



## Implicit theories of a desire for fame

John Maltby<sup>1\*</sup>, Liz Day<sup>2</sup>, David Giles<sup>3</sup>, Raphael Gillett<sup>1</sup>,  
Marianne Quick<sup>4</sup>, Honey Langcaster-James<sup>5</sup> and P. Alex Linley<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Psychology, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK

<sup>2</sup>Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK

<sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Winchester, UK

<sup>4</sup>Department of Social and Psychological Sciences, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk,  
Lancashire, UK

<sup>5</sup>Department of Psychology, Fenner Building, University of Hull, UK

<sup>6</sup>Centre for Positive Psychology, Coventry, UK

The aim of the present studies was to generate implicit theories of a desire for fame among the general population. In Study 1, we were able to develop a nine-factor analytic model of conceptions of the desire to be famous that initially comprised nine separate factors; ambition, meaning derived through comparison with others, psychologically vulnerable, attention seeking, conceitedness, social access, altruistic, positive affect, and glamour. Analysis that sought to examine replicability among these factors suggested that three factors (altruistic, positive affect, and glamour) neither display factor congruence nor display adequate internal reliability. A second study examined the validity of these factors in predicting profiles of individuals who may desire fame. The findings from this study suggested that two of the nine factors (positive affect and altruism) could not be considered strong factors within the model. Overall, the findings suggest that implicit theories of a desire for fame comprise six factors. The discussion focuses on how an implicit model of a desire for fame might progress into formal theories of a desire for fame.

In recent years, the psychological analysis of celebrity and those who follow celebrities have increased. Psychologists have sought to understand the phenomena of celebrity, by looking at the psychology of the famous (Evans & Wilson, 1999; Giles, 2000; Young & Pinsky, 2006) with theoretical and empirical explanations encompassing issues of self-esteem, narcissism, and altruism. Similarly, researchers have also examined the psychology of those who are interested in the celebrities. This work has included the measurement of celebrity worship (McCutcheon, Lange, & Houran, 2002), the

\* Correspondence should be addressed to Dr John Maltby, School of Psychology, University of Leicester, Lancaster Road, Leicester, LE1 9HN, UK (e-mail: jm148@le.ac.uk).

understanding of celebrity worship within models of personality and mental health (Maltby *et al.*, 2004), and assessing its applied value in terms of health (Maltby, Giles, Barber, & McCutcheon, 2005). Further to this, there is the opportunity to extend the consideration of the psychology of celebrity and celebrity worship to complete a triad of research; what is the psychology of those with a desire to be famous?

According to the UK's Learning and Skills Council (2006), 16% of 16- to 19-year olds presently believe that they are going to become famous, and 11% are prepared to abandon formal education in pursuit of that goal. This apparently increasing desire for fame and celebrity is reflected in the number of applications for 'reality TV' shows such as *Big Brother* and *The X Factor* (now screened in Europe, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East) which at best seem to promise little more than fleeting fame to participants. Elsewhere, there is no shortage of aspirant pop musicians and actors desperately attempting to thrust themselves into the media spotlight, despite the frequent warnings from former celebrities of the perils of stardom and regular media coverage of fallen idols with drug addictions and other misfortunes. Evidently, the positive attractions of fame hugely outweigh the negatives, especially in the eyes of adolescents and young adults.

The question of why people wish to become famous has proved very difficult to answer empirically. First, there are inevitable difficulties with operationalizing fame as a construct. Simonton (1994) talks of 'greatness' in his psychological discussion of historical figures. Many think of 'fame' as something earned, or merited, through exceptional deeds, on the other hand, it has long been acknowledged that one may achieve fame as a result of socially unacceptable or immoral behaviour (Braudy, 1997).

Giles (2000) draws a distinction between the process of fame (i.e. becoming known beyond one's social network) and the state of celebrity (i.e. the experience of an individual with a high media profile). Celebrity is a largely modern phenomena, dependent on technology, while fame has long-standing historical roots (Braudy, 1997, identifies Alexander the Great as the first famous individual). However, in today's media-saturated world, the two are seamlessly intertwined.

What are the intrinsic qualities of fame that make it such a desirable state? The limited literature on the topic has raised a number of possibilities. In a qualitative study, Mrowicki and Giles (2005) found that aspiring musicians frequently articulated altruistic motives for fame seeking, such as financial assistance for parents, or a desire to educate the next generation (bypassing on musical skills). Self-aggrandizement and pecuniary motives were vehemently discounted. Giles (2000), drawing largely on celebrity biographies and media interview material, suggested that established celebrities are driven to identify honourable (i.e. non-selfish) reasons for their success. In this way, it is possible to conflate fame seeking with artistic or athletic endeavour, although for some activities (e.g. pop music, football) it is impossible to disassociate success or achievement from the media adulation that comes from being a leading pop musician or footballer.

