Do You Feel Me
The Effects of Parasocial Interaction on Perceptions of an Intersectionally Marginalized
Group, Implications for Understanding the Impact of Stigma & Acceptance

By

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Abstract

This dissertation research examines the effects of parasocial interaction (PSI) on prejudice reduction. In chapter 2, I examine the conceptualization and measurement of PSI by testing the validity and reliability of five PSI-related constructs. I found that perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification are valid and reliable measure of PSI in comparison to other measures that exclude one or more of those constructs. In chapter 3, I investigate the indirect relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction by hypothesizing about the mediating role of perceptions of variability. I found that perceptions variability mediated the relationship between PSI and both outcomes: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma. In chapter 4, I experimentally tested the role of narrative and transportation on PSI. I did not find a relationship between narrative and prejudice reduction or an effect of my manipulation on transportation. I also failed to find that PSI mediated the relationship between narrative and prejudice reduction. In chapter 5, I present my overall discussion and conclusion to the dissertation project.

Keywords:

parasocial interaction, perceived variability, acceptance, stigma, intersectionality, media effects, narrative, transportation

Dedicated to:

Mr. Michael D. Davis & Dr. Justin R. Brown

Your journey may be completed, but your influence remains

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To my mom: We have been through so much together and I am honored to walk through this life with you as my mother. Thank you, for all you have done and continue to do. I love you.

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A note on parasocial terminology

The primary focus in this dissertation research is on the concept of parasocial interaction.

The term parasocial has been deemed an interaction, a relationship, a response, and a

form of contact. Recently, Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) expanded previous

notions of parasocial interaction to propose the parasocial contact hypothesis. Schiappa,

Gregg, and Hewes (2005) argue that research has "over-worked the concept of

'parasocial interaction' or PSI, to the point that its use as a measure has outstripped

theoretical understanding" (p. 95). While they make a fair point as there is much

conceptual ambiguity about PSI, it is also necessary to consider the broader body of

literature that defines and measures PSI and work to clarify previous literature.

Throughout this dissertation research, I will use the term parasocial interaction (PSI)

instead of parasocial contact hypothesis (PCH), which I discuss in-detail in chapter 1. I

will only refer to PCH when discussing the work of Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005).

Chapter 1

In March 2016, *Vanity Fair* profiled actor Michael B. Jordan and his movie director for

Fruitvale Station and *Creed*, Ryan Coogler. The

accompanying photo, which can be seen in Figure 1.1,

was praised for showing Black men "embracing one

another as brothers," but also criticized as highly

"suggestive" of homosexuality. Online comments often

from others within Black communities suggested that

Jordan and Coogler looked as if they were going to engage

in a sexual act, while others

stated that they believe

Figure 1.1
Vanity Fair photo of actor Michael B.
Jordan and director Ryan Coogler
was the subject of praise and
homophobic criticism.

Hollywood is "obsessed with gayness." The criticism of the

photo of Jordan and Coogler was echoed recently when the

National Football League (NFL) running back Ezekiel

Elliott appeared on the 2017 cover of *ESPN*'s The Body

issue (Figure 1.2) holding a football, wearing no clothes,

dripping wet with a pool image behind him. Elliott's photo

also was disparaged among men across Twitter as

"homosexual." While the men in these two pictures may

Figure 1.2
Cover of the 2017 ESPN the
magazine The Body Issue, which
featured NFL running back
Ezekiel Elliott. The cover was the
subject of homophobic criticism.

not identify as gay or queer, what is clear from the criticism of each photo is that Black

men who identify as gay or queer face stigma and prejudice within and outside of their

collective communities.

In the United States, the socially dominant group is White, male, and heterosexual (Purdie-Vaughn & Eibach, 2008), and thus, Black gay men face unique consequences associated with being Black and gay, as well as the intersection of these two identities. Some scholars refer to Black gay men's social identity as "intersectional," characterized as belonging to two or more socially marginalized groups (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Lorde, 2007). As Black men, they face racism and as gay men, they encounter homophobia, but in addition Black gay/queer men have a unique experience with interaction of racism and homophobia as well as other dimensions of marginalization (e.g., class). Black gay men's identity can have substantially negative consequences on the way they live their lives, interact with others, and the treatment they receive from other groups (Meyer, 2003a).

Communication research suggests that parasocial interaction (PSI)—defined as "a media user's reaction to a media performer such that the media user perceives the performer as an intimate conversational partner" (Dibble, Hartmann, & Rosaen, 2016, p. 21)—may counteract negative attitudes or beliefs about an out-group (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). The potential effect of PSI on prejudice-related attitudes toward Black gay men is especially interesting considering the recent visibility of Black gay men on primetime and cable television shows such as *Empire, The Have and the Have Nots*, *Being Mary Jane,* and *Trueblood* among others. PSI has the potential to mitigate negative impressions of Black gay men by showing them favorably and as people with whom others can develop socially acceptable platonic relationships.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of my dissertation is to examine the ways media may be used to mitigate stigma and increase acceptance in the context of Black gay men in the media. I

explore the relationship between PSI and two prejudice-related outcomes: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma. My dissertation research is three-fold. First, in chapter 2, I argue that the current methodology presented in the literature to measure PSI is insufficient and should include additional variables. Using quantitative survey data, I test my proposed alternative measurement and discuss its reliability and validity. Second, I present and test a conceptual model in chapter 3 where PSI directly predicts increased acceptance and understanding of the impact of stigma on an intersectional group, as well as indirectly predicts my outcome variables through perceptions of variability (i.e., decreasing stereotypes). Currently in the literature the relationship between PSI and the dependent variables are typically assessed using regression. I test the conceptual model in its entirety using the survey data collected in the previous chapter and statistical mediation method known as the PROCESS Macro.

Finally, in chapter 4, my dissertation investigates the relationship between narrative and PSI, particularly the narrative mechanism of transportation. I move from the conceptual model tested in chapter 3 and explore the relationship between PSI and the construct of transportation. Transportation occurs when a consumer of a narrative story begins to see themselves in the shoes of another person or group over time, and is "transported" into the narrative. Through transportation, the consumer develops a sense of connection and relationship with the character and demonstrates real-life attitudinal changes and beliefs supportive of the narrative's character (Green & Brock, 2000). The mechanism of transportation is more likely to occur when the narrative is emotionally engaging, well developed, and presented over time (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Coplan, 2004). Using experimental methodology, I manipulate the level of information of a

narrative where one story had more background and depth of information than the other around a Black gay male character, and test the impact on acceptance and understanding of stigma with PSI as a mediator. The intent of this manipulation is that the story with more background and depth should induce greater transportation than the story that does not have those features. I also present the results and implications for future research. Finally, in chapter 5, I summarize the overall purpose of my dissertation research and review my results, noting the limitations of the study as a whole and several avenues for future research.

Through the remaining part of this introductory chapter, I argue that this project is significant because stigma, partially a consequence of media representations, has a negative effect on the health and well-being of Black gay men. I make this argument by first defining stigma and its related-factors. I particularly focus on the stigma-related factor of stereotyping and point out stereotypes of Black gay men in media. I move from a discussion of stereotypes and the effects of stigma to the way researchers have examined prejudice reduction in the real world and in media. Finally, I end the chapter with a discussion of PSI, the parasocial contact hypotheses (PCH), and the implications for prejudice reduction.

Literature Review

Defining Stigma & Its Related Factors

Goffman defined stigma as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" to the individual or individuals to whom it is directed (1963, p. 3). Link and Phelan (2001) argued that stigma is a consequence of five related factors. The first factor is social categorization, where individuals place themselves and other into groups. Allport (1954)

argued that social categorization is fundamental to the human experience, unavoidable, and the basis for normative judgments. The second factor is labeling others as different, where individuals determine the social group they belong and if other individuals belong in that same group or not. The third factor related to stigma is an "us versus them" dichotomy, which is the basis for in-group/out-group distinctions (Crisp & Hewstone, 1999, 2007; Crisp & Turner, 2009; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Link and Phelan (2001) cited this dichotomy as another factor in the development of stigma. Those who are stigmatized face discrimination, which consists of "negative behaviors towards members of an out-group, such as lack of friendliness, or the refusal to rent one's apartment or to give a job to a member of the group" (Brauer & Er-rafiy, 2011, p. 6). An "us versus them" dichotomy, along with social categorization, often leads to the fourth stigma-related factor, which is the process of stereotyping and labeling others with undesirable traits. The final factor related to stigma is the exercise of power" when a marginalized group attempts to reverse its position (Link & Phelan, 2001).

Over the next several pages, I will spend time on the to the fourth stigma-related factor, which is the process of stereotyping to demonstrate how media content has previously stigmatized Black gay men. Finally, I justify this research project by demonstrating that stigma may have negative effects on the mental health and emotional well-being of Black gay men.

Stereotyping Black gay men

Stereotypes are "understood in their capacity to serve as heuristics or structures for the organization of knowledge" (Mastro & Kopacz, 2006, p. 306). Brauer, Judd, and Jacquelin suggested that stereotypes consist of "information not only about typical

attributes of the group, but also about the degree to which these attributes are widely shared in the target group" (2001, p. 463). Although stereotypes are "a very partial and inadequate ways of representing the world" (Lippmann, 1922, 2004, p. 60), once they are learned, social stereotypes may be activated easily by stimuli in the environment, including media content (Devine, 1989).

Previous research argues that Black gay men are largely invisible in media content in that they have little representation on primetime and cable networks (Cobb & Means-Coleman, 2009; GLAAD, 2014; Means-Coleman & Cobb, 2007). In its most recent report, GLAAD (2016-2017) noted that there were only 71 LGBTQ characters out of 895 regular series characters across the broadcast networks, with gay men making up the greatest percentage of LGBTQ characters and only 16 of the 71 characters were Black men. On cable programming, there were 142 LGBTQ characters, and of these 15 were Black men (GLAAD, 2016-2017, p. 8)[1]; and on streaming services there were 65 LGBTQ characters of which 10 were Black men. Thus, while it is clear that there is some representation of LGBTQ individuals in media, it seems that only a small percentage of those are Black gay men.

Cobb and Means-Coleman argued that controlling images of Black gay men usually involve "interpersonal problems, violence and (someone's) destruction" (2007, p. 85). Controlling images, according to Patricia Hill Collins (2000), are dominant media representations of a group that demonstrate the group's place in the social structure. Cobb and Means-Coleman (2009) argued that these controlling images misrepresent Black gay men as simple, feminine, flamboyant and/or defective in their masculinity. This phenomenon is not inconsequential. Attitudes, behaviors, and social policy preferences

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[1] The report does not give a total number of characters on cable and streaming services.

outside of the media may be affected by such exposure to stereotypical information

(Dixon, 2006; Mastro, 2009; Valentino, 1999).

A popular Internet meme about Black gay men, seen in Figure 1.3, is an example of the way stereotypes may lead to an "us versus them" dichotomy and label Black gay men with undesirable traits. The meme features characters from the 1990s-television variety show *In Living Color,* which further promoted the notion that Black gay men are flamboyant and feminine (Cobb & Means Coleman, 2009)—traits that are seen as undesirable as a popular conceptualization of manhood, particularly Black manhood. The meme

Figure 1.3
The photo is a popular meme that stigmatizes Black gay men as flamboyant and feminine. Meme depicts characters from the Variety TV show In Living Color in the 1990s and Bravo channels starts from the Real Housewives of Atlanta. The meme suggest that jokes about gay Black men are now real characterization of Black manhood.

suggests that stereotypical characterizations of Black gay men on shows like *In Living Color* are realistic portrayals of the group in society. Since individuals create memes to make fun of others or as social commentary, memes such as the one depicted in Figure 1.3 may contribute to the stigmatization of Black gay men and create lasting influence on the perceptions and treatment of Black gay men in society.

Effects of Stigma

A number of scholars, including Allport (1954), Goffman (1963) and Meyer (2003a), argued that individuals who are the target of stigma face anxiety and are exceedingly vigilant. Being in a constant vigilant state can have negative effects on one's health. Allport (1954) and Goffman (1963) linked stigma to health risks decades ago;

however, Meyer (2003a) as well as Gattis, Sacco, and Cunningham-Williams (2012)

cited more contemporary evidence demonstrating that stigma can have negative effects

on mental health, self-esteem, social functioning, and stereotype threat among other

issues. Meyer (2003a, 2003b) focused on the intersection of sexual orientation and race in

terms of the health and wellness of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals, indicating that

minority stress, which is a consequence of negative, unwelcoming social environments

may be a reason LGB individuals have higher prevalence of mental disorders in

comparison to heterosexual individuals. Meyer and Dean (1998) argued that having an

intersectional identity has negative consequences for the way an individual is viewed in

society. Meyer (1995) also found that having an intersectional identity leads to poor

treatment of Black gay men their communities (e.g., everyday discrimination, rejection

by family, friends, and neighbors), as well as increased levels of stress, coping, and

resilience among Black gay men.

Stigma affects the way Black gay men may feel about themselves and the

situations in which they find themselves (Jeffries, Townsend, Gelaude, Torrone,

Gasiorowicz, & Bertiolli, 2015). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014)

cited stigma, homophobia, and discrimination as predictive factors in the disparately high

rate of HIV infection rates among Black gay men. Social rejection in one's community

and in society, generally, may increase the likelihood that gay men cannot be open about

their sexuality, affect their ability to have long-term healthy sexual relationships, and

increase the likelihood of risky sexual behavior among other issues. Social rejection may

make it difficult for gay men to keep a job, have access to quality healthcare, and meet

their health needs. Considering the negative effects of stereotypes and stigma, I turn to an

examination of ways researchers have tried to reduce prejudice, particularly considering the positive effects of social contact and parasocial interaction in media.

Prejudice & Social Contact

The conceptualization of PSI is directly related to Gordon Allport's work on prejudice and social contact. In his seminal text, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport described prejudice as a "hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group" (1954, p. 7). Allport (1954) suggested that negative attitudes might manifest in five behaviors: antilocution, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack or extermination. Allport's work wanted to understand the hatred and prejudice that characterized the first half of the 20th century including the Jewish holocaust. Since Allport's seminal work, research has shown that prejudice not only can cause serious physical harm, but may also have serious negative mental health consequences on the lives of individuals and groups, e.g. internalized racism (Jeffries et al., 2015; Steele, 1997) among other issues.

Allport argued that social contact of diverse groups with each other might be one of the most effective ways to mitigate negative evaluations associated with stigma or prejudice. The Contact Hypothesis, or Theory of Intergroup Contact, argues that bringing groups who are in conflict with each other together under the right conditions—including sustained contact between the groups, promotion of both groups as equal with shared goals, and lack of opposition to salient authority—may be the best way to reduce prejudice between groups (Allport, 1954). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) examined over

500 studies on intergroup contact and found that increased social contact was generally associated with a decrease in prejudice.

Crisp and Turner (2009) argued that imagined social contact may also be a route to prejudice reduction. They conceptualized imagined intergroup contact as "the mental simulation of a social interaction with a member or members of an out-group category" (Crisp & Turner, 2009, p. 317). Reviewing empirical research[3] on intergroup relations and social contact, Crisp and Turner (2009) proposed that imagined social contact with marginalized groups may improve attitudes about these groups, which may lead to increased estimation of positive traits possessed by the out-group, and reduce anxiety. Imagined social contact is similar to conceptualizations of PSI particularly in that PSI often occurs with a character who is a positive representation of their group (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005).

From Social Contact to Parasocial Interaction in Media

Horton and Wohl (1956) first conceptualized PSI as the illusion of interpersonal contact with media figures or characters and defined it as a "seeming face-to-face relationship between spectator and performer" (p. 215). Their intent was to explain how mass mediated contact could resemble social contact. Rubin and McHugh (1987) argued that PSI is a connection an audience member develops with a media figure over time, such as characters in a show, a newscaster, or a celebrity by viewing the person. Auter (1992) expanded the definition of PSI as "a one-sided interpersonal involvement of the media user with the program's character" (p. 174). From these definitions, researchers have developed measurement (a point which will be taken up in the next chapter), but also theorize about the effect of PSI. Some research suggest that PSI or PSI-related

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[3] Crisp and Turner (2009) is not a meta-analysis.

constructs might be related to behavior change and recently, researchers have extended

PSI by offering a hypothesis of its effects on media audiences.

The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis

Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) extended the contact hypothesis to include

previous research on PSI and put forth the parasocial contact hypothesis (PCH). PCH

proposes that contact between groups through media exposure may have similar prosocial

effects as interpersonal contact, whereby the benefits of direct contact can be achieved

via exposure to figures in the media. Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes argued, "Parasocial

contact can provide the kind of experience that reduces prejudice, particularly if a

majority group member has limited opportunity for interpersonal contact with minority

group members" (2005, p. 97). In other words, parasocial contact through media

characters may provide an experience similar to interpersonal contact and this interaction

may serve to reduce prejudice. Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes conceptualized PSI as either

"contact or exposure" with a character in the media and use the term "parasocial

response" to represent "the cognitive and affective reactions we have to such contact"

with this character (2005, p. 96). They hypothesized that a parasocial response is

comprised of three constructs: attraction (i.e., group cohesion), uncertainty reduction (i.e.

a reduction in fear or anxiety about a lesser known group), and perceived homophily (i.e.

considering a character as similar to one's self).[4] Finally, the researchers argue that

parasocial contact must be with a character that is a positive representation of the

marginalized group in order to reduce prejudice (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005).

Across three studies, Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) tested PCH. In their

first study, they examined the relationship between attraction, uncertainty reduction,

[4] These constructs will be discussed further in chapter 2.

perceived homophily, attitude toward gay men, and PSI by showing 174 undergraduates 10 episodes of *Six Feet Under*, a television show with a White gay male character and a Black gay male character. The researchers found no correlation between the measures of parasocial response (attraction, uncertainty reduction, and perceived homophily), which indicated that each measure represented an independent construct in relation to the other. They also found that there was not a significant relationship between parasocial response and a reduction in prejudice toward the White gay character, but parasocial responses were significantly related to a reduction in prejudice toward the Black gay male character.

In their second study, the authors used the reality show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* to test whether PSI with gay men improved attitudes towards gay men overall (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). Using a sample of 160 undergraduates who watched three episodes of *Queer Eye*, they found that participants in the pre-test/post-test group experienced a significant reduction in prejudicial attitudes toward gay men. They also found that this reduction in prejudicial attitudes was significantly correlated with perceived homophily, social attraction, and physical attraction. In their third study, the authors replicated the findings of the second study using *Dress to Kill,* a show about a comedian who dresses up as a woman (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). Using 61 undergraduates, the researchers found that parasocial contact with the main character significantly reduced stereotypical beliefs about the character's group (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005, p. 111).

Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes' (2005) work on PCH represents an advance in our understanding of PSI; however, their research fails to explore potential mediators or

moderators associated with PSI and the way other PSI-related constructs influence the

measurement of PSI and individual's beliefs. Indeed, there is not research to my

knowledge that models the effects of parasocial interaction by exploring the mediating

influence of perceptions of variability or the moderating influence of social contact.

Although, PCH is an extension of the well-established contact hypothesis, less is known

about indirect effects of PSI on attitudes and beliefs. I attempt to fill this gap with my

dissertation project.

CHAPTER 2

The popularity of television shows like *Modern Family*, *How to Get Away with Murder,* and *Empire*, which prominently feature gay characters, suggests that many media consumers are having repeated exposure to gay characters and some of those gay character have intersectional identities. Characters in these shows are notable because they do not adhere to traditional stereotypes of LGBTQ people. While Horton and Wohl (1954) suggested that the effects of PSI only last the length of television program, recent communication research suggests that contact with another group via media may change attitudes about the group in the real world (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). In this chapter, I investigate previous conceptualizations and measurement of PSI. I argue that a scale of PSI that includes five constructs: perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification is a more valid and reliable scale of PSI in comparison to previous measures.

I begin with a brief review of the definition of measurement and measurement theory including a concise overview of reliability, validity, and scale development. I summarize research surrounding the development of two-PSI scales. I conduct a review of PSI-related constructs including perceived homophily, perceived realism, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification. My goal in this chapter is to contribute to scholarly understanding of the conceptualization and measurement of PSI.

Literature Review

Background on Measurement

Measurement, according Allen and Yen, "is the assigning of numbers to individuals in a systematic way as a means of representing properties of the individuals"

(2001, p. 2). According to Carmines and Zeller, measurement "focuses on the crucial relationship between the empirically grounded indicator(s)—that is, the observable response—and the underlying unobservable concepts" (1979, p. 10). Measurement has four levels: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio and each level is dependent on the existence or lack thereof of four factors- distinctiveness, ordering in magnitude, equal intervals, and an absolute zero (Allen & Yen, 2001). A measure is considered distinctive if "different numbers are assigned to individuals who have different values of the property being measured" (Allen & Yen, 2001, p. 7). Ordering in magnitude is simply that larger numbers denote more of a particular item or "property." Equal intervals are obtained by having equal distance between measures denote an equal amount of difference in the measured item (Allen & Yen, 2001). Finally, absolute zero is when a zero signifies the absence of the item being measured. According to Allen and Yen, measurement theory is "a branch of applied statistics that attempts to describe, categorize, and evaluate the quality of measurements, improve the usefulness, accuracy, and meaningfulness of measurements, and propose methods for developing new and better measurement instruments" (2001, p. 2).

In social science research, the concepts we attempt to measure are typically related to theory (DeVellis, 1991). PSI is rooted, theoretically, in research on social contact and media effects. In its original conceptualization, researchers argued that PSI may work to fulfill a human need for interaction in similar way as interpersonal contact (Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985). Recent extensions of PSI propose that mass-mediated interaction may have an impact on an individual's real world attitudes (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). Just as Allport suggested that under certain conditions social contact

was the best way to reduce prejudice, research should work to understand under what conditions PSI reduces prejudice. Thus, understanding the way PSI is conceptualized and measured are necessary to understanding its affects. I consider the concepts of reliability and validity to understand the measurement of PSI.

Reliability & Validity

In research, measurement should be both reliable and valid to show that the measure consistently measures what it says it is measuring. Reliability, as defined by Carmines and Keller, "concerns the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials (1979, p. 12). Reliability is "inversely related" to random measurement error (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p. 15).[5] Validity is the idea that a measurement does what it is intended to do (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). According to Carmines and Zeller, "validity concerns the crucial relationship between concept and indicator" (1979, p. 12). In measuring validity, researchers must be concerned with nonrandom measurement error. Nonrandom error is at the root of validity and has "a systematic biasing effect on measuring instruments" (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p. 14). Validity of a measure depends on the amount of nonrandom measurement error present.

