



### **PB310: Independent Research Project**

**Study Title:** The effect of parasocial relationships and degrees of investment in celebrities on likelihood to “cancel” when faced with transgressions.

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**Key Words:** parasocial relationships, cancel culture, celebrity transgressions, fan investment, human brands

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## **Abstract**

This study used a mixed-methods approach to examine the role of parasocial relationships and degree of investment in a celebrity on individuals' willingness to cancel the celebrity when faced with examples of transgressions. Degree of investment in the celebrity was proposed to explain (mediate) the relationship between parasociality and willingness to cancel. In addition, the type of transgression presented (moral valenced vs personal misbehaviour) was proposed to moderate the relationship. Grounded in parasocial interaction theory, a regression analysis found a significant negative relationship between degree of parasociality and willingness to cancel, indicating that individuals with higher parasociality exhibit lower willingness to cancel a celebrity when faced with news of a transgression. A mediation analysis found that the degree of investment in the celebrity did not significantly mediate the relationship, as there was no conditional indirect effect. However, the relationship between parasociality and willingness to cancel was moderated by the type of transgression presented (moral valenced vs personal misbehaviour); with individuals with higher parasociality being less likely to cancel the celebrity for moral transgressions as compared to personal misbehaviours. Additionally, sentiment analysis found that the moral transgression condition observed more positive sentiment in responses as compared to the personal misbehaviour condition. Commonly observed quotes in the qualitative responses are also reported on in the study. The implications of these findings for understanding the extent of parasocial relationships in different contexts are discussed, and suggestions for future research are presented.

## **Introduction**

### **Parasocial Relationships:**

Parasocial relationships (PSR) refer to non-reciprocal socio-emotional connections with celebrities arising from repeated exposure to media content (Hoffner & Bond, 2022). Individuals tend to feel a sense of familiarity with the celebrity fostering a belief in their ability to make accurate attributions about the celebrity's behaviour (Moraes, 2019). Research indicates that they mirror offline social relationships in their development, maintenance and function despite the individual's perceived intimacy not being reciprocated (Tukachinsky, 2019).

Social media and digital platforms have accelerated the effect of PSRs through the frequency and perceived authenticity of media figures' self-disclosures (Konijn, 2017). Although these interactions lack the reciprocity of attachment and closeness from the media figure, these connections can feel as genuine and compelling to the fans as in-person interactions that include aspects of friendship and understanding (Chung & Cho, 2017). Additionally, momentary episodes of virtual interpersonal engagement (media figure retweeting or liking fan comments) have shown to have a strengthening effect on parasocial relationships (Bond, 2016).

Despite celebrities having little to no influence over how their actions and images are portrayed in traditional media, social media platforms have provided them with the autonomy over the persona they deliver to the public (O'Neill, 2015). PSRs are strengthened by the frequency of celebrity appearances as consistent exposure is crucial towards developing intimacy. Therefore, consumers look for repeated exposure to a celebrity – often through “ritualistic viewing” of their content or abundant expenditure on their products to further develop their loyalty and increase levels of intimacy (Ballantine, 2014).

## **Degree of Investment**

The performative intimacy projected by parasocial relationships often informs branding and marketing opportunities. Brands and individuals themselves capitalise on social influence, for instance and fanbase, for instance through brand endorsements, television advertisements and merchandising. As identification with celebrities through parasocial relationships have proven positive effects on purchase decision and materialism (Wahab, 2019), a celebrity can thus be viewed as a “human brand” whose fans seek out transmedia products, performances, and endorsements associated with the celebrity, but also engage in meaning-making through social construction and interaction in a way that resembles the cult appeal of branded content (Kerrigan et al, 2011). This creation of a “human brand”, therefore, transfers the positive feelings associated with the celebrity towards purchasing material objects such as merchandise, concert or film tickets or any associated content as a means to reaffirm their PSR with the celebrity.

PSRs can also expand social networks and offer companionship, especially in cases of social deficit such as during the COVID-19 pandemic (Jarzyna, 2020). The formation of online fan groups and communities leads to a sense shared social identity, exhibiting increased levels of happiness, self-esteem and social connectedness (Laffan, 2020) among fans. They identify as part of a group that shares goals, values, and feelings, organised and articulated around the celebrity (Duffett 2015; Marshall & Redmond 2016). Through re-affirming beliefs with other fans, individuals develop greater fandom identity salience, solidifying their PSR (Reysen, 2015).

As such, PSRs are also strengthened by fans spending longer hours interacting with celebrities online (Tao, 2019) and engaging in celebrity news (Claessens, 2015). Additionally, longer-term attachments to a celebrity contribute to having a stronger PSR and a higher

willingness to invest in their “human brand” (Trivedi & Sama, 2020) along with a greater willingness to forgive them for brand transgressions (Finsterwalder et al., 2017).

### **Celebrity Transgressions and Cancel Culture:**

This rapid growth in online celebrities, however, has also given rise to “cancel culture” – the ability to try to erase someone from public discourse – either through publicly shaming or de-platforming (Shimul, 2022). Celebrity transgressions have been shown to negatively impact consumer’s attitudes and behavioural intentions toward the celebrity (Kulczynski, 2018) causing them to engage in “cancelling”. Research has also coined a term to capture fans’ experiences of mourning the dissolution of a relationship with an idolized figure they have no proximate or reciprocal interactions with - para-loveshock (Jones, 2022).

However, responses to transgressions vary significantly depending on the moral reasoning process observed by the fans, the image of the celebrity and their ability to establish strong parasocial relationships (Hautala, 2019). Additionally, the margin of transgression which is afforded to individual celebrities may be influenced by other factors such as gender, class and economic status (Gies, 2011). Attribution theory finds that when people witness unwanted behaviours from their favourite celebrity, they can engage in moral decoupling, wherein individuals detach the celebrity’s performance from acts of wrongdoing, so that they can morally denounce transgressive acts while continuing to personally celebrate the celebrity’s professional performance (Bhattacharjee, 2020). This is exacerbated in cases of high parasociality, as fans may engage in a defensive information-processing manner, which is biased toward their desired conclusion (Schmalz and Orth, 2017), diverting transgression attribution to other factors, and thereby rendering attachment to be minimally affected.

