Chapter XXXIX
Celebrity–Persona Parasocial Interaction Scale

Mihai C. Bocarnea
Regent University, USA

William J. Brown
Regent University, USA

BACKGROUND

The celebrity-persona parasocial interaction scale (CPPI) is designed to measure how media consumers form parasocial relationships with celebrities or popular fictional characters. A parasocial relationship is defined as an imaginary interpersonal relationship between a media consumer and a media persona (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Persona can be real people, such as actors, athletes, and performing artists; or they can be fictional characters, such as Susan in the television serial Desperate Housewives, a character played by actress Teri Hatcher; or Indiana Jones, a character in the film, Raiders of the Lost Ark, played by actor Harrison Ford.

The CPPI is derived from several other published parasocial action scales, including Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985), Cole and Leets (1999), and Auter & Palmgreen (2000). While most parasocial interaction scales are designed to measure the strength of parasocial relationships that develop through television viewing, the CPPI is particularly targeted to celebrities whose exposure far exceeds television programs alone.

Parasocial interaction is one kind of mediated involvement that occurs through enduring or repeated exposure to famous people, both real and fictional. The concept of involvement assumes that media consumers are active rather than passive receivers of information. Two types of involvement conceptualized by Rubin and Perse (1987) are (1) a motivational state that reflects the attitudes that people bring with them to the communication situation, and (2) the cognitive, affective, and behavioral participation induced by the media during media exposure (i.e. becoming emotionally and intellectually involved with a character while watching a film or television program).

Repeated exposure to media persona through the mass media creates a sense of friendship or intimacy in media users (Levy, 1979). Audience members commonly look to media personali-