There are three types of validity: content, criterion-related, and construct validity. Content validity "concerns item sampling adequacy—that is, the extent to which a specific set of items reflects content domain" (DeVellis, 1991, p. 43). Criterion-related validity concerns the relationship of a measure to an outcome regardless of its theoretical relationship and is typically divided into concurrent validity and predictive validity.

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[5] Random measurement error is the idea that there are simply too many sources to account for all of them in a measurement.

Concurrent validity is related to the measure of item and the outcome at the time of assessment. Predictive validity is related to the ability of a measure to predict a future outcome. Finally construct validity is concerned with a variable's theoretical relationship to another variable (DeVellis, 1991, p. 46). My study is concerned with the construct validity because I examine the theoretical relationship between PSI and a number of related constructs. I am also concerned with concurrent validity because I am interested in whether a measure of PSI is related to an outcome of prejudice reduction at the time of measurement.

Developing a scale of PSI

DeVellis argued that scales are "measurement instruments that are collections of items intended to reveal levels of theoretical variables, not readily observable by direct means" (1991, p. 8). In this chapter, I focus on reliability as well as construct and concurrent validity by reviewing the theoretical constructs previously associated with PSI and how those constructs have been previously measured.

Since Horton and Wohl conceptualized PSI in the 1950s, researchers have tried to measure it.[6] Levy (1979) focused on developing a measure of PSI that analyzed the relationship media consumers develop with newscasters. Noting Horton and Wohl's original conceptualization of PSI, Levy (1979) used hour-long focus groups to create statements reflective of PSI. Based on focus group discussion, Levy found that seven items might be indicators of PSI. The seven items were as follows:

1. The newscasters are almost like friends.

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[6] Rosengren and Windahl (1971) first attempted to measure PSI and later developed a stronger measure using qualitative data to develop "a 10-item 'degree of involvement' survey, with three of the items representing a univariate measure of PSI" (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000, p. 80). I have only been able to locate the reference to this study in Auter and Palmgreen (2000) and therefore I am currently unable to discuss Rosengren and Windahl's (1971) study any further.

2. I like hearing the voices of the newscasters in my house.
3. When the newscaster shows how he feels about the news, it helps me make up my mind about the news item.
4. I like to compare my own ideas with what the commentators say.
5. When the newscasters joke around with each other, it makes the news easier to take.
6. I feel sorry for the newscaster when they make mistakes.
7. Television shows you what people in the news are really like.

Levy (1979) followed his focus group study, with interviews of 240 individuals. Using these data Levy ran first-order correlations between the index of PSI (which included the seven statements listed above), age, overall television exposure, gregariousness (willingness to be social), and watching television alone. In these data there was an inverse relationship between PSI and social contact, and PSI was more likely among older people.

In summary, Levy's study used qualitative responses to create an index of PSI. In Levy's PSI index, there was evidence of the construct of perceived realism, which is seen in statement number seven. There was a connection to perceive homophily in statements three and four, which suggests that the journalists are similar to oneself. Finally, there was also the notion of emotional engagement with a newscaster as evident in statement six. The constructs of perceived realism and homophily will be examine in later portions of this chapter and chapter 4 considers emotional engagement as a part of relationship between PSI and narrative. Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985) continue Levy's work by developing a scale of PSI in the context of news exposure.

Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985) developed a conceptual model PSI to predict need for interpersonal contact or loneliness when viewing the news. Rubin and colleagues conceptualized PSI "as interpersonal involvement of the media user with what he or she consumes" (1985, p. 156). Their argument was based on the premise that

individuals turn to media when they have limited opportunities for social interaction and

therefore may be more likely to develop a "parasocial" relationship with a media figure.

Rubin and colleagues used local news as a context to explore PSI because news anchors

"encourage bonds of familiarity and dependence" (1985, p.161). Using a survey of 329

undergraduates, the researchers attempted to create a reliable measure of PSI by

developing 29-items of PSI; however several items were dropped from the scale in order

to decrease conceptual overlap.[7] The 20-items that remained in the Rubin, Perse and

Powell's PSI scale were as follows:

1. The news program shows me what the newscasters are like.
2. When the newscasters joke around with one another it makes the news easier to watch.
3. When my favorite newscaster shows me how he or she feels about the news, it helps me make up my own mind about the news story.
4. I feel sorry for my favorite newscaster when he or she makes a mistake.
5. When I'm watching the newscast, I feel as if I am part of their group.
6. I like to compare my ideas with what my favorite newscaster says.
7. The newscasters make me feel comfortable, as if I am with friends.
8. I see my favorite newscaster as a natural, down-to-earth person.
9. I like hearing the voice of my favorite newscaster in my home.
10. My favorite newscaster keeps me company when the news is on television.
11. I look forward to watching my favorite newscaster on tonight's news.
12. If my favorite newscaster appeared on another television program, I would watch that program.
13. When my favorite newscaster reports a story, he or she seems to understand the kinds of things I want to know.
14. I sometimes make remarks to my favorite newscaster in a newspaper or magazine, I would read it.
15. If there were a story about my favorite newscaster in a newspaper or magazine, I would read it.
16. I miss seeing my favorite newscaster when he or she is on vacation.
17. I would like to meet my favorite newscaster in person.
18. I think my favorite newscaster is like an old friend.
19. I find my favorite newscaster to be attractive.
20. I am not as satisfied when I get my news from a newscaster different than my favorite newscaster.

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[7] Rubin, Perse and Powell (1985) do not provide much background on the development of items of PSI except to cite previous literature they used to guide the items construction.

In sum, Rubin, Perse, and Powell not only expanded on Levy's work, but also their measure reflects a number of the constructs that I argue should be included in a scale of PSI. For example, in Rubin, Perse, and Powell's measure there is evidence of attraction (in statement 19), perceived homophily (in statement 13), uncertainty reduction (in statement 1). PSI-scaled put forth by Rubin, Perse, Powell was extended by Auter (1992).

Auter (1992) examined intimacy of audience and character relationships, particularly considering the notion of "breaking the fourth wall," which occurs when a character steps out of their fictional role and addresses the audience with the intent of experimentally validating Rubin, Perse, and Powell's scale. Auter placed respondents in one or two experimental conditions depending on whether the character broke the fourth wall or not. Auter (1992) reported high reliability of Rubin, Perse, and Powell's PSI scale. Auter (1992) also found that individuals who saw the more intimate stimuli, in which the character broke the fourth wall, had higher PSI scores. This work suggests that that Rubin, Perse, and Powell's PSI scale is particularly useful when testing the relationship between a media consumer and media figure who speaks directly to the viewer. Indeed, much of the PSI research, I reviewed, focused on viewing newscasters who speak directly to the media audience. More recently, communication research investigated PSI between a viewer and a character in a fictional narrative.

Across two research studies, Auter and Palmgreen (2000) developed and validated the audience-persona interaction (API) scale as a measure of PSI. They argued that PSI is a "multi-dimensional construct" and "if studied carefully—might provide significant insight into the audience-media relationship" (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000, p.

80). In study 1, Auter and Palmgreen began with qualitative measures asking participants

four questions:

1. What is it about the characters on your favorite sitcom that attracts you?
2. Describe examples of your reactions to and interactions with program characters when you watch your favorite sitcom.
3. Discuss the similarities you see between your friends and the characters on your favorite sitcom.
4. Discuss the similarities you see between yourself and the characters of your favorite sitcom. (2000, p. 81)

Out of these responses, Auter and Palmgreen developed a forty-seven-item PSI measure.

Auter and Palmgreen used principal component analysis with varimax rotation to reduce

these items in sub-dimensions. Of the forty-seven items, twenty-two were retained in four

sub-dimensions: identification with favorite character, interest in favorite character, group

identification, and problem-solving ability of favorite character (Auter & Palmgreen,

2000). In their second study, Auter and Palmgreen (2000) tested the API scale alongside

other related items such as: general television exposure, perceptions of TV realism, and

how much viewers like television. Reliability for API was reported as $\alpha = .84$. This study

has implications for my argument that a scale of PSI should included identification. The

API scale is first time a measure of PSI includes identification.

In sum, in the first studies conceptualizing and measuring PSI (Rosengren &

Windahl, 1971; Levy, 1979; Rubin, Perse & Powell 1985) researchers begin with

qualitative measures. Researchers often ran correlations between measures of PSI,

demographic measures, personality traits, and media exposure among other variables to

established validity of a measure of PSI. Across these measurement styles, research is

consistent that PSI is a multidimensional concept; however, the constructs related to PSI

have varied. I argue that throughout the parasocial literature five constructs are

consistently mentioned and those constructs are perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification. In the next section, I review each of the five constructs and argue that these constructs should be included in one scale of PSI.

PSI-related constructs

Previous research has investigated PSI in several contexts, including: news viewing and loneliness (Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985) as well as uncertainty reduction and attraction (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Throughout this literature, several constructs have been examined repeatedly. These PSI-related constructs include: perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification (Cohen, 2004; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985; Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). For example, in a meta-analysis of thirty research studies, Schiappa, Allen, and Gregg (2007) found that perceived realism, perceived homophily, and social attraction (or likeability) are three factors strongly correlated with PSI. The next section reviews previous literature on perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification. My goal is to determine validity of these constructs as measures of PSI and test reliability of these constructs in a single scale of PSI.

Perceived realism. Perceived realism is the idea that viewers may see or believe a media character or story to be realistic. Pouliot and Cowen (2007) argued that perceived realism is a two-dimensional concept that includes: (1) factual realism, and (2) psychological realism. Factual realism is the idea that individuals and/or events in media are true or false. Psychological realism relates to the plausibility of or similarities to events and individuals in the real world. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008) also argued that there are two types of realism: (1) external realism and (2) narrative realism. External realism can be

interpreted as "similarity" to the real world while narrative realism relates to the likelihood that the story may occur in the real world (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008). Pouliot and Cowen's as well as Busselle and Bilandzic's suggested that perceived realism is about the plausibility of the narrative and realness of the characters and/or events. Both conceptualizations may factor into PSI; however, Green (2008) argues regardless of whether a story is fact or fiction it can have an impact on media consumer. With this in mind, I consider perceived realism of a media character or figure.

As reviewed previously, Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985) argued that PSI is made up of a number of components including the "degree of reality approximation of the persona, stylized behavior and conversational manner of the persona, and effective use of the formal features of television. These factors work together to make the television character a predictable, non-threatening, and hence, perfect role partner for the viewer" (1985, p. 156). Indeed, it seems that perceived realism may be vital construct in the conceptualization of PSI. In order words, the extent to which a character in a television show is seen as similar to individuals in the real world, a viewer may be more likely to have a parasocial interaction.

Perceived Homophily. Perceived homophily is defined as "the degree to which pairs of individuals who interact are similar with respect to certain attributes, such as beliefs, values, education, social status and the like" (Rogers & Bhowmik, 1971, p. 526). The term "perceived homophily" has been used with consistency in the PSI literature; however, some researchers have used the term "perceived similarity" to refer to comparable ideas.

Perceived homophily has been examined as a multidimensional concept and may include similarities among individuals on the basis of looks, values, beliefs, and background (McCroskey, Richmond, & Daly, 1975; Prisbell & Anderson, 1980). Early research on perceived homophily studied the concept in terms of interpersonal relationships. Prisbell and Andersen (1980) examined the relationship between perceived homophily and uncertainty, feeling right, safety, and self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships using four different samples. Using multiple regressions, Prisbell and Andersen (1980) found that perceived homophily was a predictor of levels of uncertainty. This study has implications for my research because much of the theoretical basis for linking PSI to real world attitudes is rooted in the literature on interpersonal contact and prejudice reduction. Thus, viewers who feel that a character is similar to themselves may translate their beliefs about that character onto the character's group in the real world.

Eyal and Rubin (2003) examined perceived homophily, identification, and PSI with aggressive television characters and participant's level of aggression. Eyal and Rubin's research is rooted in social cognitive theory, which argues that individuals learn by observing models. Eyal and Rubin (2003) maintained that "social cognitive theory also accounts for homophily, suggesting that people are more likely to pay attention to and be influenced by models who are perceived to be similar" (p. 80). Surveying 219 undergraduates about aggressive television personalities, Eyal and Rubin found that individual's level of aggression was moderately correlated with perceived homophily, identification, and PSI (2003). The implication of this study for my research is that media consumers who perceived a character to be similar may have more positive attitudes about the character's group in the real world.

In summary, perceived homophily may be related to PSI, as individuals in the media audience perceive characters on television to be similar to themselves, the individual might be more likely form a relationship with that character regardless of whether the character looks into the camera and speak to the individual directly, but also that relationship may impact real world attitudes.

Attraction. Previous research on PSI has divided attraction into three types: (1) physical, (2) social, and (3) task (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes suggested that social attraction may also be called "likeability" and task attraction may be deemed as "respect" (2005, p. 99). They argued that social and task attraction may be "mutually reinforcing" and associated with physical attraction (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005, p. 9).

 Hogg and Hardie (1991) conceptualized social attraction in terms of "group cohesiveness." Using self-categorization theory, the process by which individuals place themselves in an in-group and others in an out-group to produce norms or prototypical group identification, Hogg and Hardie (1991) argued that group membership may be a key factor in producing in-group/out-group attraction. They also argued that social attraction is different from "interpersonal liking" in that social attraction is rooted "in-group prototypicality" (Hogg & Hardie, 1991, p.176). They reasoned that "ethnocentric attraction" is a primary feature in interpersonal relations or attraction (Hogg & Hardie, 1991).

In sum, the research on attraction, specifically social attraction, is the basis for liking a media figure. In the original measurement of PSI (PSI-scale proposed by Rubin, Perse, and Powell), statements asked about physical attraction and wanting to socialize

with a media figure. The implication is that if a media consumer sees a media figure as attractive they might be less likely to stereotype the character. This attraction might be applied to character's social group in the real world.

Uncertainty reduction. Uncertainty reduction comes out of Initial Interaction Theory developed by Berger and Calabrese (1975). Uncertainty reduction is the idea that when individuals initially meet there is a level of uncertainty about the behaviors of the other person; however, as individuals develop an interpersonal relationship those levels of uncertainty decrease. Thus, a reduction in levels of uncertainty about an individual or group may be related to a decrease in prejudice. For example, Rubin and McHugh (1987) used a survey to examine uncertainty reduction, attraction and PSI on perceptions of the importance of developing a relationship with a television character. Rubin and McHugh (1987) found a significant relationship between PSI, social attraction, and physical attraction. They also found a small correlation between length of viewing and PSI (1987). Finally, they found a significant association between PSI and the importance of a relationship with a television character (Rubin & McHugh, 1987).

Identification. Scholars have suggested that identification and PSI are different, but related constructs. Cohen (2001) argued, "Identification requires extreme absorption in the text and involves an intense emotional experience whereas PSI is a concept modeled to be similar to friendship and is increased by a direct address to audience by the character" (p. 253). Cohen (2001) maintained that when media consumers' identify with a television character, the person stops being conscious "of his or her social role as an audience member and temporarily (but usually repeatedly) adopts the perspective of the character" (p. 251).

Brown (2015) attempted summarize and clarify four routes by which a viewer may become "involved"[8] with a media figure: transportation, PSI, identification, and worship. Brown argued that each route is "theoretically and empirically distinct" (2015, p. 261), which means that each route is exist independent of the others and can be measured independently of the others. Brown (2015) put forth a theoretical model, figure 2.1, where he argued that PSI is influenced by attraction and perceived homophily. Brown's conceptual model suggests that both transportation[9] and PSI can lead to identification.

Notably, Brown's conceptual model is different from the argument I make about PSI and identification. First, I argue that identification may be included in a scale of PSI while Brown argues that PSI influences identification. Brown (2015) suggested that PSI differs from identification in that PSI is about an "interaction" between the viewer and the character while identification requires a "merging" of the viewer with the media figure (2015, p. 265). Here again, I differ from Brown. I argue that identification may be a construct related to PSI while Brown suggested that PSI influences identification.[10]

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[8] The meaning of involvement is unclear in the literature. Indeed, in my deep dive into the literature into the PSI literature several research discussion the notion of involvement. For example, Murphy, Frank, Moran, & Patnoe-Woodley (2011) discuss degree of involvement with a character. However, in the measurement of involvement they asked participants "how involved" they were with the character. That question does not get at the meaning of involvement.

[9] Transportation will be discussed fully in chapter 4.

[10] I argue that perceived realism is a construct related to PSI while Brown suggests that perceived realism influences transportation. This argument depends a researcher definition of perceived realism. Indeed, there are two kinds of perceived realism (which I reviewed above). There is the notion of perceptions of how realistic the story is, but there are also perceptions of how realistic the character is in a story. Since research suggests that it does not matter if a story is fact or fictional (Green, 2008), I consider perceptions of how realistic of character appears in a narrative.

Figure 2.1
The image is a visual representation of Brown's (2015) conceptual model of involvement with a media character in a narrative. Brown suggests that there are four routes to character involvement: transportation, PSI, identification, and worship.
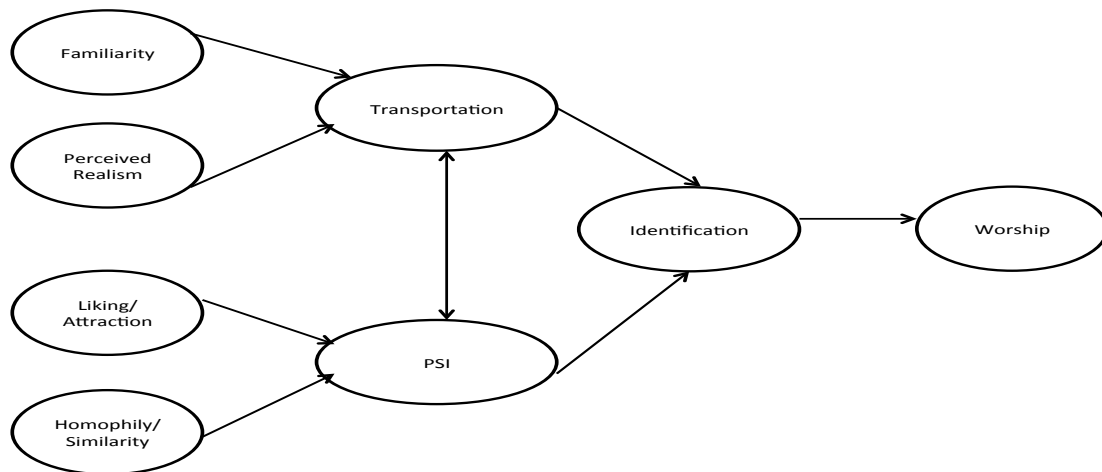
Hoffner (1996) also investigated notions of identification and PSI among children. Hoffner first defined identification as "the process by which a viewer shares a character's perspective and vicariously participates in his/her experiences during the program" (1996, p. 389). Hoffner elaborated on the differences between identification and PSI noting that "the process of developing parasocial relationships has been likened to the process by which people come to know others in real life" (1996, p. 390) while identification involves want to be like a character and wanting to be a part of the character's experiences (Hoffner, 1996, p. 390).

Taken together the literature on identification and PSI has suggested that they are different, but related concepts. It is possible that identification with a character may be a part of a parasocial interaction, but it may also be the case that conceptual overlap between PSI and identification might result in problems with multicollinearity. In

summary, previous research has examined a number of constructs in relation to PSI and those constructs include: perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification. To my knowledge, all of these constructs have not been tested in one scale of PSI.

Hypotheses

Previous research has produced two scales of parasocial interaction: PSI scale (Auter, 1992; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985) and the API scale (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000). The API scale is useful for audience/character interactions when the character breaks the fourth wall**.** The PSI scale, while a sufficient scale of parasocial interaction, was also validated with the consideration of "breaking the fourth wall." This research project is not concerned whether a character "breaks the fourth wall," but instead focuses on the relationship viewers develop with characters they enjoy watching through repeated exposure.

Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes' (2005) measure of parasocial response examines only three of the five constructs that have been previously associated with PSI. Considering previous research on perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification, it is clear that these constructs have some relationship to PSI. Indeed, determining the construct validity of a scale is about repeated measurement: "Construct validity is not established by confirming a single prediction on different occasions or confirming many predictions in a single study. Instead, construct validation ideally requires a pattern of consistent findings involving different researchers using different theoretical structures across a number of different studies" (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p. 24).

Construct validity is typically determined using a series of correlations in which the constructs of interest are examined against one another and the dependent variable. I examined the correlations among those who indicated they had seen a gay character. It is clear that four of the constructs: perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, and uncertainty reduction are constructs related to the measurement of PSI. At the same time, previous literature is not clear about the relationship between PSI and identification. While previous literature argued that identification and PSI are different; the literature also suggests that there may be conceptual overlap between PSI and identification as well as a possible strong correlation between perceived homophily and identification. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

> H1a: There will be a small correlation between perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification, as they are distinct constructs.

> H1b: There will be a positive correlation between perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification and two outcomes: acceptance and understanding of stigma.

In addition to investigating validity, I test reliability of these five constructs. I use the internal consistency method to determine reliability of the constructs. The internal consistency method "requires only a single test administration and provides a unique estimate of reliability for the given test administration (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p. 44). Cronbach's alpha is the most popular way of determining reliability.

> H2: A scale of PSI that includes: perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification will generate a higher reliability then a scale that excludes any one of those constructs.

Previous research on PSI has not investigated how each construct is affected by the repeated exposure to and enjoyment of an intersectional character. For example,

attraction, as mentioned in the literature review, may be ethnocentric and therefore it may be the case that attraction is less significant to PSI when a viewer has repeated exposure to an intersectional character (Hogg & Hardie, 1991). As reviewed in the chapter 1, Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes (2005) found that a parasocial response was significantly related to a reduction in prejudice against a Black gay character; however, their study did not test the relative contributions of each PSI-related construct (They studied attraction, uncertainty reduction, and perceived homophily.) when viewers were exposed to an intersectional character. Thus I offer the following research question:

> RQ1: What is the relative contributory impact of each PSI construct on PSI when the viewer has PSI with an intersectional character as oppose to when a viewer has PSI with non-intersectional character?