Given this tendency for individuals to give socially desirable explanations for fame seeking, the focus in the present study was on attributions that people in general make towards the desire for fame. In the lack of such theory and research, implicit theories present a possible fruitful avenue for research.

Implicit theories are defined as personal interpretations, constructions, and beliefs about phenomenon that reside in the minds of individuals; these are also described as folk theories - essentially, lay ideas that surround a particular topic area (Sternberg, Conway, Ketron, & Bernstein, 1981; Sternberg, 2001). Implicit theories have been used by psychologists to study people's implicit theories in a variety of domains, including

intelligence (Dweck & Elliott, 1983; Berg & Sternberg, 1992; Sternberg, 2001), interpersonal and romantic relationships (Puccio & Chemtino, 2001), the processing of social information (McConnell, 2001), and stereotypes (Levy, Plaks, & Dweck, 1999; Levy, Stroesser, & Dweck, 1998). Sternberg suggests four reasons why implicit theories are important to study. The first reason is that implicit theories of intelligence are important in understanding everyday life. Implicit theories of intelligence drive the way in which people perceive and evaluate their own beliefs and that of others. Subsequently, people use such perceptions and evaluations to draw conclusions about themselves and others and make judgments about everyday life. The second reason is that implicit theories can give rise to more formal theories which researchers can investigate. This approach allows the researcher to condense theories into one big descriptive work, which provides a framework for researchers. The third reason why implicit theories are useful is that they may provide useful avenues to research when an investigator thinks explicit theories are wrong or inadequate. Fourthly, and lastly, implicit theories can inform theories around particular psychological constructs.

Empirically, the usefulness of implicit theories has been shown in a number of domains. In the literature on intelligence, implicit theories of intelligence have been useful in demonstrating differences between cultures, particularly in terms of western and eastern conceptions of intelligence (Sternberg, 2001; Berry, 1984) and elaborating on changes in intelligence within cultures (Berg & Sternberg, 1992; Siegler & Richards, 1982). In the examination of social cognition and stereotypes, the study of implicit theories have been fruitful in leading to testable theoretical models illustrating how perceiver differences have important implications for social information processing that occurs when forming impressions of others (McConnell, 2001) and help explain individual differences in social stereotyping and stereotype endorsement (Levy *et al.*, 1998).

The role and influence of celebrity in our society is huge, and evidence suggests that many individuals show a desire for fame (YouGov, 2006), with a number of young people believing they are going to become famous and willing to abandon formal education in pursuit of that goal (Learning and Skills Council, 2006). However, there is very little psychological theory and empirical analysis of this desire for fame. It is argued that implicit theories of a desire for fame can give rise to more formal theories of that construct providing a context that is presently missing from the literature. The aim of the present studies was to explore implicit theories of a desire for fame.

## **STUDY I**

In this study, we examined the factor structure of participants' conceptions of desire to be famous to elucidate the structure and content of people's conceptions of desire for fame.

### **Method**

#### ***Participants***

A total of 1,534 United Kingdom participants (839 males and 695 females) aged between 12 and 72 years (mean age = 26.31, *SD* = 9.4) took part in the study. In terms of ethnicity, 1,180 respondents identified themselves as White European, 132 respondents as Black, 80 respondents as Indian, 67 respondents as Pakistani, 36 respondents as Chinese, 14 respondents as Middle Eastern, and 25 identified themselves as 'other'

ethnicity. In terms of marital status, 621 respondents identified themselves as single, 530 respondents view themselves as married or cohabiting, 273 respondents categorized themselves as dating or in a long-term relationship, 108 respondents categorized themselves as divorced or separated, and 2 respondents categorized themselves as widowed. Finally, 891 respondents reported being in work (with the largest occupational area being general administrative/supervisory work [ $N = 188$ ] or computer-related work [ $N = 154$ ]), 587 respondents reported being at school or at university, and 56 respondents reporting being unemployed or between jobs.

In terms of our sampling framework, we employed non-proportional quota sampling. We wanted to ensure the sample represented a number of different populations in society; therefore, respondents were approached via advertising for respondents in a number of schools, universities, workplaces and community, and church groups.

