

Impact of Digital Health and Lifestyle Commodification On Celebrity Brand Perception: A Gen Z Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Celebrity endorsement and influencer culture have become central forces in shaping contemporary consumer behavior, especially among younger age groups. This study examines how celebrity lifestyles and social media content influence consumption patterns, lifestyle imitation, self-image, and psychological well-being across different age categories. Using a quantitative research design, primary data were collected from 218 respondents through structured questionnaires, supported by secondary literature on celebrity endorsement, identity formation, and media effects. The sample is dominated by young adults (18–24 years) and students, indicating that early adulthood is a critical stage for celebrity-driven influence. Dichotomous and Likert-scale analyses reveal that while a substantial proportion of respondents follow celebrities, engage with their content, and report being influenced by endorsements—particularly in terms of purchase decisions—actual conversion into purchases of celebrity-owned brands remains comparatively lower. Frequency-based and behavioural Likert scales, tested through one-way ANOVA, show statistically significant variation across behaviours such as lifestyle comparison, perceived pressure to maintain beauty standards, and satisfaction with one's own lifestyle. The findings suggest a nuanced pattern: celebrity culture is pervasive and does generate aspirational pressure and materialistic tendencies, yet many respondents also display skepticism, critical awareness of sponsored content, and a degree of psychological resilience. The study contributes to existing literature by integrating ethical concerns and a longitudinal perspective, highlighting implications for brands, influencers, educators, and regulators in promoting responsible, non-exploitative marketing practices that do not exacerbate financial impulsiveness, body image issues, or self-concept instability among young consumers..

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement; Influencer Marketing; Youth Consumer Behaviour; Lifestyle Imitation; Social Media; Self-Image; Materialism.

Introduction:

Celebrity endorsement is a primary driver of consumer behavior, particularly among younger consumer segments. Celebrity endorsement of a particular service or brand greatly raises brand awareness and trust, and in most instances, drives less popular brands into a highly desired consumer product. The effectiveness of such endorsements is, however, greatly dependent on the perceived authenticity of the celebrity-product relationship. Empirical research indicates that consumers react best when there is a rational and natural association between the endorser and the brand. Perceived forced, artificial, or commercially motivated endorsements are likely to be met with suspicion and are more likely to be rejected by more discerning consumers. Young consumers, in particular, are most affected by celebrity endorsement due to stages of their social and psychological development. Young adults and teenagers imitate celebrities they look up to as role models, adopting their consumption habits to identify with a preferred lifestyle or to improve peer group social status. The sway of celebrities shifts over time. This isn't

to say that superstars such as actors, athletes and recording artists don't matter anymore — they do — but, increasingly, social influencers on social platforms have emerged as particularly powerful marketing levers. Their influence is predicated on close personal relationships, because social influencers are seen as an authority with direct one-to-one visibility. Unlike traditional celebrities that are perceived as unreachable distant entities, social media influencers create the illusion that they are close and more accessible. By promoting live discussions, posting personal stories, and delivering honest feedback, social media influencers began to set the authenticity of their advertising. It's revolutionized marketing — today, most companies focus on reaching younger audience by collaborating with influencers, as younger people are more likely to trust people who look and talk like them instead of big companies.

Besides influencing short-term consumer expenditure, celebrity endorsements have long-term implications for consumption habits, brand loyalty, and personal identity

formation. Empirical evidence asserts that extended periods of exposure to celebrity endorsements across many years exert a long-lasting effect on the values and consumer behavior, which further influence the future life stages. The attachment that is cultivated between a celebrity who is known to many people and a certain brand is certain to form lasting emotional connections, hence forming brand loyalties that are far from transaction-based relations.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify and analyse how celebrity content and lifestyle choices influence people of different age groups.
2. To identify how individuals of different age groups get influenced by celebrity content
3. To evaluate the psychological impact of attempting to maintain celebrity-inspired lifestyle