Methods

Design & Procedure

This research study consisted of a 12–15-minute survey hosted online using Qualtrics. Participants were recruited using Survey Sampling International (SSI). I gave SSI a survey link and they were responsible for recruiting participants. SSI handled all of the recruiting procedures and included all compensation information in their recruitment materials. In order to participate in this survey, participants had to be over the age of 18 and were paid per their agreement with SSI. The Institutional Review Board at the University of Wisconsin-Madison approved this study.

The flow of participants through the study can be seen in Figure 2.2. Participants were lost because they did not consent to participate or they did not complete the survey

in a satisfactory[11] manner. One participant was lost because they were underage. Finally, a number of participants were lost because they did not have meaningful responses on open-ended responses measuring TV show and character enjoyment[12]. Finally, some participants were lost because the character they named in their open-ended responses was not gay or queer.[13] The final sample for the study was n = 409. Out of the 409 participants who remained in the sample, n = 162 said that they had never seen a gay or Black gay character on television while n = 247 had seen at least one gay or Black gay character on television. This study solely focuses on the 247 respondents who indicated that they had a seen a gay character.

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[11] A number of participants did not give "meaningful responses" to the items about character enjoyment and were therefore deem "bad completes" SSI. After showing my SSI project manager these responses the company collected more participants for the study.

[12] These measures were used to create a PSI scale.

[13] Two participants wrote the names of male journalists who identify as gay. I left those responses in the dataset. I also left responses if the actor who identifies as gay/queer in real life portrays the character in question.

Figure 2.2
Flow diagram of all participants in this research study, n = 409.
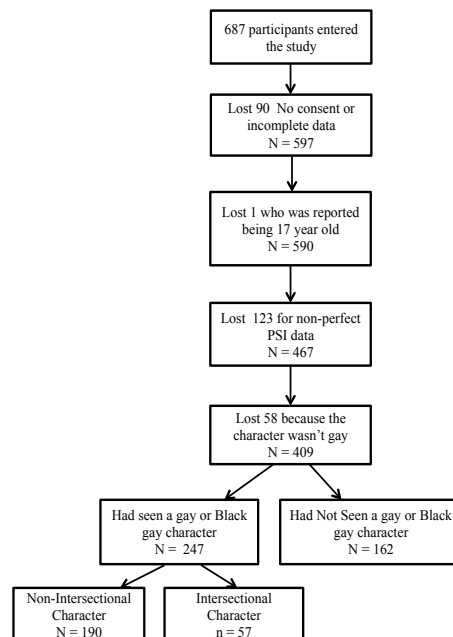
Participants were asked to respond to several demographic measures including:

gender, race, political affiliation, and religiosity at the beginning of the survey and were

asked about sexual orientation and cultural worldview at the end of the survey. Since the

study was about PSI with a gay character, I measured sexual orientation and cultural

worldview at the end of the study as to not prime participants with their own sexual

orientation.

Participants were first asked about the different social groups they had seen on

television. Participants were asked, "How many television shows do you watch with the

following groups of people?" On a scale from zero to five, participants indicated if they

watch TV shows with a gay male, a Black gay male, Black or African American, Latino,

lesbian, Black lesbian, Muslim or transgender character. If a respondent indicated that

they had seen at least one show with a gay or Black gay character, the survey was

programmed to show questions that asked participants to name a television show and gay

character in that show that they enjoy watching. If participants indicated that they had not

seen a gay or Black gay character on television, the survey was programmed to show

questions that asked participants to name a television show they enjoy watching and a

male character in that show that they enjoy watching. This study focuses only on those

participants who indicated that they had seen at least one gay or Black gay character on

television. Subsequently, participants answered questions about the television show and

character they wrote about in the open-ended questions.

Measures

  TV Show & Character Enjoyment. Participants who indicated that they had

seen at least one television show with a gay or Black gay character they were given the

following question:

> There are many TV dramas, past and present, with gay male characters
> including Jack McFarland & Will Truman on *Will & Grace,* Cameron
> Tucker & Mitchell Pritchett on *Modern Family*, Justin Suarez & Marc St.
> James on *Ugly Betty*, Will Horton on *Days of Our Lives,* Brian McKinney
> on *Queer as Folks,* Nolan Ross on *Revenge*, Leon Carpe on *Roseanne*,
> Kurt Hummel & David Karofsky on *Glee,* David Fisher on *Six Feet
> Under,* Andrew Wells on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer,* Chris Keller on *Oz,*
> Waylon Smithers *on The Simpsons,* Thomas Barrow on *Downton Abbey*
> and Ian Gallagher on *Shameless* to name a few.

> In the previous question, you indicated that you had seen at least one
> television show with either a gay male or Black gay male character. Of the
> shows with a gay male or Black gay male character, please tell us which
> televisions show you MOST ENJOY watching. Please write the NAME
> OF THE SHOW in the text box.

> If you CANNOT come up with anything, please write the name of any
> show that you ENJOY WATCHING with a male character that you like.

Subsequently, participants were asked to write the name of the character.

  Perceived Realism. I adapted a perceived realism scale developed by Potter

(1986). The validity of the scale was confirmed in Potter (1992). The scale is composed

of five statements that were measured on a five-point scale with anchors "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The statements were as follows: "There are certain characters on TV shows that I admire," "There are few characters in TV shows that I would like to be more like," "I know someone in real life like **," "In ** the character is like someone I know in my life," and "On the TV show ** the character acts like someone I know in my life."

Perceived Homophily. I measured perceived homophily using a scale developed by McCroskey, Richmond, and Daly (1975). McCroskey, McCroskey, and Richmond (2006) established the reliability and validity of this measure. Participants were asked about the character they said they enjoyed watching using a five-point bipolar scale:. The statements were as follows: "** has status like me," "** is from a different social class," "** is culturally different (reverse coded)," "** has an economic situation like mine," "** is like me," "** is different from me (reverse coded)," and "** doesn't behave like me (reverse coded)."

Attraction. Social attraction measures were adapted from McCroskey and McCain (1974). The validity and reliability of the measures have been confirmed (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994). The social attraction scale was made up of five statements that were measured on a five-point scale with anchors "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The statements were as follows: "I think ** could be a friend of mine," "It would be difficult for me to talk with **" (reversed coded), "** just wouldn't fit into my circle of friends" (reverse coded), "We could never establish a personal friendship with each other" (reverse coded), and "I would like to have a friendly chat with **."

Uncertainty Reduction. I measured uncertainty reduction using items adapted from Kellerman and Reynolds (1990). Rubin, Palmgreen, and Sypher (1994) established the reliability and validity of the uncertainty reduction scale. On a five-point scale from "not very well" (1) to "very well" (5) participants were asked the following items "Confident in your general ability to predict how ** will behave," "How accurate you are at predicting the values ** holds," "How accurate do you think you are at predicting **'s attitudes," "How well do you think you are at predicting **'s feelings and emotions" and "How well do you think you know **."

Identification. In order to measure identification, I adapted a measure used by Cohen (2001) and Moyer-Gusé and Nabi (2010). The scale included ten items measured on five-pointed with anchors "disagree" (1) and "agree" (5). The items were as follows: "While viewing **, I felt as if I was part of the action," "While viewing **, I forgot myself and was fully absorbed," "I was able to understand the events in the program in a manner similar to that in which ** understood them," "I think I have a good understanding of **'s character," "I tend to understand the reasons why ** does what he or she does," "While viewing the show I can feel the emotions ** portrayed," "At key moments in the show, I felt I knew exactly what ** was going through," "While viewing the program, I wanted ** to succeed in achieving his or her goals," and "When ** succeeded I felt joy, but when he or she failed, I was sad." Response options were measured on a five-point Likert scale anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

Analytic Approach

My analyses focused on the construct validity and reliability of a scale of PSI that uses five constructs: perceived homophily, perceived realism, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification. I test the relative significance of these PSI-related constructs when participants may have had a PSI with an intersectional character.

Construct validity is "concerned with the extent to which a particular measure relates to other measures consistent with theoretically derived hypotheses concerning the concepts (or constructs) that are being measured" (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p. 23). Construct validity is typically measured by examining a number of pieces of evidence, which includes examining past research and correlation tests. In order to determine construct validity of the PSI scale I ran correlations of the constructs against each other, as well as the outcome variables. To assess internal consistency, I ran a test of reliability using Cronbach's alpha.

In the final analyses of this chapter I test the research question regarding the relative contribution of each PSI-related construct when a respondent reported on intersectional character and when others respondents reported non-intersectional character. In order to test this research question, I created a dichotomous variable that measured whether a survey respondent reported on an intersectional character or not. As shown in Figure 2.3, fifty-seven participants reported that they enjoy watching an intersectional character, while 190 participants reported on a character who was not intersectional. I split the data into groups by whether participants had seen an intersectional character or not and performed a multiple regression.

Note on Data Analysis

The data was cleaned such that only participants with complete data on the measure of TV show/character enjoyment were used in the analysis. By complete data, I mean that the respondent was able to write the name of the television show and the name of a gay male character. For example, some participants would write the name of a show but when asked to name the character wrote, "I can't remember the name of the character." I categorized responses without clear names as non-perfect data and removed them from the dataset. I removed several respondents because the respondent named a character (or the actor) who was not gay. If it was the case that the actor is gay in real life, the response remains in the dataset. I also kept in two respondents who reported enjoying journalists who are gay.

<div align="center">**Results**</div>

TV Show & Character Enjoyment. Participants mentioned sixty-eight unique television shows across primetime and cable television. The most mentioned characters were Cameron Tucker and Mitchell Pritchett from the television show *Modern Family* followed by Ian Gallagher from the show *Shameless*. Fifty-seven participants mentioned intersectional characters. The character Jamal Lyon from the television show *Empire*, was the intersectional character mentioned most frequently mentioned by respondents.

Table 2.1 shows a complete list of television shows, characters, whether the character is gay (perceived as gay or whether the actor is gay), whether the character has an intersectional identity, and the number of respondents who indicated that they had seen a gay character on television.

PSI-related constructs. Table 2.2 includes overall mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach's alphas for each construct and the mean and standard deviation for each item that was used to scale the construct.

Hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1a proposed that there would be a small correlation (SPSS Tutorials, 2017) between perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification. Correlations between PSI–related constructs can be found in Table 2.3.

Hypothesis 1b. Hypothesis 1b proposed that there would be significant correlations between the five constructs—perceived realism, attraction, perceived homophily, uncertainty reduction, and identification—and the outcome measures of interest—understanding stigma and acceptance of gay men. The correlations are reported in Table 2.3.

Table 2.1
Table listing the television shows and character enjoyed by study participants. Participants indicated that they had seen at least one television show featuring a gay or Black gay character and therefore listed that show with gay characters & name the gay character in that show for their measures of parasocial interaction.

T.V. show	Name of Character	Mentions	Gay	Intersectional
13 Reasons Why	Tony Padilla	2	Yes	Yes
American Dad	Terry Bates	1	Yes	No
Anime	Naruto Shippuden	1	Yes	No
Archer	Ray Gillette	1	Yes	No
(The) Arrow	Curtis Holt /Mr. Terrific	2	Yes	Yes
Barney Miller	Marty Morrison	1	Yes	No
Being Mary Jane	Mark Bradley	2	Yes	Yes
Black Sails	Captain Flint	1	Yes	No
Blacklist	Raymond Reddington	2	Yes	No
Bob's Burgers	Bob Belcher	1	Maybe (Bisexual)	No
Breaking Bad	Walter White	1	Yes	No
Bull	Chunk Palmer	4	Maybe (It's implied)	No
CNN	Anderson Cooper	1	Yes	No
Days of Our Lives	Will Horton	3	Yes	No
Doogie Howser, M.D.	Doogie Howser/Neil Patrick Harris	2	No/Actor is gay	No
Downton Abbey	Thomas Barrow	1	Yes	No
Empire	Jamal Lyon	16	Yes	Yes
(The) Fosters	Jude Foster	2	Yes	No
Game of Thrones	Renly Baratheon	2	Yes	No
General Hospital	Felix DuBois	1	Yes	Yes
Girls	Elijah Krantz	1	Yes	No
Glee	Kurt Hummel	5	Yes	No
Greenleaf	Kevin "Miles" Satterlee	1	Yes/Bisexual	Yes
Hap & Leonard	Leonard Pine	2	Yes	Yes
Hawaii 50	Steven McGarret	1	Yes	No
Hello, Fred	Fred	1	Yes	No
House of Cards	Nathan Darrow	1	Yes	No
How I Met Your Mother	James Stinson	1	Yes	Yes
How to Get Away With Murder	Conner Walsh	4	Yes	No
I watch a news Show on Fox with a gay male, he is not a character (Fox News)	Shepard Smith	1	Yes	No
Impractical Jokers	James Murray	1	Yes	No
It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia	Ronald "Mac" McDonald	1	Yes	No
Magicians	Eliot Waugh	1	Yes	No
Modern Family	Cam, Phil	1	Yes	No
	Cameron Tucker	34	Yes	No

	Mitchell "Mitch" Pritchett	21	Yes	No
	Cam & Mitch	3	Yes	No
Nashville	Will Lexington	1	Yes	No
Night Shift	Drew Alister	1	Yes	No
Noah's Arc	Noah Nicholson	1	Yes	Yes
Orphan Black	Felix Dawkins	1	Yes	No
Oz	Chris Keller	1	Yes	No
Parks and Recreation	Craig Middlebrooks	1	Yes	No
Prison Break	Michael Scofield	4	Actor is gay	Yes
Queer As Folk	Emmet Honeycutt	1	Yes	No
Roseanne	Leon Carpe	2	Yes	No
Ru Paul's Drag Race	Ru Paul	4	Yes	Yes
Say Yes to the Dress	Randy Fenoli	1	Yes	No
Scandal	Cyrus Bean	1	Yes	No
Sense 8	Hernando Fuentes	1	Yes	Yes
	Lito Rodriguez	2	Yes	Yes
Shameless	Mikhailo Aleksandr Milkovich	1	Yes	No
	Ian Gallagher	19	Yes	No
Skins	Maxxie Oliver	1	Yes	No
Soap	Bill Crystal	1	Yes	No
Sopranos	Vito Spatafore	1	Yes	No
Star	Cotton	1	Yes	Yes
Superstore	Mateo Liwanag	2	Yes	Yes
Switched at Birth	Matthew	1	Pretends to be gay	No
The Big Bang Theory	Sheldon Cooper	4	Asexual	No
	Leonard Hofstadter	1	Perceived to be gay	No
The Borgias	Micheletto Corella	1	Yes	No
The Have and the Have Nots	Jeffery Harrington	1	Yes	Yes
The Office	Oscar Martinez	1	Yes	Yes
The Simpsons	Moe Szyslak	1	Yes	No
The Walking Dead	Aaron/Recruiter	7	Yes	No
	Paul "Jesus" Monroe	2	Yes	No
True Blood	Lafayette Reynolds	1	Yes	Yes
Ugly Betty	Marc St. James	2	Yes	No
Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt	Titus Andromeda	7	Yes	Yes
Watch Happens Live	Andy Cohen	1	Yes	No
Will & Grace	Jack McFarland	13	Yes	No
	Will Truman	14	Yes	No
WWE Raw	Roman Regies	1	Yes	Yes
Young and Hungry	Elliot Osment	4	Yes	Yes

Table 2.2
Table includes means and standard deviations for PSI-related constructs, which include perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification. The table also includes the Cronbach's alphas for each scale.

Measures	Items	Mean	St. Dev.	Alphas
Perceived Realism	Full Scale	3.38	1.05	.84
	There are certain shows on TV shows that I admire.	4.19	.78	
	There are few characters in TV shows that I would like to be more like. (Reverse coded)	2.63	1.42	
	I know someone in real life like **	3.16	1.39	
	** acts like someone I know in my life.	3.05	1.39	
	** is like someone I know in my life.	3.13	1.42	
Perceived Homophily	Full Scale	2.67	1.14	.84
	Has status like me	2.53	1.29	
	Has similar social class	2.96	1.33	
	Is culturally different	2.69	1.30	
	Has an economic situation like me	2.52	1.31	
Attraction	Full Scale	4.20	.84	.81
	Could be a friend of mine.	4.28	1.00	
	Would be difficult for me to talk with. (Reverse Coded)	4.21	1.11	
	Just wouldn't fit into my circle of friends. (Reverse Coded)	3.88	1.35	
	Could never establish a personal friendship. (Reverse Coded)	4.13	1.25	
	Could have a friendly chat with me.	4.49	.81	
Uncertainty Red.	Full Scale	3.44	.96	.92
	Confident in your general ability to predict how ** will behave	3.48	1.11	
	How accurate you are at predicting that values ** hold	3.44	1.09	
	How accurate do you think are at predicting ** attitudes	3.49	1.07	
	How accurate do you think are at predicting ** feelings and emotions.	3.40	1.12	
	How well do you think you know **.	3.39	1.12	
ID	Full Scale	3.87	.70	.87
	While viewing **, I feel as if I am part of the action.	3.59	1.18	
	While viewing **, I forget myself and are fully absorb.	3.67	1.20	
	I am able to understand the events in the program in a manner similar to that in which ** understands them.	3.75	1.03	
	I think I have a good understanding of **'s character.	4.12	.89	
	I tend to understand the reasons why ** does what he does.	3.97	.92	
	While viewing the show I feel the emotions ** portrays.	3.96	.91	

	At key moments in the show, I feel I know exactly what **is going through.	3.69	1.03
	While viewing the program, I want ** to succeed in achieving his goals.	4.28	.85
	When ** succeeded I feel joy, but when he fails I am sad.	3.99	.96

Table 2.3
Table of correlation coefficients between PSI-related constructs, perceived realism, attraction, perceived homophily, uncertainty reduction, and identification; and prejudice reduction. There are two measures of prejudice reduction: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma.

	Perc'd Realism	Attraction	Perc'd Homophily	Uncertainty Red.	ID	Acceptance	Stigma Impact
Perc'd Realism	1	.22**	.42**	.30**	.32**	.16*	.21**
Attraction		1	.10	.12	.31**	.43**	.24**
Perc'd Homophily			1	.25**	.22**	.03	.08
Uncertainty Red.				1	.38**	.09	.15*
ID					1	.30**	.26**
Acceptance						1	.55**
Stigma Impact							1

Note: Range of all measures between 1 and 5, * p < .05, **p. < .01, ***p < .001

Hypothesis 2. H2 proposed that the five constructs of interest in this study would be a reliable scale of PSI. Cronbach's alphas for the five constructs are reported in Table 2.3 and were high. The PSI scale, which includes all five PSI-related constructs had a Cronbach's alpha, $\alpha = .86$. The traditional measures of PSI, which included perceived realism, perceived homophily and attraction, have a Cronbach's alpha, $\alpha = .75$ (Nunnally, 1978). Using only the constructs used by Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005), which included perceived homophily, attraction, and uncertainty reduction, the Cronbach's alpha, $\alpha = .77$. A PSI scale that includes attraction, perceived realism, perceived homophily, uncertainty reduction, and identification appears to be relatively more reliable than previous PSI scales. Thus, I find support for H2.

RQ1: PSI with Intersectional vs. Non-intersectional character. I tested the

relative contribution of each PSI-related construct when a character has an intersectional

identity and those that did not view an intersectional character using regression analysis.

Among those who reported enjoying an intersectional character the relative contribution

of identification was greater than the other four constructs. Additionally, tests suggested

that there may also be a problem with multicollinearity with identification in the model.

The full regression analysis is reported in Table 2.4

Among respondents who reported enjoying a non-intersectional gay character

regression analysis was similar to the regression analysis for those who saw an

intersectional gay character. Again, the relative contribution of identification was greater

than the other constructs as indicated by a higher beta weight. In this model, there was

not a problem of multicollinearity with the construct of identification. The full regression

analysis can be found in Table 2.5.

Table 2.4
Regression table for outcome PSI with intersectional characters, n = 57.

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Tolerance	VIF
Model						
Constant	.16	.05		3.02		
Perceived Realism	.15	.01	.28	19.42	.72	1.38
Perceived Homophily	.12	.01	.20	14.84	.79	1.26
Attraction	.18	.01	.23	15.83	.66	1.50
Uncertainty Reduction	.18	.01	.27	18.45	.68	1.47
Identification	.31	.01	.47	27.23	.49	2.02

Note: * p < .05, **p. < .01, ***p < .001

Table 2.5
Regression table for outcome PSI with for participants who enjoy non-intersectional gay characters, n =190.

	B	St. Error	Beta	t	Tolerance	VIF
Model						
Constant	.13	.02		5.17		
Perceived Realism	.15	.00	.29	39.28	.72	1.38
Perceived Homophily	.11	.00	.24	33.53	.77	1.29
Attraction	.19	.00	.31	45.55	.90	1.11
Uncertainty Reduction	.18	.00	.32	44.41	.80	1.25
Identification	.33	.01	.39	54.30	.80	1.26

Note: * p < .05, **p. < .01, ***p < .001

Discussion

This study was initially inspired by individuals' in the media audience reactions the death of major character on a long-running television show. In season eleven of ABC's hit show *Grey's Anatomy*, the character of Dr. Derek "McDreamy" Shepherd was killed off the show, Kimble (2015) noted audience reaction on Twitter:

> I actually grow really attached to these characters its sad but true. And when they die it affects me like any other death. *3 crying emojis* #RIPMcDreamy

> Anyone else's wife crying in the middle of the living floor… or is it just mine? #GreysAnatomy…. #GreysAnatomyBrokeMyWife

> So when are we all signing up for group therapy…??????! #GreysAnatomy #tgit #disbelief

Over the course of eleven seasons members of the media audience had grown to care about the character of Derek Shepard such that they had very real emotions about and responses to the character's death. I argue that many viewers had some form of a relationship with the character, which was very real in the mind of the viewers. Thus, I began my study of PSI and how it might be related to real world attitudes. To study the affects of PSI, I set out to understand how PSI is conceptualized and measured.

In chapter 1, I investigated previous conceptualizations and measurement of PSI and argued for a new measure of PSI. While it has been measured differently over time, typically, PSI has been thought to be a multidimensional construct. Much of the measurement of PSI surrounds the development of two scales: the PSI scale (Auter, 1992; Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1987) and the API scale (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000). Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) slightly diverged from these scales by conceptualizing a "parasocial response" as attraction, perceived homophily, and uncertainty reduction. Finally, PSI has typically been studied in terms of characters "breaking the fourth wall." My research project examined the relationships viewers develop with characters, specifically with intersectional characters. I study PSI without a specific examination of breaking the fourth wall.

