

Matching Celebrity Profile with Brand Profile: A Parasocial Interaction Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This research will help us find out the relationship between the Controversial Celebrity Profile and the brand profile. The focus is to address the idea of Parasocial Interaction usually created by using famous celebrities for advertising the products, using all forms of media (Television, radio, theater). We will discuss celebrity profile and Brand Profile in the light of Para-social interaction. We analyze how celebrity profile and brand profile is directly affected by Para-social interaction and find that could be beneficial in increasing brand profile. We consider the even perception of heterogeneous viewer about celebrities. This celebrity relationship with brand will affect company's profitability and measure the creative effectiveness of mass media. Finally we discuss the techniques to attract customers through effective implementation of PSI.

KEYWORDS: Celebrity profile, Parasocial Interaction, Celebrities, Brand profile.

INTRODUCTION

Assumptions about media users respond to media offerings are source of inspiration for many researchers because our society is fascinated by celebrities. Celebrities survive due to fan falling, the moment fan are attracted to celebrities they are in Para-social Interaction relation with them. The first appearance of the word Para-social Interaction (PSI) was found in research paper by [1]. The concept is four decades old, and with the passage of time it became the popular the field of communication. [1]. The term used to describe response of viewers to media characters is called persona. It is the form of social interaction in which one sided relationship exists and other part is unaware of the gravity of such association; it is controlled by the performer. This relationship is viewed as friendship or familiarity with a distant persona related to any kind of media [2].

Para-social Interaction is originated from the field of psychiatry, its abnormal behavior, resulting from the feelings of fear, loneliness insufficient leisure activities a limited social interaction [3]. It is one-sided relationship in which one party knows very well about other but relationship is not equal [4]. PSI shows parallel to form of irregular interactions in interpersonal communication [5]. PSI is different from real relationships, because of no face-to face interaction, therefore no rejection risk, so there is remote possibility to meet the celebrity [6]. This concept gained popularity in 1960's when television became popular. It was found through researches that in real life PSI meet the needs which are unmet; the people who are lonely or have less interpersonal relationships have more attractiveness for celebrities. Audience with Higher PSI relationship tries to contact the media character personally ([7], [1] [8]). This also applies to those who relate themselves with heroes/heroines and consider them their friend. This concept was extended by brown et al [9], [10], [11]

[12] PSI has every such quality which is attractive, alluring and attention-grabbing in a personality. People find someone interesting and attractive if they have same qualities in them, it is a sort of illusion that can be dangerous. He tested the PSI theory, and found the highest scores of PSI of older people for news anchors whom they are watching for longer time period. He also found a concept of reflexive role-taking that is viewers will only found someone reliable when he is of same views as them.

[13] The major part of Para-social interaction is "Personae". An actor/celebrity is actually a fictional character that is personae with which viewers develop Para-social relationship (PSI). This is three ways relationship that in which fictional characters form personalities (due to specific personality traits), become celebrities. These personae are only for media, only for the audiences that are in Para-social relation [1]. Personae are the Hub of PSI, which can maintain and attain intimacy with the crowd of strangers, and viewers consider them as their own friend. They recognize & identify the performer, through their observation, facade, and voice/gestures how they behave in different situations by their conversation style and act. This persona has continuous relationship with the performer that controls his routines of life. People share the media figure/ performer life and consider it identical to their own life. The audience share small parts of his public life leading to the private life.

Celebrities belong to particular set of public, which enjoys recognition on a very large mass through Para-social interaction relation with viewers. In short he is a person who is well recognized in public in his achievement in specific area.[14]. Now a day's any celebrity i.e. Athlete, movie actor, Television Star, cartoon character or even dead persons can be used to endorse product [15]. The trend of celebrity induction for brand promotion is very common today. There is a direct relationship between the celebrity profile and Para-social interaction. Certain important factors (like Credibility, Values, Popularity, Product match, Physical attractiveness, Controversy risk, Celebrity professional Appeal and Ironic acceptability (Origin , context) in celebrity profile will be viewed to observe the persuasion dimensions that are desire, relevance, information, likability, change and attention. [16] Celebrities have great influence in society

Celebrity endorser is defined a publically recognized individual, who uses his popularity on behalf of consumer good/service by appearing in its advertisement/ promotion [15]. Most of the companies are of the view that celebrity endorsement will be more beneficial and will not only increase their sales but also become a strong factor for customer retention. But research tells a different story, according to the existing literature on this topic it is supported with evidence, that sometimes celebrities are ineffective in product endorsement. In more comprehensive words even top celebrities who are very successful in their fields turns out to be ineffective in communicating the said objective of the product, thus failing to target the audience and general masses. Thus it can be said evidently that celebrities can also create a negative impact on the public and can be turn the tables for the company in terms of their expectations from them. On the other hand the selection of a suitable celebrity for a brand orientation is very important like any other item involve. If proper care is not taken in the selection of celebrity it can create a serious business risk which can shrink their existing customer size and tamper the good will of a company. In more precise and accurate words we can say that a part form the product itself, celebrity is holding the image of the company and is custodian of its repute among the public and peers as well.