### **Gap in the Literature:**

Past research in this area has mainly focused on understanding how celebrity endorsements can be used effectively in marketing strategies by transferring the consumer-

celebrity relationship to an endorsed brand, resulting in increased purchasing intentions. In transgression research, studies have solely examined how celebrities can act as shields to protect brands who have been involved in a transgression by exercising their parasocial relationship with the consumer (Aw, 2023). These show that brand endorsers can bolster forgiveness and trust when the consumers have parasocial relationships with the endorsers. However, there is less research considering the implications of this “blind following” on celebrity ownership in a non-marketing context and the condonement of actions of the celebrity when faced with news of a transgression. Similarly, there is scarce research in the role of previous investment in the celebrity in acting as buffer between cancelling a celebrity and a parasocial relationship.

The importance of addressing this topic is twofold. Firstly, the rapid increase of “cult followings” and obsessive fanbases with the growth in consumption of digital media makes it important to understand the foundations of PSRs and the moral reasoning of fans while viewing content contradictory to their beliefs (Gies, 2011). Additionally, since PSRs are synonymous to real-life friendships, a violation of this bond could also adversely impact mental health among fans, invoking feelings of grief, betrayal, and distress (Hoffner, 2022).

### **The Current Study**

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by considering the role of investment (social, time and monetary) in the relationship between parasociality and willingness to cancel a celebrity; also including an additional consideration of the type of transgression presented.

The choice of Taylor Swift as the celebrity for this study stems from her global recognition for having a strong connection with her fans, known as “swifties”. The interactive nature of this fan-celebrity relationship through hidden clues within song lyrics, easter eggs or social media comments coupled with the fortified cult-like identity of the loyal fans makes this group a key example of a strong parasocial relationship.

As such, it seems apparent that there is merit in specifically investigating the role of existing investment in the interaction between parasociality and celebrity transgressions, and a strong fan following like that of Taylor Swift seems to be a promising blueprint for a parasocial relationship. With regards to the ideal demographic for investigating the formation of parasocial relationships, Lotun's (2024) paper on the development of parasociality suggests that these bonds are most salient in emerging adulthood (18-25 years old).

Furthermore, this study is seemingly well positioned to narrow the literature gap that is currently present in parasocial interaction research. For example, (Finsterwalder et al., 2017) explicitly mentions the need to further investigate whether the type of transgression presented influences individuals' decisions on continued support for the celebrity, even bringing up the role of the media source as a key area to explore. Additionally, (Chung & Cho, 2017) specify that future research should investigate a range of scenarios for forgiveness while considering celebrity transgressions, which this study aims to do, adopting a relatively unexamined analysis design.

In this way, this study attempts to provide a first step towards further unpacking the role of parasocial relationships, the additional monetary, social and economic investment made in the celebrity brand due to these parasocial identities, and how these impact their willingness to cancel the celebrity when faced with news of a (personal misbehaviour or morally valenced) transgression.

### **Research Questions:**

RQ1: Do participants with stronger parasocial relationships with Taylor Swift display a lower likelihood to cancel her when confronted with transgressions?

RQ2: Is the relationship between degree of parasocial relationship and willingness to cancel mediated by degree of investment?



RQ3: Is the relationship between degree of parasocial relationship and willingness to cancel moderated by the type of transgression presented (morally valenced vs personal misbehaviour)?

### **Research Hypotheses:**

**Null Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>0</sub>):** There will be no significant difference in individuals' willingness to cancel regardless of their degree of parasociality.

**Alternative Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>):** Individuals with higher parasociality with Taylor Swift will exhibit a lower willingness to cancel her when faced with examples of transgressions.

**Null Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>0</sub>):** The relationship between degree of parasociality and willingness to cancel is unaffected by degree of investment

**Alternative Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>1</sub>):** The relationship between degree of parasociality and willingness to cancel is mediated by degree of investment

**Null Hypothesis 3 (H<sub>0</sub>):** The relationship between degree of parasociality and willingness to cancel is unaffected by the type of transgression presented

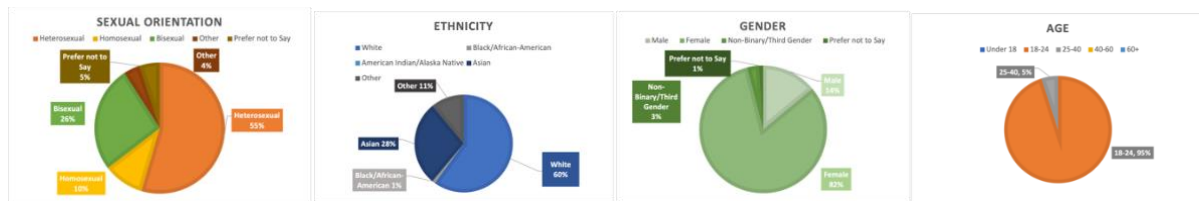
**Alternative Hypothesis 3 (H<sub>1</sub>):** The relationship between degree of parasociality and willingness to cancel is moderated by the type of transgression presented.

## **Methodology**

### **Power Analysis:**

A priori power analysis was conducted using the pwr package (Champely et al, 2020) to determine the required sample size for the study. This determined that in order to achieve the desired power level of 0.80 at a significance level of 0.05 with the specified effect size of 0.2 for correlation as illustrated by similar studies in this domain, the study required a sample size of 122 participants. This was achieved and surpassed by a final sample of 545 participants, indicating that the study was sufficiently powered. These results can be found in the power\_analysis notebook in the Research Compendium.

## Sample:



**Figure 1.** *Demographics of the Sample*

A total of 545 participants were recruited via Taylor Swift Society online group chats across UK universities with an invitation to participate in the online experiment. After removing 208 participants listwise for not completing all the assigned measures, the final sample consisted of 337 participants who were primarily female (82%). Around two thirds were White (60%) and 28% were Asian. The sample was also predominantly heterosexual (55%), followed by 26% bisexual and 10% homosexual participants. A detailed breakdown can be seen in Fig 1.

## Materials:

In order to collect the data needed for analysis, this study adapted and combined a number of established measures to create and distribute a survey. Qualtrics was used to randomly allocate participants equally between the two conditions.

The survey collected quantitative data using 5-point Likert Scales ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree') for all the questions of each of the four variables of the study (Independent Variable (IV), Mediator, Moderator, Dependent Variable (DV)). Qualitative data was collected through an optional open-ended question at the end of the survey asking for a justification for previous quantitative responses. The four measures used in the survey either all use, or minimally adapt, established pre-existing measures, and are edited to target opinions about Taylor Swift specifically:

### ***1. Independent Variable - Parasocial Relationships (See Appendix A):***

Nine items were used to assess three constructs of parasocial relationships: namely friendship, understanding and identification. These items were adapted from a variety of scales developed by Chung and Cho (2017), Tal-Or & Cohen (2010) and Rubin & Perse (1987). These scales had high Cronbach's alpha values of 0.91, 0.83 and 0.76 respectively indicating high reliability.