I found there is construct and concurrent validity and reliability among the five PSI-related constructs. In terms of construct validity, all of the constructs examined in this work have been used in previous studies of PSI or PCH. In this study, attraction was not correlated with uncertainty reduction or perceived homophily; however there were low correlations between other constructs. Most notably, identification and perceived homophily had a medium-high correlation, which suggested that there might be some overlap in the measures. However, the test of multicollinearity suggests that there is not an issue.

Additionally, many of the PSI-related constructs were correlated with the prejudice-related outcomes. Acceptance was correlated with perceived realism, attraction, and identification. The outcome measure understanding the impact of stigma was correlated with perceived realism, attraction, and uncertainty reduction. While the

outcomes measures were not correlated with all the constructs, there is evidence theoretically and empirically that all these constructs are related to PSI and may be included in a PSI scale.

In terms of reliability, the five constructs had high reliability. Indeed, all five constructs have a better Cronbach's alpha than previous scales of PSI, including the one used by Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005). When I examined the relative contributions of each construct on PSI, I found in that identification had a greater relative contribution to PSI in comparison to the other construct.[14] Most notably, there was an issue of multicollinearity in the scale for those participants who reported enjoying an intersectional gay character. For participants who reported that they enjoyed watching a non-intersectional gay character, identification had a greater relative contribution, but in this case there was not an issue of multicollinearity.

Implications of this study

This study has implications for measuring PSI. In the data, participants could write about a gay character that they enjoy watching. There are some pros and cons to this measure. Asking participants about a character that they enjoy seems to be a valid way of measuring PSI. Indeed, many studies of PSI begin with a qualitative measure (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000; Levy, 1979). However, there are some issues of clarity in the responses. In the next section I attempt to work through some of the issues with

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[14] Noted in my dissertation defense, I need to consider other methods to determine relative contribution of each construct to PSI. One way to do this is by conducting a restricted confirmatory factor using R. A restricted confirmatory factor analysis would allow me examine the contribution of each construct while restricting the influence of the other constructs. A restricted confirmatory factor analysis would need to be conducted for those participants who saw an intersectional character and those who did not report on an intersectional character.

participants' open-ended responses in which they were supposed to name of gay

character that they enjoyed watching on television.

In some cases, participants indicated that they had seen a gay or Black gay

character, but then wrote about characters that are not gay. There were also a number of

participants who could not recall the name of the character from a television show. There

are number of ways that this may be interpreted. First, it simply may be that in the

context of taking a survey, individuals are unable to recall the name of the character in

the same way they would have had they had more time. Second, some participants may

have seen gay men and/or Black gay men, but they did not enjoy watching those

characters. Perhaps, future study might examine people who are exposed to intersectional

characters, but do not enjoy watching those characters. Finally, there were a couple of

participants who indicated that they had not seen a gay or queer character, but

subsequently indicated that they enjoyed watching a gay character like Jamal Lyon. It

may be the case that participants simply forgot about Jamal's sexuality.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, this study

had two qualitative questions that facilitated the measurement of PSI. There were a

number of participants lost because they were unable to recall the name of the TV

character or television show. In the future, I would like to find better ways of measuring

PSI; perhaps using some type of algorithm that randomizes a list of shows based on

individual responses to media preferences.

Second, I was concerned that participants would not be able to recall a gay

character that they enjoyed on television and therefore I decided to "guide" participants.

That is, I offered examples of gay male characters in popular television shows. Giving participants this information may have biased their responses. Noticeably, I did not include Black gay men in the examples. I did this for a several of reasons. I wanted participants to be able to recall Black gay character on their own without any potential guidance from the survey instrument. There are so few Black gay men on television it may have been obvious to participants had I mentioned them as examples.

Third, I did not ask respondents how often they had viewed the character in the past; I only included a general measure of media exposure. I argue that PSI is about repeated exposure to a character that one enjoys; however, in the study I assumed that my respondents have seen the character multiple times. In the future it would be imperative to know how many times an individual had viewed a character and whether there were difference around quantity of viewings and forming a relationship with an intersectional character.

Fourth, the study was a survey, which places limits on the constructs that can be measured as part of PSI. For example, transportation into a narrative may also be a construct associated with PSI; however, it is very difficult to measure transportation in a survey setting.

Even with the limitations, this study remains meaningful for its attempt to conceptually clarify and advance the measure of PSI. As Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) note, the PSI literature is peppered with different definitions and scales. However, unlike Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, I believe it is necessary to have definitional clarity on what PSI is, how it is measured, and the way it applies across different sectors of the media audience and television characters. Media effects scholars and communication

researchers benefit from well-theorized and well-measured variables. In order to understand the effects of television exposure on the media audience, we must work to thoroughly and completely understand concepts like parasocial interaction. In the next chapter, I present part two of this study, in which I examine the way PSI might indirectly lead to greater acceptance and understanding of the impact of stigma of gay men, specifically those gay/queer men with intersectional identities.

Chapter 3

Thus far, I have examined the conceptualization and measurement of PSI to argue that a measure of PSI must consider repeated exposure to a character that the viewer enjoys and that a scale of PSI should include: perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification. In this chapter, I build on chapter 1 and present a conceptual model of PSI. I propose that PSI is directly and indirectly related to prejudice-reduction.

Prejudice is the "generalized negative affect toward members of an out-group" (Er-rafiy & Brauer, 2012, p. 921). As reviewed in chapter 1, researchers previously found that under the right conditions, social contact was one of the best ways to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In their work on PCH, Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes (2005) argued that mass-mediated contact might have similar prejudice reducing affects as intergroup contact. The idea that mass-mediated contact may reduce prejudice is significant because we know that stigma, which is the result of prejudicial evaluations can have a negative impact on health and well-being on social marginalized groups like gay men (Jeffries, Townsend, Gelaude, Torrone, Gasiorowicz, & Bertiolli, 2015; Meyer, 2003a).

PSI may impede negative evaluations associated with prejudice by elevating notions that gay men generally and Black gay men specifically are made up of a diverse group of individuals. As a result, individuals are likely to have greater acceptance. Additionally, I argue that media consumers who have higher levels of perceptions of variability of gay men as a group may be more likely to understand the impact of stigma

on the lives of gay men because they come to see that gay men can be similar to themselves and/or other social groups.

In this chapter, I begin with a short discussion of stereotypes/stereotyping and how stereotypes of Black men generally and Black gay men specifically characterize them as outside of dominant and/or normative notions of masculinity. I connect the literature on stereotyping to perceptions of variability. Subsequently, I review research on perceptions of variability and the way it has been measured. I propose a conceptual model that suggests that perceptions of variability mediate the relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction. Finally, I discuss the potential moderating role of social contact

Literature Review

Stereotypes in Media

Brauer and Er-rafiy (2011) define stereotyping as "people's tendency to associate certain traits with certain groups or, to be more precise, to believe that a given group possesses a given trait to a greater extent than a relevant comparison group" (p. 5). Devine (1989) as well as Fiske and Neuberg (1990) argued that stereotypes can be activated without conscious effort by cues in the environment or the mere presence of physical features or attributes. In other words, stereotypes can easily be activated by cues in the media environment. A significant amount of research has focused on stereotypes of different social groups particularly those characterized by race and sexual orientation.

Travis Dixon's work demonstrated the ways stereotypes are associated with real-world outcomes. For example, Dixon and Linz (2000a, 2000b) found that African Americans are overrepresented as lawbreakers in media content. These representations have become stereotypes of Black identity. Dixon (2006) also found that individuals, who are heavy viewers of media content that contained images of Black people as criminals,

were more likely to think of the world as dangerous, and those who endorsed those stereotypes that linked African Americans with crime were more likely to show support for the death penalty (Dixon, 2006). Other researchers have also argued that the activation of negative stereotypes about African Americans can influence individuals' evaluations of politicians and social policy (Mastro, 2009; Mastro & Kopacz, 2006; Valentino, 1999).

Black gay men have also been stereotyped in media content. Black gay men have been stereotyped as feminine, flamboyant, and over-the-top (Cobb & Means-Coleman, 2009). While, Cobb and Means-Coleman (2008) note the general scarcity of representations of Black gay men in media, they also cited comical and "over-the-top" depictions of Black gay men in television shows like *In Living Color*. In summary, portrayals of Black men, generally, characterized the group as criminal or "thugs" while stereotypes of Black gay men paint them as dysfunctional and dangerous. These stereotypes serve to shape evaluations of Black gay men by those within and outside of their sociocultural groups. With this in mind, researchers have examined ways to reduce negative evaluations by increasing perceptions of variability of a group.

Perceptions of Variability

Perceived variability is "the degree to which individuals perceive a group as heterogeneous" (Brauer & Er-rafiy, 2011, p. 3) Typically, in-groups are seen as having more variability than out-groups (Guinote, Judd, & Brauer, 2002). Er-rafiy and Brauer (2012) argued that perceived variability is an influential construct that has "cognitive (stereotypes), affective (prejudice) and behavioral (discrimination)" consequences (2012,

p. 921). In other words, increasing perceptions of variability of another group may reduce stereotyping, prejudice, and/or discrimination toward that group.

Perceived group variability is composed of two components: stereotypicality and dispersion (Brauer, Judd, & Jacquelin, 2001; Ryan, Judd, & Park, 1996). Stereotypicality is "the measure of the strength of the subject's stereotypes, where strength is defined as the extremity of the perceptions" (Ryan, Judd, & Park, 1996, p. 75). Dispersion is the degree to which "group members are seen as tightly clustered around their mean on a given attribute versus dispersed over a wide range of values on that dimension" (Ryan, Judd, & Park, 1996, p.76). Brauer and Er-rafiy (2011) argued that perceived variability and stereotypes are related constructs: "Any claim of a causal link between perceived variability and stereotypes is tautological: stereotyping is usually defined as the association of characteristics with social groups, and perceived variability either involves the measure or the manipulation of this same construct" (2011, p. 3). With this in mind, my research study focuses on the effects of perceived variability on the relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction.

Measuring perceived variability

Across four studies, Brauer and Er-rafiy (2011) explored the relationship between perceived variability, prejudice, and discrimination. In each of the four studies, Brauer and Er-rafiy (2011) varied their manipulation of perceived variability of a relevant out-group. In study one, Brauer and Er-rafiy manipulated perceived variability by pointing out a subgroup of the out-group instead of the entire group. In study two, perceived variability was manipulated by having participants think that members of the out-group had varying opinions and/or attitudes. In study three, participants were exposed to a

poster with different images of an out-group. In study four, participants examined

pictures of out-group members and were asked to think about differences or similarities.

Across all four studies, Brauer and Er-rafiy (2011) found that elevated perceptions of

variability was associated with lower levels of prejudice.

Thus, perception of variability might mediate the relationship between PSI and

prejudice-related attitudes of gay men. That is, having repeated exposure to a gay

character that one enjoys and having a parasocial reaction to that character might be

likely to increase an individual's perceptions of gay men as a group of diverse individuals

in ways akin to the effects of social contact. Increased perceptions of variability of gay

men as social group may be associated with increased acceptance of gay men and greater

understanding the impact of stigma in lives of gay men.

Hypotheses

In the introductory chapter, I reviewed the ways stigma and prejudice may

negatively affect the health and wellbeing of Black gay men. Stereotypes contribute to

the stigmatizing of intersectional groups as previous research suggests that stereotype

activation may be related to negative evaluations. Stereotypes in media content have

characterize Black gay men as dysfunctional.

On way stereotype activation and thus prejudice might be mitigated is through

media. Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) previously found a direct relationship

between parasocial contact and attitudes toward gay men; however, I argue that the

relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction is mediated through perception of

variability, that is, by increasing the notion of group as composed of diverse individuals,

people are more likely to be accepting of another group and make also come to

understand of the negative impact of stigma. To my knowledge, previous research has not

tested the potential for PSI to increase perceptions of variability and indirectly affect

attitudes toward gay men. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

> H1a: Perceived variability will partially mediate the relationship between parasocial interaction with a gay character and acceptance of gay men.

As previously discussed, stigma can have a negative effect on the lives of Black gay men.

Some media effects theory suggests that people can learn from media content (Bandura,

2009). It may be the case that when a viewer has a parasocial interaction with a gay

character, the viewer is willing to put themselves in the shoes of the character and come

to understand how negative social evaluations affects gay men in the real world. Thus, I

hypothesize the following:

> H1b: Perceived variability will partially mediate the relationship between parasocial interaction with a gay character and understanding the impact stigma has on the lives of gay men.

The Moderating Role of Social Contact

The contact hypothesis suggests that under the right conditions, social contact

with an out-group can mitigate negative evaluations associated with prejudice and

discrimination. Using data from a national survey, Herek and Glunt (1993) found that

interpersonal contact was a predictor of attitudes toward gay men. Herek and Capitanio

(1996) examined heterosexual contact with gay men and lesbians across two studies.

They found that people with more contact had more positive attitudes than those with no

contact. They also found that interpersonal contact to be a better predictor of attitudes

than any other demographic variable. In fact, Herek and Capitanio (1996) discussed the

idea of interpersonal contact increasing variability of a group when they reported:

Favorable attitudes were more likely among heterosexuals who reported multiple contacts with lesbians or gay men. Although knowing one gay person was associated with more positive attitudes than knowing none, only respondents who knew at least two gay persons were consistently significantly different from those with no contacts. Perhaps knowing multiple members of a stigmatized group is more likely to foster recognition of that group's variability than knowing only one group member. (p. 420)

Therefore, in a theoretical model of PSI, previous social contact with gay men is likely to moderate the relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction. While I argue that social contact might moderated the indirect relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction it is unclear where that moderation might occur. One could argue that the relationship between exposure and PSI might be magnified for those who have not had interpersonal contact with gay men in the real world. On the other hand, it could also be the case that social contact moderates the relationship between perceptions of variability and both prejudice-related outcomes such that those who have had contact with gay men in the real world are relatively more accepting and have greater understanding of the impact of stigma. Thus, I offer competing hypotheses of the moderating role of social contact:

H2a: Social contact will interact with parasocial interaction with a gay character such that the effects of PSI on perceived variability will be magnified among people who have few gay male or Black gay male social contacts.

H2b: Social contact will interact with perceptions of variability such that the effects of perceived variability on prejudice reduction will be magnified for those who have had more contact with gay males or Black gay males in the real world.

Demographics variables related to PSI

Previous research on attitudes toward gay men and intergroup relations suggest that some demographic variables may be predictors of PSI and prejudice reduction. One demographic variable that might be related to PSI and prejudice reduction outcomes

is race/ethnicity. In terms of the independent variable PSI, research on intergroup relations suggests that individuals have empathy for those in their in-group and apathy for out-groups (Cikara, Bruneau, Van Bavel, & Saxe, 2014). Thus, African Americans may be affected differently than White Americans by seeing a Black gay male character. Scholars have found that African Americans may receive a boost of self-esteem by the mere presence of an African American character on screen (Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011) and thus race may be predictor of PSI. Additionally, in terms of prejudice reduction may be the case that participants who have intersectional identities might also be more likely to have a reduction in prejudice. On the other hand, it is evident that communities of color may re-inscribe the same prejudices present in the wider society. Thus, it is necessary to test the role of race in the relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction.

Religiosity and political affiliation (Greenberg & Brystryn, 1982) has also been shown to be a significant predictor of PSI and prejudice reduction. For many, religiosity is closely linked to political affiliation and therefore political affiliation may also be associated with a PSI with an intersectional character. For some who are more conservative and/or whose political views a line with the Republican party may be less likely to have a PSI with a gay character and may be less likely to be accepting or understand the impact of stigma on the lives of gay men.

Age may also be associated with PSI and prejudice reduction with an intersectional character. Younger members of the media audience may be more accepting than older individuals. Typically, younger individuals have more liberal social and political views, which are often associated with greater acceptance of other groups, but

also it may be the case that younger people are more likely to have a parasocial interaction with a character outside of their social group.

Conceptual Model

My conceptual model depicts an indirect relationship between PSI and acceptance of gay men and understanding the impact of stigma on the lives of gay men. The relationship between PSI and perceived variability is mediated by perceptions of variability. I propose that social contact might moderate either the relationship between PSI and perceived variability or the relationship between perceived variability and prejudice reduction. I also consider background variables as predictors of PSI. The visual representation of my conceptual model can be found in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1
My conceptual model depicting the relationship between PSI, perceptions of variability, social contact, and prejudice-related outcomes. My model proposes a direct relationship between PSI and both prejudice reducing outcome. I also argue that the PSI is indirectly related to prejudice reduction through perceptions of variability. Finally, I suggest the social contact will either moderate the relationship between PSI and perceptions of variability or the relationship between perceptions of variability and prejudice reduction.
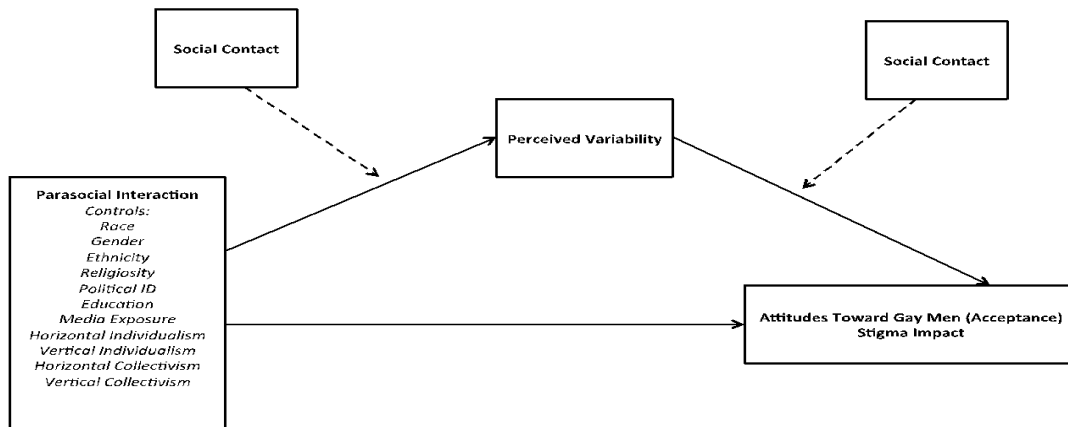
Note: Previous literature is not clear on the where social contact might moderate this relationship and therefore the relationship is shown with a dotted arrow.

Methods

Design & Procedure

Data collection for this study occurred alongside data discussed in chapter 2 and also see chapter 2 for participant flow resulting in a sample size of, n = 247. All procedures were the same as describe in chapter 2. The full survey codebook is located in Appendix 1

Measures

Dependent Variables

Acceptance. I measured attitudes toward gay men/acceptance using the homopostivity scale (Morrison & Bearden, 2007). The homopostivity scale was measured on a five-point scale anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (5) and consisted of five statements. The statements are as follows: "If a family member told me he was gay, I would no longer speak to him," "It is important for me to avoid gay men," "I have no problem with gay men, but see no need for them to express their sexual

orientation publicly," "In general, I believe it is morally acceptable to be a gay man," and "Gay men are of value to my community."

Understanding the Impact of Stigma. I measured understanding the impact of stigma by using a scale. Similar to the measure of attitudes toward gay men, the scale was measured on a five-point scale anchored by "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree." The scale consisted of four statements, which were: "My community's views regarding homosexuality affects the lives of gay men," "I think name-calling has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community," "I think social rejection has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community," and "I think physical violence has an effect on the lives of gay men in my community."

Independent Variable

PSI. The PSI scale included: attraction, perceived realism, perceived homophily, uncertainty reduction, and identification. Refer to chapter 2 for the full description of how this item was measured.

Mediator

Perceived Variability. The measured consists of five statements measured on a five-point scale. The statements were: "Gay men are a unique collection of individuals," "Gay men are different from one another," "Gay men are a diverse group," "Gay men are a uniform group," and "Gay men are similar to one another." I recoded the last two statements.

Moderator

Social Contact. To measure interpersonal contact, I used a measure developed by Herek and Capitanio (1996). On a five-point scale, participants will be asked how many

family members, close friends, and acquaintances they know who are gay and of different racial backgrounds.

Control Variables

      Demographics. I used single-item measures of age, race, gender, ethnicity, religiosity, political affiliation, education, and sexual orientation.

      Cultural Worldview. Cultural worldview was measured using a scale developed by Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand (1995). The scale consists of horizontal collectivism, horizontal individualism, vertical individualism, and vertical collectivism. Each scale consisted of four statements measured on a five-point scale. Participants were given a score that was the total of their responses to the four statements on each scale. All individualism and collectivism were five-point scales anchored by "agree" (1) and "disagree" (5).

      Statements measuring horizontal collectivism were as follows: "If a coworker/colleagues gets a prize, I would feel proud," "The well-being of my coworkers/colleagues is important to me," "To me, pleasure is spending time with others," and "I feel good when I cooperate with others."

      The statements measuring vertical collectivism were as follows: "Parents and children must stay together as much as possible," "It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want," "Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required," and "It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups."

      Horizontal individualism was measured with the following statements: "I'd rather depend on myself than others," "I rely on myself most of the time, I rarely rely on

others," "I often do 'my own thing,'" and "My personal identity, independent of others, is

very important to me."

The statements measuring vertical individualism were as follows: "It is important

I do my job better than others," "Winning is everything," "Competition is the law of

nature," and "When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused."

Media Exposure. Exposure to television was measured by asking, "How often

(in hours) do you watch TV? (Live or on the Internet). On a seven-point scale from 0 to

5+ hours[15], respondents provided the number of hours of television viewed "on a typical

weekday," "on a typical Saturday," and "on a typical Sunday." I created a weekly

measure of media exposure by multiplying hours on a typical weekday by five and

subsequently adding the scores from the responses to the number of hours on Saturday

and Sunday spent watching TV.

Analytic Approach

As reviewed in chapter 2, social contact and PSI are closely related in the

literature therefore I ran correlations between the two items. Subsequently, I ran

regressions to test for multicollinearity between PSI and social contact. Multicollinearity

occurs when two or more variables in a regression model are highly correlated and can

result in inability to assess the effect of the independent variable on the dependent

variable (Farrar & Glauber, 1967; Mansfield & Helms, 1982). The variance inflation

factor (VIF) can identify multicollinearity. Field (2009) suggests that "if average VIF is

greater than 1, then multicollinearity may be biasing the regression model" (p. 224).

