



May 5, 2023

GEN Z & PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MUSICIANS ON TIKTOK

M.A. PROJECT DEFENSE
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TODAY'S AGENDA

1 BACKGROUND

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

3 METHODOLOGY:
Q-SORT

4 SOCIAL MEDIA
CAMPAIGN

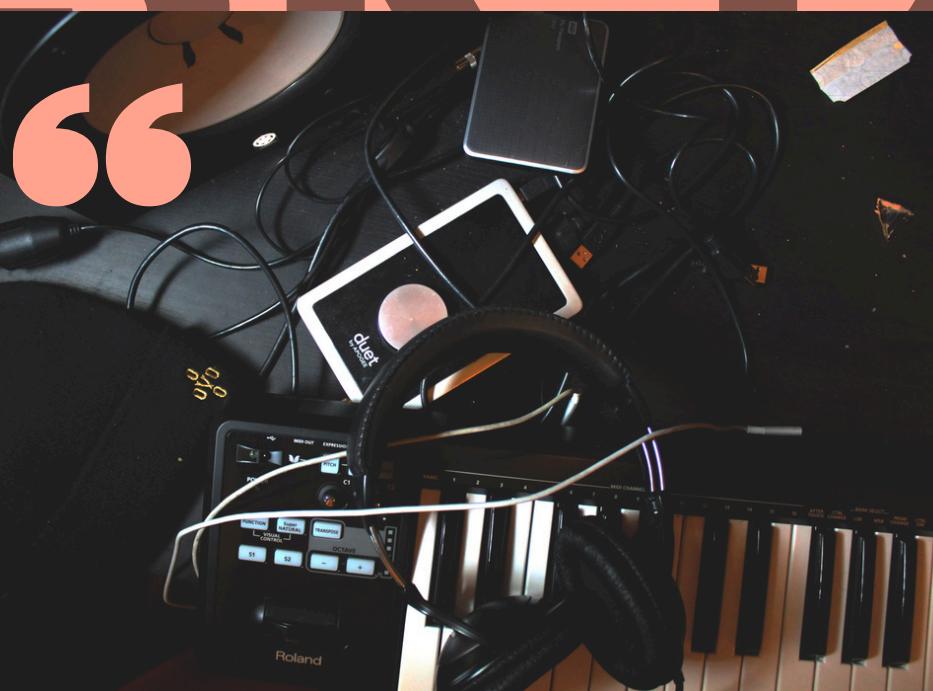
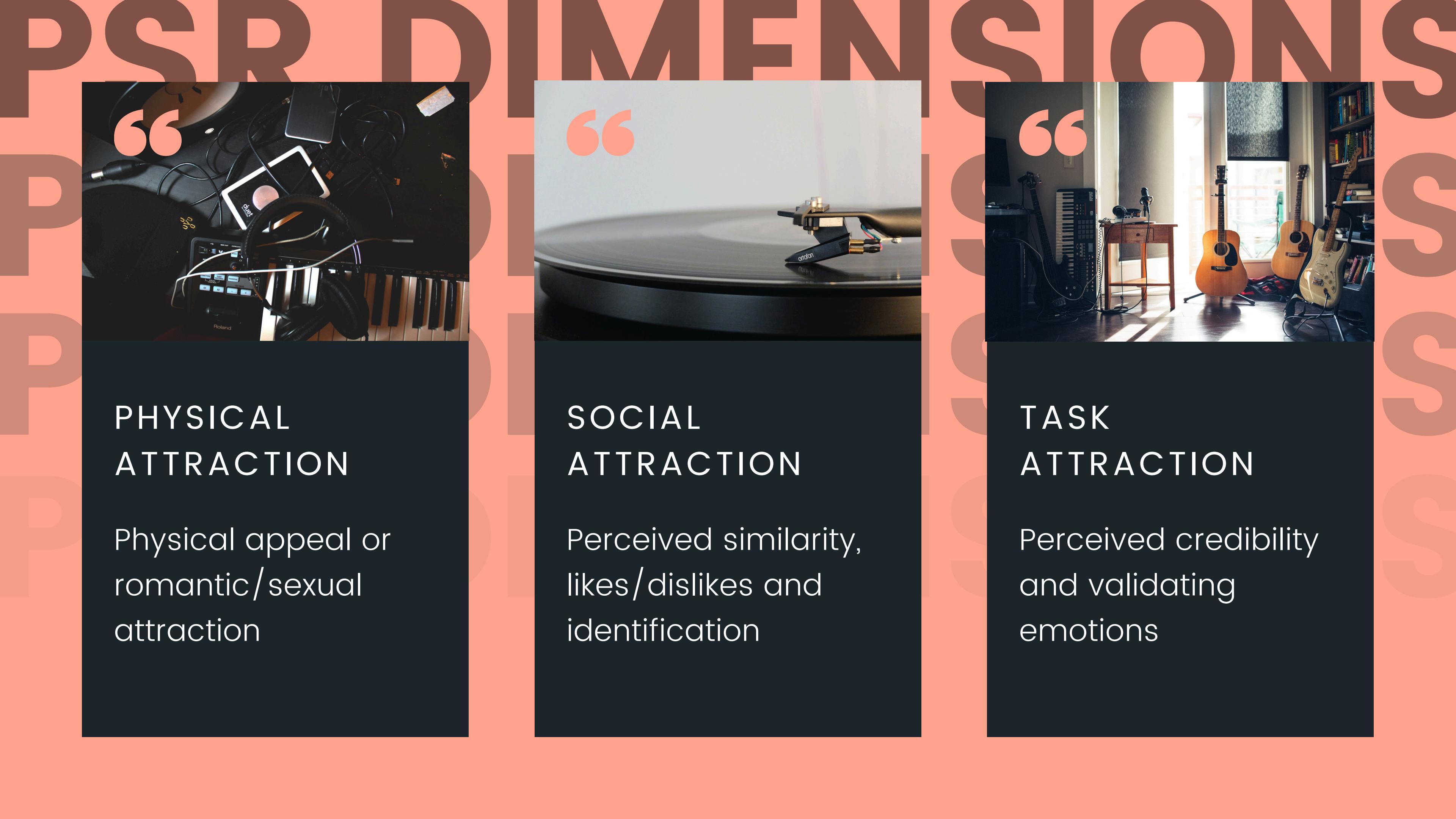
5 DISCUSSION