### ***2. Mediator Variable - Degree of Investment (See Appendix B):***

Nine items were used to gauge degree of investment in Taylor Swift. These items were created on the theoretical conceptualisation of parasocial relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956) and assessed three subfactors— monetary investments (expenditure on concert tickets, merchandise), time investments (time spent being a fan, frequency of listening) and social investments (part of fan groups, chat groups).

### ***3. Moderator Variable - Type of Transgression (Morally Valenced vs Personal Misbehaviour)***

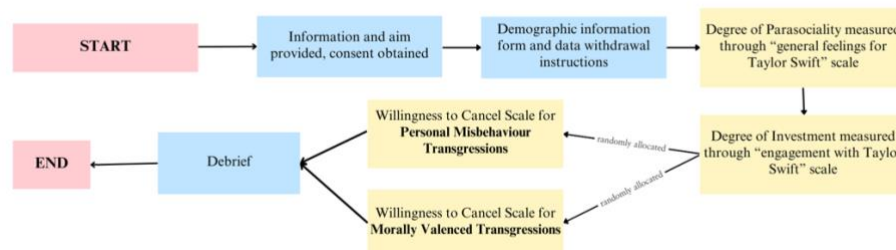
A key research question for this study supported by literature posits that the type of transgression (personal vs morally valenced) may impact fan attitudes toward a transgression (Summers and Johnson, 2008). Therefore, there was an even distribution of three transgression scenarios for each condition and participants were equally randomly allocated to one of the two conditions. These transgressions were created based on other celebrity news scandals and online fan discussion forums.

### ***4. Dependent Variable - Willingness to Cancel (See Appendix C and D)***

This scale was adapted from the forgiveness scales used by (Fedorikhin, Park, and Thomson (2008) and Bhattacharjee (2013) which have Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.93 and 0.95. This study, however reverse scored the questions as compared to the original scale, as it aimed to measure willingness to cancel (rather than forgiveness that is measured in the original

scale) when faced with transgressions (particularly continued monetary support, loyalty and interest).

## Procedure



**Figure 2.** *Experimental Procedure Flowchart*

Given the online nature of the study, the study's procedure was carried out virtually through the digital survey sent to participants. First, participants were provided with the participant information sheet and the informed consent form for the study (ethics folder of compendium). The study began once participants granted their consent for data collection and analysis. Initially, they were asked to enter their unique, anonymised ID based on provided criteria to allow for potential data withdrawal, if desired. Participants also answered demographic questions on their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and profession. Each subsequent question assessing parasociality, investment and willingness to cancel was measured on a 5-Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) as part of the four key measures of the study.

Participants were then presented with the first measure of the study, investigating the independent variable of the study (parasociality). To avoid response bias, participants were asked nine questions regarding their "general feelings" about Taylor Swift to gain authentic responses surrounding their tendency to view the celebrity as a friend and understand her motivations. Once completed, participants were presented with the measure for the mediated variable: degree of investment which was presented as their "engagement" with Taylor Swift.

This included nine questions regarding their monetary investments (expenditure on concert tickets, merchandise), time investments (time spent being a fan, frequency of listening) and social investments (part of fan and chat groups). Then, participants were randomly allocated to one of two conditions – morally valenced transgressions (MVT) or personal misbehaviour transgressions (PMT), measuring the moderated variable.

The group allocated to the MVT viewed three examples of Taylor Swift engaging in actions that affected her outward moral judgement and had broader societal implications while the group allocated to PMT were subjected to three examples of Taylor Swift committing a misbehaviour that solely affected herself and was questionable to her character and public persona. Following the presentation of each transgression in both conditions, participants were asked to respond to a series of five questions designed to gauge their continued support for Taylor Swift, ranging from purchasing merchandise to publicly defending her actions. Participants indicated their willingness to continue supporting her in each of these ways using a 5-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicated greater willingness to provide support. Finally, participants were presented with an optional open-ended question asking for a justification for their previous answers. After this, participants were thanked for their participation and provided with a debrief sheet outlining the aims and intentions of the study and provided with the researcher's details for further queries and the opportunity to withdraw from the study and eliminate their data from further analysis.

The order of the four measures was intentionally structured to limit potential order effects such that being exposed to examples of transgressions would not uncharacteristically influence participants' responses to their parasociality scores (IV) or their degree of investment (Mediator).

### **Ethical Considerations:**

Ethics approval was granted by the LSE Research Ethics Committee. The study posed no significant risks over and above those experienced in everyday encounters.

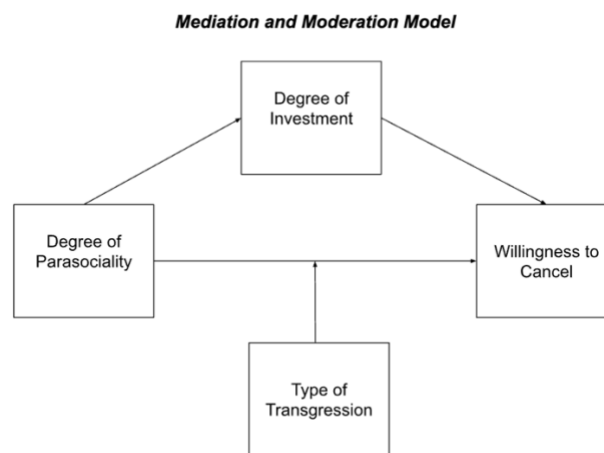
### **Analysis Plan:**

#### *Measures of Parasociality, Degree of investment and Willingness to Cancel:*

To calculate each participants' degree of parasociality, degree of investment and willingness to cancel, their individual responses to the questions from the respective scales were summed and averaged separately. To measure participants' willingness to cancel, the scores were summed and averaged for participants in each condition and then collated.

#### *Confirmatory Analysis:*

A mediation and moderation analysis were carried out to test the hypotheses of this study. Degree of investment was analysed as the mediator variable, whereas the type of transgression presented was the moderator variable, as shown in Figure 3 below:



**Figure 3:** *Hypothesised mediation and moderation model for the relationship between degree of parasociality, willingness to cancel, degree of investment and type of transgression*

With regards to the first hypothesis, the background literature seems to indicate that parasocial relationships bolster trust and forgiveness through self-congruity (Aw, 2023); and relatedly buffer the negative impacts of celebrity transgressions (Bond, 2016). As such, a simple regression analysis was carried out to measure the direct impact of parasociality on participants' willingness to cancel.