The activities of communication develop the pattern of connectivity between the celebrity Profile and Brand profile [17]. The transfer of image between celebrity and brand occur when an advertisement make contingency between two of them [18], [19].

Customer purchase is strongly affected by advertizing. Now a days it become significant for the companies to introduce such measures that will motivate, persuade and develop desire to purchase with the help of advertising campaign. It is proved by all means that attention and publicity is generated by using celebrities in advertisements [20].The reliability of an endorser positively affects the decision to purchase and balances consumers' attitudes towards the product [21]. [22] is of the opinion that if the endorser is reliable, the consumer will be attracted to a promotion instead of paying attention to issues of quality and image. Celebrity endorsement greatly affect consumer, it can also cause change in the market share of the companies [23]

[24] Researched that Negative image of a celebrity poses a damage to the endorsed brand. It is a result of the negative information in consequence to which there will be negative attitude towards the brand. A new venture can avoid damage to the brand by distracting public from the celebrity, but this is not possible in case of ventures whose reputation is built up by a celebrity entrepreneur.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY: The rising trend of celebrity and endorsement in the last few years encourages us to find out the strong its connection with Parasocial interaction. Celebrities are the choice of public that are famous due to certain characteristics that are positive. Due to their famousness brand use them for endorsements that will further result in increasing their financial benefit. It might happen some times that celebrity might get involved in some controversial issue unintentionally or intentionally (for getting fame). Everyone is very well aware of the fact that if the celebrity has a positive profile it will have positive impact on the brand profile, but still some issue are unsolved. The aim of this study is to find that:

- What will be the effect of negativity of celebrity profile on the brand they are endorsing?
- To understand the relationship between level of involvement in Parasocial interaction with your favorite celebrity.
- To find what will be the effect of greater Parasocial interaction of celebrities with the brand profile they are endorsing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mass media is always a source of entertainment for all; especially for the lonely people so that their interpersonal needs are met [25] due to this they are involved in Para-social interaction. Para-social interaction was first explained as viewer's reaction to media character during media utilization, by [26]. They consider interaction between media users and personae as main attribute of mass media usage. They regard Para-social Interaction simulacrum of conversational give and take.

PSI can be recognized, when a viewer interacted with the media figure, but did not recognize the figure [27].

Factors that form Para-social relationship have attractiveness of 36%, similarity 23% and reality 23% [28].

Through Parasocial interaction, it appears that the celebrity is directly communicating the viewer, that give an illusion that viewer is involved in personal way, in short it seems like face to face relationship[29]. A scale to measure the Parasocial Interaction is created by [30] to measure the bond that is created with famous personalities. According to [31] research has found that the primary function of PSI is, that it is the way to make alternative companionship, sue to certain reasons like loneliness, lack of social life and relying on Television.

Parasocial interaction does not have the actual contact with the media personality, so this result in positive social interaction with no feeling of unworthiness and no rejection risk [32]. The study conducted from 1980 to 2003 reveals that the craze of celebrity following is twice [33]. A special journalism project assessed 3760 reports on the programs, the result states, from 1977-1997 celebrity fame, scandals, stories has immensely increase to 27.6% [34] The reason is strong Para-social interaction.

[35] Para-social interaction can be ranged from real to imaginary characters; it can be with real celebrities, fictional or even cartoons. This relation can be formed at any point in life, childhood-Teenage-adulthood. The person in PSI relationship are active, motivated, deliberate, aim-directed and purposive, they try to satisfy his social communication requirements through mass media [2]. [36] Nordlund was of the opinion that PSI relationship is a phenomenon that is very common and with long term effects.

There are two phenomena that are part of Para-social interaction according to [37] and are called Para-social Communication and Para-social Processing. Para-social communication is prejudiced feeling of users to be affianced in give and take with persona. Para-social processing is the way user responses are captured towards persona PSI is the type of public interaction that has one sided communication; media (Print, electronic) users scrutinize the actions of persona, while users' reaction can only be predictable but not observable by persona [38].

A study by literature described the Para-social interaction between listeners and radio personalities, the result was for listening their favorite personality, 30% respondent's use 51%-75% of time and 34% respondents use 26%-50% of time. 81% respondents listen to their favorite personalities "whenever they can". 55% respondents listen to their favorite personalities on mobile/computer when they are away. 63% respondents listen to their favorite personalities for more than 4 years.