WHAT ARE PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS?

...

Perceived one-sided
relationships between audiences
and media figures





PHYSICAL ATTRACTION

Physical appeal or
romantic/sexual
attraction



SOCIAL ATTRACTION

Perceived similarity,
likes/dislikes and
identification



TASK ATTRACTION

Perceived credibility
and validating
emotions

● PERCEIVED FRIENDSHIP

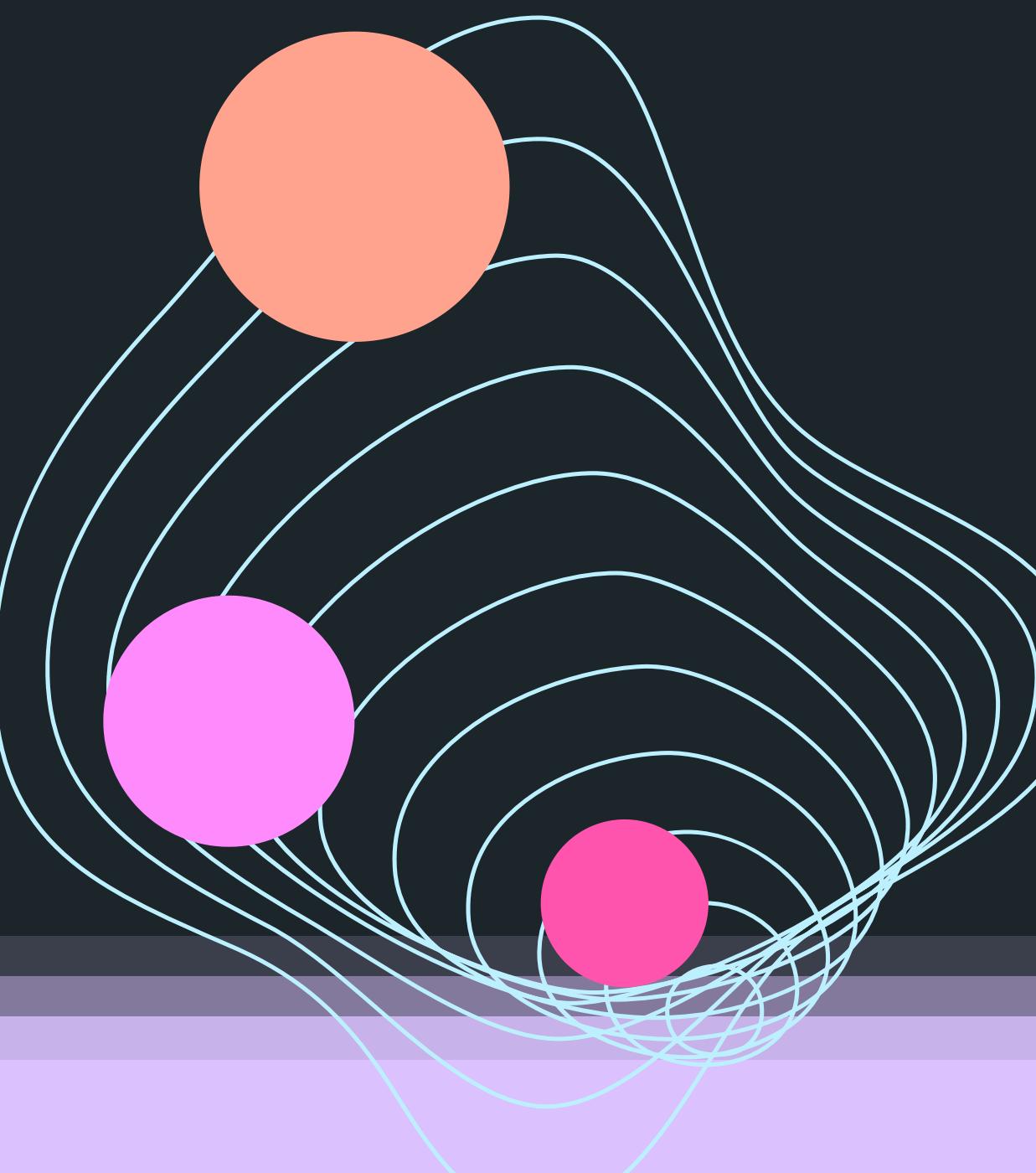
One-sided, defined through intimacy and liking, and necessitates frequent viewing

