RESEARCH ARTICLE

Development and validation of the parasocial relationships with religious figures scale

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to develop and validate the Parasocial Relationships with Religious Figures (PSR-R) scale, a multidimensional instrument designed to assess individuals' parasocial relationships with their idolized religious figures. A total of 301 participants aged 18–29 was recruited using convenience sampling, representing six religious groups in Indonesia. The scale development process involved item generation, expert evaluation, and confirmatory factor analysis to establish structural validity. The final 25-item PSR-R scale demonstrated robust model fit (CFI = .908, RMSEA = .062, and SRMR = .607) and captured four dimensions: interest in, knowledge of, identification with, and interaction with. Internal consistency was high (α = .922), with dimensions-level reliabilities ranging from .711 to .855 and significant intercorrelations among its four dimensions, supporting its validity as a multidimensional construct. Convergent validity was supported by a significant positive correlation with a measure of celebrity worship (r = .544, p < .001), suggesting shared psychological processes underlying parasocial relationships across domains. These findings support the PSR-R scale as a reliable and valid instrument for assessing parasocial relationships in religious contexts. By introducing a validated measurement tool, this study provides a foundation for further exploration of parasocial relationships with religious figures and its psychological implications. The scale offers theoretical and applied value for examining the psychological implications of mediated religious engagement. Future research should assess its cross-cultural generalizability, its role in identity development, and its potential applications in religious education, counseling, and mental health settings.

INTRODUCTION

The term "parasocial" was first introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956) to describe an illusory relationship between an audience and a performer. This relationship is unidirectional, occurring solely from the audience toward the persona presented by the performer. Research on parasocial interactions has been extensively explored, highlighting the distinction between two key concepts. A parasocial interaction refers to a one-off experience of watching a performer without repeated engagement, creating a momentary connection without long-term emotional attachment. Meanwhile, a parasocial relationship is an ongoing connection with a performer that extends beyond media exposure, fostering a sense of familiarity and attachment over time (Dibble et al., 2016). The definition of parasocial relationships has evolved, leading to the understanding that such relationships emerge through repeated parasocial interactions, eventually developing into more intimate, one-sided connections (Boyd et al., 2022).

Parasocial relationships are initiated through the visibility of performers across various media platforms, followed by celebrification. In today's digital age, the media's role in shaping public perception is more prominent than ever, with individuals crafting curated personas to maximize their reach and influence. This phenomenon reflects the growing interdependence between media consumers and content creators, where public figures intentionally construct their personas to engage audiences. According to Mikuláš and Chalányová (2017), celebrification is the process through which individuals with a well-crafted persona attain fame and widespread recognition through diverse media forms. These individuals may come from various fields, including politics, the arts, acting, athletics, business, micro-celebrity culture (e.g., YouTubers, bloggers), and religious figures. The celebrification process involving religious figures is particularly distinctive, as religious figures are perceived as embodiments of the faith they represent.

In Indonesia, religious identity is one of the most prominent aspects of social identity, and social media users often categorize public figures based on their perceived religious affiliation, further reinforcing parasocial relationships (Afidah et al., 2024; Febrian, 2024). In addition to their spiritual role, religious figures often influence public opinion beyond their religious communities. Their influence extends beyond religious matters, encompassing topics such as public health (Kinanggi et al., 2022; Muchammadun et al., 2021) and cultural politics, particularly in contexts such as Indonesia, where they navigate the intersections of faith, commerce, and political interests (Beta, 2024).

Unlike other public figures, religious figures typically possess moral authority, elicit reverence, and serve as symbols of group identity, which can lead to deeper emotional and spiritual attachment by blending religious presence with entertainment content (Zaid et al., 2022). They play a role in negotiating authority and shaping societal norms, influencing how religious values are perceived and practiced (Febrian, 2024). Such influence often extends beyond personal religiosity, contributing to collective understandings of morality and identity within a religious community. Previous studies in the parasocial relationship literature have shown that individuals are often drawn to media figures who reflect their identity (MacNeill & DiTommaso, 2022).

