

# Mirror of Morals: Parasocial relationships with Anti-Heroes

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## Abstract

Parasocial relationships, when someone has a relationship with another person unaware of their existence, can develop because of constant television access. This project aims to answer the research question, "Could parasocial relationships with antihero characters positively correlate with self-worth?". A survey was created to collect data on parasocial relationships with the antiheroes Harley Quinn, Wade Wilson, Rick Sanchez, Walter White, Fiona Gallagher, and BoJack Horseman and the effects of these parasocial relationships' effects on self-worth. While the results expressed that parasocial relationships were present after using the Pearson coefficient, the research showed mostly negative coefficients, and the results were most predominant in 18–24-year-olds. This means that as the participants' self-worth decreased, their likeness of having a parasocial relationship with an anti-hero character increased. In addition, the data expressed a positive correlation that as the participant's self-worth decreased, their ability to form healthy relationships decreased. These results concluded that parasocial relationships with antihero characters are not healthy since they form with people with low self-worth. Furthermore, people with low self-worth cannot form healthy real-life relationships, which causes them to form parasocial relationships with antihero characters.

## Method

Methods: A correlational research survey.

Revision: Not presented in public places

Collection: Social media

Analysis: Excel spreadsheets

## Survey Design

Self-worth

Dr. Stober's survey

Both question types

Character specific

Each were unique

"Yes " or "No"