Research Problem: The core research problem explores a fundamental but complex question of contemporary consumer culture: How partners-in-crime celebrity endorsers and influence impact more than immediate purchases by, in turn, shaping foundational levels of identity, values, and long-term consuming among young consumers -- both what they acquire as well as who they are. And how the psychological secret recipe for doing so is manifest throughout such linkages to proffer future prolific flow. The role of celebrities in shaping the consumption behavior and lives of the youth is a complex matter that transcends simple proselytization. This article elaborates the interplay of psychological, developmental, technological, ethical, and longitudinal processes that influence young consumers' attitudes toward celebrity-endorsed products and lifestyles.

Importance of the study: The present study is unlike previous studies in that it includes ethical considerations within the analysis. Whereas most current research centers on the success of brands using celebrity endorsement to increase the effectiveness of advertising, this study takes a different approach by considering whether it is ethical to market lifestyles that are aspirational but cannot be achieved by young consumers. These findings have important implications about the influence of influencers, brands and regulators in fostering responsible marketing behavior specifically with regard to materialism, financial impulsiveness and self-concept problems. Moreover, this work extends the time frame beyond a temporary period during which consumers change their behavior and adds a longitudinal component to test how deeply influence exerted by celebrities affects the purchasing behaviour and life decisions of young adults. The other, previous studies reflect consumers' only first response, and the present study explores whether limited celebrities-led impacts towards consumption transits to the later stage of adulthood or they vanish gradually.

Literature review:

Influence of Youth and Identity: Stars heavily shape what teenagers spend on, and how they see themselves.

Adolescents buy products that bear the stamp of endorsement from celebrities because they believe such goods carry with them images of success and status (Bush et al. Parasocial relationships of transmission-reflection settings subsume such endorsements as well (Horton & Wohl, 1956). While celebrities' endorsements may stimulate passion and generate profit, overexposure of stars' lives could hinder adolescents in their focus on study or career achievements by luring them to focus more on physical wealth and influence (Chan & Prendergast, 2008).

Differences in Culture: The power of endorsements is highly cultural. In collectivist countries like India or China, the power of social conformity and peer pressure outshines celebrity endorsement effects as young adults associate consumeristic desires with groups or membership (Kaur & Garg, 2016). On the contrary, in individualist countries such as U.S., personal autonomy attenuates this influence (Triandis, 1995). Celebrities transfer symbolic properties — status, glamour, trust — from brands.” (McCracken, 1989) DeepCopy's (14)Meaning Transfer Model Serves as a bridge model and reveals why well-known personality is personally transferable for brand switchOver Image: Pop Culture : Sociological interpretation of contemporary culture. Yet if the celebrities' image is not congruent with that of the advertising product, it could easily send a wrong signal wasting investments and thus also providing rationale for adaption to local culture values (Hung, 2014).

Credibility, Attractiveness, and Fit: The means-ends approach to the multiplicative model In literature, a main idea surrounding endorser is that the endorser should represent credibility, trustworthiness attractiveness and fit with the brand (Erdogan, 1999). According to the match-up hypothesis, endorsements are most effective when the cue's characteristics match those of a particular product (Kamins, 1990). For example, using a whip-cracking Hollywood socialite to hawk green products makes sense and instills trust in consumers. On the other hand, insincere or only-money-based endorsements can defect both celebrity and brand (Friedman & Friedman, 1979).

Impact on Brand Image and Sales: Celebrity endorsements are effective means of raising brand awareness, recall, and attachment - especially for the Gen Z audience who is browsing on digital media outlet such as Instagram (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). They might speed up purchase decisions and produce short-term sales increases (Spry et al., 2011). Yet, the evidence suggests long-term customer fidelity relies more on product quality and brand image and less on celebrity pull power (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). In other instances, consumers may retain the celebrity but neglect the brand being promoted which negatively affects overall branding effectiveness (Till et al., 2008).