Individuals engage actively by consistently consuming their favored religious figures' social media content and participating in religious activities through digital media or one-way live sermons (Mardani & Abduh, 2022). Boyd et al. (2022) argued that sustained engagement and continuous interaction constitute parasocial relationships, which also applies to followers of religious figures. These relationships are maintained through interaction with religious figures, interest in their

messages and persona, identification with shared beliefs or values, and knowledge of their background and communication style, all of which cultivate a sense of intimacy and reinforce shared identity between individuals and the religious figures they admire.

When followers develop parasocial relationships with religious figures, these relationships can reduce resistance to persuasion from the religious figure. This phenomenon raises concerns about how individuals internalize messages without critical evaluation, particularly when they hold religious figures in high esteem. The persuasive power of religious figures is not solely a result of their knowledge or spiritual authority but also stems from the emotional bonds formed through repeated exposure. Tukachinsky et al. (2020) suggest that followers are more likely to adopt positive attitudes and intentions toward the messages conveyed by religious figures. Furthermore, parasocial relationships can lead to increased feelings of satisfaction (Azzman et al., 2017), as individuals in these relationships perceive religious figures as "figures of intimacy", which are sources of comfort, pleasure, or role models (Gleason et al., 2017). Individuals may derive feelings of safety and security from such figures, particularly when those figures share aspects of the individuals' identity, such as religious background (MacNeill & DiTommaso, 2022).

The perceived intimacy can create an emotional dependency, where followers turn to religious figures for guidance in both spiritual and personal matters. The influence of an intimate figure is particularly pronounced during the developmental stage of emerging adulthood (aged 18—29), where a key developmental task is the pursuit of intimacy with something meaningful in life (Syed, 2015). During this formative life stage, the low barrier to entry for online engagement enables emerging adults to form one-sided connections with content creators, leading to parasocial interactions and relationships that provide advice, entertainment, and personal relatability, thereby fulfilling their desire for intimacy in a digital context (Salib, 2022).

However, an overreliance on parasocial relationships may have detrimental effects on individuals. While these relationships offer emotional comfort, they may also foster unrealistic attachments that hinder personal and social development. Excessive identification with religious figures can create an illusion of companionship, replacing real-world interactions and limiting the development of meaningful interpersonal relationships. According to Baek et al. (2013), dependence on parasocial or one-sided relationships is associated with loneliness and diminished trust in others. This further suggests parasocial relationships cannot substitute for reciprocal social interactions (Tukachinsky et al., 2020). Consequently, assessing how parasocial relationships develop is essential to identify potential risks, such as an excessive fixation on religious figures, which may manifest as celebrity worship (Maltby et al., 2006).

The celebrity worship toward religious figures can result in unhealthy attachments, where followers excessively idolize religious figures, detracting from genuine spiritual engagement (Lucas, 2020). Recognizing the fine line between admiration and obsession is crucial in preventing adverse psychological outcomes. Understanding the development of parasocial relationships with religious figures can help anticipate and mitigate their negative consequences on individual well-being while facilitating timely interventions to address issues such as loneliness and diminished trust in direct social relationships.

Given the significance of parasocial relationships in shaping audience perceptions and behaviors, various measurement tools have been developed to assess this phenomenon. The Parasocial Interaction Scale (PSI-Scale) was first developed by Rubin et al. (1985) to measure parasocial relationships with fictional characters. However, this scale did not distinguish between the constructs of parasocial relationships and parasocial interactions. In its statistical application, the PSI-Scale

treated these constructs as a single latent variable, raising concerns regarding the scale's validity. Since parasocial relationships are multidimensional, the PSI-Scale cannot capture them fully. Consequently, Tukachinsky (2011) developed the Multiple PSR Scale, which consists of 24 items and reconceptualized Rubin et al.'s (1985) approach by incorporating four dimensions. However, Tukachinsky (2011) limited the Multiple PSR Scale to figures associated with friendship and romantic relationships.

Similar to this conceptualization of parasocial relationships, broader measurement tools have been developed to assess parasocial relationships beyond the dimensions of friendship and romance, particularly concerning social media figures. Examples include the Multidimensional Measure of Parasocial Relationships (MMPR), an 18-item scale developed by Garcia et al. (2022), and the Parasocial Relationships in Social Media (PRISM) scale, a 22-item measure developed by Boyd et al. (2022). However, these tools also have limitations. The Multiple PSR Scale inadequately captures the full spectrum of parasocial relationships, focusing primarily on friendship and romance, which mainly represent sources of comfort and pleasure. Meanwhile, the MMPR and PRISM scales are restricted to figures on social media platforms.

