections that would justify retaining three factors after rotation. The items that cluster on the same factor suggest that factor 1 represents impression, 2 represents credibility, and 3 represents value system. Impression item 5 item was loaded weakly on factors 3 (0.35) & 8 (0.34). Based on the exploratory factor analysis, it was determined that Schwartz's (2005) short value scale would not be a suitable alternative to measuring the subscale of perceived values for the Role Model scale.

## Appendix G

### EFA Results of Impression

An EFA analysis *impression* indicated there are 2 factors with eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and in combination explained 65.33% of the variance. However, the second factor's eigenvalue of 1.07 barely achieved Kaiser's criterion of 1. Additionally, the scree plot showed inflexions that would justify retaining 1 factor after rotation. As a result, it was determined that the *impression* subscale is best fit as a single item scale. See Table 17 below.

*Table 18: EFAs for Role Model Impression subscale*

Item Wording	Item	Factor Loading	
		1	2
I find this media figure to be inspiring.	5	<b>0.906</b>	
This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.	12	<b>0.835</b>	
Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.	10	<b>0.775</b>	
Seeing this media figure accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.	9	<b>0.771</b>	
This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.	8	<b>0.704</b>	
This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.	7	<b>0.638</b>	
This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.	11	<b>0.605</b>	
Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.	15	<b>0.575</b>	0.311
I look towards this media figure for inspiration.	4	0.487	
This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.	16		<b>0.882</b>
This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.	3		<b>0.842</b>
This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.	6		<b>0.813</b>
I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.	2		<b>0.701</b>
Seeing this media figure's struggles helps me deal with my flaws.	14		<b>0.701</b>
I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.	1		<b>0.552</b>
Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.	13	0.345	0.465

Note: The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (Promax with Kaiser Normalization) rotation.

## Appendix H Study 3 Survey

*Participants view Consent Form then continue to the rest of the survey.*

***Please complete the following demographic questions:***

*Demographics*

What is your age? (text entry)

Please indicate the gender you identify with (text entry)

Please indicate your race/ethnicity: (select all that applies)

Caucasian / Middle Eastern

Black/African American

Hispanic/Latino

Native American/American Indian

Asian/Pacific Islander

Other \_\_\_\_ (open answer)

*Survey Design:*

Participants will be randomly assigned to one of two conditions. The participants will be asked to think of a different celebrity or public figure, the following prompts represent one of

Condition 1: Before you get started, I want you to think of a celebrity or public figure who you consider to be a role model.

Condition 2: Before you get started, I want you to think of a celebrity or public figure who you like a lot but *do not consider* a role model.

The following questions are going to ask you about your feelings and attitudes towards this celebrity or public figure.

Please do not include media figures who are fictional characters or cartoons.

*Survey Items (to be repeated in all three conditions, one for each type of media figure outline in the study design):*

Wishful Identification Scale, Instructions:

I want you to think of person XXX when reading the following statements. Answer to the best of your ability how well they describe person XXX on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Somewhat Disagree), 4 (Unsure/Neutral), 5 (Somewhat Agree), 6 (Agree) through 7 (Strongly Agree)

I'd like to do the kinds of things this media figure does.

This media figure is the sort of person I want to be like myself.

Sometimes I wish I could be more like this media figure.

This media figure is someone I would like to emulate.

\*I would never want to act the way this media figure does in the media.

Parasocial Relationship (Tukachinsky, 2010)

Instructions: Which XXX character do you relate to the most? (Open text).

I want you to think of XXX when reading the following statements. Answer to the best of your ability how much you agree with the following statements on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Somewhat Disagree), 4 (Unsure/Neutral), 5 (Somewhat Agree), 6 (Agree) through 7 (Strongly Agree).

**PSF communication**

If this media figure was a real person, I could have disclosed negative things about myself honestly and fully (deeply) to them.

If this media figure was a real person, I could have disclosed a great deal of things about myself to them.

Sometimes, I wish I knew what this media figure would do in my situation.

If this media figure was a real person, I could have disclosed positive things about myself honestly and fully (deeply) to them.

Sometimes I wish I could ask this media figure for advice.

I think this media figure could be a friend of mine.

**Love Physical**

I find this media figure very attractive physically.

I think this media figure is quite handsome/pretty.

This media figure is very sexy looking.

This media figure fits my ideal standards of physical beauty/handsomeness.

**Love emotional**

I want this media figure physically, emotionally, and mentally.

For me, this media figure could be the perfect romantic partner.

Sometimes I think that this media figure and I are just meant for each other.

I wish this media figure could know my thoughts, my fears, and my hopes.

This media figure influences my mood.

I adore this media figure.

I idealize this media figure.

**Friendship support**

If this media figure was a real person I would in times of need.

If this media figure was a real person I would give them emotional support.

If this media figure was a real person, they would be able to count on in times of need.

If this media figure was a real person I would want to share my possessions with them.

If this media figure was a real person I could trust them completely.

If this media figure was a real person I could have a warm relationship with them.

I want to promote the well-being of this media figure.