A mediation variable (degree of investment) attempts to explain the underlying relationship between the independent and dependent variables. For our model, we can see this illustrated through the following example: a Taylor Swift fan exhibits high levels of parasociality, which could mean that they express this identity by exhibiting a lower willingness to cancel. However, when this is coupled with the fan being heavily invested in Taylor Swift (for e.g., through buying merchandise, being on fan groups, holding concert tickets), the individual might have an even greater motivation to continue supporting her, regardless of potential misbehaviours.

As such, higher degrees of investment in a celebrity could strengthen the effect of parasocial relationships on willingness to cancel. However, individuals exhibit varying degrees of support depending on the type of transgression they are exposed to (Gies, 2011). Therefore, a moderation analysis was carried out to identify whether differences in types of transgression affected high parasocial individuals' willingness to cancel. The Johnson Neyman technique (Johnson and Fay, 1950) was then employed to further probe the nature of the moderation.

Additionally, a sentiment analysis was carried out on the qualitative responses through ranking each response numerically on a sentiment scale and calculating average related sentiments to understand participant justifications for their responses. Common quotes arising in these responses were also identified. Using both a mediation and moderation analysis allowed us to gain a comprehensive understanding of what processes and under what conditions the variable achieve significant effects (Musairah, 2015).

## Results

### Preliminary Analysis:

After removing 208 of incomplete responses listwise, descriptive statistics were calculated for all the relevant variables to screen for missing or erroneous values, of which none were found ( $n = 337$ , see Appendix E). This included the independent variable; parasociality ( $M=3.56$ ,  $SD=0.81$ ), the mediator variable; investment ( $M=3.77$ ,  $SD=0.94$ ) and the dependent variable; willingness to cancel ( $M=3.10$ ,  $SD=0.86$ ).

To conduct diagnostics and test linear model assumptions, the performance package in R (Lüdtke et al., 2021) was used. Preliminary analysis indicated adequate fit and suggested normality of residuals, and homogeneity of variance for the hypothesised mediation and moderation models to the observed data (TLI and CFI  $> .90$ , RMSEA and SRMR  $< .10$ ).

### Primary Analysis:

To initially understand the extent to which the variables covary, a Pearson's  $r$  (1895) correlation matrix was calculated (Appendix F). A large correlation positive correlation was found between degree of parasociality and degree of investment ( $r=.77$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Results indicated willingness to cancel was significantly negatively correlated with degree of parasociality ( $r= -0.48$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and degree of investment ( $r=-0.43$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

### **Hypothesis 1: Individuals with high levels of parasociality will showcase a low willingness to cancel when faced with news of a transgression**

Degree of parasociality and willingness to cancel were found to be significantly negatively correlated. A simple linear regression was conducted with willingness to cancel as the continuous outcome and degree of parasociality as the predictor. The analysis confirmed that there is a significant negative relationship between degree of parasociality and willingness to cancel ( $\beta = -.51$ ,  $t(337) = -9.9$ ,  $p = <0.001$ ). Thus, the  $H_1$  that fans showcasing higher



parasociality with Taylor Swift are less likely to cancel her when faced with news of a transgression is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Variable	$\beta$	SE	t	p
Intercept	4.90	0.19	26.28	<0.001
Parasociality	-0.51	0.05	-9.92	<0.001

**Table 1.** *Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Willingness to Cancel based on Degree of Parasociality*

**Hypothesis 2: The relationship between parasociality and willingness to cancel will be mediated by degree of investment**

To evaluate this hypothesis, a mediation analysis was carried out with parasociality as the independent variable, willingness to cancel as the dependent variable and investment as the mediator. Results indicated that the path from degree of parasociality to investment does not significantly contribute to a lower willingness to cancel, as demonstrated by the insignificant indirect effect (ACME = -0.12, 95% CI [-0.24, 0.02],  $p=0.06$ ) as the confidence intervals included 0 and the p-value is greater than 0.05. The direct effect of parasociality on willingness to cancel is significant, without considering the mediating role of investment (ADE= -0.39, 95% CI [-0.57, -0.22],  $p<0.01$ ). Additionally, the total combined effect of ACME and ADE is significant and negative (E=-0.51, 95% CI [-0.61, -0.41],  $p<0.01$ ). Therefore, we must accept the null hypothesis, and can conclude that the relationship between parasociality and willingness to cancel is not mediated by the degree of investment in the celebrity.

	Estimate	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p- value
ACME (Path ab)	-0.12	-0.24	0.02	0.06
ADE (Path c)	-0.39	-0.57	- 0.22	<0.01***
Total Effect	-0.51	-0.61	-0.41	<0.01***

Proportion Mediated	0.24	-0.03	0.50	0.06
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**Table 2:** *Mediation Effects of Degree of Investment on the Relationship Between Degree of Parasociality and Willingness to Cancel*

Note: ACME = Average Causal Mediation Effect; ADE = Average Direct Effect; CI = Confidence Interval. The ACME represents the indirect effect of minority status on IP through racial discrimination. The ADE represents the direct effect of minority status on IP not through racial discrimination. The total effect is the combined direct and indirect effects of minority status on IP.

**Hypothesis 3: The relationship between parasociality and willingness to cancel will be moderated by the type of transgression presented (MVT vs PMT)**

To evaluate this hypothesis, a moderation model was specified with parasociality as the independent variable, willingness to cancel as the dependent variable and the type of transgression present as the moderator variable. The type of transgression was constructed as a binary variable with PMTs being coded as 0 and MVTs being coded as 1. The direct effect of the type of transgression was not significant ( $\beta = 0.49$ ,  $t = 1.33$ , 95% CI [-0.21, 1.20],  $p = 0.18$ ) as the confidence intervals included 0 and the p-value is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the type of transgression (MVT or PMT) on its own does not have any effect on willingness to cancel. However, the interaction term between parasociality and type of transgression indicates a negative significant effect ( $\beta = -0.22$ ,  $t = -2.18$ , 95% CI [-0.42, -0.02],  $p = 0.03$ ). Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the relationship between parasocial relationships and willingness to cancel is moderated by the type of transgression presented. Nevertheless, while the significant interaction term indicates the presence of a moderation effect, it does not tell us anything about the nature of the moderation (i.e., which levels of the moderator have a significant conditional direct effect on the relationship).