Parasocial relationships

First seven questions

Specific to character

## Introduction

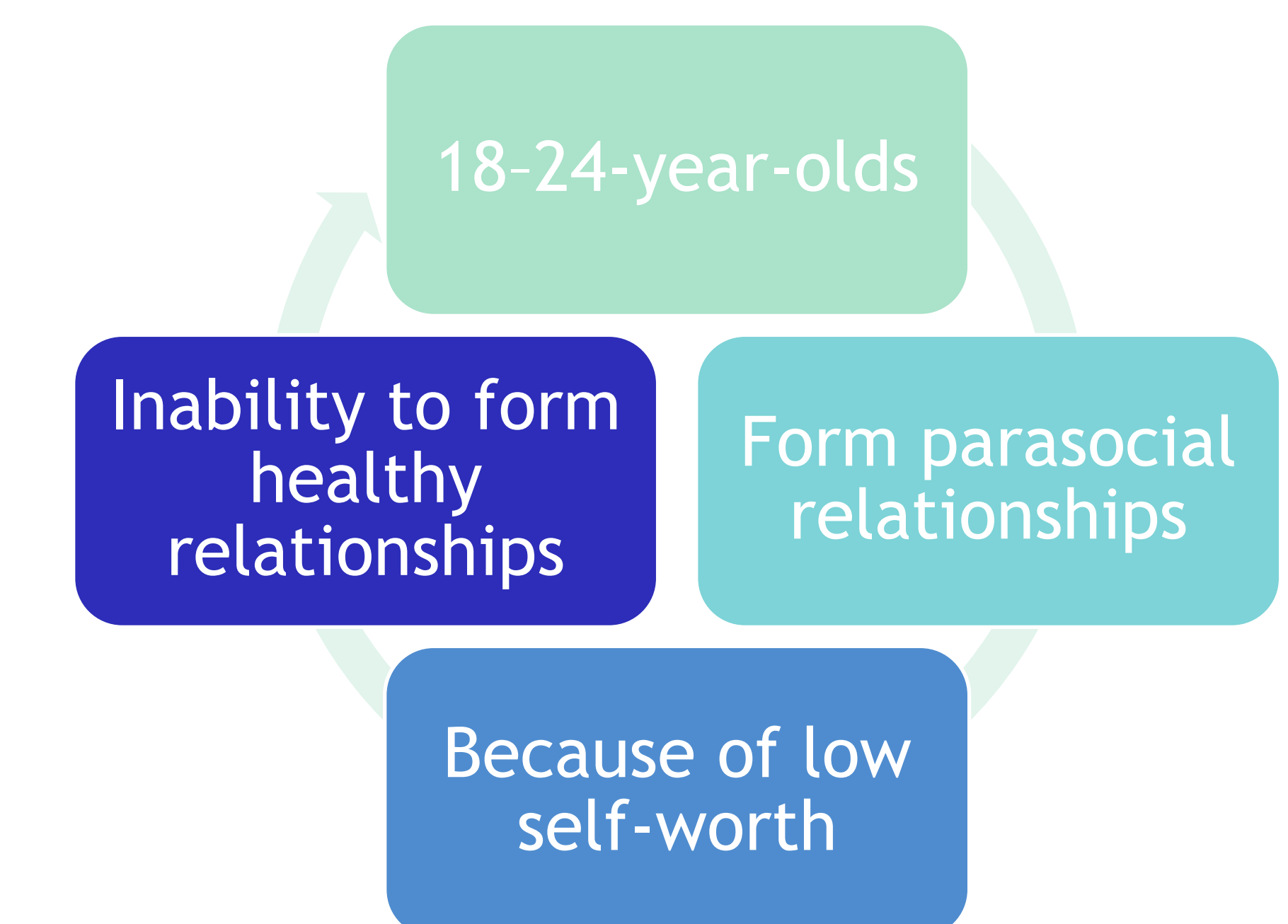


- Low amongst adolescents

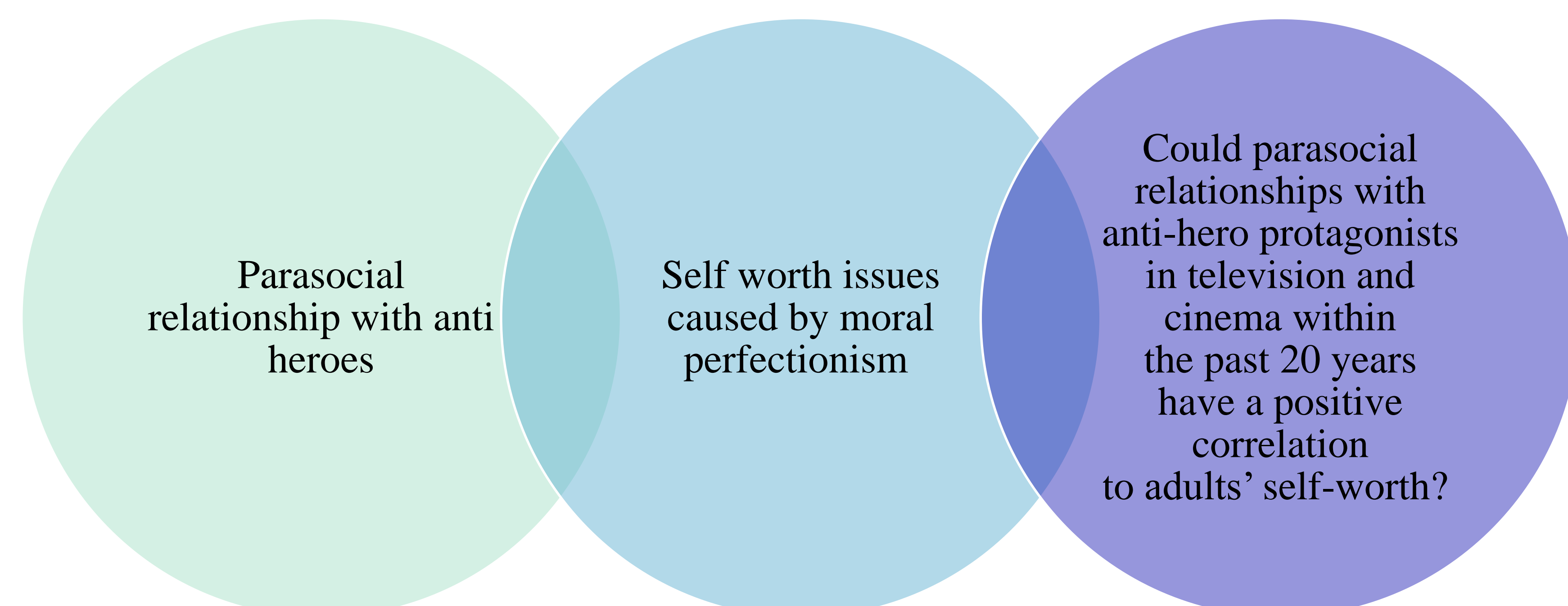
- Factor of low self-worth

- Increase self-worth

## Conclusion

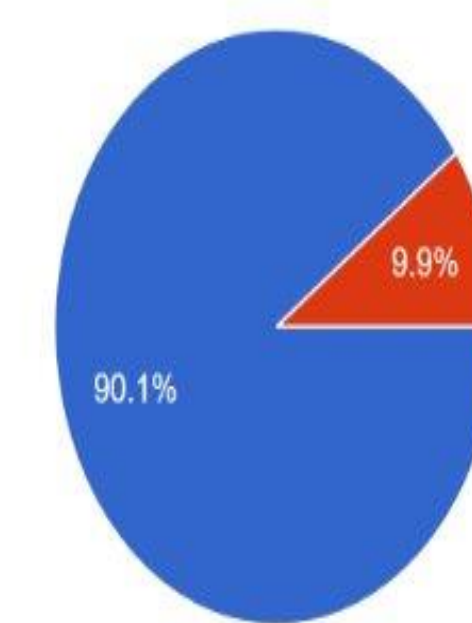


## Hypothesis and Research Question

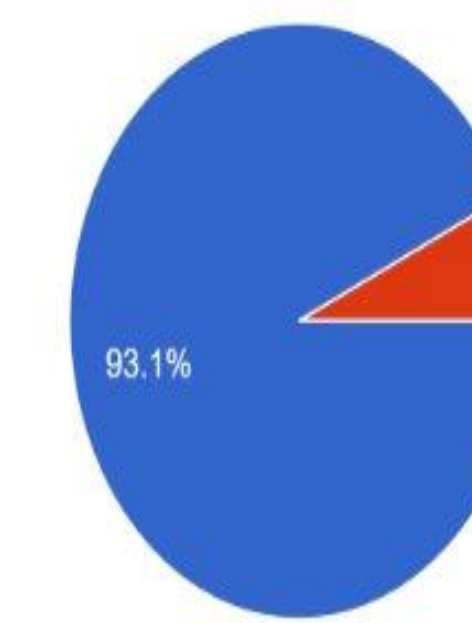


## Results

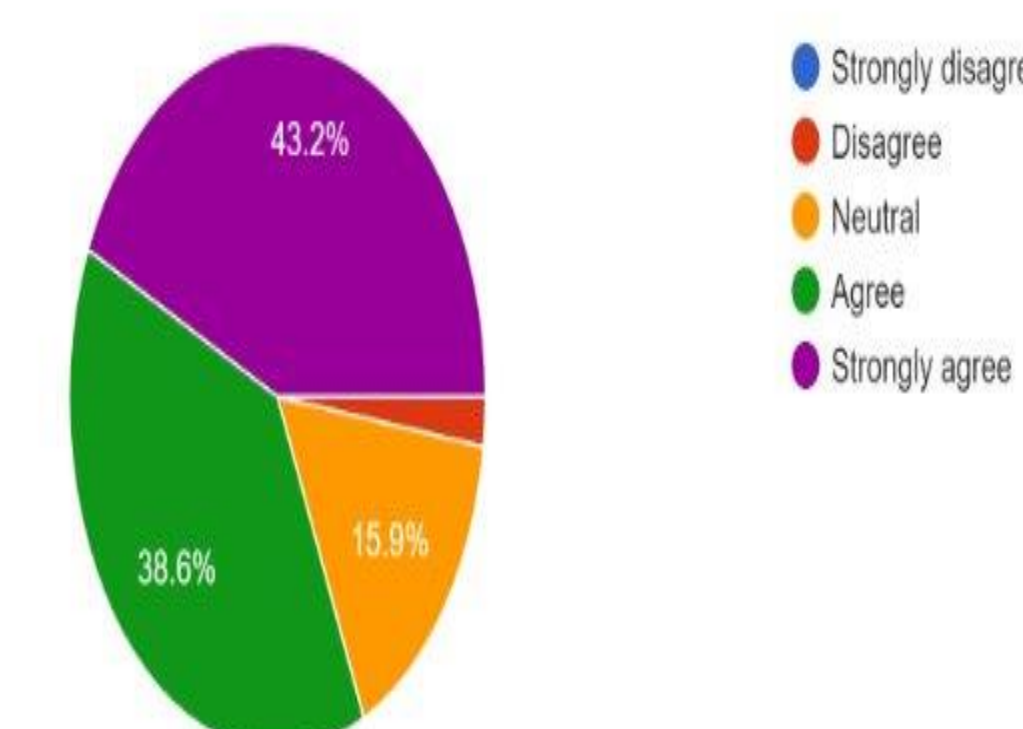
Do you look forward to watching Fiona Gallagher?  
151 responses



Do you look forward to watching Wade Wilson?  
130 responses



BoJack says the line, "Everybody loves you, but nobody likes you." when BoJack said this line, did you relate to his sentiment or feel emotionally moved by this statement?  
44 responses



I am able to form healthy connections with people in my life.      4.0336    0.41407  
9

On a scale of one to five, how would you rate your self-confidence?      3.4326    0.62674  
92      73

## Anchor Papers

Stober, J. (1998). The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale: More perfect with four (instead of six) dimensions. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 24(4), 481-491.

Oliver, Mary Beth, et al. "A penchant for the immoral: Implications of parasocial interaction, perceived complicity, and identification on liking of anti-heroes." *Human Communication Research* 45.2 (2019): 169-201.

Amato, Sara A., "Female Anti-Heroes in Contemporary Literature, Film, and Television" (2016). Masters Theses. 2481.

Zeng, Pan, et al. "Moral perfectionism and online prosocial behavior: The mediating role of moral identity and the moderating role of online interpersonal trust." *Personality and Individual Differences* 162 (2020): 110017.