In line with Gleason et al. (2017), who argued that a figure of intimacy can also be a role model deserving of respect due to their status or authority across various media, measurement tools must be tailored to specific contexts. Some researchers have developed specialized tools to assess parasocial relationships with different figures, such as political leaders. For instance, Hakim and Liu (2021) introduced the Parasocial Relationship with Political Figures (PSR-P) Scale to measure parasocial relationships in a political context. This six-item scale differs from previous tools by specifically explaining parasocial relationships in political settings. As a measurement instrument designed to assess parasocial relationships with political figures, the PSR-P Scale demonstrates strong construct validity and reliability, making it applicable across cultural contexts.

A figure of intimacy, as a role model, can also emerge from religious figures. Azzman et al. (2017) examined the effects of parasocial relationships with religious figures on social media usage and the appeal of reality shows featuring religious figures as guests. In their study, they adapted the PSI-Scale, which was not ideal for this context as it failed to differentiate between relationship and interaction. Additionally, Bae et al. (2010) did not employ a specific tool to measure parasocial relationships with religious figures. Therefore, developing the Parasocial Relationships with Religious Figures (PSR-R) scale is necessary, as no accurate and reliable tool currently exists to measure this construct. The PSR-R Scale would comprehensively capture parasocial relationships, including extreme parasocial behaviours marked by celebrity worship.

METHOD

This study employed a scale development approach to construct a measurement tool for parasocial relationships with religious figures in the Indonesian context. Data were collected through an online questionnaire via Google Forms and distributed to social media platforms like Facebook, X, and Instagram. The participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method. The final sample consisted of 301 Indonesians aged 18–29 (M = 25.50, SD = 3.54), who idolize religious figures in their respective religions. This specific age range was selected to target individuals in the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, a period characterized by an intensified pursuit of intimacy and the exploration of meaningful life commitments (Syed, 2015). Of the participants, 199 were women (66.1%), while 102 were men (33.9%). The religious affiliations of the participants included Islam (74.7%), Protestantism (9.7%), Hinduism (6.7%), Confucianism (4.0%), Catholicism (2.6%), and Buddhism (2.3%), that is, the six religions officially recognized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The developing scale procedure was followed by the steps outlined by

Cohen et al. (2013), which include conceptualizing and constructing the measurement, testing, and analyzing the items.

To initiate the scale development process, we adopted the construct of parasocial relationships. We utilized the dimensions proposed by Boyd et al. (2022), which consist of four components: interest in, knowledge of, identification with, and interaction with. We formulated indicators for each dimension based on a literature review (top-down approach) and specified them in the context of religious figures. The initial scale comprised 49 items: 13 assessing interest in, 13 assessing knowledge of, 15 assessing identifications with, and 8 assessing interaction with. As the construct is multidimensional, each dimension contributes to the measured overall construct. The dimensions of parasocial relationships were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The 5-point Likert model was chosen to allow participants to express their level of agreement with each statement clearly.

After we collected the data, we analyzed the items. We began by checking the reliability of each dimension. Kaplan and Saccuzzo (2018) suggest that for general research, the expected reliability coefficient ranges from .70 to .80, while for clinical diagnosis, the threshold can reach up to .95. Subsequently, we assessed the internal consistency of the items by examining their relationships to the overall scale and corresponding dimensions. Anastasi and Urbina (2016) emphasized that content evaluation focuses on the relevance of items to the dimensions and indicators, while form analysis examines the effectiveness of wording. Besides that, we conducted item discrimination analysis using corrected item-total correlation (CRIT) and corrected item-dimension correlation (CRID; Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018).

The scale's dimensionality was examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the validity of the proposed model. CFA was conducted using item quality criteria with a factor loading threshold of > .30 (Hair et al., 2019), considered the minimum acceptable criterion for item validity. Additionally, convergent validity was tested by analyzing the relationship between the parasocial relationship construct and celebrity worship, using the Celebrity Attitude Scale adapted by Abraham et al. (2020). According to Maltby et al. (2006), celebrity worship is an extreme form of parasocial relationship characterized by absorption and addiction, potentially leading to clinical symptoms. The adapted Celebrity Attitude Scale consisted of 26 favorable items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), measuring three dimensions: entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological. This scale demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .93).