However, others suggests that a VIF greater than 2 may be problematic (Field, 2009). In

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[15] The scale includes .5 (or an half hour) in order to make the scale seven points.

addition to VIF, the tolerance statistic can also provide information on multicollinearity such that values "below .1 indicate serious problems" (Field, 2009, p. 224).

I present a number of control variables in this study; and there may be an issue of statistical power when running the mediation and moderated/mediation models. In regression analysis you need 10 -15 cases per predictor (Field, 2009, p. 222). I put forth eleven controls variable in my conceptual model. In order to deal with this potential issue, I used regression analysis to determine which potential controls were significant and only using those controls in the mediation analysis.

The Process Macro for SPSS was used to test mediation and moderated/mediation hypotheses (Hayes & Preacher, 2013). The Process Macro allows for tests of direct and indirect effects of PSI on acceptance. In addition to estimating coefficients for the mediation path, the macro estimates confidence intervals around point estimates, allowing for direct comparison of effect sizes for mediation pathways. I used Process model 4 to test my mediation model. Process model 7 was used to test moderation/mediation.

Results

Summary Statistics & Correlations

Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of all demographic measures and control variables can be found in Table 3.1. Age, race, sexual orientation, religiosity, political affiliation, and cultural worldview were used as control variables in mediation and moderated/mediation models. Table 3.2 contains the means and standard deviations for the independent variable, both dependent variables: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma, the mediating variable perceived variability and

moderating variable social contact. Table 3.3 shows the correlation matrix for all IV,

DVs, and all control variables.

Table 3.1
Descriptive statistics for all demographics variables, n= 247.

Measure	Item	Frequency	%	Mean	St. Dev.	Alpha
Age	Year	---	---	39.77	15.34	
Gender	Woman	165	66.8	---	---	
	Man	80	32.4	---	---	
	Missing	2	.8	---	---	
Race	White	160	64.8	---	---	
	Black	29	11.7	---	---	
	Latino	20	8.1	---	---	
	Asian	21	8.5	---	---	
	Alaska Native	11	4.5	---	---	
	Pacific Islander	1	.4	---	---	
	Other	2	.8	---	---	
Hispanic	Yes	30	12.1	---	---	
	No	213	86.2	---	---	
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual/Straight	216	87.4	---	---	
	Bisexual	15	6.1	---	---	
	Gay/Lesbian	9	3.6	---	---	
	Prefer Not to Say	3	1.2	---	---	
	Other	4	1.6	---	---	
Education	Overall	---	---	3.99	.72	
	Less than high school degree	4	1.6	---	---	
	High school graduate	47	19.0	---	--	
	Some college but no degree	60	24.3	---	---	
	Associate degree in college (2-year)	33	13.4	---	---	
	Bachelor's Degree in college (4-year)	62	25.1	---	---	
	Master's degree	30	12.1	---	---	
	Doctoral degree	3	12.1	---	---	
	Professional degree (JD, MD)	8	3.2	---	---	
Religiosity	Overall	---	---	3.28	1.50	
	Unimportant	55	22.3	---	---	
	Somewhat unimportant	22	8.9	---	---	
	Neither	36	14.6	---	---	
	Somewhat important	66	26.7	---	---	
	Important	68	27.5	---	---	
Political ID				---	---	
	Strong Democrat	60	24.3	---	---	
	Not so strong Democrat	31	12.6	---	---	

	Independent leaning Democrat	42	17.0	---	---	
	Independent	37	15.0	---	---	
	Independent leaning Republican	13	5.3	---	---	
	Not so strong Republican	24	9.7	---	---	
	Strong Republican	19	7.7	---	---	
	Other	9	3.6	---	---	
	Don't know	12	4.9	---	---	
Horizontal Collectivism				1.91	.70	.78
Vertical Collectivism				1.92	.77	.72
Horizontal Individualism				1.70	.69	.71
Vertical Individualism				2.98	.87	.70
Media Exposure				22.25	10.11	

Table 3.2
Means and standard deviations for independent variable: PSI, dependent variables: acceptance and
understanding the impact of stigma, meditating variable: perceived variability and moderating variable:
social contact, n = 247.

Measure	**Item**	Mean	St. Dev.	Alpha
Acceptance		3.85	.94	.77
	If a family member told me he was gay, I would no longer speak to him. (Recoded)	4.54	.95	
	It is important for me to avoid gay men. (Recoded)	4.30	1.14	
	I have no problem with gay men, but see no need for them to express their sexual orientation publicly. (Recoded)	3.00	1.51	
	In general, I believe it is morally acceptable to be a gay man	3.52	1.55	
	Gay men are of value to my community	3.91	1.24	
Understanding stigma		3.62	1.13	.88
	My community's views regarding homosexuality affects the lives of gay men.	3.41	1.30	
	I think name -calling has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community.	3.79	1.25	
	I think social-rejection has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community.	3.66	1.29	
	I think physical violence has an effect on the lives of gay men in my community.	3.61	1.38	
Parasocial Interaction				.86
Perceived Variability		4.16	.90	.80
	Gay men are a unique collection of individuals.			
	Gay men are different from one another.			
	Gay men are a diverse group.			
	Gay men are similar to one another (recoded)			
Social contact		2.56	1.01	--

Table 3.3

Correlation matrix including all control variable, independent variable: PSI, dependent variables: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma, mediator variable perceptions of variability, and moderating variable social contact

	Age	Race	Gender	Religiosity	Political Affiliation	Education	Sexual Orient	HI	VI	HC	VC	Perceived Variability	Social Contact	Stigma	Accept	PSI
Age	1	.26**	-.01	.13*	.03	.09	-.13*	-.04	.28*	-.05	-.05	-.02	-.24**	-.10	-.10*	-.07
Race		1	-.15**	-.05	.16**	.10	-.04	.02	.12*	-.02	.02	.11*	-.25**	-.12*	.02	-.02
Gender			1	-.10*	-.03	.04	.09	.03	-.18**	-.01	-.02	-.10	-.01	-.07	-.18**	-.16*
Religiosity				1	.13**	-.01	-.15**	-.03	.01	-.21**	-.21*	-.18**	-.01	-.11*	-.33**	.01
Political Affiliation					1	-.05	-.03	.03	.01	.03	-.10*	-.16**	-.16**	-.36**	-.32**	-.19**
Education						1	-.09	.07	-.04	-.03	.04	.21**	.02	.03	.07	-.04
Sexual Orientation							1	.01	-.07	.02	.15**	.08	.08	.10*	.17**	-.01
HI								1	.15**	.13**	.19**	-.05	-.02	-.03	-.04	-.11
VI									1	.04	.18*	.06	-.03	.01	.06	.01
HC										1	.48**	.02	--.01	.04	.07	-.05
VC											1	-.06	-.15**	-.12*	-.14**	-.18**
Perceived Variability												1	.18**	.38**	.59**	.17**
Social Contact													1	.26**	.22**	.28**
Stigma														1	.55**	.29**
Accept															1	.33**
PSI																1

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was run to determine whether there are any issues with multicollinearity in the data as well as to identify significant control variables. Two regression models were completed because there are two dependent variables: attitudes toward gay men and stigma impact. Results from the first regression model with the outcome variable of attitudes acceptance can be found in Table 3.4. In all cases tolerance was within an acceptable range**.** VIF was over one, but not greater than two. Results from the regression analysis with the outcome variable understanding the impact of stigma can be found in Table 3.5. In all cases tolerance was within an acceptable range and again VIF was over one, but not greater than two in this mode

Table 3.4
Regression model for prejudice-related outcome: acceptance, n=247.

	B	SE B	β	t	Tolerance	VIF
Model						
Constant	2.43	.46		5.25		
Race	.09	.09	.06	1.03	.83	1.20
Age	-.00	.00	-.06	-1.01	.76	1.30
Gender	-.18	.08	-.12*	-2.31	.90	1.11
Religiosity	-.11	.03	-.22***	-4.04	.87	1.15
Political ID	-.05	.02	-.16**	-3.00	.90	1.11
Sexual Orientation	.13	.06	.12*	2.32	.90	1.11
Horizontal Individualism	-.07	.06	-.07	-1.31	.91	1.10
Vertical Individualism	.12	.05	.13*	2.33	.82	1.21
Vertical Collectivism	.02	.06	.02	.27	.67	1.48
Horizontal Collectivism	-.05	.06	-.05	-.87	.71	1.40
Media Exposure	-.01	.00	-.06	-1.02	.82	1.21
Perceived Variability	.32	.05	.38***	6.90	.85	1.17
Social Contact	-.04	.04	-.05	-.91	.80	1.25
Parasocial Interaction	.32	.08	.23***	4.02	.81	1.23

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .00

Table 3.5
Regression model for outcome: understanding the impact of stigma, n=247.

	B	SE B	β	t	Tolerance	VIF
Model						
Constant	2.33	.72		3.25		
Race	-.13	.14	-.06	-.94	.83	1.20
Age	.00	.00	.03	.49	.76	1.31
Gender	-.00	.12	.00	-.01	.90	1.11
Religiosity	.01	.04	.02	.32	.87	1.15
Political ID	-.11	.03	-.27***	-4.32	.90	1.11
Sexual Orientation	.08	.09	.06	.93	.90	1.11
Horizontal Individualism	-.13	.09	-.10	-1.51	.90	1.10
Vertical Individualism	.01	.08	.01	.14	.82	1.21
Vertical Collectivism	-.01	.10	-.01	-.15	.67	1.48
Horizontal Collectivism	-.02	.10	-.01	-.20	.71	1.40
Media Exposure	-.00	.01	-.03	-.45	.82	1.22
Perceived Variability	.23	.07	.20**	3.17	.85	1.17
Social Contact	.02	.07	.02	.32	.80	1.25
Parasocial Interaction	.34	.12	.18**	2.77	.81	1.23

Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis 1a suggested that perceived variability would partially mediate the relationship between parasocial interaction and acceptance. I found significant direct (Effect = .29, SE = .08, t = .3.95, p < .001, LLCI = .15, ULCI = .45) and indirect effects (Effect = .10, SE = .05, LLCI = .00, ULCI = .22). R-squared for the model equals .57. PSI was significantly related to perceived variability and perceived variability was significantly related to attitudes towards gay men. Thus, hypothesis 1a was supported. The full model can be seen in Figure 3.2.

Hypothesis 1b proposed that perceived variability would partially mediate the relationship between PSI with a gay character and understanding the impact of stigma on the lives of gay men. There were significant direct (Effect = .39, SE = .11, t = 3.58, p < .001, LLCI = .16, ULCI = .60) and indirect effects (Effect = .06, SE= .04, LLCI = .00, ULCI = .15). R-squared for the model equals .46. Thus, hypothesis 1b was supported. The full model can be seen in Figure 3.3. The same control variables were measured in this model as in the previous model.

Figure 3.2
Conceptual model with perceived variability mediating the relationship between PSI and the
prejudice-related outcome of acceptance, n = 246.
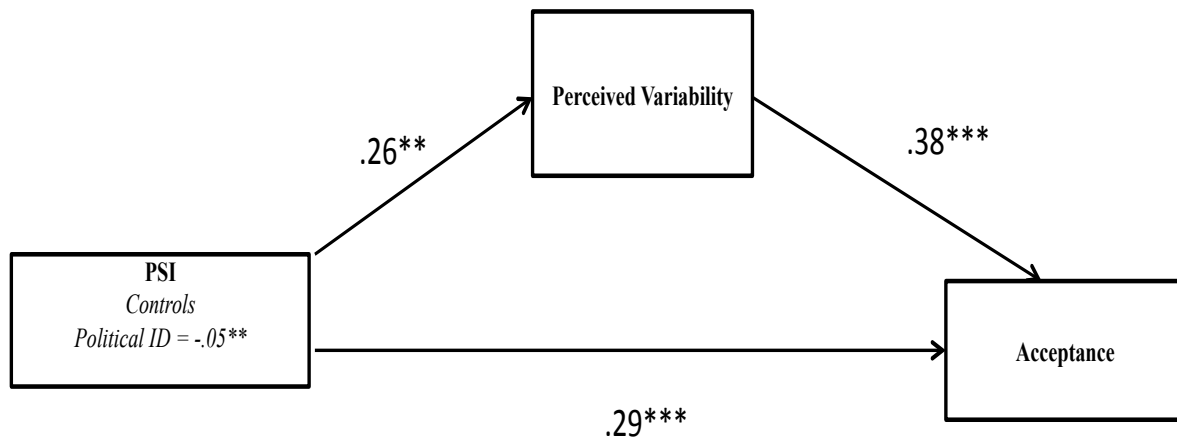
Note: p < .05*, p < .01**, p < .001***

Figure 3.3
Conceptual model with perception of variability mediating the relationship between PSI and the
prejudice-related outcome of understanding the impact of stigma impact, n = 246
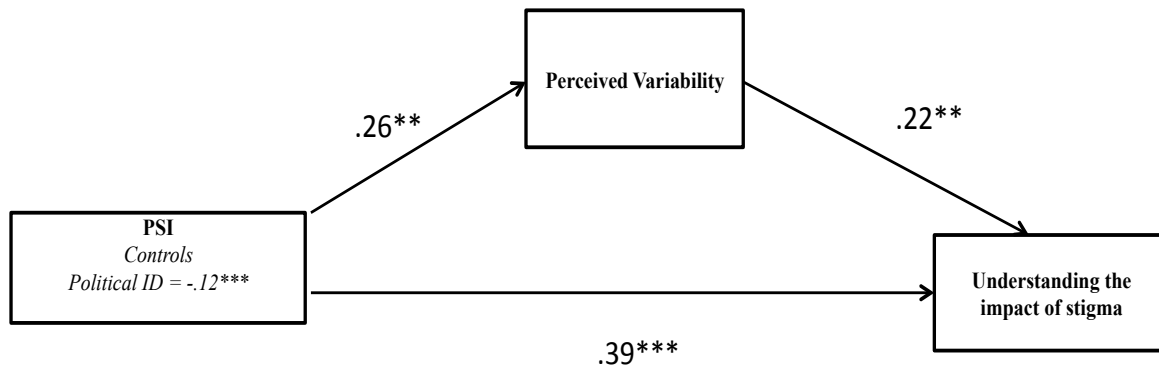
Note: p < .05*, p < .01**, p < .001***

Moderated Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis 2a proposed that social contact would significantly moderate the relationship PSI and perceived variability. I did not find significant moderation and therefore H2a was not supported. H2b suggested that social contact might moderate the relationship between perceived variability and both prejudice-related outcome. I did not find significant moderation and therefore H2b was not supported.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between PSI, perceptions of variability, and prejudice-related attitudes about gay men. While a direct relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction was previously found by Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) and confirmed here, my study took the relationship a step further. I hypothesized that there would be a positive indirect relationship between PSI and two outcomes: (1) acceptance and (2) understanding the impact of stigma. I proposed that the relationship between PSI and those outcomes was mediated through perceptions of variability. I found that perceptions of variability mediated the relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction.

Finally, I offered competing hypotheses about the moderating role of social contact. I suggested that social contact with gay men might moderate the relationship between PSI and perceptions of variability such that those with the low social contact with gay men in the real world would be most affected; however, I did not find support for this hypothesis. I also suggested that social contact might moderate the relationship between perceived variability and prejudiced-related outcomes such that the effect would be magnified for those you already had contact with gay men in the real world. I did not find support for this hypothesis.

Unexpectedly, there was not a significant relationship between PSI and social contact. Initially, it was suggested that there might be a problem of multicollinearity, but as previously stated, regression analysis determined that this was not an issue. While VIF is over 1, its remains under 2, which is an acceptable VIF, level. Additionally, tolerance measures were within acceptable range suggesting that there is not a problem of multicollinearity between social contact and PSI. Second, I thought that a lack of moderation was the result of insufficient power due to the number of control variables. In all cases, I removed controls that were not significant and ran additional analyses, and again I did not find an interaction between PSI and social contact.

Research Implications

My study examined the role of the perceived variability, a construct often used in social psychology and related to communication research on stereotypes. In communication research, we know a great deal about the existence and effects of stereotypes; however, there is limited research on the way media can be used to mitigated stereotype activation and subsequent usage in the evaluation of other groups. However, the social psychology literature holds a great deal of information on possible ways to mitigate prejudice and use of stereotypical evaluation.

Taken together, chapter 2 and 3 present of conceptual model of the relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction with a specific focus on intersectional gay/queer men. I found that the five PSI-related constructs could be included in a single scale and that PSI indirectly affected prejudice-related outcomes through perceived variability. The goal was to not only clarify the conceptualization and measurement PSI, but also to consider the indirect relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction through the mediating role of perceptions of variability

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study that should be acknowledged. First, the only mediated test in this study is perceptions of variability. There may be other mediating variables that play a role in the relationship between PSI and prejudice reduction and future research to work to understand what those mediators are.

Second, social identity of the viewer may have a moderating effecting on the relationship between PSI and perceived variability. Specifically, salient identity or the way an individual ranks their identities may play a role in how that individual experiences PSI with an intersectional character. For example, those audience members from different racial/ethnic groups may have a different perspective on gay men generally and Black gay men specifically than those from the major group because they have experience with social marginalization. On the other hand, individuals from racial and ethnic groups outside of the socially dominate group also have sociocultural norms outside of those of dominant culture that may or may not be positively related to acceptance of other intersectional groups. Social identity may also be a significant factor in the relationship between PSI and prejudice-reduction for women and gender non-conforming individuals who are marginalized by patriarchic and paternalism. Social identity is not taken up in my model, but should and will be taken up in future studies.

<div align="center">**Conclusions**</div>

Ultimately, this study furthers our knowledge of the effect of parasocial interaction and the implications for real-world attitudes. Since intersectional groups like Black gay men continue to experience stigma within society, PSI appears to be one fruitful avenue to mitigate negative evaluations of gay men as a group.

In the next chapter, I continue my examination of PSI and prejudice reduction, but move away from the building of the conceptual model that I have discussed throughout chapters 2 and

3. In chapter 4, I consider the effects of the storyline or narrative on inducing PSI and whether manipulating a story might also be related to prejudice reduction.

CHAPTER 4

Up to this point, my dissertation research has focused on building a conceptual model of PSI. In chapter 1, I examined five PSI–related constructs and found a scale of PSI that contained perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification had construct and concurrent validity and reliability. In chapter 3, I found that perceptions of variability mediated the relationship between PSI and both prejudice-related outcomes: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma. In my conceptual model, PSI was both directly and indirectly related to increased acceptance and greater understanding of the impact of stigma.

In this chapter, my dissertation investigates the relationship between narrative and PSI, particularly the narrative mechanism of transportation. I move from the conceptual model tested in chapter 3 and explore the relationship between transportation and PSI. Transportation occurs when a consumer of a narrative story begins to see themselves in the shoes of another person or group over time, and is "absorbed" into the narrative. Through transportation, the consumer develops a sense of connection and relationship with the character and demonstrates real-life attitudinal changes and beliefs supportive of the narrative's character (Green & Brock, 2000). The mechanism of transportation is more likely to occur when the narrative is emotionally engaging, well developed, and presented over time (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Coplan, 2004; Green, 2008). As previous research suggests that individuals are likely to discriminate against those who are non-prototypical members of their in-group (Purdie-Vaughn & Eibach, 2008) and transportation into a narrative may reduce counterarguing such that viewers may be persuaded to see a Black gay male character as similar to themselves, I test the effect of narrative on PSI.

Using experimental methodology, I manipulate the level of information of a narrative where one story had more background and depth of information than the other around a Black gay male character (an LGB storyline), and test the impact on acceptance and understanding of stigma with PSI as a mediator. The intent of this manipulation is that the story with more background and depth should induce greater transportation than the story that does not have those features.

In this chapter, I begin by defining narrative, transportation, and their relationship to PSI. I then present an experimental study, in which I randomly expose participants to two versions of a narrative: one version featuring the narrative of a positive, non-stereotypical intersectional and has a depth of information and background about a Black gay male (LGB storyline) character and the other version which does not contain the in-depth background information (non-LGB storyline) and test how exposure is related to increased acceptance and greater understanding of the impact of stigma.

Literature Review

Narrative

Researchers have examined the power of stories to stimulate behavioral change, reduce counterarguing, and increase the likelihood of persuasion (Green, 2004, 2008; Green & Brock, 2000, 2002). A large body of research in communications suggests that narratives can have an effect on real-world attitudes (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004; Moyer-Gusé, 2008; Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2009; Slater & Rouner, 2002). According to Green (2008), "Stories do not have to be true to be influential; fact and fiction are often equally effective at changing attitudes and beliefs" (p. 48). Researchers argue that the mechanism by which narrative affects behavior is through a construct known as transportation (Green, 2004; Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004).

Transportation

  Transportation, as defined by Green, is "an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings, focused on story events" (2004, p. 248). Transportation theory argues that being absorbed into a narrative may have affects on an individual's real-world attitudes and beliefs (Green & Brock, 2000). Tal-Or and Cohen (2010) also argued that viewers who are transported might be more likely to relate to a media character such that the beliefs of that character might influence the attitudes of the viewer. Green (2008) argued that transportation might be an effective conduit for persuasion for three reasons: transportation reduces counterarguing (Slater & Rouner, 2002), it facilitates an emotional response (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009), and media figures in the story might become role models (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004). Thus, when transportation is high, individuals are less likely to counterargue with the message (Green & Brock, 2000; Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010) and are more likely to form relationships with characters (Moyer-Gusé, 2008; Murphy, Frank, Moran, & Patnoe-Woodley, 2011). The relationship viewers' form with characters on television may positively inform viewer's attitudes about the character's social group in the real world. In this chapter, I argue that a narrative that is transporting might be more likely to induce PSI because the viewer is less likely to conterargue with the message and may be more likely to see the character as a role model.

The relationship between transportation & PSI

  As previously examined in chapter 2, there are a number of constructs related to PSI. In chapter 2, I argued that perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, and identification make-up valid and reliable scale of PSI. In this chapter, I examine the construct of transportation because as the mechanism of narrative impact, transportation is likely to be associated with PSI. Transportation is different from those constructs explored in

chapter 2 because it is not easily measured in a survey study. In order words, it may not be easy for media consumers to recall how "transported" or "absorbed" they felt while viewing a narrative unless that recall happened immediately after exposure.