### **Procedure**

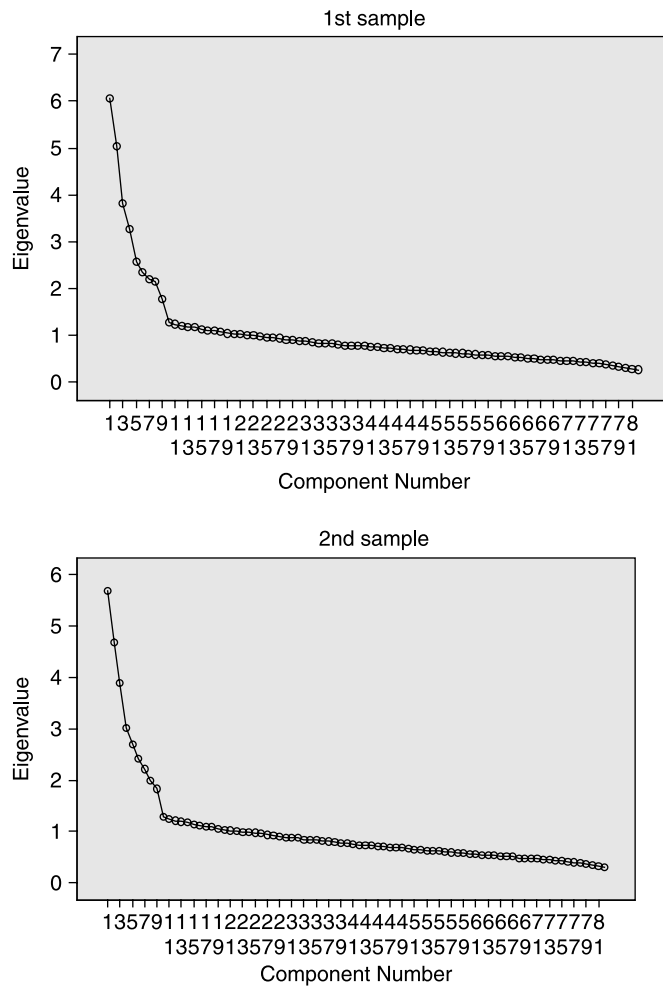
For this first study, we compiled a list of descriptors of people who desired to be famous. To get this list, we sampled 54 respondents (20 students in university education and 34 non-student adults aged from 18 to 62 years, mean age = 34.12,  $SD = 9.2$ ). Subjects received a blank page on which they were asked to list as many behaviours and attitudes they thought characteristic of a person who wanted to be famous. Behaviours and attitudes listed by the subjects that were mentioned more than three times were compiled into a list of 82 descriptors. We stopped collecting data at the point when participants were no longer providing new descriptors. Two of the authors carried out the identification of potential items. Reliability of coding of items was calculated using a 20% sample of the descriptions. Across these two raters, coding agreement was satisfactory (Cohen's  $\kappa = 0.81$ ). Three of the authors then subsequently developed the items for administration in the study by making the items as short as possible and unambiguous in meaning (Kline, 1986). The items were then administered to a group of 10 university undergraduate students (five males and five females) who rated or checked the items for suitability for language, wording, and clarity. Determining whether the item was suitable, or any changes to wording, required 80% agreement between raters.

We then provided the 1,534 participants in this experiment with each of the 82 descriptors. Participants were asked to rate how each characteristic was descriptive of someone who wanted to be famous. Participants used a scale ranging from 1 (not characteristic at all) to 9 (extremely characteristic).

### **Results**

In order to determine the factor structure of the data, we first divided it randomly into two halves, or samples ( $N = 767$  in each). To establish the number of factors present, parallel analysis and the Scree test were applied in turn for each sample.

As determining the number of factors is crucial to the current consideration, we used two criteria. The first was the use of the Scree test (Cattell, 1966) based on a plot of eigenvalues of the factors and choosing only those factors that are above the elbow in the line of eigenvalues (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Scree plot used to determine the number of factors.

The second was through a parallel analysis of Monte Carlo simulations (Horn, 1965) that allow the comparison of the eigenvalues to those that might be expected from purely random data with no structure (see Table 1). Both methods of assessment suggested that nine factors be extracted.

It was found that nine factors were present, there being agreement between both tests and both samples. That is, only the first nine eigenvalues exceeded the 95th percentiles of their respective sampling distributions.