Risks and Limitations: Celebrity endorsements carry risks. Diminishing returns: Too much exposure dilutes the celebrity's believability (Tripp et al., 1994). It is

very common for bad press about a celebrity to corrupt brand endorsements (Knittel & Stango, 2013). Indeed, sales typically increase at the outset of a campaign and drop after the campaign ends. A further danger is the product being overpowered by the celebrity, resulting in weak brand name recall (Erdogan, 1999). These are the risks that illustrate why you have to be so careful of which celebrities endorse and how.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach: This research employs a quantitative study design since it ensures statistical accuracy, objectivity, and comparative analysis on the effect of celebrities on young consumer behavior. Employing survey methods of data collection, the study design allows for the collection of data from a large sample from a wide range of age groups and social classes. One of the benefits attached to quantitative methods is that they can determine patterns and relationships between psychological responses and celebrity endorsement, such as increased purchase intention, improved brand loyalty, or changes in the process of identity formation. The further use of statistical graphs, percentage distribution, and computation in numbers facilitates greater convenience and comprehension in findings.

Hypothesis:

The hypothesis for the study can be noted as follow:

1. Null Hypothesis: H_0 = There is no significant correlation between celebrity social media following and lifestyle imitation among individuals.
2. Alternate Hypothesis: H_a = There is a significant correlation between celebrity social media following and lifestyle imitation among individuals.

Data Collection Methods:

The study utilized primary and secondary data collection methods. Questionnaires were used for primary data to collect data directly from the respondents, with different types of questions to investigate demographic-celebrity influence relationships on consumer behavior. Questions were framed (multiple choice, scales) for some, while others provided room for open-ended answers for collecting personal views. The secondary research part involved a review of already published sources that were scholarly in nature, i.e., research studies and journals. These sources furnished contextual evidence, theoretical data, and comparative data that validated the primary data.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION:

Sr.no	Demographic Factor	Category	Frequency
1	Gender	Female	114
		Male	98
		Other	3
		Not mentioned	3
2	Age Group	Less than 18	11
		18-24	98
		25-34	30
		35-44	32
		45-54	33
		55-64	13
		Above 64	1
3	Occupation	Business	17
		Housewife	19
		Professional	38
		Retired Individual	9
		Service	27
		Student	108

The sample comprises a slightly higher number of female respondents (114) compared to males (98), with three individuals identifying as "Other" and three preferring not to disclose their gender. This distribution indicates that women may be more engaged with celebrity-driven health and lifestyle narratives, possibly due to targeted marketing strategies in beauty, wellness, and fashion. The survey respondents predominantly fall within the 18-24 age group (98 respondents), making up the largest segment of the sample. This suggests that young adults are the primary audience engaging with the commodification of health and lifestyle and its impact on celebrity brand image. The 25-34 (30), 35-44 (32), and 45-54 (33) age groups also contribute significantly,

indicating that middle-aged individuals are also influenced by celebrity endorsements and lifestyle trends. A smaller representation is observed among those under 18 (11), 55-64 (13), and above 64 (1), suggesting that older and younger individuals are less affected by these trends. A significant portion of respondents are students (108), indicating that younger individuals, particularly those in academic settings, are highly engaged with celebrity branding and lifestyle influences. Professionals (38) and service workers (27) also form a considerable share, implying that working individuals remain conscious of celebrity-endorsed health and lifestyle trends. Housewives (19), business professionals (17), and retired individuals (9) contribute

smaller numbers, suggesting that while these groups may engage with celebrity culture, their purchasing decisions and self-perception may be less influenced by

commodified lifestyle trends compared to students and professionals.

Dichotomous:

Dichotomous	Yes	No
Following celebrity culture	136	82
Awareness of celebrity brands	82	136
Following celebrities on social media	123	95
Influence of content of celebrities	151	68
Purchase of products after celebrity endorsement	146	72
Purchase of products from celebrity brands	102	116

Inference: With the help of this graph we can understand that the number of people following celebrity culture and being influenced by celebrities is more as compared to people who are not. However, at the same time if we look at the number of people who are actually purchasing products from celebrity brands, it is relatively low. So with this we can understand that

the rate at which people convert their celebrity influence into actual brand purchases is quite low. The data reveals that consumers may follow celebrities and be swayed by their endorsements of third-party products, but are more hesitant to fully commit to celebrity-branded products themselves.