**Perceived Role Model Impact Scale, Instructions:**

I want you to think of person XXX when reading the following statements. Answer to the best of your ability how well they describe person XXX on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Somewhat Disagree), 4 (Unsure/Neutral), 5 (Somewhat Agree), 6 (Agree) through 7 (Strongly Agree)

***Value System***

I appreciate certain values that this media figure encompasses.

I see characteristic traits in this media figure that I value.

I appreciate that this media figure has principles relevant to mine.

I admire that this media figure stands up for their principles.

This media figure has values I strive to have in my own life.

***Credibility/Qualifications (Mastery & Growth)***

Accomplished  
 Expert  
 Experienced  
 Knowledgeable  
 Qualified  
 Skilled  
 Successful  
 Capable  
 Sets an Example  
 Sincere  
 Honest

*Inspiration/Modified Emulation*

I feel this media figure is an important guide for me to explore my domain of interest.  
 I think of this media figure as a guide on how to achieve my goals.  
 This media figure is someone I can look to for validation.  
 I look towards this media figure for inspiration.  
 This media figure inspires me to follow their footsteps.  
 This media figure's actions encouraged me to follow through with certain goals in my own life.  
 This media figure showed me it was possible to achieve certain goals in my own life.  
 Seeing this media figure's accomplishments gave me the confidence to pursue my own goals.  
 Seeing this media figure achieve their goals makes me feel I am capable of achieving my goals.  
 This media figure makes the path(s) I want to take seem more achievable.  
 This media figure shows me that I am capable of achieving certain goals.  
 Seeing this media figure deal with struggles helps me deal with my struggles.  
 Seeing this media figure's flaws helps me deal with my flaws.  
 Seeing this media figure's success helps me be who I want to be.  
 This media figure has successfully taken the same path(s) I want to take.

Role Model Scale (Rich 1997)

I want you to think of person XXX when reading the following statements. Answer to the best of your ability how well they describe person XXX on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Somewhat Disagree), 4 (Unsure/Neutral), 5 (Somewhat Agree), 6 (Agree) through 7 (Strongly Agree)

*Role modeling*

This media figure provides a good model for me to follow.  
 This media figure leads by example.  
 This media figure sets a positive example for others to follow.  
 This media figure exhibits the kind of attitude and behavior that I try to imitate.  
 This media figure acts as a role model for me.

Attitude Homophily Scale (McCroskey et al., 2006)

I want you to think of person XXX when reading the following statements. Answer to the best of your ability how well they describe person XXX on a scale of 1 (Strongly



Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Somewhat Disagree), 4 (Unsure/Neutral), 5 (Somewhat Agree), 6 (Agree) through 7 (Strongly Agree)

This media figure thinks like me.

\* This media figure doesn't behave like me.

\* This media figure is different from me.

This media figure shares my values.

This media figure is like me.

This media figure treats people like I do.

\* This media figure doesn't think like me.

This media figure is similar to me.

\* This media figure doesn't share my values.

This media figure behaves like me.

\* This media figure is unlike me.

\* This media figure doesn't treat people like I do.

This media figure has thoughts and ideas that are similar to mine.

\* This media figure expresses attitudes different from mine.

This media figure has a lot in common with me.

VITA

**SARA ERLICHMAN**

**EDUCATION**

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**The Pennsylvania State University**

Ph.D. of Mass Communication, May 2022

**University of Kansas**

Master of Journalism and Media Studies, May 2016

**Virginia Wesleyan University**

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Minor in Psychology

**PUBLICATIONS**

---

*Academic Journals*

**Erlichman, S., & Pluretti, R.,** (2021). A Presidential Bromance: How meme culture upsets race, gender, and political power dynamics. Accepted with *Journal of Communication Inquiry*.

Harrison, V., & **Erlichman, S.,** (2022, Spring publication). NFL Player Protests, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Diversion in Sports Crisis. *Journal of Sports Media*

**Erlichman, S., & Harrison, V.,** (2019, December 19). Coping with Tragedy via Reflected Glory: How the Houston Astros' World Series win contributed to locals overcoming Hurricane Harvey. *Communication and Sport*.

Myrick, J. G., & **Erlichman, S.** (2019, January 28). How Audience Involvement and Social Norms Foster Vulnerability to Celebrity-Based Dietary Misinformation. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*. Advance online publication.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000229>

**COMPETITIVE CONFERENCE PAPERS & PANELS**

---

**Erlichman, S.,** Oliver, M. B., Tan, R., Reed, O., Ford, S., & Chen, C., *Ambiguous Movie Endings: Effects of perceived complexity and affective responses on long-term engagement*. Mass Communication Division for the National Communication Association in Baltimore, MD, (2019, November).

**Erlichman, S.,** Reed, O., Tan, R., Chen, C., Ford, S., & Oliver, M. B., *Talking about Inception: How unresolved movie endings impact audiences' responses to film*. Information Systems Division for the International Communication Association in Washington, D. C., (2019, May).

Harrison, V. S. & **Erlichman, S.,** *The NFL, CSR, and Fan Relationship Building: Examining the National Anthem controversy*. Public Relations Division for the International Communication Association in Washington, D. C., (2019, May).

**HONORS & AWARDS**

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**NCA:** Top Paper in the Visual Communication Division, 2019

**AEJMC:** Second place in the Student Paper Competition, 2018