The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was calculated to be .833 for the first sample and .825 for the second sample. Values closer to 1 are better and a value of .6 is a suggested minimum. Bartlett’s test of sphericity, which tests the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, suggested that it was possible to reject the null hypothesis (first sample;  $\chi^2 = 13,822.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ; second sample;  $\chi^2 = 12,847.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Principal components analysis was performed on the 82 items for the first sample. These factors were then subjected to oblique (oblimin) and varimax (orthogonal)

**Table 1.** Comparison of eigenvalues and parallel analysis value

Eigenvalue	First sample		Second sample	
	Value	95th percentile	Value	95th percentile
1.00	6.056	1.760	5.695	1.760
2.00	5.035	1.703	4.677	1.703
3.00	3.810	1.657	3.894	1.657
4.00	3.268	1.624	3.023	1.624
5.00	2.577	1.590	2.701	1.590
6.00	2.357	1.567	2.417	1.567
7.00	2.190	1.536	2.215	1.536
8.00	2.152	1.510	1.984	1.510
9.00	1.766	1.489	1.832	1.489
10.00	1.267	1.467	1.278	1.467

rotation with delta set to 0. In interpreting solutions, factor loadings of above .3 were considered as relevant to the factor (Kline, 1986). Both rotation methods produced clear solutions and provided similar interpretations in terms of what items loaded on which factors. However, it was the varimax rotation that produced the clearest loadings on the factors, and this yielded a meaningful orthogonal solution with evident simple structure. A full table detailing the factor loadings for this analysis is provided at [www.le.ac.uk/pc/jm148/maltbytable.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/pc/jm148/maltbytable.html).

The overall variance accounted for the model was 35.62%. The labelling of each of the factors was carried out by three of the authors. Each author suggested a number of potential labels for each factor separately from each other and then, following subsequent discussion, the name of each factor was given when there was 100% agreement between authors.

We have labelled the first factor '*Ambition*' (accounting for 7.32% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .61 to .84). This factor is defined by statements such as 'Has worked hard all their life to be famous', 'Believe they will be discovered one day', and 'Has a life ambition to be famous'. These items represent the idea that ambition, self-belief, and hard work are necessary preconditions for fame.

We have labelled the second factor '*Meaning derived through comparison with others*'<sup>1</sup> (accounting for 6.00% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .37 to .68). This factor is defined by statements such as 'Very little matters to them apart from being famous', 'Is trying to escape real life', and 'Doesn't care about others', which encompass a feeling that those who have a desire for fame obtain meaning through a comparison with, or recognition by, others.

We have labelled the third factor '*psychologically vulnerable*' (accounting for 4.57% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .50 to .71). This factor is defined by statements such as 'Is very unsure of him/herself', 'Has low self-esteem', and 'Has issues with him/herself', which relate to the idea that those desiring fame may be

<sup>1</sup> Though one factor was originally potentially mislabelled (meaning derived through comparison with others), and this was pointed out by one reviewer and we would like to acknowledge this useful insight and the subsequent advice given towards the renaming of this factor.

psychologically vulnerable, exhibiting low self-esteem, a poor image of their physical self, or feelings of being ignored.

We have labelled the fourth factor '*attention seeking*' (accounting for 4.01% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .52 to .73). This factor is defined by items such as 'Willing to do what others may not be willing to', 'Will do anything to be famous', and 'Always wanting people to notice them'. This factor seems to capture the belief that individuals with a desire for fame want other people to notice them and will do almost anything to gain that recognition.

We have labelled the fifth factor '*conceitedness*' (accounting for 3.04% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .41 to .57). The factor is defined by statements such as 'thinks they are going to be the next big thing', 'Thinks they are amazing', and 'Thinks fame is their destiny'. This factor seems to encapsulate the belief that people who want to be famous believe they have the ability and it is their destiny to be famous, perhaps overestimating self in relation to others.

We have labelled the sixth factor '*social access*' (accounting for 3.02% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .36 to .60). It is defined by statements such as 'Wants everyone to know their name', 'Wants to be able to access all areas of an elite social world', and 'Wants to be recognized', suggesting that this factor encompasses a desire within an individual to achieve celebrity status by joining a celebrity world where other people recognize them and know their name.

We have labelled the seventh factor '*altruistic*' (accounting for 2.72% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .36 to .62). The factor is defined by statements such as 'Has integrity', 'Wants to give their family a better quality of life', and 'Wants to be a good role model for people', and reflects a general view that people who want to be famous are looking to improve the social and economic climate for people around them.

We have labelled the eighth factor '*positive affect*' (accounting for 2.70% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .38 to .62). This factor is defined by statements such as 'Enjoys what they do', 'Is confident', and 'Has got what it takes to be famous'. This encapsulates a belief that people who want to be famous have generally positive affect and positive attributes.