	Label	Model Estimates		t	p	SE
		Estimate	95% CI [LL, UL]			
Intercept		4.67	[ 4.09, 5.24]	17.1	<0.01	0.27
Parasociality	a	-0.40**	[-0.56, -0.25]	-5.45	<0.01	0.07
		0.49	[-0.21, 1.20]	1.33	0.18	0.37

Type of Transgression	b	-0.22*	[-0.42, -0.02]	-2.18	0.03	0.10
Indirect effect (a*b)	ab					

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**Table 3.** *Moderation Effects of Type of Transgression on the Relationship between Degree of Parasociality and Willingness to Cancel*

The Johnson-Neyman technique was employed to examine the significance regions of the conditional direct effect across the range of values of the moderator (Appendix G). However, since the moderator is a binary variable, the plot revealed no regions of significance between the values of 0 and 1; indicating that there is significant difference at both levels of the moderator (PMT and MVT). The negative interaction term ( $\beta = -0.22$ ) suggests that as we move from personal misbehaviours (0) to moral transgressions (1), the negative effect of parasociality on willingness to cancel becomes stronger. Therefore, individuals with higher parasociality are less likely to cancel the celebrity for moral transgressions as compared to personal misbehaviours.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

The open-ended question “Thinking about your answers to the previous questions, could you tell us the main reason for your responses?” was analysed using sentiment analysis to identify common themes. There were 94 responses in the PMT condition as compared to 83 responses in the MVT condition. These responses were coded based on their sentiment on a scale of 1 (Extremely Negative Sentiment) to 5 (Extremely Positive Sentiment). The sentiment frequency for the responses can be observed in Table 4. On average, the moral transgression condition observed more positive sentiment in responses (3.28) as compared to the personal misbehaviour condition (2.63), supporting the moderation result that individuals are less likely to cancel for MVTs as compared to PMTs. Additionally, key quotes drawn from the participant justification are include in Appendix I. These all indicate a level of attempting to differentiate between the celebrity’s work and personal behaviours, as well as argument of misinformation from the media.

Sentiment	Frequency
Extremely Negative	18
Moderately Negative	20
Neutral	27
Moderately Positive	19
Extremely Positive	10

**Personal Misbehaviours (n=94)**

Sentiment	Frequency
Extremely Negative	16
Moderately Negative	15
Neutral	20
Moderately Positive	12
Extremely Positive	20

**Moral Transgressions (n=83)**

**Table 4.** *Sentiment Frequency (personal misbehaviours vs moral transgressions)*

## Discussion

Previous research on PSRs and their effects on forgiveness of transgressions has predominantly centred around marketing efforts and using celebrities as brand endorsers (Thomas, 2016). This study went a step further by examining the role of parasocial relationships in forming “human brands” and considering the effects of varying kinds of transgressions on cancellation intentions.

Firstly, a direct relationship was established between parasociality and willingness to cancel as fans with greater parasociality exhibited a lower willingness to cancel Taylor Swift when faced with examples of transgressions. This appears to echo existing literature that claims that PSRs can foster favourable, strong, and unique connections in consumer memory, thus reinforcing brand relationship equity (Yuan, Kim, and Kim 2016). Since PSRs are also grounded in the notion of empathy (Hartmann and Goldhoorn 2011), consumers may be prone to empathize with the brand as their friend, identifying with the experience of making a mistake and the need for forgiveness, and thus are more likely to forgive the act of transgression.

Several studies have brought to light that some individuals maintain and defend their relationships with brands after news of a transgression, while others leave. Additionally, the

margin of transgression which is afforded to individual celebrities may be influenced by other factors such as gender, class and economic status (Gies, 2011). This difference can be explained through a theory that consumers' reactions toward a brand transgression are irrevocably wedded to the consumer–brand relationship (Lin and Sung, 2014; Sinha, 2017), indicating that closer consumer–brand relationships buffer negative brand information and forge a greater tolerance for transgressions. This study aimed to apply this theory to the concept of “human brands” - wherein the celebrity's human qualities transfer over to their products and endorsements, and can be appropriated by consumers, thereby facilitating consumer–brand relational ties (Dwivedi, 2015). Therefore, investment in the “Taylor Swift” brand through purchasing merchandise, streaming music and spending on concert tickets was hypothesised to strengthen the extent of the parasocial relationship, with the combined effect leading to a stronger decreased willingness to cancel her when faced with conflicting information. The results found a strong correlation (0.77) between PSRs and degree of investment as fans of Taylor Swift are also more likely to invest time, money and social capital into reinforcing and updating their PSR with her.

However, contrary to these findings, the degree of investment in the celebrity was not found to be a significant mediator of the relationships between parasociality and willingness to cancel. The high correlation between PSR (IV) and degree of investment (mediator) could lead to an issue of multicollinearity (Daoud, 2017), wherein the two variables might overlap significantly, resulting in the mediator failing to significantly impact the dependent variable (willingness to cancel), as the main effects are captured by the direct relationship. Since PSRs directly contribute to favourable dimensions of investment such as brand evaluations, positive purchase intentions, and increased word of mouth (Chung, 2017), the model might not view PSRs and degree of investment as distinct variables due to their largely associated nature, leading to an insignificant effect.

Consumer decisions to forgive or trust a transgressed brand hinges on the nature of the transgression (Fetscherin, 2021). There is scant research in this area, with the focus primarily being on the presence or absence and severity of transgressions (Khamitov, 2020). Previous studies that examined transgression types (Trump, 2014) found that the buffering effect of brand congruence only holds when the transgressions are non-self-relevant for the consumer and not ethical in nature. This study aimed to expound on this finding through investigating whether differences in the bearer of consequences faced by a transgression (celebrity in PMTs and the broader society in MVTs) affected consumer's willingness to cancel the celebrity. The first part of the analysis however, revealed that the type of transgression presented, does not predict willingness to cancel, on its own. A key consideration that could interpret the meaning of this finding is the perceived authenticity of the presented transgressions.