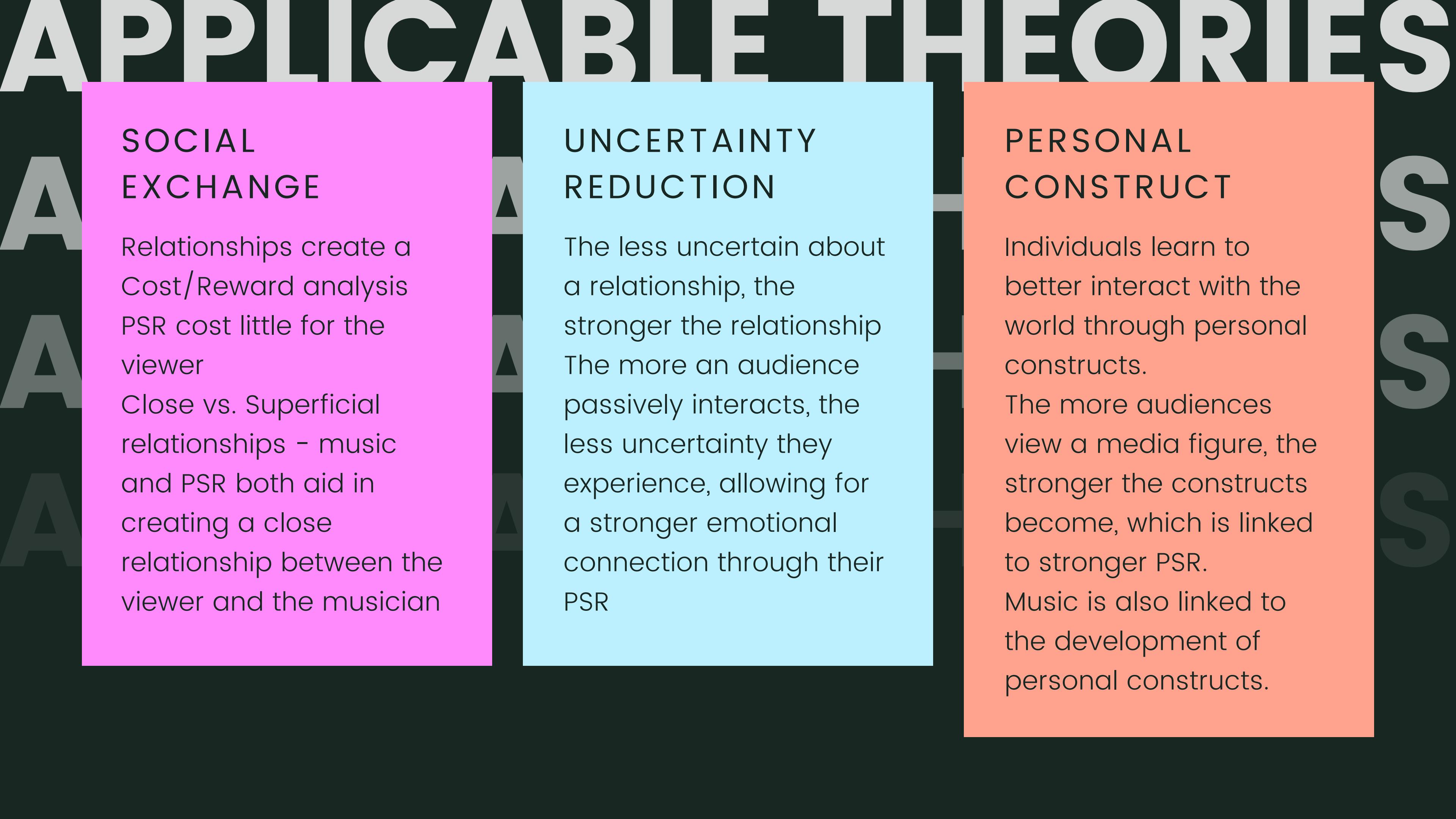
● ILLUSION OF INTIMACY

Performers can blur the line between intimacy and reality

● SOCIAL MEDIA

Created a shift from a one-to-many dynamic to a one-to-one dynamic, creating a perception of authenticity and less illusionary





CLIENT

TRIP THE FAN

A music management organization in Oklahoma City, specializing in Electronic Press Kits among other marketing needs for local artists.

STEPSMOM

An orchestral dream punk band from Oklahoma City, with dreamy three-part harmonies, ambient cello and synth contrasted with angsty guitar riffs and powerful lead vocals. Their music represents the disillusionment of many who are trying to find meaning and purpose in a society that distorts reality.

METHODOLOGY

Q-METHOD

A Q-Sort would help sort participants into publics/like-minded groups, based on their attitudes toward and perceptions of parasocial relationships.

Participants were asked to rank 36 statements on a forced bell curve. The statements were divided into 3 subthemes (**physical, social and task attraction**), with 12 in each category.

Included 30 participants, all Gen Z (born 1996 or later) and identifying as female, who were recruited through word-of-mouth and social media.

ADMIRING AUDIENCES

6 participants

Mostly Gen Z, single white females

PHYSICAL ATTRACTION

SOCIAL ATTRACTION

TASK ATTRACTION

View their favorite artists as capable and companionable

"When I listen to music, I feel like the artist is opening up to me" (+4, z=1.681)

83% of participants strongly agree that they like following and watching their favorite artists on social media.

"I want to have a sexual relationship with my favorite artists" (+4, z=1.314).

UNAROUSED & UNAFFECTED

7 participants

Mostly Gen Z white females in a relationship

ANTI-PHYSICAL ATTRACTION

SOCIAL ATTRACTION

TASK ATTRACTION

Strongly against sexualizing their favorite artists, prefers strong musical talent and identification

“I want to have a sexual relationship with my favorite artists” (-5, $z=-2.101$)

“I care more about the music than the artists. Other than if the artist does something controversial, I typically do not pay attention to them. If I like their music I like their music.”

“I enjoy seeing artists I like posting snippets of songs that are unfinished and seeing the evolution of the song” (+2, $z=0.798$).