We have labelled the final factor '*glamour*' (accounting for 2.24% of the variance and relevant loadings ranging from .44 to .62). This factor is defined by statements such as 'Wants to see their picture in magazines', 'Thinks they have to have the 'perfect look', and 'Are glamorous'. This factor encompasses the perceived emphasis on glamour and image in the world of the famous.

Confirmatory factor analysis on the second sample reaffirmed that an orthogonal nine-factor model gave a very good fit to the data. The first stage of confirmatory factor analysis was to fit a more general model in which factors were allowed to covary. As might be expected, the general model yielded an excellent fit to the data as indicated by the following statistics:  $\chi^2 = 3,263.398$ ,  $df = 3,203$ ,  $p < .224$ ; comparative fit index (CFI) = .994; standardized root mean-square residual (SRMR) = .033; root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .005. The second stage of confirmatory factor analysis was to fit an orthogonal model and compare the degree of fit of the two models, making use of the fact that an orthogonal model is nested within a model in which factors are allowed to covary. It was found that the fit of the orthogonal model was also excellent, as evidenced by highly similar values for the goodness-of-fit statistics:  $\chi^2 = 3,307.706$ ,  $df = 3,239$ ,  $p < .196$ ; comparative fit index (CFI) = .993; standardized root mean-square residual (SRMR) = .035; root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .005. A statistical comparison of the degree of fit of

the two models, using the chi-squared difference test, revealed that no loss of fit was incurred by choosing the nested orthogonal model ( $\chi^2$  difference = 44.31,  $df = 36$ ,  $p < .161$ ). It may be concluded that an orthogonal nine-factor model provided the most parsimonious account of the data with a good degree of fit.

To determine the replicability of the item loadings on the factors, the factor solution obtained from the second sample was rotated orthogonally to conform to the factor structure of the first sample as far as possible. This method of maximizing similarity between factor solutions is known as Procrustes rotation (Schonemann, 1966). Factor congruence coefficients were then computed to assess the degree of similarity between factors in the two factor loading matrices across the 82 items (McCrae, Zonderman, Costa, Bond, and Paunonen, 1996). Conventionally, if a factor congruence coefficient exceeds .90, it is taken as an indication of factor invariance (Mulaik, 1972).

The factor congruence coefficient for the first six factors was found to exceed .90; ambition (.98), meaning derived through comparison with others (.98), psychologically vulnerable (.97), attention seeking (.95), conceitedness (.94), and social Access (.93). However, the three remaining factors did not exceed the criteria of .90; altruistic (.90), positive affect (.90), and glamour (.85).

Alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951) were computed for each factor for both samples and provided in Table 2. Six of the scales (ambition, meaning derived through comparison with others, psychologically vulnerable, attention seeking, conceitedness, and social access) showed a satisfactory internal reliability statistic ( $\alpha > .70$ ; Kline, 1986) across the two samples, but the scales altruistic, positive affect, and glamour failed to do so.

The final analysis in this study looked at the relationship between the factor scores for each of the factors for both samples by age and sex. No statistical relationship was found between age and any of the factors among both samples (ranging from  $r = -.050$ ,  $p = .16$  to  $r = .35$ ,  $p = .33$ ). Furthermore, no sex differences were found for any of the factors scores across the two samples (ranging from  $t = -1.535$ ,  $p = .13$  to  $t = 1.49$ ,  $p = .14$ ).

Initial findings from this study suggest that nine separate factors emerge from individuals' implicit theories of why people want to be famous; reflecting ambition, a potential meaning derived through comparison with others, potentially being psychologically vulnerable, the result of attention seeking, a reflection of conceitedness, a desire to gain social access, for altruistic reasons, resulting from a general positive affect, and an attraction to fame for the glamour. Analyses that examine the internal reliability and replicability among these factors suggest that ambition, meaning derived through comparison with others, psychologically vulnerable, attention seeking, conceitedness, and social access showed adequate internal reliability and display factor congruence.