Since Taylor Swift is an example of a young pop star whose following consists of long-term fans with a strong perceived understanding of her intentions and morals (Zafina, 2024), the believability of the transgressions was another issue faced in this study. Through close analysing and careful decomposing of her character for several years, participants were unlikely to believe examples of behaviour that was so outlandish to her meticulously curated "good-girl" image. Effron and Monin (2010) describe this phenomenon as the "third party moral licensing effect" where past good behaviour affords someone the benefit of the doubt even when a misdeed occurs. This was also evidenced by qualitative responses that reinforced this – "I cannot imagine Taylor would engage in such behaviour" and "Taylor has never done anything like these examples". Despite the intentions to use a specific, well-known celebrity to invoke the feelings of attachment that are associated with human brands (Fong, 2012), this could have potentially compromised the ecological validity of this study. To overcome this, participants could instead be exposed to realistic AI-generated news feed or examples of past real transgressions to view more authentic responses (Finsterwalder, 2017).

The qualitative results also uncovered that within the PMT condition, participants predominantly found differing levels of severity between the transgressions, which would also translate to differences in continued support. For example, making a transphobic comment was viewed as a much more serious offense than cheating on a partner. The measure for continued support was also criticised by participants as the degree of cancellation by “continuing to buy merchandise” had different repercussions for the celebrity than “continued music streaming”, as they signal different levels of forgiveness. Although there is no clear-cut parameter that merits cancellation (Velasco, 2020), these findings could inform the creation of a gradation scale that could rank the severity of transgressions based on their cancellability, specifically in the context of public media figures. Future research could adapt these findings to understand which kinds of transgressions are considered more or less fatal to a celebrity’s public image and how this informs scope for continued support post transgression.

The key insight that the results depict is that the type of transgression (morally valenced vs personal misbehaviour) is a significant moderating factor in the relationship between parasociality and willingness to cancel. Crucially, the findings suggest that individuals with higher parasociality are less likely to cancel a celebrity for moral transgressions as compared to personal misbehaviours. The justifications for the responses in the morally valenced transgression condition also exhibited more positive sentiment than the personal misbehaviour condition. This can be explained as research surrounding moral reasoning implies that when faced with examples of their idol’s immorality, to alleviate dissonance, individuals engage in moral decoupling (Lee & Kwak, 2015), where they separate the judgments of a transgressor’s immorality and their performance or external attribution (Singh, 2020), wherein the blame of the celebrity in this context is attributed to a third party. A threat to the celebrity brand, in the form of negative celebrity actions, acts as a threat to the self (Cheng, 2012). People react to threats to the self in a way that allows them to maintain a positive self-view to reduce the

dissonance that arises when the self is in question (Steele, 1983). Thus, when a threat to the brand acts as a threat to the self, fans may alleviate the threat by buffering their evaluations of the celebrity or putting the celebrity on a pedestal.

This idea is supported by the findings as a large proportion of the qualitative responses reflected a diffusion of responsibility from the celebrity onto media channels, other celebrities, or societal pressures. Examples included *“She is also working to offset her carbon emissions; she needs to travel via private jet for safety reasons”* and *“I feel that her actions may not necessarily be her personal opinions but more of how her management decides to handle the situation.”* In comparison, personal misbehaviours are more difficult to justify as they speak to the celebrity’s character directly, however a common sentiment expressed in this condition was separating the artist’s work from their character, allowing for continued guilt-free interaction. Examples included *“I love her music and I am able to disassociate the music from the person, lots of artist and famous people do bad things.”* And *these things would make her a 'bad' person in my eyes, yet I have loved the music and lyrics for some time so maybe separate art from the artist.”*. Additionally, since the sample was predominantly white (60%) and UK-based, research has shown that individualistic cultures exhibit less moral outrage than collectivist cultures, to community transgressions, as they view the individual as a distinct unit, free from social obligation (Laham, 2010) which would justify the support for moral as compared to personal misbehaviour transgressions.

Although the sample is predominantly female, this can be attributed to females reporting higher frequency and emotional intensity of parasocial activity than males (Maltby, 2005) along with proven trends of greater same sex idolisation, thereby not significantly skewing results. Nevertheless, caution must be exercised when considering the magnitude of this study’s findings, with interpretations limited by the insignificant hypothesised effects and



the direction and interpretation of results being subjective and analysed based on previous research.

### **Avenues for Future Research:**

Future research could expand on these findings to investigate whether the intention to cancel would be further affected by the celebrity offering a justification or apology for their actions and whether this effect would be prolonged (Hu, 2019).

Moreover, although these results suggest a significant effect for the specific context of Taylor Swift fans, it is unclear whether the findings would map onto other cancellation scenarios within other domains; where-in the demographic compositions, social norms and ideologies differ, especially since parasocial relationships emerge primarily between group members with similar characteristics and backgrounds (Hoorn, 2017). This could be within the sphere of celebrity worship for example, with other pop stars or actors (Stever, 2009), organisations such as sports teams (Sun, 2010); or in areas with greater societal ramifications such as with voting intent for political figures (Cohen, 2021). Therefore, it is important to consider the generalisability of these findings across broader contexts. Despite this study looking into a relatively low stakes example of the extent of parasocial relationships, it is also important to consider how these findings may contribute to more extreme contexts, such as the formation of cult followings or extremist groups which could adversely affect societal wellbeing and cause large-scale unrest through compromising democratic processes (Ophir, 2012).

## Conclusion

With the ongoing scrutiny of celebrities in today's cancel culture, understanding how fans' identities are maintained, rejected, or altered following allegations of transgression remains a crucial area of importance for academic research. This study advances psychological research on PSRs by examining their roles in the creation and investment in "human brands" and their effect on cancellation of celebrities when faced with examples of morally valenced or personal misbehaviour transgressions, using Taylor Swift as an example. The results reveal that parasocial relationships negatively predict willingness to cancel celebrities when faced with news of transgressions, although the degree of investment in the celebrity does not significantly mediate this relationship. Notably, the research illustrated that the type of transgression—moral valence versus personal misbehaviour—plays a moderating role, with moral transgressions being less likely to lead to cancellation among those with stronger parasocial ties. Sentiment analysis also found greater positive sentiment in responses within the MVT condition as compared to the PMT condition, which can be explained through moral transgressions being rationalized or attributed to external pressures by participants. Future studies could extend the scope of this research by exploring PSRs and the forgiveness of transgressions not only with other celebrities but also within diverse areas such as politics, sports, and other public figures. Methodologically, improving the believability of transgressions and identifying more subtle ways to record participant intentions, for e.g., through implicit association tests is recommended to enhance the ecological validity and reliability of future studies. The findings of this study emphasize the need to delve into the individual cognitive processes that underpin the formation of parasocial relationships, as well as the societal influences that reinforce and propagate them.