AUDIENCES ADMIRING



NAME

Ivy Jackson

AGE

21

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

Single

OCCUPATION

Student (film major) and part-time waitress

LOOKING FOR IN MUSICIANS

- Musicians take a stance on the issues important to them
- Bands that make them feel cool/have 'cool' music taste
- Music that makes them feel like the artist is opening up to them

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- Loves seeing artists partake in the same silly trends they partake in

CORE DESIRES

- Looking for new artists that they can feel connected to or make them feel heard

PAIN POINTS

- As a creative individual, they tend to feel isolated and just want to feel heard by the art they're consuming

“THERE'S NO WORLD WHERE I'M NOT BESTIES WITH MY FAVORITE ARTISTS.”

UNARROUSED & UNAFFECTED UNAWARE



NAME

Lora Freeman

AGE

22

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

In a long-term relationships

OCCUPATION

Graduate Student (psychology major) and interning at a research center

LOOKING FOR IN NEW MUSIC

- Loves strong musical talent
- Don't care about sexualizing musicians (in fact, hate doing that)
- Music that validates their emotions and vulnerabilities

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- Loves seeing the development of songs

CORE DESIRES

- Looking for new music to keep them company while working and studying

PAIN POINTS

- As they are entering the 'real world,' they are realizing more issues get swept away – and they want someone to talk about

I CARE ABOUT MY FAVORITE ARTISTS AS PEOPLE AND ADMIRE THEIR TALENTS.

POSITIONING

ADMIRING AUDIENCES

**Capable & Daydream
Material**

UNAROUSED &
UNAFFECTED

**Talented &
Companionable**



OBJECTIVES

AWARENESS

The objective for both target publics is to have an effect on awareness. Specifically, to generate increased viewership by 50% of stepmom's Instagram and TikTok within the next 3 months,

ACCEPTANCE

The objective for both target publics is to have an effect on acceptance. Specifically, to gain their interest and positive attitude toward stepmom through an increase in engagement by 25% with stepmom's Instagram and TikTok within the next 3 months.

ACTION

The objective for target publics is to have an effect on action. Specifically, to obtain an increase in following on stepmom's Instagram and TikTok by 10% within the next 3 months.

BIG IDEA

The big idea for this campaign is to engage with audiences through social attraction, task attraction and physical attraction.

This campaign will be reaching out to audiences through social attraction by showcasing **stepmom's music and relatability** for audiences to identify with; through task attraction by highlighting **stepmom's musical talent and emotional validation** through their music; finally, through physical attraction by promoting content from **live events** for audiences to daydream about attending.

RECOMMENDED PLATFORMS



CONTENT INVENTORY

MAY 15



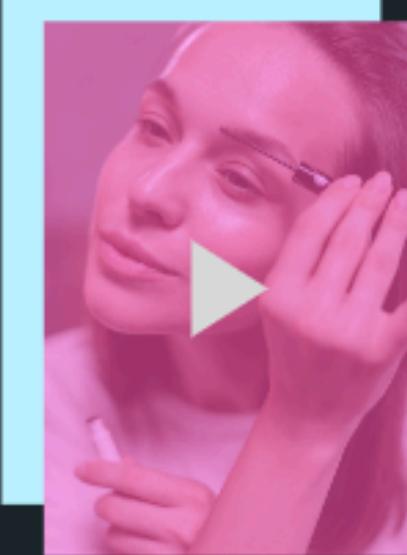
Behind-the-scenes candid footage with the band from a recent show.

MAY 17



A day-in-the-life with stepmom at rehearsals.

MAY 19



A get-ready-with-me for the Factory Obscura concert.

MAY 22



A TikTok with footage from the Factory Obscura concert.

MAY 25



Choose a current trend on TikTok for the band to adapt.

MAY 26



Show more concert footage or a song that hasn't been promoted recently.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

**Helps to guide future parasocial relationship research
in respect to Gen Z and other digital natives**

Created specific groups and personas to reflect their attitudes toward parasocial relationship dimensions

**Directs and increases potential strength of future
campaigns in the music industry**

Sets a potential precedent for utilizing parasocial relationships as a way to efficiently grow and strengthen fanbases with up-and-coming artists

**Future research could use quantitative research to
expand these findings**

Quantitative research would expand the participant sample and allow the findings to become even more generalizable

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

ANY QUESTIONS?