CFA was also used to assess model fit using its key indices (Hair et al., 2019). The comparative fit index (CFI) ranges from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating a stronger model fit; a CFI value greater than .90 indicates a good fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) compensates for chi-square statistics in large samples and estimates the goodness of fit in the population, with values below .07 considered desirable. The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was deemed acceptable if below .08.

RESULT

The average test score, compiled from responses from 301 participants, was 72.3, with a standard deviation 13.2. The descriptive statistical analysis highlighted variability across items. For the 49 items, the mean ranged from 1.66 to 4.51, while the standard deviation varied between .73 and 1.38, indicating differing data consistency levels.

According to Kangwanrattanakul and Krägeloh (2024), skewness values between -1.96 and +1.96 indicate a distribution that meets normality criteria, particularly in samples exceeding 300 participants. The results showed skewness values ranging from -1.39 to 1.16. Additionally, Sovey et al. (2022) established that kurtosis values within the range of -7 to +7 align with normal distribution parameters. The kurtosis values in this study fell within this range, specifically from -1.22 to 4.77.

Given that the data were normally distributed, we analyzed the CRIT (corrected item-total correlation), CRID (corrected item-dimension correlation), and factor loadings to determine whether items should be retained or eliminated. All criteria met or exceeded the threshold of .30, yet the parameters consistently improved when items were qualitatively deemed appropriate. We also ensured that no items exhibited significant cross-loadings. After confirming item quality, we categorized the items into two groups. A summary of items meeting the criteria (retained) and those deemed suboptimal (eliminated) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Integrative Item Analysis Results

Dimension	Good Item	Suboptimal Item
Interest in	5, 6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 22	8*, 9, 10*, 12*, 13*, 23*
Knowledge of	11, 20, 24, 32	14, 18*, 19*, 25*, 26, 27, 29*, 31*, 32
Identification with	1, 2, 28, 30, 33, 40, 41, 46	35*, 36*, 37*, 38, 39, 43*, 47*
Interaction with	3, 4, 21, 45, 48, 44	42*, 49*
Total Item	**25 items**	**24 items**

*CRIT = corrected item-total correlation; CRID = corrected item-dimension correlation; * = reversed*

Based on these three criteria, items categorized as good items exhibited CRIT, CRID, and factor loadings that met the required thresholds (CRIT ≥ .30; CRID ≥ .30; Loading factors ≥ .30). Additionally, they were qualitatively assessed as being easily understood and appropriately aligned with the designated indicators. Therefore, the good item can be considered as having strong discriminative power, effectively distinguishing between individuals with high and low levels of parasocial relationships with religious figures. Moreover, these items successfully measured each intended dimension. In contrast, items categorized as suboptimal items (CRIT < .30; CRID < .30; Loading factors < .30) failed to differentiate between varying levels of parasocial relationships with religious figures and did not adequately capture each dimension.

This study tested a multidimensional model and assessed model fit before deciding whether to retain or eliminate items. The initial model fit indices for all 49 items did not meet the established criteria (CFI = .584, SRMR = .107, RMSEA = .085). Subsequently, after determining that 25 items would be retained, we re-evaluated the model, with the results presented in Figure 1.

Reliability reflects the precision of measurement results. We found that the reliability coefficient for the PSR-R scale was .922, with dimensions ranging from .711 to .855, indicating high reliability. An instrument is considered reliable if its internal consistency coefficient exceeds .700 (Karahan et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024). The PSR-R scale demonstrated excellent reliability, exceeding .900 (Dabbagh et al., 2023; Juanamasta et al., 2023). High reliability indicates that the scale exhibits strong internal consistency. Its items are homogeneous and consistently measure the same underlying construct, reducing measurement error and ensuring the stability of responses across different applications.