Frequency Based Likert Scale	Always	Occasionally	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Comparison of lifestyle with celebrities	8	42	27	57	84
Discussion of the lifestyles of celebrities with other people	4	45	42	63	64
Motivation to improve lifestyle after seeing social media posts of celebrities	15	40	41	54	68
Pressure to maintain certain beauty standards because of celebrities	8	49	31	46	84
Saving money to buy products from celebrity brands / celebrity endorsements	9	25	38	43	103
Fact checking celebrity lifestyle claims	10	35	31	61	81
Research celebrity endorsed products	15	30	51	58	64

Inference: The data suggests that while celebrity culture is pervasive, most individuals do not actively compare their lifestyles to celebrities or discuss them frequently. The high "Never" (84) and "Rarely" (57) responses for lifestyle comparison indicate that people may admire celebrity lifestyles but do not necessarily emulate them. However, social media plays a significant role in influencing lifestyle choices. A considerable

number of respondents (15 "Always" and 40 "Occasionally") feel motivated to improve their lifestyles after seeing celebrity posts, showing that aspirational behavior exists. Similarly, beauty standards set by celebrities exert some pressure, with many selecting "Occasionally" (49) or "Sometimes" (31), reflecting moderate influence.

Frequency Based Anova

Anova: Single Factor				
SUMMARY				
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Comparison of lifestyle with celebrities	218	815	3.755760369	1.57433009
Discussion of the lifestyles of celebrities with other people	218	790	3.640552995	1.360940434
Motivation to improve lifestyle after seeing social media posts of celebrities	218	771	3.552995392	1.66500256
Pressure to maintain certain beauty standards because of celebrities	218	800	3.686635945	1.669866871
Saving money to buy products from celebrity brands / celebrity endorsements	218	855	3.940092166	1.482505547
Fact checking celebrity lifestyle claims	218	817	3.764976959	1.523212152
Research celebrity endorsed products	218	776	3.576036866	1.532386073

ANOVA							
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>	
Between Groups	22.92034233	6	3.820057055	2.474074425	0.02194131138	2.104568241	
Within Groups	2334.580645	1512	1.544034818				
Total	2357.500987	1518					

Inference: A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the differences among various behavioral responses to the commodification of health and lifestyle in relation to celebrity influence. The results indicate a statistically significant difference between the groups ($F(6, 1512) = 2.47, p = 0.022$), suggesting that the responses to celebrity lifestyle influence vary meaningfully. The F-statistic (2.47) exceeds the F-

critical value (2.10), providing evidence to reject the null hypothesis, which assumes no significant difference among the means. Additionally, the p-value (0.022), being less than 0.05, confirms that at least one group's mean differs significantly from the others. The within-group variance (1.54) indicates some level of individual variability in responses.

Behavioural Based Likert Scale:

Behavioural Based Likert Scale	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Celebrity lifestyle influences my personal goals	15	12	56	61	74
Celebrity promotions affects my purchasing decisions	32	51	37	52	46
Celebrity lifestyle ideal promotes unhealthy standards	45	61	59	33	20
Social media has increased the pressure to live like celebrities	59	87	33	26	13
I believe celebrities actually use the products they endorse	8	12	52	69	77

I feel satisfied with my own lifestyle while viewing celebrity content.	52	95	47	12	12
I can distinguish between authentic and sponsored celebrity content.	32	51	69	29	37
Celebrity lifestyle affects my self image	31	50	39	48	50
I feel pressure to keep up with celebrity lifestyle trends	8	13	45	67	85