There is a limited body of narrative research, to my knowledge that includes an examination of PSI. As mentioned in chapter 2, Brown (2015) attempted to summarize and clarify four routes by which a viewer may become "involved" with a media figure: transportation, PSI, identification, and worship. Brown (2015) suggested that transportation does not overlap "conceptually" with PSI or identification. The relationship between transportation and PSI is mutually influential in Brown's model (indicated by an arrow in both directions). Brown's conceptual model suggests that transportation is influenced by familiarity and perceived realism and both transportation and PSI can lead to identification. Brown's research has several implications for this research project. In previous chapters of this dissertation, I have not suggested whether the relationship between transportation and PSI is mutually influential. In this chapter, I argue that a narrative with greater background might induce greater PSI. I do not conceptualize transportation and PSI as mutually influential. I argue that narrative by way of transportation influences PSI.

Much of the previous research on narrative has examined the relationship between transportation and identification, specifically. One example of this research is a study conducted by Moyer-Gusé and Nabi (2010), which examined transportation and identification with characters to determine which was more likely to be associated with greater persuasion. Using a sample of undergraduate students, they tested the effects of narrative on safe sex intention using an experimental approach. Students were exposed to either a dramatic narrative (a television show) or a news program. Exposure to a dramatic narrative led to greater identification and

perceived similarity with the lead characters than those exposed to a news program. In terms of intention to practice safe sex, exposure to a dramatic narrative decreased male safe sex intention, but increased female safe sex intention. Finally, Moyer-Gusé and Nabi (2010) found that identification with a character in a narrative was more effective in reducing counterarguing than transportation and that PSI was greater in participants watching a news program. This study has several implications for my research. First it suggests that a dramatic narrative may be associated with behavior change as oppose to non-dramatic media content, and therefore I consider the effects of a dramatic narrative on prejudice reduction. Second, Moyer-Gusé and Nabi also argued the effects of narrative may be different based on the demographics of the viewer. That is narrative may have different effects on men versus women, which suggest that I need to be discerning about the population used in this study.

In summary, research has shown that transportation as a mechanism of narrative is closely tired to literature on PSI. In fact, literature on transportation is often connected to PSI-related constructs that I discuss at length in chapter 2. With this in mind, I examine how a narrative featuring a greater depth of information and background on a positive, non-stereotypical Black gay male character versus a narrative that does not contain this information might induce PSI. As a result of inducing PSI, viewers may also have increased acceptance and greater understanding of the impact of stigma because the viewer may have greater positive perceptions of the groups and are able to feel empathy for the group.

There area number of recent television shows featuring not only intersectional characters, but also Black gay men specifically. Across primetime, cable, and streaming services there have been a number of television programs featuring intersectional characters. Television shows like *The Wire*, *Noah's Arc*, *Empire*, *Being Mary Jane,* and *The Have & The Have Nots*, prominently

feature Black gay men in more complicated multidimensional representations in dramatic narratives. In the next section I describe how one character from the Fox show *Empire* is a good subject for testing the effects of narrative on PSI with an intersectional character.

Transportation, PSI & Emotion Engagement using *Empire*

In January 2015, the FOX network debuted the primetime hip-hopera *Empire*. In its first season the show was a smashing success with an average of over 9.9 million viewers (Kissell, 2015). GLAAD's report on the representation of LGB people on television praised *Empire* for its "inclusive" programming, considering the variety and quantity of LGB people on the show (2015, p. 7). In its second season, *Empire* brought in over 10 million viewers 18-49, leading its time slot (Porter, 2016). *Empire*'s strong ratings are an indication that the show has strong narrative content and audiences may feel transported while watching that content. The narrative structure of a show like *Empire* along with the dramatic delivery of the actor's performance may be transporting for the viewer thereby increasing the likelihood of PSI between the viewer and a relevant character.

One of the major storylines in *Empire* is of Jamal Lyon, played by actor Jussie Smollett. Jamal Lyon is the musically gifted Black gay son struggling to be accepted by his father who believes being gay is an unacceptable choice. Jamal Lyon may be a powerful media representation that has the potential to shape individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward Black gay men in the real world. In addition, viewers who have repeated exposure to the character, enjoy watching him, and have a parasocial reaction may experience increased acceptance and greater understanding of the negative impact of stigma on the lives of gay men in the real world. Green and Brock argued, "For fictional or narrative communication, attachment to a protagonist may be an important determinant of the persuasiveness of a story. Because a protagonist may

serve as an 'internal' source of information or beliefs, transportation may lead to greater liking

for sympathetic protagonists" (2000, p. 702). The narrative of *Empire* and the positive,

sympathetic, and non-stereotypical representation of a Black gay man may be associated with

increased acceptance and better understanding of negative impact of stigma among viewers who

see the narrative as persuasive and/or have a PSI with the character Jamal Lyon.

Hypotheses

In this study, I examine the affects of narrative on prejudice reduction. That is, can a

dramatic narrative featuring a positive, non-stereotypical gay Black man be persuasive, reduce

counterarguing and be related to real world attitudes? To the extent that a dramatic narrative can

induce transportation it may reduce prejudice. Thus, I hypothesize (Figure 4.1) the following:

> H1: A narrative featuring an LGB storyline of positive, non-stereotypical
> portrayal of a Black gay man will be associated with increased acceptance
> and greater understanding of the impact of stigma in comparison to a
> narrative that does not feature the narrative arc of Black gay character.

Figure 4.1
Model displaying effects of narrative manipulation on prejudice related outcomes.
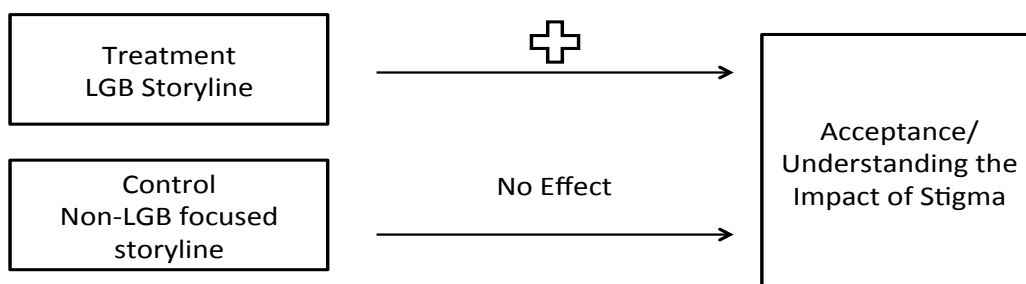
A broad body of literature on narrative suggests that transportation is the mechanism of

narrative impact. Previous research suggests that a story that is emotionally engaging, well

developed, and presented over time (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Coplan, 2004; Green, 2008).

Thus I hypothesize the following (Figure 4.2):

H2: A narrative that gives more depth and background information on a Black gay character who is positive, sympathetic and non-stereotypical should be more transporting than a narrative that does not contain this information.

Figure 4.2
Model showing the effects of narrative manipulation on transportation.
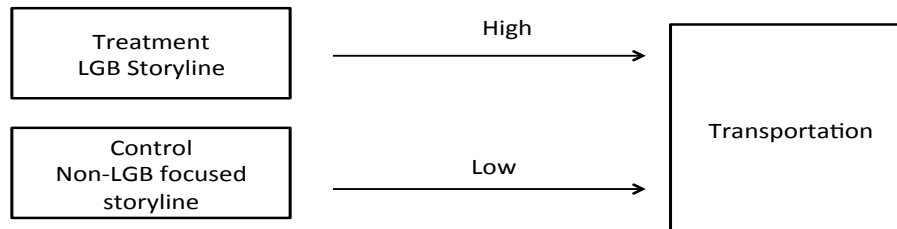
As reviewed in the literature viewers who are transported may be more likely to experience a parasocial interaction because being engrossed in the story may reduce counterarguing and viewers may be persuade to see the gay character positive, non-stereotypical and sympathetic. This response might result in a parasocial interaction that is also connected with prejudice reduction in the real world. With this in mind, I hypothesize (Figure 4.4) that following:

H3a: Parasocial interaction will partially mediate the relationship between viewing a narrative with more background information of a positive, non-stereotypical, and sympathetic gay character as oppose to a narrative that does not contain this information and increased acceptance of gay men.

Narrative may also be indirectly associated with greater understanding of the impact of stigma. Because a narrative might prompt emotional engagement, it may be the case that those viewers, who are exposed to a narrative with greater depth of information about a positive, non-stereotypical Black gay character, may be more likely to put themselves into the shoes of the character. With this in my mind, I hypothesize the following (Figure 4.3):

H3b: Parasocial interaction will partially mediate that relationship between a narrative with more background information of a positive, non-stereotypical and sympathetic Black gay character as oppose one that does not contained this information and greater understanding of the impact of stigma.

Figure 4.3
The relationship between narrative and prejudice-related outcomes is mediated through parasocial interaction.

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                        │   PSI    │
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│              │                        │  Acceptance/ │
│              │                        │ Understanding│
│ LGB storyline│ ─────────────────────→ │ the Impact of│
│              │           +            │    Stigma    │
└──────────────┘                        └──────────────┘
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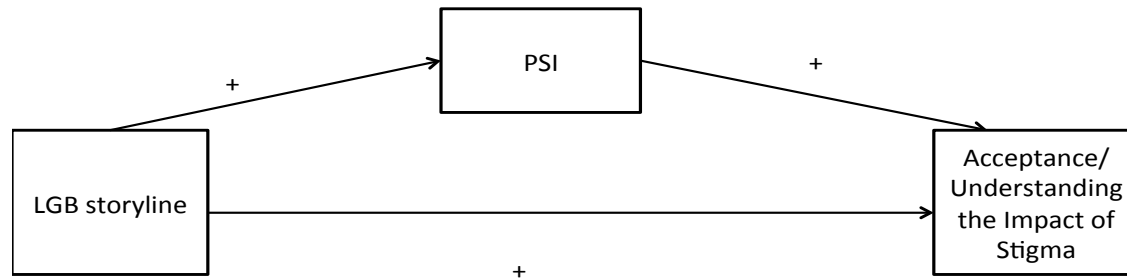
Methods

Participant Recruitment

Recruitment for this study began in July 2017 and ended in April 2018. Participants were recruited through a variety of methods: using social media, flyers at University of Wisconsin-Madison and the city of Madison public libraries, and through acquaintances. The study solely focused on recruiting male subjects for several reasons. The subordinate male target hypothesis (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) suggests that men are more likely to discriminate against those close to their in-group. Black gay men are socially marginalized in comparison to Black straight men, White straight men, and White gay men. Other research suggest that women discriminate out of fear while men are more likely to discriminate out of a need for power (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Sidnaius & Pratto, 1999). The implication is that the motivation for discrimination differs by gender. In total, the sample for this study was n = 59.

Design and Procedures

The study consisted of three parts. In the recruitment email, participants were given a link that took them to the consent form and pre-experimental questionnaire. After completing the consent process, participants answered questions about their demographics, media exposure, social contacts, and personality traits. Then, participants were randomized into different surveys.

At the end of the survey, participants set up a time to come to the Physiology and Communication Effects (PACE) Lab for the experiment portion of the study.

Participants watched one of two versions of an edited narrative from the primetime television show, *Empire*. Participants in the treatment condition watched a 37-minute, 58-second clip depicting Jamal Lyon's road to publicly coming out as gay. The clip extends from the pilot episode until episode 8 of the first season of *Empire.* This narrative contained more background and greater depth of information about Jamal's character. Participants in the control condition watched a 27- minute 58-second clip does not provide the depth and background of information on Jamal's character. After watching the show, all participants took a post-test. Following the post-test, respondents were debriefed and paid $20 for their participation.

<center>**Measures**</center>

Dependent Variables

Acceptance. The same items were used in this study as discussed in chapter 3. All participants received the same measures of acceptance in the post-test

 Understanding the Impact of Stigma. The same items were used in this study as discussed in chapter 3. Participants were randomized so that some received these measures in the pre-test and others did not.

Mediator

Parasocial Interaction. In order to measure PSI in this study, I used the PSI scaled developed by Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985). Auter (1992), as well as Auter and Palmgreen (2000), help established the reliability and validity of the scale. I used the PSI scale because I am interested in

the effects of an intersectional character in a dramatic narrative. I want to understand how viewers relate to characters in a narrative, which is measured by a PSI scale.[16]

The scale was made up of five factors: identification with the protagonist, interest in the protagonist, perceptions of the group of characters on *Empire,* and the ways the protagonist handles problems. All sub-scales were measured on a five-point Likert scale anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (5).

The factor "identification with the protagonist" was comprised of six statements about the television character. The statements were as follows: "Jamal reminds me of myself," "I have the same qualities as Jamal," "I seem to have the same beliefs or attitudes as Jamal," "I have the same problems as Jamal," "I can imagine myself as Jamal" and "I can identify with Jamal."

The "interest in the protagonist" factor included six statements: "I would like to meet the actor who played Jamal," "I would watch the actor on another program," "I enjoyed trying to predict what Jamal would do," "I hope Jamal achieved his goals," "I care about what happens to Jamal" and "I like hearing the voice of Jamal."

The "perceptions of the group of characters on *Empire* " factor asked about all the characters on *Empire.* The statements were as follows: "Characters on *Empire*'s interactions are similar to mine with friends," "Characters on *Empire*'s interactions are similar to mine with family," "My friends are like characters on *Empire*," "I'd enjoy interacting with characters on *Empire* and my friends at the same time," "While watching *Empire,* I felt included in the group," and "I can relate to characters' attitudes on *Empire*."

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[16] The research in this chapter was conceptualized separately from the study discussed in chapters 2 and 3. I actually ran the study discussed in this chapter ahead of running the study discussed in chapter 2 and 3. I will discuss the meaning and limitations of conducting the project in this manner in the discussion section of this chapter and in chapter 5.

The are four statements that made up the final factor of "the ways the protagonist handles problems." Those statements were "I wish I could handle problems as well as Jamal," "I like the way Jamal handles problems," "I would like to be more like Jamal," and "I usually agreed with Jamal."

Predicator/Independent Variable

Transportation. In addition to attempting to manipulate transportation, I also measured it. The concept of transportation was measured using a scale developed by Green and Brock (2000). The scale was measured on a five-point Likert scale anchored by "disagree" and "agree," using seven statements. The seven statements were as follows: "At times during the program, the story world was closer to me than the real world," "My attention was focused more on my surroundings than on the program," "The program created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the program ended," "During the program, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story," " At times during the program, I completely forgot that I was in the middle of the experiment," "I forgot my own problems and concerns during the program," and "While watching, I found myself thinking about what I had done before the experiment or what I would do after it."

<div align="center">

Analytic Approach

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In order to consider the relationship between the narrative and the prejudice-related outcome, I conduced an independent sample T-test. An independent T-test is used "in situations in which there are two experimental conditions and different participants have been used in each condition" (Field, 2009, p. 334). T-tests helped me to determine whether there was a significant effect of the manipulation between the experimental groups. I used the same analysis to

determine if there was a statistical difference between viewer of the treatment and control narratives and levels of transportation.

The Process Macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2014) was used to test the mediation hypotheses that suggest that PSI indirectly affected the relationship between narrative and both prejudice-related outcomes: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma (Hayes & Preacher, 2013). The mediation analysis used model 4, which was previously described in chapter 3.

Results

Summary Statistics

Demographics. About 73% of the sample reported their race as white with the average age being 27 years old (SD = 8.43). Participants were low on religiosity with about 74% of the sample reporting that religion wasn't important in their daily lives. About 64% reported having a strong affiliation with the Democratic Party or leaning toward that party and about 56% reported having a 4-year degree or a Master's degree. Finally, 66% of the sample was heterosexual, 25% was gay, and 8% was bisexual.

Acceptance. The scale for the measure of acceptance had a mean of " somewhat agree"(M= 4.55, SD = .58). The items did not scale well together with Cronbach's α = .64, which is below the minimum acceptable level (Nunnly, 1978).

Understanding the Impact of Stigma. The scale for the measure understanding the impact of stigma has a mean "somewhat agree" (M = 4.25, SD = .74) was also reliable in the post-test with Cronbach's α = .75.

Parasocial Interaction. Overall, the scale of PSI (M = 3.24, SD = .59) was reliable with Cronbach's α = .89.

Transportation. The scale (M = 3.55, SD = .65) was below a minimum level of reliability with

Cronbach α = .63 (Nunnly, 1978).

Manipulation Checks

The stories I created were different on the dimension of narrative. In the treatment

condition, participants got 10 extra minutes of content focused on Jamal's path to coming out as

gay. This information contained greater background and more in-depth information about Jamal

as a character. In that narrative, Luscious (Jamal's father) throws him in a trash can after Jamal

wears heels and a woman's scarf into the living room of their home. This scene was not in the

control condition. I asked participants "What did Luscious do to a young Jamal?" Since there

were only two video conditions, I used independent sample T-test to examine whether

participants who saw the treatment remembered the previously mentioned event and those that

saw the control should not have remembered. There was a significant difference between those

who saw the control versus those who saw the treatment (Levene's test, F= 27.87, p < .001)

Hypothesis 1. H1 suggested that watching a positive, non-stereotypical portrayal of a Black gay

men will be associated with increased acceptance and greater understanding of the impact of

stigma in comparison to a narrative that does not contain this information. Using an independent

sample T-test, I found no difference between narrative with greater background and depth of

information and a narrative that does not contain that information. Thus, H1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2. H2 suggested that a narrative that gives more depth and background information

on a positive, sympathetic, and non-stereotypical Black gay character should be more

transporting than a narrative that does not contain this information. Again using independent

sample T-test, I did not find a difference in the level of transportation the narrative with greater

information and depth as oppose to the narrative that did not contain that information. Thus, H2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3a and 3b suggested parasocial interaction would mediate the relationship between narrative and acceptance (H3a) as well as understanding of the impact of stigma (H3b). To test H3a, I conducted a meditation analysis, with narrative as the IV, PSI as the meditator and acceptance as the DV. Figure 4.4 shows the effect model of h3a. I did not find a main effect between the narrative and acceptance. In this model, PSI did not mediate the relationship between narrative and acceptance. I did not find support for hypothesis 3a.

Figure 4.4
Conceptual model suggesting that relationship between narrative and acceptance of Black gay men is mediated through parasocial interaction, n = 59.
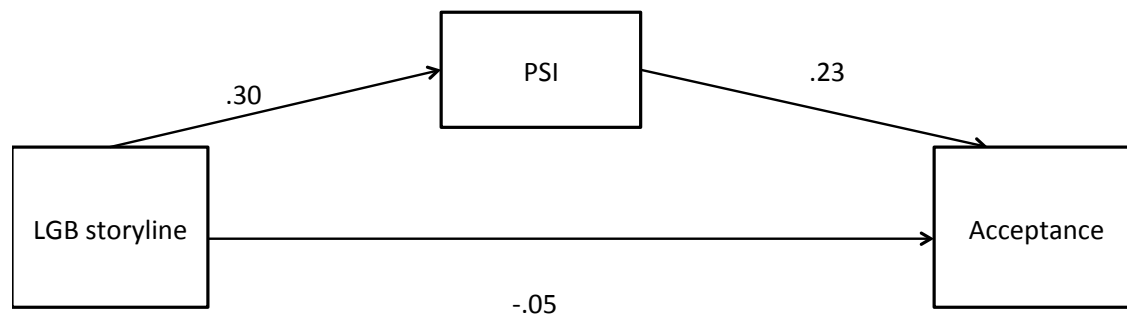
Note: The A path which is the path between the narrative and PSI was approaching significance with p = .05.

To test H3b, I conducted a mediation analysis. Again narrative was the independent variable and PSI was the mediator. This analysis used understanding the impact of stigma as the outcome variable. Figure 4.5 shows the visual representation of the H2. In this model, I did not find a main effect of narrative on understanding the impact of stigma. I also did not find that PSI mediated the relationship between narrative and understanding the impact of stigma. Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Figure 4.5
Conceptual model suggesting that relationship between narrative and understanding the impact of stigma on Black gay men is mediated through parasocial interaction, n = 59.
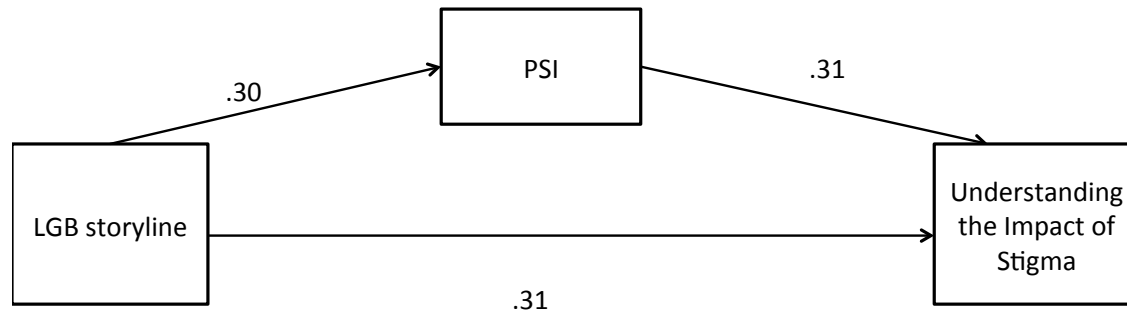
Discussion

In this chapter, my dissertation investigates the relationship between narrative and PSI, particularly the narrative mechanism of transportation. I moved from the conceptual model tested in chapter 3 and explored the relationship between transportation and PSI. Transportation occurs when a consumer of a narrative story begins to see themselves in the shoes of another person or group over time, and is "absorbed" into the narrative. Through transportation, the consumer develops a sense of connection and relationship with the character and demonstrates real-life attitudinal changes and beliefs supportive of the narrative's character (Green & Brock, 2000). In this study, I exposed 59 male viewers to one of two versions of an edited narrative of *Empire*. In the treatment condition, the narrative focused Jamal's background with in-depth information about his journey to being open about his sexual orientation. In the control condition the narrative that did not contain information about Jamal's journey.

In hypothesis 1, I suggested that a narrative with more background and in-depth of information about a Black gay character would be associated with increased acceptance and greater understanding of the impact of stigma, which would constitute a main effect of the study manipulation. I did not find a difference between participants who saw the treatment condition

and those who saw the control condition and therefore hypothesis 1 was not supported. There may be several explanations for these findings. First, the videos were not pre-tested, due to time constraints, to determine if they would be effective. Thus, the manipulation may not have been strong enough. Second, in chapters 2 and 3, I argue that PSI is consequence of repeated exposure. This study was a one shot study, which may not be conducive to stimulating PSI.