Although the PSR-R scale accurately measures parasocial relationships with religious figures, there remains a possibility that participants' accurate scores contain some degree of error. The standard error of measurement (SEM) represents the extent of error variability and is used to estimate the actual score. A lower SEM value indicates lower error variability and, consequently, higher precision. The SEM was calculated using the reliability coefficient (α) and standard deviation (SD). Our

calculations revealed that the SEM ranged from .195 to .467, suggesting that the PSR-R scale has low error variability and is a precise instrument for measuring parasocial relationships with religious figures.

Given the scale's multidimensional nature, we also calculated the correlations among the four dimensions to assess its robustness. These results are presented in Table 3.
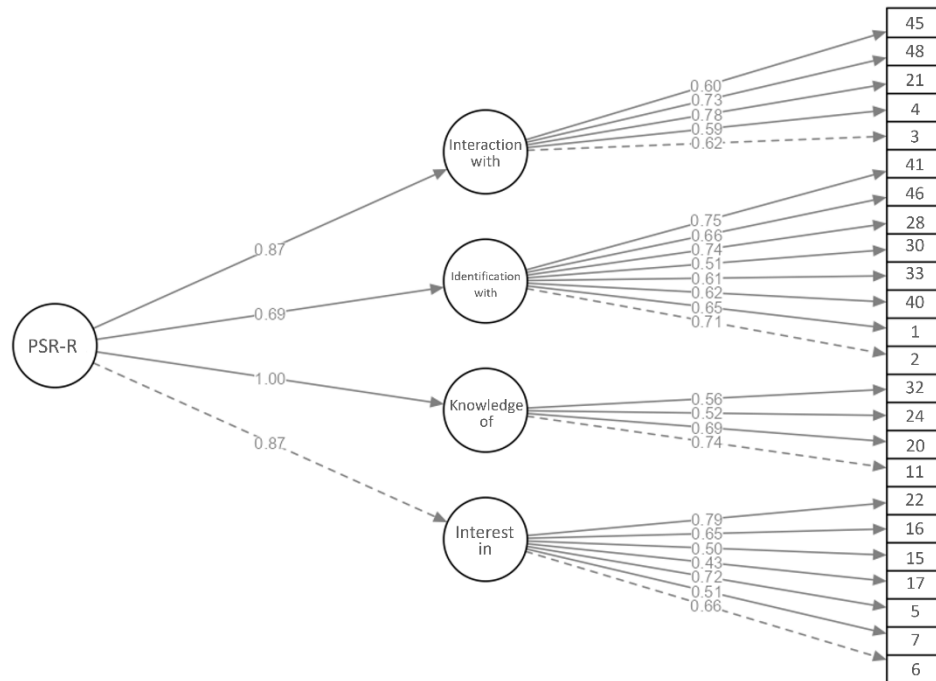
Figure 1. Parasocial Relationships with Religious Figures' Model

Table 2. Initial and Final Items Reliability Test

Dimension	Initial Item		Final Item	
	Total Item	Cronbach's α	Total Item	Cronbach's α
PSR-R Scale	49	.913	25	.922
Interest in	13	.823	7	.805
Knowledge of	13	.646	4	.711
Identification with	15	.817	8	.855
Interaction with	8	.742	6	.814

Table 3. Parasocial Relationships' Dimension Correlation

Dimension	Correlation			
	Interest in	Knowledge of	Identif. with	Interaction with
Interest in	—	.682***	.598***	.608***
Knowledge of	.682***	—	.540***	.684***
Identif. with	.598***	.540***	—	.546***
Interaction with	.608***	.684***	.546***	—

*** < .001

The strong positive correlations among the four dimensions indicate that while each dimension captures a distinct aspect of parasocial relationships, they are inherently interrelated. The correlation coefficients ranged from .540 to .684, suggesting that interest in, knowledge of, identification with, and interaction with religious figures are closely linked components of the PSR-R construct. These statistically significant relationships further support the multidimensional structure of the scale, demonstrating that the dimensions collectively contribute to a cohesive measurement of parasocial relationships rather than functioning as independent factors. This finding suggests that the PSR-R scale

effectively captures the intended psychological phenomenon, validating its use as a robust instrument for assessing parasocial relationships with religious figures.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to develop a reliable and valid scale (PSR-R) to measure individuals' parasocial relationships with their idolized religious figures and assess extreme parasocial relationships related to celebrity worship. The findings provide strong evidence for the psychometric robustness of the PSR-R scale in assessing parasocial relationships with religious figures. Through a series of statistical analyses, we established the scale's reliability, validity, and factor structure, supporting its use as a multidimensional measure.