Inference: The data suggests that while celebrity culture remains pervasive, most individuals maintain a critical and independent stance towards celebrity influence. The predominantly "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses across multiple dimensions indicate a growing consumer sophistication and resistance to uncritical celebrity worship. Social media and digital platforms significantly shape perceptions of celebrity lifestyle, with a notable number of respondents

(59 "Strongly Agree" and 87 "Agree") acknowledging increased pressure to emulate celebrity trends. However, this awareness does not translate into wholesale adoption. The high skepticism towards product endorsements is particularly striking, with 69 "Disagree" and 77 "Strongly Disagree" responses indicating that consumers are increasingly discerning about celebrity-driven marketing.

Behavioral Based Anova

Anova: Single Factor				
SUMMARY				
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Celebrity lifestyle influences my personal goals	218	741	3.414746544	0.78
Celebrity promotions affects my purchasing decisions	218	632	2.912442396	1.27
Celebrity lifestyle ideal promotes unhealthy standards	218	552	2.543778802	1.15
Social media has increased the pressure to live like celebrities	218	483	2.225806452	1.06
I believe celebrities actually use the products they endorse	218	769	3.527522936	0.61
I feel satisfied with my own lifestyle while viewing celebrity content.	218	477	2.198156682	0.84
I can distinguish between authentic and sponsored celebrity content.	218	603	2.778801843	1.08
Celebrity lifestyle affects my self image	218	635	2.926267281	1.24
I feel pressure to keep up with celebrity lifestyle trends	218	773	3.562211982	0.59

ANOVA				
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	474.9328597	8	59.36660747	61.93953997

Within Groups	1864.20583	1945	0.958460581	
Total	2339.13869	1953	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
			0	1.943156275

Inference: To assess the impact of the commodification of health and lifestyle on the brand image of celebrities, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the means across different perception categories. The results indicate a statistically significant difference among the groups ($F(8, 1945) = 61.94, p < 0.001$), suggesting that respondents hold varying views on celebrity influence. The F-statistic (61.94) is substantially higher than the critical value (1.94),

providing strong evidence against the null hypothesis. Additionally, the p-value (0.00) further supports the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that at least one group's mean significantly differs from the others. The within-group variance (0.96) suggests some level of individual variability, with notable differences in responses related to purchasing decisions, self-image, and social pressure.

Ordinal Rating:

Ranking	Facebook	Instagram	Youtube	Snapchat	Twitter/X
1	56	114	84	16	24
2	47	55	65	22	29
3	35	10	101	35	37
4	25	16	57	89	56
5	55	23	12	56	72

Inference: The inference from the ranking data clearly reveals that social media preferences are shaped by diverse user motivations, content styles, and platform functionalities rather than simple popularity counts. Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube dominate the landscape, each for distinct reasons: Facebook for its wide demographic reach and multifunctional features, Instagram for its visually driven appeal among younger users, and YouTube for its vast and versatile content ecosystem. These platforms show consistently strong first-preference votes, reflecting loyal user bases and broad relevance across different segments. In contrast,

groups—Snapchat appealing to those who prefer intimate, ephemeral communication, and Twitter/X attracting users seeking real-time updates, debates, and professional interactions. The study highlights a nuanced ecosystem in which users select platforms that align with their communication needs, interests, and engagement habits. The varied ranking patterns point to a marketplace where no single platform fulfills every user requirement, and each site holds a distinct competitive position. The findings demonstrate that user engagement is deeply influenced by platform-specific strengths such as content format, community culture,

Ranking	Shah Rukh Khan	Mr. Beast	Taylor Swift	Amitabh Bachchan	Samay Raina	Greta Thunberg	Indra Nooyi
1	86	20	18	27	17	13	37
2	34	65	25	32	17	27	18
3	26	21	66	33	38	16	18
4	15	32	16	74	32	23	26
5	11	18	52	21	66	35	15
6	14	20	25	20	23	80	36
7	32	42	15	11	25	24	68

Snapchat and Twitter/X cater to more specific user

and perceived utility.