## STUDY 2

Sternberg notes the probity of any study of implicit theories of psychological constructs depends on whether the findings demonstrate any external validity, and can demonstrate that they do not just reside passively in participants' thinking or are created as a result of participation in a psychological experiment. Therefore, Study 2 sought to test the validity of the findings of Study 1 by showing that individuals actively use those constructs identified in Study 1. Consequently, the procedures described in

**Table 2.** Regression analysis with weighted items from each factor used a predictor variables and average rating of descriptions used as the dependent variable (Cronbach's alpha coefficients calculated for each of the subscales from Study 1 are also provided in this table)

Scales	$\alpha$ 1st sample	$\alpha$ 2nd sample	B	$\beta$	t	p =
Sex of description			-0.278	-0.084	-.732	.468
Ambition	.91	.89	1.278	0.469	2.203	.032
'Meaning derived through comparison with others'	.84	.82	1.378	0.595	2.168	.035
Psychologically vulnerable	.80	.81	1.370	0.576	2.016	.049
'Attention seeking'	.78	.73	1.416	0.583	2.022	.049
'Conceitedness'	.72	.72	1.712	0.589	2.563	.014
'Social access'	.74	.71	1.408	0.588	2.335	.024
'Altruistic'	.59	.53	0.299	0.111	0.461	.647
'Positive affect'	.58	.57	0.499	0.218	0.731	.468
'Glamour'	.47	.56	1.649	0.727	2.650	.011
					$r^2$	= .41
					Adj $r^2$	= .29
					R	= .64

Study 2 adopt a similar experimental approach to that used by Sternberg (1981, 1985). The aim of Study 2 was to test whether the constructs surrounding a desire for fame, identified in Study 1, demonstrate validity by showing that they are actively used by individuals in their evaluation of other people.

## Method

### Participants

The participants were 44 undergraduate students at a university in the East Midlands (22 males and 22 females), aged between 18 and 25 years (mean age = 20.21,  $SD = 1.2$ ).

### Procedure

Participants were presented with 60 profiles of fictitious people, 30 males and 30 females, whose names were chosen from the top 100 names of new-born babies in the United Kingdom in 2003. Each profile was constructed from a 54 item pool of the top six loading items from each of the nine factors in Study 1. Then, using random numbers, each descriptor was randomly assigned to the profile of each fictitious person, until each profile comprised seven descriptors. An example of a profile would be

‘Mark is unhappy with the way he looks; he has a lack of values, doesn’t care about others, always wants people to notice him, thinks he is going to be the next big thing, thinks he will fit in well with other celebrities and is always happy’.

Participants read the profile for each person, and then were asked to rate the person on ‘how famous this person wanted to be’. Participants were then asked to rate each of the 60 profiles on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 ‘does not want to be famous at all’ to 5 ‘average’ to 9 ‘really wants to be famous’.

## Results

Multiple regression was used to predict the overall ratings of the fictitious people from the nine descriptors. The sample size for the analysis was 60 (based on the number of profiles, not the number of participants in the experiment). Counts for each of the descriptors used from each factor in the profile were entered as predictor variables. Therefore, if the profile contained three items from the ambition factor, two items from the ‘lacking meaning’ factors, one descriptor each from the ‘psychological vulnerability’, and ‘attention seeking’ and none for the remaining factors, the predictor variables entered into the regression would have been 3, 2, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, and 0. Additionally, the gender of the profile was also included as a predictor variable. The dependent variable was the average rating given to each profile across the 44 participants. Within this consideration, we are not aiming to suggest that these variables are causal in nature but rather are aiming to examine the discriminate validity of each of the factors.

The regression statistic was significantly different from zero ( $F(10, 49) = 3.37$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Table 2 shows the full results for an unstandardized multiple regression. Included in this table is the unstandardized regression coefficient ( $B$ ), the standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ), the semipartial correlations ( $sr^2$ ),  $r$ ,  $r^2$ , and adjusted  $r^2$ . The present findings suggest that all regression weights, except for those associated with the

altruistic, positive affect and gender of the person in the profile were statistically significant. This finding suggests that seven of the nine factors (ambition, social access, glamour, meaning derived through comparison with others, psychologically vulnerable, attention seeking, or conceitedness) predicted unique variance in the extent to which the fictitious persons were believed to desire fame. This finding suggests that these seven factors are used actively in individuals' evaluation of other individuals' desire for fame.

## **Discussion**

Initial findings from Study 1 suggest that nine separate factors emerge from individuals' implicit theories of why people want to be famous; reflecting ambition, a potential meaning derived through comparison with others, potentially being psychologically vulnerable, the result of attention seeking, a reflection of conceitedness, a desire to gain social access, for altruistic reasons, resulting from a general positive affect, and an attraction to fame for the glamour. Analysis that sought to examine replicability among these factors suggested that altruistic reasons for wanting fame, desire for fame reflecting positive affect, and an attraction to fame for the glamour did not display factor congruence. Furthermore, internal reliability statistics computed for the items of these factors suggested that only ambition, meaning derived through comparison with others, psychologically vulnerable, attention seeking, conceitedness, and social access showed adequate internal reliability.