The initial model fit analysis indicated that the 49-item version did not meet the recommended fit criteria, highlighting the need for item refinement. Following a systematic item selection process, the revised 25-item model demonstrated improved model fit, reinforcing the structural integrity of the PSR-R scale. The factor loadings further confirmed that all retained items meaningfully contributed to their respective dimensions, indicating strong construct validity. In line with these findings, many items were eliminated, as religious and spiritual constructs are inherently complex and multifaceted, which can complicate the development of reliable measurement tools, particularly for multidimensional instruments (Braghetta et al., 2021).

In addition to structural validation, the PSR-R scale demonstrated good convergent validity, as evidenced by its significant positive correlation with the Celebrity Attitude Scale. This result suggests parasocial relationships with religious figures share conceptual similarities with broader parasocial engagement patterns, supporting the scale's theoretical framework. The correlation between parasocial relationships and celebrity worship implies that similar psychological processes, such as the need for emotional support from religious content and identity formation, may also apply to religious figures (Brown, 2018). While religious figures differ from mainstream celebrities in terms of their perceived authority and moral guidance, the observed correlation suggests that the underlying mechanisms of parasocial involvement may be comparable across different figures of influence.

The reliability analyses further support the scale's psychometric properties. The internal consistency of the PSR-R scale was high, with an overall Cronbach's alpha of .922 and dimension-level reliability ranging from .711 to .855. These values exceed the commonly accepted threshold for psychological scales, indicating that the PSR-R scale consistently measures parasocial relationships with religious figures. Additionally, the standard error of measurement (SEM) values were relatively low, indicating minimal error variability and reinforcing the instrument's precision. These findings support previous claims that parasocial relationships should be measured with greater specificity (Gleason et al., 2017). In this regard, the PSR-R scale effectively captures specificity within parasocial relationships with religious figures.

More specifically, the dimension-level Cronbach's alpha values provide important insight into what each dimension captures based on its conceptual definition and indicators by Boyd et al. (2022). Interest in high reliability demonstrates that the items consistently measure individuals' affective engagement and dedication towards the religious figure, encompassing enthusiasm for content, concern for the figure's well-being, and willingness to follow them across media platforms. Knowledge reflects individuals' efforts to seek information about the personal life and teachings of the religious figure, thus representing the informational engagement component. While slightly lower than other dimensions, this value still supports the construct validity of cognitive involvement within the PSR-R scale. Identification with the highest reliability powerfully captures the perceived psychological

closeness between individuals and religious figures. It measures the extent to which individuals feel similar opinions, beliefs, and attitudes with the figure, highlighting the importance of shared identity and psychological affiliation in parasocial relationships. Finally, the interaction consistently measures the emotional and social involvement experienced by individuals concerning religious figures.

The strong positive correlations observed among the four PSR-R dimensions suggest that while each factor represents a distinct aspect of parasocial relationships, they collectively form a cohesive construct. They are interrelated and contribute to a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of parasocial relationships with religious figures. This pattern supports the theoretical proposition that parasocial relationships are complex phenomena encompassing emotional, cognitive, identity-related, and social components that interact dynamically to influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Garcia et al., 2022).

While these results provide promising support for the PSR-R scale, further research is needed to explore its applicability across diverse populations and religious contexts. Given that parasocial relationships are influenced by cultural, social, and individual factors, future studies should examine whether the structure and validity of the PSR-R scale remain stable across different demographic groups. (Boyd et al., 2024). One notable strength of this study lies in its contextual relevance to the developmental stage of the participants. The influence of a figure of intimacy is particularly pronounced among 18—29-year-olds, when individuals are especially drawn to meaningful relationships, including parasocial ones with religious figures, which may fulfill psychological needs for intimacy and identity exploration in a digital context (Salib, 2022).

