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Idols and Friends in the Eyes of Adolescents: Parasocial Interaction and Two-Step Flow

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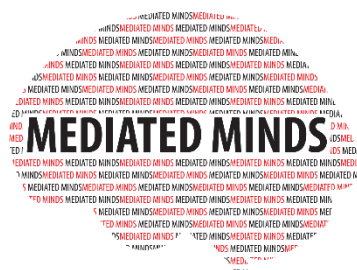
Abstract — In this presentation, we will explore the beliefs and behaviors of adolescents through parasocial interaction and two-step flow theory with the goal of explaining why inaccessible people are so impactful to today's youth.

I. INTRODUCTION

Through our research of the connection of both parasocial interaction and two-step flow theory to the opinions and behaviors of youth we have found that parasocial relationships are just as important as interpersonal relationships, especially in the eyes of adolescents. With this being said, we need to respect the feelings young adults have towards relationships with media figures because they have the same connection and level of impact as any other relationship. We also found that social media posts made by friends and other pages has indefinitely swayed the political opinions of young consumers.

II. FINDINGS

How parasocial interaction and two-step flow are relevant to the development of adolescents.



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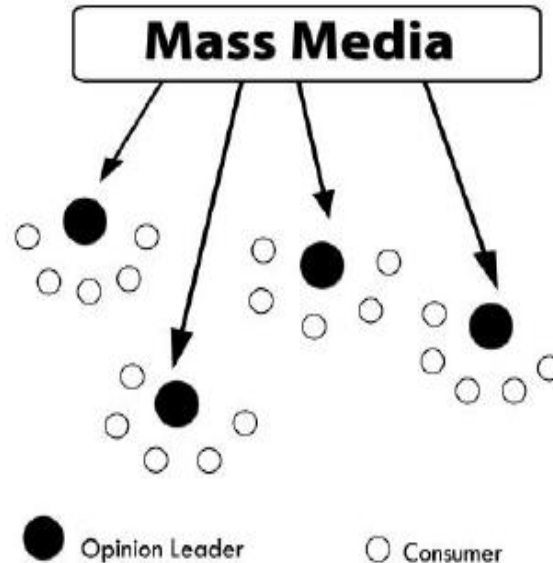
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IDOLS AND FRIENDS IN THE EYES OF ADOLESCENTS: PARASOCIAL INTERACTION AND TWO-STEP FLOW

Jordan Woody & Camryn Woody

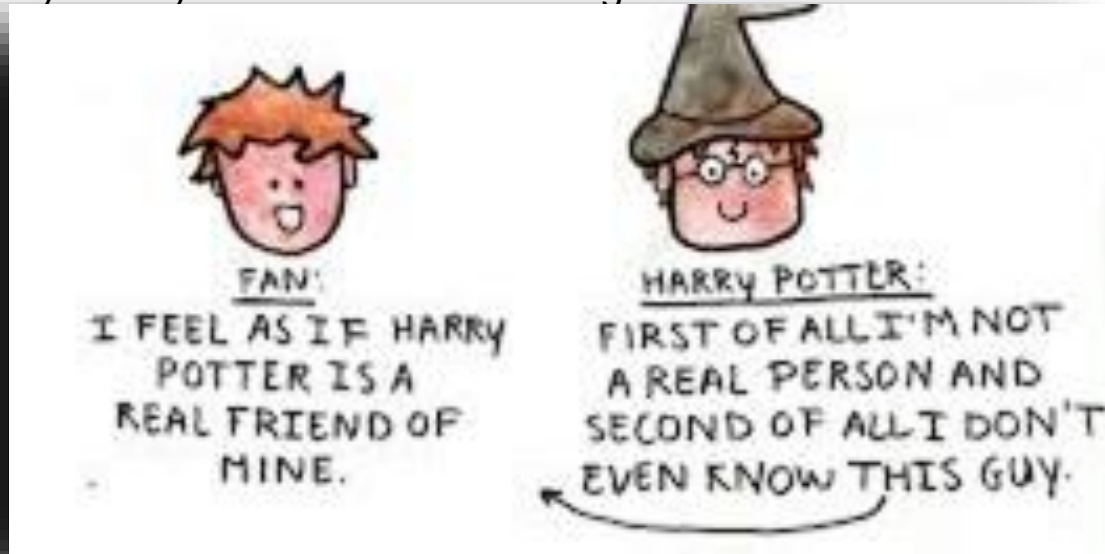
TWO-STEP FLOW

- The passing of information from media to audience through the opinionated interpretations of others is known as the two-step flow theory.



PARASOCIAL INTERACTION

- People attracted to personas displayed in the media → Choose to keep up with actions on a day-to-day basis → Creates a legitimate one-sided relationship



ADOLESCENTS

- Adolescents are relying on media more and more to shape their personalities
- Media that has the largest impact on adolescents is social media



APPLICATION TO TWO-STEP FLOW

- Individuals obtaining information about politics through Facebook led to a negative depiction of the way democracy works (Bene, 2017).
- Older siblings who were affected by the NYADMC campaign had a large influence on the opinions of their younger sisters and brothers (Hornik, 2006).



APPLICATION TO PARASOCIAL INTERACTION

- Successful interactions between young people and media figures = healthier overall relationships (Bond, 2016)
- Media icons taking the place of imaginary friends (Gleason, Theran, Newberg, 2019)