In hypothesis 2, I suggested that those who saw the treatment video would have greater transportation that those you saw the control. I did not find a difference in transportation and therefore hypothesis 2 was not supported. Green (2004) argued that transportation is not easily manipulated. The two videos I created were different only in that the treatment provided more information (10 extra minutes) about Jamal's story. Perhaps simply providing more information in the form of more scenes (longer narrative) is not sufficient to inducing greater levels of transportation.

In the third hypothesis, I tested the mediated relationship between narrative and two outcomes: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma by examining the mediated role of parasocial interaction. I did not find a significant direct or indirect effect in the relationship between narrative and both prejudice-related outcomes: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma. Thus, I did not find support for hypothesis 3a or 3b. Indeed, some of the reasons I did not find a main effect might apply here as well. The videos were not pre-tested and the PSI might occur over repeated exposure. Additionally, because there is a wide stigma around gay men and Black gay men specifically, which I discuss at the very outset of this work in chapter 1, some participants in my study may have been "put off" by viewing a detailed narrative of a Black gay man. The treatment narrative contained images of Jamal interacting with his boyfriend and

discussing his sexuality. These images, particularly in a one-shot study might have offended some study participants.

In sum, the lack of research findings in this study may be the result of a number of factors, which include that the narrative was not transporting, or emotional engaging, and/or the protagonist was not seen as a role model for the viewers. Although this study is somewhat distinct from study 1, there is overlap in the discussion of what constructs compose PSI and what constructs are predictors. In this study, I make the argument that narrative by way of transportation is a predictor of PSI; but do not find support for this relationship in this study.

This study has limitations that should be acknowledged. First, this is a one-shot study. While transportation has been induced in shorter timespans, many research studies of PSI let participants view hours of media content (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). While my study does not expose participants to hours of content, I tried to show participants the narrative arc of the Jamal's story. Additionally, because it was not feasible for me to show participants hours of content, I created a short video that combined several episodes of *Empire*. The splicing together of episodes may have been confusing for some participants. I asked participants if they felt confused while watching the narrative. On average, participants reported being "a little confused" (M = 4.22, SD = .75).[17] Even a little bit of confusion may have prevented participants from being fully transported into the narrative, which in turn may have affected whether or not they had a parasocial interaction.

The study was conducted in a lab where participants were hooked up to physiology equipment while viewing the narrative. While the lab is set up to make participants as comfortable as possible there remains challenges to ecological validity. If I could redo this study,

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[17] The scale anchors were 1 "a great deal" and 5 "none at all."

I would work with a group of men over the course of several months. I would ask them to watch a season of a television show like *Empire* to determine PSI and narrative transportation.

Future research using this data

Moving forward I plan to examine several other factors measure in this study including social identity, public policy, emotional responses, and physiological responses.

I collected data about the social identity of my participants and how they rank their identity categories. The way my participants view their identity may be connected to how they related to the character of Jamal Lyon. For example, some participants may prioritize their race over their sexual orientation while other prioritize sexual orientation over race and there may be another group that see those identities as equal. Social identity may influence support for certain public policies like whether businesses have the right to refuse to do business with LGB people. This analysis represents it own study and will be explored in the immediate future.

A second, additional analysis I will conduct with these data is with regard to two physiological measures: EDA and EMG, which were recorded at the time of data collection. Skin conductance or electrodermal activity (EDA) is correlated with electrical properties in the skin (Potter & Bolls, 2012). Skin conductance has become one of the most popular psychophysiological measures because it may be a good indicator of an "orienting response." An orienting response signals that increased attention is being paid to a stimulus (Potter & Bolls, 2012). Skin conductance is also reflective of the sympathetic nervous system, which tells the heart to beat faster. The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for an individual's fight or flight response. Skin conductance is a good measure of emotional arousal (Lang, Potter, & Bolls, 2009).

EMG is the recording of the electrical signal associated with facial muscle activity and can be used to measure emotion. The corrugator supercili muscle, otherwise known as the frowning muscle, is a physiological indicator of negative emotional response (Potter & Bolls, 2012). Zygomaticus major is the smiling muscle and an indicator of positive emotional response (Potter & Bolls, 2012). Research suggests that empathetic responses may be unconscious or spontaneous (Dimberg, Andrésson, & Thumberg, 2011). Media audiences may experience the emotions of a character on television by mimicking their facial expressions, which may lead to an empathetic response (Dimberg, Andrésson, & Thumberg, 2011). I am interested in both corrugator supercili, which is an indicator of negative emotions and zygomaticus activity, which is an indicator of positive emotions (Potter & Bolls, 2012).

Conclusion

While this study did not find support for the effects of narrative and/or transportation on PSI, the study remains fruitful. First, the lack of results suggests that case attention must be paid when attempting to manipulate narrative transportation. Second, the lack of outcomes suggests that PSI may not be studied in an experimental context. Considering all the outcomes of this research project, I use the last chapter to reflect on this research project as well as discuss future research on PSI and prejudice reduction.

CHAPTER 5

Two weeks after I defended the proposal for what would become this dissertation project, in the early morning hours of June 12, 2016, a gunman walked into an Orlando nightclub and opened fire on hundreds of people celebrating Pride weekend. Forty-nine people were killed, most of them Black and Brown LGB people. The Orlando massacre is just one example of the ways stigma and homophobia can have extremely negative consequences for LGBTQ communities. Of course, not all homophobic individuals engage in extreme violence, but they may voice negative opinions or commit everyday microaggressions against Black gay men and other members of LGBTQ communities that can have negative effects on health and wellbeing. The terroristic violence of the Pulse nightclub shooting is just one example of why my dissertation focuses on PSI as a way to use media to mitigate stigma and prejudice experienced by intersectional groups.

Overview of Research & Findings

Across two research studies, I examined PSI and its indirect relationship to acceptance of gay men with a particular interest in Black gay men. I was also interested in whether PSI would be associated with greater understanding of the impact of stigma in the lives of gay men. In chapters 2 and 3, I closely examined the conceptualization and measurement of PSI and presented a conceptual model in which the relationship between PSI and prejudice-related outcomes were mediated through perception of variability. Chapter 2, specifically, focused on the conceptualization and measurement of PSI by examining the five related-constructs: perceived realism, attraction, perceived homophily, uncertainty reduction, and identification. I found that these constructs were valid and reliable constructs of PSI. While correlations suggested that there is overlap in the constructs, the constructs were more reliable than other measures of PSI used by Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) and others. I ran regression

analysis to determine whether one or more constructs contributed to PSI with an intersectional character or non-intersectional character. I found that the regression model with outcome PSI was similar for viewers who saw an intersectional character and those who saw a non-intersectional character..

In chapter 3, I hypothesized an indirect relationship between PSI and the two outcomes measures of interest: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma on the lives of gay men. I found that perceptions of variability significantly mediated the relationship between acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma. As stated previously, Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2005) had already proposed and found a direct link between PSI (or PCH, as they refer to it) and attitudes about gay men.

In chapter 4, I experimentally tested the relationship between narrative, PSI and prejudice reduction by focusing on the narrative mechanism of transportation. First, I tested where the two narratives were related to both outcomes: acceptance and understanding the impact of stigma. I did not find a statistical difference between those viewers who saw the control narrative and those who saw the treatment video. I also tested whether there was a difference by narrative condition on transportation. Again, I did not find support for my hypothesis. Finally, I examined whether PSI mediated the relationship between narrative and prejudice reduction. I did not a direct relationship between narrative and either prejudice-related outcome: acceptance or understanding the impact of stigma. I also did not find that PSI mediated the relationship between narrative and the two outcomes of interest.

Significance of Research Results

The results of this research project are interesting because it is in conversation with multiple bodies of research and takes an interdisciplinary approach to investigating ways to

effectively use media to reduce prejudice and stigma. As reviewed in the introductory chapter, under the right conditions, social contact is one of the best ways to mitigate prejudice. However, there are many parts of the United States where individuals to not live near or interact with people outside of their own racial/ethnic group and therefore media may be the only avenue by which they interact with other groups. This study suggests that having diverse, non-stereotypical characters in popular television shows may also be one route to stigma reduction.

To the extent that those characters are enjoyable and positively represent members of their group, it is likely that viewers may have parasocial interactions that affect their real-world attitudes about the group as well as their understanding of the negative effects of stigma and discrimination. At the same time, my study reveals that there is more that needs to be understood about qualities present in a narrative that are associated with prejudice reduction. Green and Dill noted that typically individuals (i.e. viewers) believe themselves to be "immune" to the effects of media or media influence (2012, p. 449). As other research as shown, chapter 2 and 3 also demonstrate that individuals in the media audience are not immune to the effects of media, particularly when viewers are not aware they are being persuaded (Green, 2004; Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005; Slater & Rouner, 2002).

Why a Quantitative Study of Intersectionality?

With these results of this study in mind, I want to explicate on why I choose to conduct these studies in the manner that I did and where future research on PSI might focus. First, I want to explain why I chose to conduct a quantitative study of PSI considering intersectional characters. I focused on people with intersectional identities for a couple of reasons. Quantitative communication research is rich in its understanding the nature of stereotypes, racial prejudice, and gender prejudice in media content; however, we do not fully understand stereotyping or

prejudice when an individual has overlapping socially marginalized identities. Quantitative social science research has not thoroughly considered how repeated media exposure to an intersectional character may be associated with real-world attitudes.

There is a lot of research in the humanities that qualitatively examines intersectionality by interviewing people about the nature of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination in their lives. Scholars like Audre Lorde and Patricia Hill Collins have examined the effects of intersectionality on themselves, Black women, and Black queer women among other groups. What I have attempted to do here is think about intersectionality in a quantitative context in order to examine media effects on multiple marginalized groups in a generalizable way.

To be clear, I did not approach intersectionality from a quantitative perspective because I do not value qualitative research. I do! With a background in Afro-American Studies, I have a rich background in qualitative research and the critical perspectives of Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks and other Black feminist scholars who made it possible for me to complete a dissertation on intersectionality. In fact, I wanted to focus on intersectional individuals and media characters because my background in Afro-American Studies taught me that social identity is complex, and rarely does an individual fit into one social identity group. Quantitative research needs to find avenues to incorporate intersectional identities into the field.

Second, it was necessary to conduct a survey and a quasi-experimental study for several reasons. Much of the previous research on PSI forced participants to watch media content over some length of time (typically a semester). I wanted to consider PSI in manner that people could tell me about television shows and characters that they already watch and enjoy. In this way, I was thinking about ecological validity and generalizability. It was very interesting to see the number of television shows and characters mentioned (many of which I had not heard of before

coding the data). Generally, I can correctly assume that many people were already seeing gay men in their media content and that content has some relationship to their real-world attitudes.

As a communication researcher, who is particularly interested in media effects on communities of color, my work and PhD research program has not only contributed to our understanding of how media can perpetuate stereotypes and normative ideas of gender and race (in the form of a Master's thesis in Afro American Studies) and how people of color deal with stereotypes in their own media content (a Master's thesis in Journalism), but also how media can be used to mitigate health inequalities in communities of color. This research study is a general reflection of my research program.

Final Thoughts

In the same year as the Orlando nightclub shooting, the film Moonlight, featuring the coming of age story of Black queer man, captivated audiences and eventually won the 2017 Academy Award or Best Picture. It is a sharp contrast: the terroristic violence of what happened at the Pulse nightclub. The triumph of *Moonlight* demonstrated public interest in more positive representations of LGBTQ people. While a movie like *Moonlight* cannot offer repeated exposure to LGBTQ individuals in the same way that television shows such as *Empire,* it can be part of a more inclusive media environment that includes more positive, diverse representations of gay or queer men. The success of *Moonlight* reveals that there is room for researchers to study such representations and for media producers to put positive images of gay men in their content and these representations can work toward the social good. Parasocial interaction through media represent one valuable avenue by which we can work to mitigate the stigma associated with homophobia and increased acceptance of Black gay men within society.

Appendix 1

Dissertation Study 1a & 1b
<mark>Independent Variable</mark>
<mark>Dependent Variable</mark>
<mark>Mediator</mark>
<mark>Moderator</mark>
<mark>Control Variables</mark>

Consent
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Study: Exploring the Relationship Between TV Characters and Viewers

Principal Investigator: Michael W. Wagner (phone: 608-263-3392) (email: michael.wagner@wisc.edu)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH
This research examines the relationships individuals develop with television characters. Specifically, this research study examines the way you connect with television characters who may be different from you.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?
This research consists of one survey, which should take 15 minutes. While answering any of the questions you may choose to skip or decline any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you decide to withdraw from the study, which you are free to do at any time, your data as collected up to the withdrawal point will be used in the data analysis, unless you indicate otherwise

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?
There are minimal risks associated with your participation. There is a minimal risk of a breach of confidentiality

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FOR MY PARTICIPATION?
There are no direct benefits to you.

WILL I BE COMPENSATED FOR MY PARTICIPATION?
 You will be compensated for your participation directly by SSI as per your agreement with them.

HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?
 Your data (with no names attached) will be aggregated with other participants' data and analyzed with common statistical techniques for the purpose of publishing the results in a book or academic journal. Your name is not connected to the file containing your data.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research, you should contact the principal investigator Michael W. Wagner at 608-263-3392 or graduate student researcher Catasha Davis at catashadavis@wisc.edu. If you are not satisfied with the response of the research team, have more questions, or want to talk to someone about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Education and Social & Behavioral Science IRB Office at 608-263-2320.
Your participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time without penalty.

 Save or print out and keep a copy of this form so that you will be able to contact us if questions occur to you at a later date

During the survey, DO NOT hit the return key, as many browsers interpret that as the same as clicking on the "continue" button.

 By indicating, "Yes, I consent to participate," you are indicating that you have read this consent form, you are at least 18 years of age, are able to provide your own consent and voluntarily consent to participate in this online questionnaire.
❍   Yes, I consent to participate
❍   No, I do not consent to participate
If No, I do not consent to par... Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

<mark>Age:</mark> What year were you born?

Gender: What is your gender identity?
- ○ Woman
- ○ Man
- ○ Transgender
- ○ Another identity, not listed here
- ○ Prefer not to answer

Race: What is your race? (Check all that apply)
- ❑ White/Caucasian
- ❑ Black/African American
- ❑ Asian
- ❑ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ❑ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

Hispanic: Are you Hispanic or Latino?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Religiosity: How important is religion in your everyday life?
- ○ Unimportant
- ○ Somewhat unimportant
- ○ Neither unimportant or important
- ○ Somewhat important
- ○ Important

_____Page Break_____

Political Affiliation: Generally speaking, do you consider yourself:
- ○ Strong Democrat
- ○ Not so strong Democrat
- ○ Independent leaning Democrat
- ○ Independent
- ○ Independent leaning Republican
- ○ Not so strong Republican
- ○ Strong Republican
- ○ Other
- ○ Don't know

_____Page Break_____

Education: What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
- ○ Less than high school degree
- ○ High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- ○ Some college but no degree
- ○ Associate degree in college (2-year)
- ○ Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- ○ Master's degree
- ○ Doctoral degree
- ○ Professional degree (JD, MD)

_____Page Break_____

Policy Importance: Recently there have been several political or social issues making news headlines. How important is it to address each issue?

	Very unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither	Somewhat important	Very important
Protesting the national anthem	○	○	○	○	○
Unisex bathrooms	○	○	○	○	○
Gun laws	○	○	○	○	○
Dakota Access Pipeline	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals' rights to provide services to or do business with LGBTQ people	○	○	○	○	○
The Immigration Ban	○	○	○	○	○
Building a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Policy Support: Tell us about your feelings toward each issue:

	Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neither	Supportive	Very supportive
Protesting the national anthem	○	○	○	○	○
Unisex bathrooms	○	○	○	○	○
Gun laws	○	○	○	○	○
Dakota Access Pipeline	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals' rights to provide services to or do business with LGBTQ people	○	○	○	○	○
The Immigration Ban	○	○	○	○	○
Building a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Text: The next four questions ask about your attitudes toward sensitive issues. Remember that your responses are anonymous. Thank you again for your participation!

_____Page Break_____

Perception of Race: To improve race relations, it is important to focus on...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The unique experiences of different racial/ethnic groups	○	○	○	○	○
What different groups have in common	○	○	○	○	○

___Page Break___

Perception of Race Part 2: There is _____ attention paid to race and racial issues in our country these days.
- O   Too Much
- O   About the right amount
- O   Too Little

___Page Break___

Understanding the Impact of Stigma: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
My community's views regarding homosexuality affects the lives of gay men.	O	O	O	O	O
I think name-calling has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community.	O	O	O	O	O
I think social rejection has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community.	O	O	O	O	O
I think physical violence has an effect on the lives of gay men in my community.	O	O	O	O	O

___Page Break___

Attitude toward Gay men (Homopostivity Scale): How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
If a family member told me he was gay, I would no longer speak to him.	O	O	O	O	O
It is important for me to avoid gay men.	O	O	O	O	O
I have no problem with gay men, but see no need for them to express their sexual orientation publicly.	O	O	O	O	O
In general, I believe it is morally acceptable to be a gay man.	O	O	O	O	O
Gay men are of value to my community.	O	O	O	O	O

___Page Break___

Perceived Variability: Please rate the following items:

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
Gay men are a unique collection of individuals	○	○	○	○	○
Gay men are different from one another.	○	○	○	○	○
Gay men are a diverse group.	○	○	○	○	○
Gay men are a uniform group.	○	○	○	○	○
Gay men are similar to one another.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Media Exposure: How often (in hours) do you watch TV? (Live or on the Internet)

	0	.5	1	2	3	4	5 +
On a typical weekday	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
On a typical Saturday	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
On a typical Sunday	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Instructional Perceived Realism: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
I feel I can learn a lot about people from watching TV.	○	○	○	○	○
I get useful ideas about how I should act around my friends and family by watching characters on television.	○	○	○	○	○
By watching TV, I feel I can learn about life's problems and situations.	○	○	○	○	○
The characters I see on television help give me ideas about how to solve my own problems.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Q55: How many television shows do you watch with the following groups of people?

	None	1-2 shows	3-4	4-5	More than 5
Gay male character	○	○	○	○	○
Black gay male character	○	○	○	○	○
Black or African American character	○	○	○	○	○
Latino character	○	○	○	○	○
Lesbian character	○	○	○	○	○
Black Lesbian character	○	○	○	○	○
Muslim character	○	○	○	○	○
Transgender character	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

*If respondents indicated that they had seen at least one television show with gay male character or a Black gay male character, they were saw Q48 & Q49 question and answers questions about perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, identification about the TV show and character they said they enjoyed.

Q48: There are many TV dramas, past and present, with gay male characters including Jack McFarland and Will Truman on *Will & Grace,* Cameron Tucker & Mitchell Pritchett on *Modern Family*, Justin Suarez & Marc St. James on *Ugly Betty*, Will Horton on *Days of Our Lives,* Brian McKinney on *Queer as Folks,* Nolan Ross on *Revenge*, Leon Carpe on *Roseanne*, Kurt Hummel and David Karofsky on *Glee, David Fisher on Six Feet Under, Andrew* Wells on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer,* Chris Keller on *Oz,* Waylon Smithers *on The Simpsons,* Thomas Barrow on *Downtown Abbey* and Ian Gallagher on *Shameless* to name a few.

In the previous question, you indicated that you have seen at least one television show with either a gay male or black gay male character. Of the shows with a gay male or black gay male character, please tell us which television show you **MOST ENJOY** watching. Please write the **NAME OF THE SHOW** in the text box.

If you **CANNOT** come up with anything, please write the name of any show that you **ENJOY WATCHING** with a male character that you like.

TEXT BOX

Q49: Please enter the name of the character in the show you wrote about in the previous question. **PLEASE ENTER THE NAME OF THE CHARACTER ONLY**

TEXT BOX

_____Page Break_____

Identify Perceived Realism : How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
There are certain characters on TV shows that I admire.	○	○	○	○	○
There are few characters in TV shows that I would like to be more like.	○	○	○	○	○
I know someone in real life like ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue}.	○	○	○	○	○
${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} acts like someone I know in my life .	○	○	○	○	○
${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} is like someone I know in my life.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Perceived Homophily: How much do you agree with each statement about ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue}.

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
Has status like me	○	○	○	○	○
Has similar social class	○	○	○	○	○
Is culturally different	○	○	○	○	○
Has an economic situation like mine	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Attraction: How much do you agree with each statement about the character ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} in the television show ${q://QID48/ChoiceTextEntryValue}.

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
Could be a friend of mine.	○	○	○	○	○
Would be difficult for me to talk with.	○	○	○	○	○
Just wouldn't fit into my circle of friends.	○	○	○	○	○
Could never establish a personal friendship with each other.	○	○	○	○	○
Could have a friendly chat with me.	○	○	○	○	○

==Uncertainty Reduction==: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Not At all	*	*	*	Very Much
Confident in your general ability to predict how ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} will behave.	O	O	O	O	O
How accurate you are at predicting the values ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} hold.	O	O	O	O	O
How accurate do you think you are at predicting ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} attitudes.	O	O	O	O	O
How well do you think you are at predicting ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} feelings and emotions.	O	O	O	O	O
How well do you think you know ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue}.	O	O	O	O	O

___Page Break___

==Identification:== How much do you agree with each statement?

	Clearly describes my feelings	Mostly describes my feelings	Moderately describes my feelings	Slightly describes my feelings	Does not describe my feelings
While viewing ${q://QID48/ChoiceTextEntryValue}, I feel as if I am part of the action.	O	O	O	O	O
While viewing ${q://QID48/ChoiceTextEntryValue}, I forget myself and are fully absorbed.	O	O	O	O	O
I am able to understand the events in the program in a manner similar to that in, which ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} understands them.	O	O	O	O	O
I think I have a good understanding of ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} character.	O	O	O	O	O
I tend to understand the reasons why ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} does what he does.	O	O	O	O	O
While viewing the show I can feel the emotions ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} portrays.	O	O	O	O	O
At key moments in the show, I feel I know exactly what ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} is going through.	O	O	O	O	O
While viewing the program, I want ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} to succeed in achieving his goals.	O	O	O	O	O
When ${q://QID49/ChoiceTextEntryValue} succeeded I feel joy, but when he fail I am sad.	O	O	O	O	O

**If respondents indicated that they had not seen at least one television show with gay male character or a Black gay male character, they were saw Q59 & Q60 question and answers questions about perceived realism, perceived homophily, attraction, uncertainty reduction, identification about the TV show and character they said they enjoyed.