Despite theological differences among religions, the structure of parasocial relationships, which involves admiration, trust, the pursuit of knowledge, and feelings of social connectedness, tends to follow a consistent pattern. These relationships are rooted in universal human needs for attachment, meaning, and symbolic representations of moral or spiritual values (Azzman et al., 2017). Therefore, the PSR-R scale can be generalized across religious groups, as long as the figure in question has public visibility and serves as a spiritual role model. The scale does not assess the content of specific doctrines; instead, it captures the psychological structure of an individual's relationship with a religious figure they idolize. For this reason, its cross-context validity can be further examined through follow-up studies, such as measurement invariance testing across religious groups (Boyd et al., 2022). This approach aligns with the growing recognition that, in the digital age, spiritual authority is increasingly mediatized and accessible across diverse religious communities (Campbell & Tsuria, 2022).

Additionally, the reliance on self-report measures in this study presents a potential limitation, as participants' perceptions of their parasocial experiences may be subject to social desirability bias or introspective limitations. Social desirability bias can lead participants to report their parasocial experiences in a way that they believe is more socially acceptable. This can result in over-reporting positive aspects of parasocial relationships, such as perceived intimacy or authenticity, while under-reporting negative aspects or the extent of their emotional investment in these relationships (Bergen, 2020). Future research should consider incorporating alternative methodologies, such as behavioral indicators or experimental designs, to further validate the construct.

In practical terms, the PSR-R scale holds potential as a diagnostic or screening tool in religious education, counseling based on religious or spiritual frameworks, or psychological support services. Practitioners could use this scale to assess the depth and nature of an individual's connection to religious figures, identifying healthy inspiration and potentially excessive dependency. For example, extremely high scores on identifying with or interacting with dimensions may serve as red flags for

counselors addressing identity diffusion, emotional isolation, or idealization of authority figures (Soto-Sanfiel & Mäder, 2019). In educational contexts, this scale can inform how religious figures and media are presented to youth, guiding strategies that balance reverence with critical engagement (Golan & Don, 2022).

Overall, these findings underscore the value of the PSR-R scale as a reliable and valid measure of parasocial relationships with religious figures. This study contributes to the growing body of research on parasocial phenomena, particularly in religious and spiritual contexts, by providing a psychometrically sound tool. Future investigations should continue refining and expanding upon these findings, examining the broader psychological and social implications of parasocial relationships with religious figures.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully developed and validated the PSR-R scale as a reliable and multidimensional measure of parasocial relationships with religious figures. By addressing the complexity of parasocial involvement in religious contexts, this research contributes to the broader understanding of how individuals form one-sided attachments to influential figures beyond traditional celebrity worship. The findings underscore the psychological significance of these relationships, emphasizing their potential role in shaping personal identity, emotional well-being, and moral guidance.

The implications of this study extend to various aspects of psychological science and everyday life. The PSR-R scale provides a crucial tool for researchers and practitioners to explore the psychological mechanisms underlying parasocial relationships in religious settings. Understanding these relationships can inform interventions related to religious coping, spiritual well-being, and the influence of religious figures on social behavior. Additionally, this study highlights the need for greater awareness of extreme parasocial involvement, which may have implications for mental health and social functioning.

Future research should further examine the cross-cultural validity of the PSR-R scale, considering the diverse ways in which religious figures are perceived and engaged across different societies. Expanding the application of this scale to different religious traditions and demographic groups will enhance its utility and generalizability. Moreover, integrating alternative methodologies, such as behavioral measures and experimental approaches, can provide deeper insights into the psychological and social impacts of parasocial relationships with religious figures. By advancing this line of research, future studies can further elucidate the role of parasocial relationships in contemporary religious and psychological landscapes.

DECLARATION

Acknowledgment

Author contribution statement

Yunita Dewanti proposed the research idea during brainstorming sessions with the other authors, prepared the manuscript, and served as the corresponding author. All authors collectively executed the research and contributed to the research conceptualization. Ratu Ifthiharfi, Muhammad Ahyar Hamka, and Ratriastu Ruciswandaru actively assisted in the research process, including

operationalization, data collection, analysis, writing, and review. Akhmad Saputra Syarif also contributed to data collection and the writing process. The entire research process, from ideation to the preparation of this manuscript, was thoroughly supervised by Ali Nina Liche Seniati.

Data access statement

The corresponding author can obtain the data supporting this study's findings upon a reasonable request.

Declaration of interest's statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper

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