A second study sought to test the validity of the findings of Study 1 by showing that individuals actively used those constructs identified in Study 1. Seven of the nine factors (ambition, social access, glamour, meaning derived through comparison with others, psychologically vulnerable, attention seeking, or conceitedness) predicted unique variance in the extent to which the fictitious persons were believed to desire fame. This finding provides validity for the findings of Study 1 by showing that individuals actively use these seven constructs in their evaluation of other people's desire for fame. However, two desire for fame factors did not predict desire for fame in fictitious descriptions of persons, these were positive affect and altruistic reasons. This is perhaps not surprising, given that statements such as 'Has integrity', 'Wants to give their family a better quality of life', 'Wants to be a good role model for people' (altruistic reasons), 'Enjoys what they do', 'Is confident', and 'Is a unique person' (positive affect) are by no means unique to those wanting to be famous.

In terms of using the findings to build a potential robust model of desire for fame, the findings from the two studies suggest that six of the factors pass the criteria in this study by showing replicable factor congruence, demonstrating satisfactory internal reliability, and are able to show some validity in that they are used actively in their evaluation of other people's desire for fame. The six factors are ambition, meaning derived through comparison with others, vulnerability, attention seeking, conceitedness, and social access. Considering these factors, it would seem that the view of desire for fame for four of the factors is negative among the United Kingdom public, reflecting the view that a desire for fame is the result of either a meaning derived through comparison with others in life, reflecting a vulnerable state, attention seeking or a level of conceitedness. The exceptions to this overarching negative view are the ambition and the social access factor. These are not necessarily negative views of a desire to be famous, but rather, may reflect both negative and positive assessments of why people wish to be famous.

The ambition factor seems to be largely positive, with the statements reflecting a view of a hard working and industrious ambitious individual who has a purpose in life and shows a determined character. However, the social access factor may reflect both positive and negative aspects of social functioning, suggesting either a vacuous attempt to win friends and influence people, or a genuine attempt to better oneself.

We should not necessarily abandon the consideration of the positive affect, altruistic, and glamour factors, particularly as Giles (2000) notes, that established celebrities identify honourable (e.g. altruistic) reasons for their success. There are likely in any case to be discrepancies between retrospective explanations for fame by celebrities and others' attributions about their fame seeking. However, despite this caveat, both theoretically and empirically the positive affect, altruistic, and glamour factors seem weaker factors in any potential model of implicit theories of a desire for fame.

Furthermore, we need to further investigate some of the outcomes of the research. While Sternberg (2001) suggests reasons for why implicit theories are fruitful (implicit theories facilitate an understanding of everyday perceptions, give rise to more formal theories surrounding a construct, allow theories to be condensed into a framework) other theorists suggest that there are some problems with implicit theories. Furnham (1988) argues that implicit theories of a construct can be ambiguous and inconsistent and tend to be overly descriptive. Some of these problems apply to the current study of a desire for fame. There is some ambiguity with the meaning behind some of the current factors, particularly whether they can be viewed as a positive or negative outcome of a desire for fame. These problems illustrate the limitations to the current study. There are no test-retest reliability or validity statistics for the exact meaning of each the various factors, nor for the model's validity, particularly in terms of understanding in cultural relevance and importance when applied across different population groups.

However, the current six-factor framework provides a context to begin to understand a desire for fame in society. Consequently, future research developments may take place within more formal theories of a desire for fame, and the present study suggests factors and statements which could be used to develop a psychometric measure of a desire for fame. Such a scale could be developed among the general population and also among those seeking fame to standardize scores. Equally, as there are presently a number of older teenagers who believe they are going to become famous, with some prepared to abandon formal education in pursuit of that goal (YouGov, 2006; Learning and Skills Council, 2006), the development of such a scale among children is important. Moreover, the examination of any emerging psychometric model against indices of personality, well-being, and social and developmental cognitive measures would furnish formal theories of a desire for fame.

These developments are facilitated by the current paper, which has adopted the use of an implicit theories approach to begin the development of more formal theories of a desire for fame. The present studies have sought to establish the reliability, replicability and validity of these everyday theories of a desire of fame by demonstrating their stability and active use in individual's thinking. The findings suggest that implicit theories of a desire for fame in the United Kingdom can be best considered as comprising six factors; ambition, meaning derived through comparison with others, psychologically vulnerable, attention seeking, conceitedness, and social access.