Q59: There are many TV dramas, past and present, with memorable male characters including Derek Shepherd on *Grey's Anatomy*, Chandler Bing and Ross Geller on *Friends*, Ari Gold on *Entourage*, Jack Tripper on *Three's Company*, Dr. John Truman Carter and Dr. Doug Ross on *ER*, Dr. Sheldon Cooper on *Big Bang Theory*, Thomas Magnum on *Magnum P.I.,* Barney Steinson on *How I Met*

Your Mother, Dylan McKay on *Beverly Hills 90210*, Uncle Jesse on *Full House*, Will Smith on *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, and Al Bundy on *Married with Children* to name a few.

Please enter the name of a television show that you **ENJOY** watching which contains a male character that you **ENJOY** watching. **PLEASE ENTER THE NAME OF THE TV SHOW ONLY**

Q60: Please enter the name of the character in the show you wrote about in the previous question in the box below. **ONLY ENTER THE NAME OF THE CHARACTER**

Identity Perceived Realism_2 : How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
There are certain characters on TV shows that I admire.	○	○	○	○	○
There are few characters in TV shows that I would like to be more like.	○	○	○	○	○
I know someone in real life like ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue}	○	○	○	○	○
${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} acts like someone I know in my life.	○	○	○	○	○
${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} is like someone I know in my life.	○	○	○	○	○

Perceived Homophily_2: How much do you agree with each statement about ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue}.

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
Has status like me	○	○	○	○	○
Has similar social class	○	○	○	○	○
Is culturally different	○	○	○	○	○
Has an economic situation like mine	○	○	○	○	○

Attraction_2: How much do you agree with each statement about the character ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} in the television show ${q://QID59/ChoiceTextEntryValue}.

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Agree
Could be a friend of mine.	○	○	○	○	○
Would be difficult for me to talk with.	○	○	○	○	○
Just wouldn't fit into my circle of friends.	○	○	○	○	○
Could never establish a personal friendship with each other.	○	○	○	○	○
Could have a friendly chat with me.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Uncertainty Reduction_2: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Not At all	*	*	*	Very Much
Confident in your general ability to predict how ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} will behave.	○	○	○	○	○
How accurate you are at predicting the values ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} hold.	○	○	○	○	○
How accurate do you think you are at predicting ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} attitudes.	○	○	○	○	○
How well do you think you are at predicting ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} feelings and emotions.	○	○	○	○	○
How well do you think you know ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue}.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Identification_2: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Clearly describes my feelings	Mostly describes my feelings	Moderately describes my feelings	Slightly describes my feelings	Does not describe my feelings
While viewing ${q://QID59/ChoiceTextEntryValue}, I feel as if I am part of the action.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
While viewing ${q://QID59/ChoiceTextEntryValue}, I forget myself and are fully absorbed.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am able to understand the events in the program in a manner similar to that in, which ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} understands them.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I think I have a good understanding of ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} character.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I tend to understand the reasons why ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} does what he does.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
While viewing the show I can feel the emotions ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} portrays.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
At key moments in the show, I feel I know exactly what ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} is going through.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
While viewing the program, I want ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} to succeed in achieving his goals.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
When ${q://QID60/ChoiceTextEntryValue} succeeded I feel joy, but when they fail I am sad.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

____Page Break____

SocialContact (race): How many of the following do you know?

	0	1	2	3	4+
Family members, close friends or acquaintances who identify as African American/Black	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Family members, close friends, or acquaintances who identify as Latino/Hispanic heritage	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Family members, close friends, or acquaintances who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Social Contact (LGBT): How many of the following do you know?

	0	1	2	3	4+
Family members, close friends or acquaintances who are gay men	○	○	○	○	○
Family members, close friends or acquaintances who are lesbian	○	○	○	○	○
Family members, close friends, acquaintances who are transgender	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Sexuality: Please choose the description that best fits how you think about yourself:
- ○ Heterosexual / Straight
- ○ Bisexual
- ○ Gay / Lesbian
- ○ Prefer not to say
- ○ Other (please specify) _____

_____Page Break_____

Identity Hierarchies: You indicated that you identify with several different categories. Tell us how important those identities are to you by distributing 10 points across those categories. Give the category or categories that are more important more points and those that are less important less points. Your total should equal 10.

_____ ${q://QID15/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}
_____ ${q://QID18/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}
_____ ${q://QID21/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}
_____ ${q://QID23/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}

Horizontal Individualism: Please rate the following items:

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
I'd rather depend on myself than others.	○	○	○	○	○
I rely on myself most of the time, I rarely rely on others.	○	○	○	○	○
I often do "my own thing."	○	○	○	○	○
My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.	○	○	○	○	○

Vertical Individualism: Please rate the following items:

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
It is important I do my job better than others.	○	○	○	○	○
Winning is everything.	○	○	○	○	○
Competition is law of nature.	○	○	○	○	○
When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Vertical Collectivism: Please rate the following items:

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.	○	○	○	○	○
It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.	○	○	○	○	○
Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.	○	○	○	○	○

Horizontal Collectivism: Please rate the following items:

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
If a coworker/colleagues gets a prize, I would feel proud.	○	○	○	○	○
The well-being of my coworkers/colleagues is important to me.	○	○	○	○	○
To me, pleasure is spending time with others.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel good when I cooperate with others.	○	○	○	○	○

END OF SURVEY

Appendix 2

Study 2 Codebook

Dissertation Physiology Pre-test

Independent Variable
Dependent Variable
Mediator
Moderator
Control Variables

Screener Questions

Gender: What is your gender?
- ❍ Male
- ❍ Female
- ❍ Other (please specify) _____

"If Female or Other … Is Selected, Then skip to End of Survey "

_____Page Break_____

Over18: Are you over the age of 18?
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

"If No…Is Selected, the Skip to End of Survey"

_____Page Break_____

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Study: Exploring the Role of Emotions in Television

Principal Investigator: Michael W. Wagner (phone: 608-263-3392) (email: mwagner@wisc.edu)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH
This research examines the role of emotions while watching a television show. Specifically, the study examines your physiological and self-report responses to a television show and its characters.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?
This research consists of several parts. The first part includes some general survey questions. This portion of the study will take 10-15 minutes. While answering any of the questions you may choose to skip or decline any questions that make you uncomfortable.

 In the second part, you attend a session in the Physiology and Communication Effects Lab in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and you be attached to sensors while watching a television show. In the final part, you will answer survey questions about the clip you saw, your opinions on various issues, and demographics. Your participation should take about 60 minutes in total. If you decide to withdraw from the study, which you are free to do at any time, your data as collected up to the withdrawal point will be used in the data analysis, unless you indicate otherwise.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?
There are minimal risks associated with your participation. There is a minimal risk of a breach of confidentiality.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FOR MY PARTICIPATION?
 There are no direct benefits to you.

WILL I BE COMPENSATED FOR MY PARTICIPATION?
You will be paid $20 for taking the first questionnaire, attending a session in the Physiology and Communication Effects lab, and taking a second questionnaire, which in total should take one hour.

HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?
Your data (with no names attached) will be aggregated with other participants' data and analyzed with common statistical techniques for the purpose of publishing the results in a book or academic journal. Your name is not connected to the file containing your data as the data only contains the ID number we provided you. The only connection of your name to your ID number is in a separate file that is only used to verify that you received compensation. Both the data file and the compensation file are kept on a password-protected computer in an encrypted file.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research, you should contact the Principal Investigator Michael W. Wagner at 608-263-3392 or graduate student researcher Catasha Davis at catashadavis@wisc.edu.

If you are not satisfied with the response of the research team, have more questions, or want to talk with someone about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Education and Social & Behavioral Science IRB Office at 608-263-2320.
 You participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time without penalty.

By indicating, "Yes, I consent to participate," you are indicating that you have read this consent form, you identify as male, at least 18 years of age, are able to provide your own consent and voluntarily consent to participate in the online questionnaire portion of this study.

- ❍   Yes, I consent to participate
- ❍   No, I do not consent to participate

"If No, I do not consent to participate…Is Selected, then Skip to End of Survey"

____Page Break____

ID#: Please create your id number using the following:
First letter of your first name
First letter of your last name
A Random 4-Digit number

Example: Jim Smith, 1316
Example ID: JS1316

Text Box

____Page Break____

Age: What year were you born?

Race: What is your race? (Check all that apply)
- ❑ White/Caucasian
- ❑ Black/African American
- ❑ Asian
- ❑ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ❑ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

Latino: Are you Hispanic or Latino?
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Religion: How important is religion in your everyday life?
- ❍ Extremely unimportant
- ❍ Somewhat unimportant
- ❍ Neither unimportant or important
- ❍ Somewhat important
- ❍ Extremely important

Political Affiliation: Generally speaking, do you consider yourself:
- ❍ Strong Democrat
- ❍ Not so strong Democrat
- ❍ Independent leaning Democrat
- ❍ Independent
- ❍ Independent leaning Republican
- ❍ Not so strong Republican
- ❍ Strong Republican
- ❍ Other
- ❍ Don't know

Education: What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- ❍ Less than High School
- ❍ High School / GED
- ❍ Some College
- ❍ 2-year College Degree
- ❍ 4-year College Degree
- ❍ Master's Degree
- ❍ Doctoral Degree
- ❍ Professional Degree (JD, MD)

_____Page Break_____

Sexual Orientation: Please choose the description that best fits how you think about yourself:
- ❍ Heterosexual / Straight
- ❍ Bisexual
- ❍ Gay / Lesbian
- ❍ Other (please specify) _____

_____Page Break_____

ID Hierarchies: You indicated that you identify with several different categories. Tell us how important those identities are to you by distributing 10 points across those categories, giving the category or categories that are more important more points and those that are less important less points. Your total should equal 10 points.
_____ ${q://QID4/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}
_____ ${q://QID13/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}
_____ ${q://QID12/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}

_____Page Break_____

Personality Traits: Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that the traits apply to you. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
Extraverted, enthusiastic	○	○	○	○	○
Critical, quarrelsome	○	○	○	○	○
Dependable, self-disciplined	○	○	○	○	○
Anxious, easily upset	○	○	○	○	○
Open to new experiences, complex	○	○	○	○	○
Reserved, quiet	○	○	○	○	○
Sympathetic, warm	○	○	○	○	○
Disorganized, careless	○	○	○	○	○
Calm, emotionally stable	○	○	○	○	○
Conventional, uncreative	○	○	○	○	○

Attachment Style: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.	○	○	○	○	○
I find it relatively easy to get close to others.	○	○	○	○	○
I don't often worry about someone getting too close to me.	○	○	○	○	○
I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.	○	○	○	○	○
I find it difficult to depend on others.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable depending on other people.	○	○	○	○	○
I find it easy to trust others.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable having other people depend on me.	○	○	○	○	○

Horizontal Individualism: Please rate the following items:

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
I'd rather depend on myself than others.	○	○	○	○	○
I rely on myself most of the time, I rarely rely on others.	○	○	○	○	○
I often do "my own thing."	○	○	○	○	○
My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.	○	○	○	○	○

Vertical Individualism: Please rate the following items:

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
It is important I do my job better than others.	○	○	○	○	○
Winning is everything.	○	○	○	○	○
Competition is law of nature.	○	○	○	○	○
When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Vertical Collectivism: Please rate the following items:

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.	○	○	○	○	○
It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.	○	○	○	○	○
Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.	○	○	○	○	○

<mark>Horizontal Collectivism</mark>: Please rate the following items:

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud.	○	○	○	○	○
The well-being of my coworkers is important to me.	○	○	○	○	○
To me, pleasure is spending time with others.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel good when I cooperate with others.	○	○	○	○	○

<mark>____Page Break____</mark>

<mark>Media Exposure</mark>: How often (in hours) do you watch TV? (Live or on the Internet)

	0	.5	1	2	3	4	5 +
On a typical weekday	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
On a typical Saturday	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
On a typical Sunday	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Perceived Realism: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
TV content reflects everyday life.	○	○	○	○	○
People on television shows are just like people in the real world.	○	○	○	○	○
TV shows things as they really are in life.	○	○	○	○	○
People on TV handle their problems just like real people do.	○	○	○	○	○
Television does not show life as it really is.	○	○	○	○	○
Television lets me really see how other people live.	○	○	○	○	○

Music: What genre or genres of music do you prefer? (Check all that apply)
- ❑ Dance
- ❑ Blues
- ❑ Classical
- ❑ Country
- ❑ Electronic
- ❑ Hip-Hop/Rap
- ❑ Indie
- ❑ Jazz
- ❑ K-Pop
- ❑ Pop
- ❑ R&B/Soul
- ❑ Rock
- ❑ Reggae
- ❑ Metal
- ❑ Other _____

Music: What genre or genres of music do you **NOT** prefer? (Check all that apply)
- ❑ Dance
- ❑ Blues
- ❑ Classical
- ❑ Country
- ❑ Electronic
- ❑ Hip-Hop/Rap
- ❑ Indie
- ❑ Jazz
- ❑ K-Pop
- ❑ Pop
- ❑ R&B/Soul
- ❑ Rock
- ❑ Reggae
- ❑ Metal
- ❑ Other _____

___Page Break___

Empire: How familiar are you with the television show?
- ○ I have never watched the show before
- ○ I have watched the show only a few times
- ○ I have watched the show more than a few times
- ○ I watched the show quite often
- ○ I almost always watch the show

Social Contact: How many of the following do you know?

	0	1	2	3	4+
Family members, close friends or acquaintances who identify as African American/Black	○	○	○	○	○
Family members, close friends, or acquaintances who identify as Latino/Hispanic heritage	○	○	○	○	○
Family members, close friends, or acquaintances who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander	○	○	○	○	○

Social Contact: How many of the following do you know?

	0	1	2	3	4+
Family members, close friends or acquaintances who are gay men	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Family members, close friends or acquaintances who are lesbian	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Family members, close friends, acquaintances who are transgender	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

_____Page Break_____

--Participants randomized to received these questions in the pre-test---

Intro: The next set of questions will ask about your attitudes toward issues and different groups of people in society. We understand and acknowledge that these can be very sensitive issues. We hope that you feel comfortable answering these questions honestly. Thank you again for your participation!

Policy: There are many issues that people believe are important. List below are a number of social and political issues. On a scale from "not at all important" to "extremely important" tell us how you rate each issue.

	Not at all Important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Treatment of minorities by police	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Rate of HIV infections	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
College debt/Student loans	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
LGBT rights	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Racism	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Poverty	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Gun violence	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Immigration	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Terrorism	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Climate change	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Wealth inequality	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

_____Page Break_____

Stigma Impact: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
My community's views regarding homosexuality affects the lives of gay men.	○	○	○	○	○
I think name-calling has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community.	○	○	○	○	○
I think social rejection has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community.	○	○	○	○	○
I think physical violence has an effect on the lives of gay men in my community.	○	○	○	○	○

___Page Break___

Acceptance: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
If a family member told me he was gay, I would no longer speak to him.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for me to avoid gay men.	○	○	○	○	○
I have no problem with gay men, but see no need for them to express their sexual orientation publicly.	○	○	○	○	○
In general, I believe it is morally acceptable to be a gay man.	○	○	○	○	○
Gay men are of value to my community.	○	○	○	○	○

END OF PRE-TEST SURVEY

Study 2 Post-test

Independent Variable
Dependent Variable
Mediator
Moderator
Control Variables

Q1: Please enter the participant ID you create in the pre-survey, which included:
  The first letter of first name
  The first letter of your last name
  A random 4-digit number

TEXT BOX

Self-Reported Emotions: While watching the narrative, how did you feel?

	A great deal	A lot	A moderate amount	A little	None at all
Sad	○	○	○	○	○
Anger	○	○	○	○	○
Disgust	○	○	○	○	○
Fear	○	○	○	○	○
Happy	○	○	○	○	○
Confused	○	○	○	○	○

___Page Break___

Empathy: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
At keys moments in the show, I felt I knew exactly what the characters are going through emotionally.	○	○	○	○	○
At important moments in the show, I could feel the emotions that characters felt.	○	○	○	○	○
During the program, when Jamal Lyon succeeded, I felt happy, and when he suffered in some way, I felt sad.	○	○	○	○	○
I never really shared the emotions of the characters.	○	○	○	○	○
The story affected me emotionally.	○	○	○	○	○
During the program, when Andre Lyon succeeded, I felt happy, and when he suffered in some way, I felt sad.	○	○	○	○	○
During the program, when Hakeem Lyon succeeded, I felt happy, and when he suffered in some way, I felt sad.	○	○	○	○	○

___Page Break___

Q4 You have been randomly assigned an Empire character to give your feedback. When prompted think about character listed.

___Page Break___

==Perceived Variability==: Think about the character of Jamal on *Empire*. Please tell us how well the following traits describe Jamal.

	Uncharacteristic	Somewhat Uncharacteristic	Neither	Somewhat Characteristic	Characteristic
Stubborn	○	○	○	○	○
Hardworking	○	○	○	○	○
Dependent	○	○	○	○	○
Creative	○	○	○	○	○
Intelligent	○	○	○	○	○
Lazy	○	○	○	○	○
Rigid	○	○	○	○	○

___Page Break____

==Perceived Variability==: Think about other characters on the show *Empire*. How does Jamal compare to them?

	1	2	3	4	5
Less Stubborn: More Stubborn	○	○	○	○	○
Less Hardworking: More Hardworking	○	○	○	○	○
Less dependent: More Dependent	○	○	○	○	○
Less Creative: More Creative	○	○	○	○	○
More Intelligent: Less Intelligent	○	○	○	○	○
Less Lazy: More Lazy	○	○	○	○	○
Less Rigid: More Rigid	○	○	○	○	○

___Page Break____

==Perceived Variability==: Think about gay men in general. How does Jamal compare to them?

	1	2	3	4	5
Less Stubborn: More Stubborn	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Less Hardworking: More Hardworking	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Less Dependent: More dependent	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Less Creative: More Creative	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
More Intelligent: Less Intelligent	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Less Lazy: More Lazy	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Less Rigid: More Rigid	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

____Page Break____

==Parasocial Interaction==: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
Jamal reminds me of myself.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have the same qualities as Jamal.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I seem to have the same beliefs or attitudes as Jamal.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have the same problems as Jamal.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I can imagine myself as Jamal.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I can identify with Jamal.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

____Page Break____

==Parasocial Interaction==: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
I would like to meet the actor who played Jamal.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would watch the actor on another program.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I enjoyed trying to predict what Jamal would do.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I hoped Jamal achieved his goals.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I care about what happens to Jamal.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I like hearing the voice of Jamal.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

____Page Break____

==Parasocial Interaction==: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
The characters interactions are similar to mine with friends.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The characters interactions similar to my interactions with family.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My friends are like characters on Empire.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I'd enjoy interacting with the characters and my friends at the same time.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
While watching Empire, I felt included in the group.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I can relate to the characters' attitudes.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

_____Page Break_____

Parasocial Interaction: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
I wish I could handle problems as well as Jamal.	○	○	○	○	○
I like the way Jamal handles problems.	○	○	○	○	○
I would like to be more like Jamal.	○	○	○	○	○
I usually agreed with Jamal.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Introduction: The next set of questions will ask about your attitudes toward different groups and policies. We understand and acknowledge that these can be very sensitive issues. We hope that you feel comfortable answering these questions honestly. Thank you again for our participation!

_____Page Break_____

Policy: There are many issues that people believe are important. Listed below are a number of social and political issues. On a scale from "not at all important" to "extremely important" tell us how you rate each issue.

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Treatment of minorities by police	○	○	○	○	○
Rate of HIV infections	○	○	○	○	○
College debt/Student loans	○	○	○	○	○
LGBT rights	○	○	○	○	○
Racism	○	○	○	○	○
Poverty	○	○	○	○	○
Gun violence	○	○	○	○	○
Immigration	○	○	○	○	○
Terrorism	○	○	○	○	○
Climate change	○	○	○	○	○
Wealth inequality	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Stigma Impact: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
My community's views regarding homosexuality affects the lives of gay men.	○	○	○	○	○
I think name calling has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community.	○	○	○	○	○
I think social rejection has an impact on the lives of gay men in my community.	○	○	○	○	○
I think physical violence has an effect on the lives of gay men in my community.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Acceptance: How much do you agree with each statement?

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
If a family member told me he was gay, I would no longer speak to him.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for me to avoid gay men.	○	○	○	○	○
I have no problem with gay men, but see no need for them to express their sexual orientation publicly.	○	○	○	○	○
In general, I believe it is morally acceptable to be a gay man.	○	○	○	○	○
Gay men are of value to my community.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Perceived Realism: Tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
There are certain characters on TV show that I admire.	○	○	○	○	○
There are few characters in TV shows that I would like to be more like.	○	○	○	○	○
I know someone in real life like Jamal.	○	○	○	○	○
On Empire the characters are like people I know in my life.	○	○	○	○	○
On the TV show Empire the character Jamal acts like someone I know in my life.	○	○	○	○	○

_____Page Break_____

Manipulation Check: What is Jamal's sexual orientation?
- ○ Straight
- ○ Gay
- ○ Bisexual
- ○ I don't know

Manipulation Check: Which Lyon brother has mental health issues?
- ○ Jamal
- ○ Hakeem
- ○ Andre
- ○ None of them
- ○ I don't know

_____Page Break_____

Manipulation Check: In the narrative you watched, what does Luscious do to a young Jamal?
- ○ Throws him in a trash can
- ○ Tell him to be an actor
- ○ Makes him clean the house
- ○ I don't know

Manipulation Check: How does Jamal come out as gay?
- ○ By changing his father's song lyrics
- ○ In a press conference
- ○ At a party at his dad's club
- ○ Singing on social media
- ○ I don't know

_____Page Break_____

Perceived Realism: Tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
I feel I can learn a lot about people from watching TV	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I get useful ideas about how I should act around my friends and family by watching characters on television	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
By watching TV, I feel I can learn a lot about life's problems and situations	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The characters I see on television help give me ideas about how to solve my own problems	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

___Page Break___

Transportation: Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
At times during the program, the story world was closer to me than the real world.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My attention was focused more on my surrounding than on the program.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The program created a new world, and them that world suddenly disappeared when the program ended.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
During the program, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Transportation: Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Agree
At times during the program, I completely forgot that I was in the middle of the experiment	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I forgot my own problems and concerns during the program.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
While watching, I found myself thinking about what I done before the experiment or what I would do after it.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

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