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## **Appendix**

### **Appendix A. Degree of Parasocial Relationships Scale**

**1. Taylor Swift makes me feel comfortable, like I'm with someone I know well**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**2. If Taylor Swift appeared on a TV program, I would watch that program**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**3. I see Taylor Swift as a natural, down-to-earth person.**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**4. I would like to see Taylor Swift in person**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**5. I feel that I understand the emotions Taylor Swift experiences.**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**6. I find myself thinking about Taylor Swift on a regular basis**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**7. I sometimes feel like calling or writing to Taylor Swift**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**8. I am very much aware of the details of Taylor Swift's life**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**9. When Taylor Swift behaves in a certain way, I believe I know the reasons behind her behaviour.**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

## **Appendix B. Degree of Investment Scale**

**1. How long have you been a fan of Taylor swift music?**

[1] less than a year [2] 1-3 years [3] 3-5 years [4] 5-7 years [5] 7+ years

**2. I regularly listen to Taylor Swift's music**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**3. I actively follow Taylor Swift's updates on social media platforms (e.g., Twitter/X, Instagram).**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**4. I attend or watch Taylor Swift's concerts, interviews, or related events.**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**5. I regularly purchase Taylor Swift's merchandise (e.g. clothing, accessories).**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**6. I have spent money on concert tickets, VIP experiences, club nights or related events associated with Taylor Swift.**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**7. I financially support Taylor Swift through buying music (e.g., vinyls. streaming platforms).**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**8. I frequently discuss Taylor Swift's music or activities with friends, family, or online communities.**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**9. I run or participate in fan clubs or online forums dedicated to Taylor Swift**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

## **Appendix C. Willingness to Cancel (Morally Valenced Transgressions)**

How would you react if Taylor Swift behaves in certain ways?

1. Imagine if Taylor Swift was the celebrity with the largest and most significant carbon footprint and completely disregarded the negative impact on the environment through her actions

**1. I would continue supporting her by streaming music**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**2. It wouldn't stop me from continuing buying merchandise**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**3. I would continue following her on social media channels**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**4. I would have belief in her views and support and defend her personality**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**5. I would want to meet her in person**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

2. Imagine there was a stampede at a Taylor Swift concert and 10 fans died due to crowd crush and extreme weather conditions. Despite prior warning signs of the dangerous conditions, she chose to continue with the show

**1. I would continue supporting her by streaming music**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**2. It wouldn't stop me from continuing buying merchandise**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**3. I would continue following her on social media channels**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**4. I would have belief in her views and support and defend her personality**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**5. I would want to meet her in person**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

3. Imagine Taylor Swift increases prices of her concert tickets based on demand, making them inaccessible and unaffordable for fans willing to pay less than £1000

**1. I would continue supporting her by streaming music**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**2. It wouldn't stop me from continuing buying merchandise**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**3. I would continue following her on social media channels**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**4. I would have belief in her views and support and defend her personality**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**5. I would want to meet her in person**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

Thinking about your responses to the previous questions, could you tell us the main reason for your responses? (optional)

## **Appendix D. Willingness to Cancel (Personal Misbehaviour Transgressions)**

How would you react if Taylor Swift behaves in certain ways?

1. Imagine if Taylor Swift made a transphobic comment during a televised event or interview.

**1. I would continue supporting her by streaming music**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**2. It wouldn't stop me from continuing buying merchandise**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**3. I would continue following her on social media channels**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**4. I would have belief in her views and support and defend her personality**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**5. I would want to meet her in person**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

2. Imagine if it was revealed that Taylor Swift had a friendship with a controversial political figure, such as a dictator, and had performed at their birthday party or a similar event.

**1. I would continue supporting her by streaming music**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**2. It wouldn't stop me from continuing buying merchandise**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**3. I would continue following her on social media channels**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**4. I would have belief in her views and support and defend her personality**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**5. I would want to meet her in person**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

3. Imagine if evidence surfaced suggesting that Taylor Swift had cheated on her partner at a social gathering or party.

**1. I would continue supporting her by streaming music**



[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**2. It wouldn't stop me from continuing buying merchandise**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**3. I would continue following her on social media channels**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**4. I would have belief in her views and support and defend her personality**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

**5. I would want to meet her in person**

[1] strongly disagree [2] disagree [3] neutral [4] agree [5] strongly agree

Thinking about your responses to the previous questions, could you tell us the main reason for your responses? (optional)

### Appendix E. Descriptive Statistics Table

	Min-Max	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis
Degree of Parasociality	1-5	3.56	0.81	3.67	-0.76	3.23
Degree of Investment	1-5	3.77	0.94	4.00	-1.03	3.43
Willingness to Cancel	1-5	3.10	0.86	3.20	-0.35	2.53

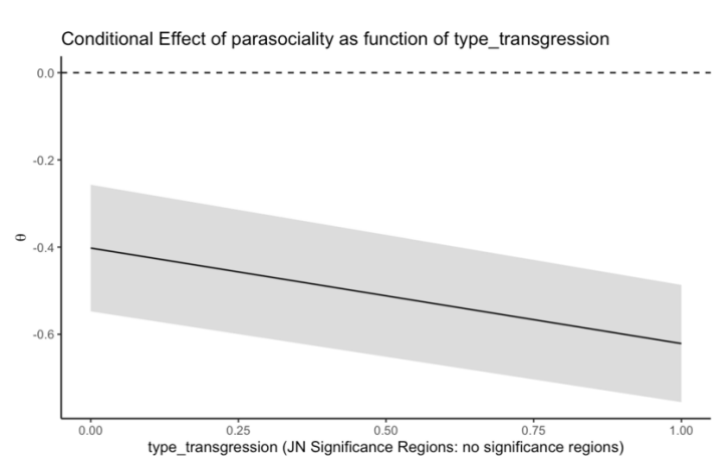
**Table 1.** *Distributions of the variables Parasociality, Investment and Willingness to Cancel in a sample of participants (n=337)*

### Appendix F. Correlation Matrix

	Parasociality	Investment	Willingness to Cancel
Parasociality	-	-	-
Investment	0.77**	-	-
Willingness to Cancel	-0.48**	-0.43**	-

**Table 1.** *Correlation Matrix for the Mediation Model between Degree of Parasociality and Willingness to Cancel via Degree of Investment within the finalized sample (n=337)*