## References

- Berg, C. A., & Sternberg, R. J. (1992). Adults' conceptions of intelligence across the life span. *Psychology and Aging, 7*, 221-231.
- Berry, J. W. (1984). Towards a universal psychology of cognitive competence. In P. S. Fry (Ed.), *Changing conceptions of intelligence and intellectual functioning* (pp. 35-61). Amsterdam: North Holland.
- Braudy, L. (1997). *The frenzy of renown: Fame and its history* (2nd ed.). New York: Vintage.
- Cattell, R. B. (1966). The scree test for the number of factors. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 1*, 140-161.
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika, 16*, 297-334.
- Dweck, C. S., & Elliott, E. S. (1983). Achievement motivation. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 4. Socialization, personality, and social development* (4th ed., pp. 643-691). New York: Wiley.
- Evans, A., & Wilson, G. D. (1999). *Fame: The psychology of stardom*. London: Vision.
- Furnham, A. (1988). *Lay theories: Everyday understanding of problems in the social sciences*. New York: Pergamon.
- Giles, D. C. (2000). *Illusions of immortality: A psychology of fame and celebrity*. London: Macmillan.
- Horn, J. L. (1965). A rationale and test for the number of factors in factor analysis. *Psychometrika, 30*, 179-185.
- Kline, P. (1986). *Handbook of test construction*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Learning and Skills Council (2006). Kids seeking Reality TV fame instead of exam passes. Press release dated 13 January 2006, accessed on 6 March 2006 from <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/norfolk/Corporate/News/realityfame.htm>.
- Levy, S., Plaks, J. E., & Dweck, C. S. (1999). Modes of social thought: Implicit theories and social understanding. In S. Chaiken & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual process models in social psychology* (pp. 179-202). New York: Guilford Press.
- Levy, S., Stroessner, S., & Dweck, C. S. (1998). Stereotype formation and endorsement: The role of implicit theories. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 1421-1436.
- Maltby, J., Day, L., McCutcheon, L. E., Gillett, R., Houran, J., & Ashe, D. (2004). Celebrity worship using an adaptational-continuum model of personality and coping. *British Journal of Psychology, 95*, 411-428.
- Maltby, J., Giles, D., Barber, L., & McCutcheon, L. E. (2005). Intense-personal celebrity worship and body image: Evidence of a link among female adolescents. *British Journal of Health Psychology, 10*, 17-32.
- McCConnell, A. R. (2001). Implicit theories: Consequences for social judgments of individuals. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 37*, 215-227.
- McCrae, R. R., Zonderman, A. B., Costa, P. T., Jr., Bond, M. H., & Paunonen, S. V. (1996). Evaluating replicability of factors in the revised NEO Personality Inventory: Confirmatory factor analysis versus Procrustes rotation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 552-566.
- McCutcheon, L. E., Lange, R., & Houran, J. (2002). Conceptualization and measurement of celebrity worship. *British Journal of Psychology, 93*, 67-87.
- Mrowicki, J., & Giles, D. C. (2005, May). *Desire and motivation for fame in a group of aspiring musicians: A qualitative study*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, New York.
- Mulaik, S. A. (1972). *The foundations of factor analysis*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Puccio, G. J., & Chimento, M. D. (2001). Implicit theories of creativity: Laypersons' perceptions of the creativity of adaptors and innovators. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 92*, 675-681.
- Schonemann, P. H. (1966). A generalized solution of the orthogonal Procrustes problem. *Psychometrika, 31*, 1-10.
- Siegler, R. S., & Richards, D. D. (1982). The development of intelligence. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of intelligence* (pp. 896-971). New York: Cambridge University Press.

## Copyright © The British Psychological Society

Reproduction in any form (including the internet) is prohibited without prior permission from the Society

292 John Maltby et al.

- Simonton, D. K. (1994). *Greatness: Who makes history and why*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1985). Implicit theories of intelligence, creativity, and wisdom. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *49*, 607-627.
- Sternberg, R. J. (2001). The concept of intelligence. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The handbook of intelligence* (pp. 3-15). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sternberg, R. J., Conway, B. E., Ketron, J. L., & Bernstein, M. (1981). People's conceptions of intelligence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *41*, 37-55.
- YouGov (2006). Young People and Reality TV. Retrieved June 22, 2007, from page 1 at [http://www.yougov.com/archives/pdf/BRO050101012\\_1.pdf](http://www.yougov.com/archives/pdf/BRO050101012_1.pdf)
- Young, S. M., & Pinsky, D. (2006). Narcissism and celebrity. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *40*, 463-471.

Received 8 August 2006; revised version received 22 June 2007

Copyright of British Journal of Psychology is the property of British Psychological Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.