Para-social relation is the psychological connections with media personalities considered as common part of identity growth [39][40]. Researchers suggested that Para-social Relation Psychological bond is like real relationship with partner and due to this reason people become celebrities. Celebrity enjoys public popularity by large share of certain set of people [41]. While [42]explained it as, a name which ones made by news, now make news by itself, with time celebrity's appearance become associated with company or brand.

Celebrity endorsement is defined a publically recognized individual, uses his popularity on behalf of consumer good/service by appearing in its advertisement/ promotion [15]. Now a day's any celebrity i.e. Athlete, movie actor, Television Star, cartoon or even dead persons can be used to endorse product [15].

The Sports stars, models and other celebrities they are used as endorsers, because they have the ability to penetrate the commercial mess of advertising by catching the customer's attention [43]. Endorsement is successful when properties of celebrity become the properties of endorsed product.[44].

[45],[46] Celebrities have certain attributes that are enviable for the product endorsement but at the same time he can also have certain related characteristics that is unsuitable for the endorsed product; so for the selection of the endorser one has to look forward the wider meaning related with the endorser with surety of not conflicting with chosen image. Selection of endorser is very important, and we have to consider the meaning related with celebrities to make sure that their personality match with the product they endorse.

METHODOLOGY

The tool used for the research was published questioner that is divided into four major parts dealing with all the aspects of required research.

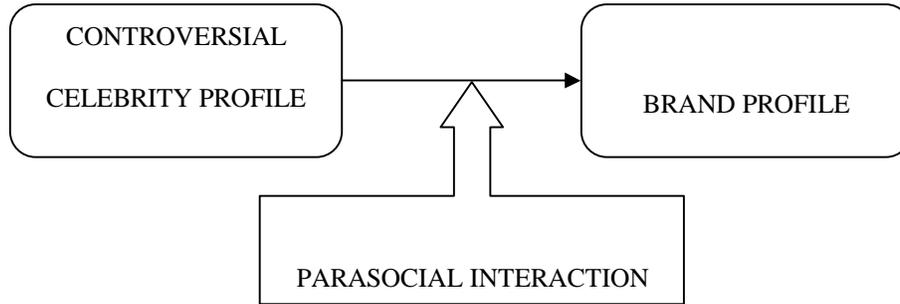
The first part of the tool is named as demographics that include gender, age, and income and education level. The second part of the tool (8 questions) was related to Para-social interaction. The third part deals with Brand profile that is divided into two sets of questions, the first section deals with people opinion about brand profile (4 questions), and other deals with factors that influence the purchase decisions (13 questions). The last part of the tool checks controversial celebrity profile (6 questions).

A 5-point Likert scale was used representing (5 strongly Disagree, 4 Disagree, 3 Neutral, 2 Agree, 1 strongly agree). We use Likert scale because it provides a wide range of selection, and is considered to be an optimistic scale [47]. With the help of this questioner the following two hypotheses will be tested

- ❑ **H1: Controversial Celebrity Profile significantly affects the brand profile**
- ❑ **H2: Parasocial Interaction significantly moderate the effect of Celebrity Profile on Brand Profile**

The model which we are going to prove is drawn below. We are going to check the relationship between the Controversial Celebrity profile (Negative impact) and Brand profile, keeping focus the Para-social interaction relationship.

Figure 1:
Effect of Parasocial Interaction on the relationship of controversial Celebrity Profile and Brand Profile



Data collection:

The data is collected through simple random sampling. In research we want views/data from whole population randomly without any sort of limitation, but we cannot do this because it quite quiet difficult for capturing the whole population so we use simple random sampling. The questioner used in this study was developed by Emma Löfgren and Juan Li in their thesis “Brand Loyalty: A Study of the Prevalent Usage of Celebrity Endorsement in Cosmetics Advertising” in May 6, 2010. This technique is used when everyone in population have equal chance of selection without any biasness [48]. The population was people from different universities, offices and household who are involved or not in Para-social interaction. The age ranging 18 years - more than 41 was used. 300 questioners were sent manually and through internet, out of those 250 were received properly filled, 30 did not respond and 20 questioners were incomplete, which constitute 83.3 % of usable response rate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The dependent variable of the data is Brand Profile (BP1), and independent variable is Controversial Celebrity Profile (CP1) whereas the moderator is the Parasocial interaction (PSI2). This study aims to investigate the impact of Controversial Celebrity Profile on Brand Profile with the Parasocial Interaction as moderator i.e. find the interactional effect of Parasocial interaction on celebrity profile and brand profile

In the model summary R Square change is 0.046, it shows that is 4.6% of the variance in the BP1 (dependent Variable) is explained by the model.