### Appendix G. Johnson Neyman Plot



**Figure 4.** *Moderation Plot of the Conditional Direct Effect of Parasociality on Willingness to Cancel, as a Function of The Type of Transgression presented*

## Appendix H. Key quotes identified in sentiment analysis

<b>Separation of the art from the artist</b>	<p><i>"I'm not a huge Taylor Swift fan but I like her music and would always be able to separate art from artist enough to listen..."</i></p> <p><i>"I try and separate the art from the artist; I enjoy listening to Taylor Swift's music and for that reason I would like to meet her, but that does not stop me from being able to have opinions and disagree with some of her actions."</i></p> <p><i>"I love Taylor swift and her music. These things would make her a 'bad' person in my eyes, yet I have loved the music and lyrics for some time so maybe separate art from the artist."</i></p> <p><i>"I love her music and I am able to disassociate the music from the person, lots of artist and famous people do bad things."</i></p> <p><i>"I think sometimes it's crucial to separate the art from the artist. While I may disagree with her decisions, that still doesn't take away how her music has positively impacted my life."</i></p>
<b>Differing degrees of support with transgressions</b>	<p><i>"I'm a massive fan of Taylor and know many people have problems with her carbon emissions which isn't something she has commented on and also isn't something I myself am too worried about. However, if she was to cause death when she had warning etc or raised ticket prices I wouldn't feel comfortable defending her actions or supporting her financially"</i></p> <p><i>"Cheating is a personal decision that affects Taylor and her partner. Associating with controversial beliefs and political figures affects whole communities"</i></p> <p><i>"Cheating is a human mistake, doesn't necessarily make you a bad person whereas being transphobic and spreading hate is a moral choice"</i></p> <p><i>"She has a large fan base meaning she is very influential, if she is sharing transphobic/controversial ideology it would make me feel uncomfortable as she will be influencing people to share that ideology, creating a toxic fanbase, however anything relating to her personal life e.g., cheating I wouldn't judge too hard on as we don't have reasoning and full details of her personal life."</i></p> <p><i>"Transphobe = 100% morally wrong she is an awful person no matter what i thought before. Dictator friend = confusion, doesn't add up, would want to figure out why/how that happened. Cheating = wouldn't be too surprised and want to know more about why/how"</i></p>
<b>Time Investment</b>	<p><i>"Listening to her music has been such a huge part of my life for so long that it would be extremely difficult to cut that out without it affecting me personally."</i></p> <p><i>"Taylor's music is one of the only constants in my life and has genuinely helped me so much with my mental health, I couldn't stop streaming her music"</i></p> <p><i>"I have been a fan for almost 12yrs and I listen and support her because I love the music and lyric mastery she has achieved."</i></p> <p><i>"The primary reason to continue listening to her music no matter her actions is because of the quality of the music itself c the way it's been integrated into society, as well as my own life due to its long time presence."</i></p> <p><i>"If a single problematic comment was made, having followed her for so long, it would seem out of character, so I would not immediately stop supporting her. Instead, I would expect an explanation and/or an apology."</i></p> <p><i>"Her music has been such a huge comfort and source of joy to me for so long that I would probably continue to listen even if she became a more controversial figure"</i></p>

<p><b>Absolution of blame</b></p>	<p><i>"She is also working to offset her carbon emissions; she needs to travel via private jet for safety reasons"</i></p> <p><i>"Being a huge celebrity, she is bound to have large carbon emissions as she cannot for safety do things such as travel on a commercial airplane. As to the weather condition question, realistically it isn't purely down to Taylor regarding the safety of the fans at the concert as it's very much the venue staff themselves and her team making those decisions. Additionally, the fans can see the weather and judge the safety themselves it's not down to Taylor. She is still a human being and it's not entirely her responsibility"</i></p> <p><i>"I feel that her actions may not necessarily be her personal opinions but more of how her management decides to handle the situation. as we do not know for sure and it is also easy to shift the blame, we are not sure if she is actually behind all these unpleasant occurrences."</i></p> <p><i>"I know things are different for someone as famous as Taylor such as safe ways for her to travel. A situation of death of a fan happened recently however Taylor is not to blame, even if she did continue with the show"</i></p> <p><i>"She is not responsible for capitalism. It's easy to blame one very visible person, but the entire system we have built is so much more complex and relies on CO2, etc. to survive. Yes, emissions are bad but the benefits that come from her travels for concerts are huge and lift the economies of any city hosting her"</i></p>
<p><b>Trust in her Character</b></p>	<p><i>"Some of the things listed are things she definitely wouldn't do. She is very caring and empathetic toward her fans and always makes sure they are content and happy with everything she does."</i></p> <p><i>"I like her music; it resonates with me but I'm fanatic about her as a person"</i></p> <p><i>"I do think that the fact that her team has stuck by her for 10 years speak loads about her great attitude towards her team and fans. I do admire her greatly for what she achieved and how she reinvents herself entirely with each album."</i></p> <p><i>"She usually stands for the right things and is one of the most powerful women of our time. I truly love her and adore her and sternly believe in the things she supports right now."</i></p> <p><i>"I am a Taylor Swift fan, my support for her comes from not only the fact I like her music, but the fact she is a genuine person who cares about her fans and also has a progressive view on society and politics."</i></p> <p><i>"I grew up with her music so it would be very difficult to stop listening to her songs considering the number of albums she has"</i></p>
<p><b>Mistrust in Media/Portrayal of Taylor Swift</b></p>	<p><i>"Celebrities like X have done much worse but internalised misogyny and media leads the focus on a successful woman in the music industry"</i></p> <p><i>"I think Taylor Swift gets a lot of hate for a lot of normal stuff that all celebrities do and a lot of the hate towards her isn't warranted."</i></p> <p><i>"Celebrities and their carbon footprints are a wider issue than just Taylor Swift so I feel it is unfair and ineffective to simply blame her"</i></p> <p><i>"I also understand that she gets more flack than other celebrities with her presence, which is sometimes unjustified."</i></p> <p><i>"I would be sceptical of anything I heard in the media about her being a bad person because so often in the past I have believed her to be immoral only to later realise it was misogynistic shaming"</i></p> <p><i>"I quite happily listen to 80s artists accused of (and in some cases, responsible for) some terrible things. Taylor Swift extremely unproblematic compared to them"</i></p>

	<i>“There are plenty of musicians who have done bad things. E.G. Michael Jackson, because it’s Taylor Swift doesn’t mean we won’t separate her from the music as well like people do with Michael Jackson”</i>
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