Inference: The analysis highlights a dynamic and evolving landscape of celebrity influence, where traditional entertainment icons coexist with emerging digital creators, global activists, and corporate leaders. Shah Rukh Khan's exceptionally high first-choice ranking reaffirms his iconic status, demonstrating unmatched cross-generational appeal and cultural resonance both in India and internationally. Taylor Swift and Amitabh Bachchan show strong yet distinct patterns—Swift representing contemporary global cultural power, while Bachchan reflects legacy influence rooted in decades of cinematic excellence. Meanwhile, personalities like Mr. Beast represent a new wave of digital-first celebrities who command significant attention among younger audiences, even if their influence is more polarized compared to mainstream figures. The presence of Samay Raina, Greta Thunberg, and Indra Nooyi among participant rankings further demonstrates that celebrity influence today extends well beyond entertainment into domains such as activism, intellectual content, and corporate leadership. Their niche yet meaningful recognition indicates that modern influence is defined by impact and relevance rather than mere fame.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The questions of the survey questionnaire towards our target group aimed at measuring how much celebrities lives influence young adults on their consuming, behavior and self-view. The items focus on a measure of celebrity brand awareness, whether or not the respondent is fan of celebrities in social media and an assessment scale that attempts to measure the extent to which their lives are influenced by celebrity-endorsed content. The findings reveal that a significant number of the audience are heavily linked to celebrity culture and, collectively, most admit to purchasing products as a result of a celebrity endorsement and feel pressurised to be in-keeping with certain beauty and lifestyle expectations.

Our results suggest that a large number of participants follow celebrity culture and are familiar with some of the celebrity-endorsed brands. Most of the individuals we interviewed referenced to pressure from celebrity content promoted on social media tools such as Instagram, YouTube and TikTok – all major spaces where celebrity marketing (and lifestyle marketing) takes place. Our informants stated that the idealised lives reflected on celebrities in such forums led to competition, leading young people participating on these platforms to aspire for similar life styles by associating with products they are consuming and alleged wellness practices around them. This demand, nevertheless, is frequently not incited by a genuine quest for self enhancement but in turn the celebrity lifestyle influence.

Furthermore, a large portion of the participants reported that they compare their life with those of celebrities and there with went pressure to meet certain standards regarding beauty and fitness. Such a focus has been associated with body image disturbances and reduced amounts of self-esteem and increased levels of anxiety

among adolescents. Youth and Celebrities' idealized carefree life Youth contribute to the glorification of celebrities, that they live a simple care-free life where-in everything comes easily to them This results in unrealistic desires by affecting dissatisfaction with one's life situation. The pressure or need to adhere to these standards has affected consumers by at least 79.1% of the respondents indicating that they have bought products belonging to celebrities not only as a utility tool but also in an attempt to clothe themselves much more like the stars do.

CONCLUSION:

This study exhibits compelling proof of age structures' connection with celebrity influence vulnerability, particularly emphasizing the powerful influence towards young people and young adults. Our results show that the younger age cohorts are more exposed to celebrity-driven content and more vulnerable to the destructiveness of health and lifestyle messages. For instance, the age group 18-24 had tremendously high engagement rates, mainly comprised of students, implying that young adults in the early stages of identity exploration are highly vulnerable targets for celebrity narratives. This heightened sensitivity seems to be biologically founded processes such as self-concept formation, peer pressure, and the high digital media literacy of this generation. Even though all age brackets are infused with celebrity culture, the influential power naturally declines with higher age, less probably due to a more impressionable age but more likely with higher internalized personal values and therefore greater resistance to aspiration-advertising. The age trajectory is consistent with a more general developmental psychology trend where identity is more established with higher age and the acceptance of outside validation becomes of a diminished significance. Nowadays, social media make up this medium through which celebrity power is executed as young people are continually exposed to idealized portrayals of lifestyles, greatly impacting younger demographics.

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