The ANOVA shows the overall significance of the model, if $p < 0.001$ it's significant. As our data has shown the results in table as 0.000, this mean our data is highly significant showing the result that moderator has occurred. The Parasocial interaction is the source with which Controversial celebrity profile and brand profile is affected, hence proving our hypothesis.

The moderating effect of Parasocial interaction is confirmed by moderation model by [49]. The highly significant value of our data show significant relation between Brand Profile and Controversial Celebrity Profile and interaction in both models, as ($p < 0.001$ is significant) show that moderation has occurred in the second model. The model 1 summary shows that $R^2 = 0.288$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.282$ with significance level of $P < 0.001$.

$R^2 = 28.8\%$ of the Parasocial interaction by the model 1, while model 2 is explaining 33.4% of the Parasocial Interaction. The table 2, 3 coefficients is the most important, that will help us defining regression equation, [47] we will look for unstandardized coefficient Beta because we need to see the independent variable.

The regressing equation in both models will be as follows

Model 1 $BP1 = 1.449 + 0.242CP1 + 0.391PS2$

Model 2 $BP1 = -1.802 + 1.302(CP1) + 1.389(PSI2) - 0.323(Interaction)$

Our major focus is Model 2, because we already have proved the significance of model 1. The regression equation of model 2 explain that in equation for dependent BP1, if independent variable (CP1) and Moderator (PSI2) are not present/start to decrease the , the BP1 have negative impact on the relationship.

Equation is showing brand profile will go down by 1.802 when your independent variables are zero.

The coefficient table also explains collinearity which checks that variables are correlated with each other or not, we will check the value of variance Inflation Factor (VIF) under the coefficients. If the value is <10, there is no multicollinearity. So, no multicollinearity exists in the model.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model Summary					
Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.288	.282	.288	49.892	.000
2	.334	.326	.046	17.170	.000
Predictors(Constant), PSI2, CP1					
Predictors(Constant), PSI2, CP1, Interaction					

Table 2: Coefficients Model 1

Coefficients ^a				
Model 1				
	B	R ²	Change in R ²	Collinearity Statistics(VIF)
Constant	1.449			
Controversial Celebrity Profile	.242	.288	.288	1.038
Parasocial Interaction	.391			1.038
a. Dependent Variable BP1				

Table 3: Coefficients Model 2

Coefficients ^a				
Model 2				
	B	R ²	Change in R ²	Collinearity Statistics (VIF)
Constant	-1.802		.046	
Controversial Celebrity Profile	1.304			21.913
Parasocial Interaction	1.389	.334		28.973
Interaction	-.323			58.975
a. Dependent Variable BP1				

LIMITATION

There are major four limitations to this study; the study was conducted for a limited time period gathering. The research could have been better if more time will be given to it. Secondly, the sample size of our data was small; the research could be more interesting if we increase the sample size of our data.

The study was random sampling which was limited to only specific areas of Lahore, if the research can be done on a general level that could be more beneficial and could bring more significant results for our data. The current research is more generalized , however it is strongly recommended to have future search that can involve aspect, like negative impact of celebrity profile on different forms of media (social, print, electronic), evaluation of negative impact of celebrity profile on the basis of gender.

IMPLICATION

Our study has several implications for different groups of people. First it can be helpful for the corporate marketers that face difficulty in identifying the right endorser for their brands. Findings of this study indicate that controversial celebrity profile has a significant impact on brand, if they have strong Parasocial interaction. The result is different that include diversified role of Parasocial Interaction. This can also be very helpful for the teachers that will improve the results of this date by working more on this topic. At the same time students can be beneficial as they have a proper baseline to work on; they can use this research in their own studies.

CONCLUSION

The results shows an interesting relationship between Controversial celebrity profile and Brand profile, The study suggest that celebrities who have strong Parasocial interaction with the viewers, can be more effective for the brand they are working for, because when a customer is attached to a celebrity, they have strong positive attitude towards the brand for which their favorite celebrity is working for. On the other hand it also shows that. The first important finding of this study is significant relationship of controversial celebrity profile and brand profile. The second finding of this study relates with enhancement of celebrity profile effect on brand profile in the presence of a

moderator Parasocial interaction. The result is positively proved its shows Parasocial interaction is a strong tool that is used to make celebrity profile. The use of celebrity endorsement, is highly popular and effective way of communication, it will have positive impact in brand image [50]. But if the Celebrity get negatively publicity or the Parasocial interaction is very low, it can have negative impact on the Brand Profile.

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