

## Investigating the media as mediators of celebrities` influence on the Iranian society from the perspective of experts along with the presentation of the media management model of cultural and social effects of celebrities

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Original Article                      Main Object: Interdisciplinary</p> <p>Scope: Iran</p> <p>Received: 05 February 2023                      Revised: 14 March 2023                      Accepted: 14 March 2023                      Published online: 11 April 2023</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b>                      celebrities,                      cultural and social influences,                      lifestyle,                      media,                      media management.</p>	<p>Media environment is now witnessing the emergence of active participants using new media to gain fame and increases the fans and followers by sharing activities appeal to an ever-growing number of users. Meanwhile, these celebrities with high levels of reputation and influence among different strata of society usually comment on various political and social issues, undertake public benefit works, and influence to a great extent the stance, opinion, and actions of a wide range of members of society on different topics. This research conducted in the framework of an interpretative paradigm uses grounded theory as a qualitative approach explores the social and cultural impacts of celebrities on Iranian society and also investigates the role of media in the emergence of the possibility of exerting such impacts. Moreover, the issue of directing these impacts using media management framework is analyzed. Due to the subject of the study and based on the chosen method, the sample of the research included experts from fields of fame, media, and university: 9 celebrities, 9 media managers, 8 academic experts; so a total number of 26 respondents participated in deep interviews till the acquired data reached theoretical saturation. From the data analysis, 15 main categories were extracted and categorized in the paradigmatic model to present the paradigmatic model of media management of cultural and social effects of celebrities based on it. Also, based on the opinions of the interviewees, the cultural and social impacts of celebrities on society and the possibility of managing these effects through the media have been confirmed, and the model of applying this media management in a paradigmatic model has also been proposed.</p>


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**Extended Abstract**

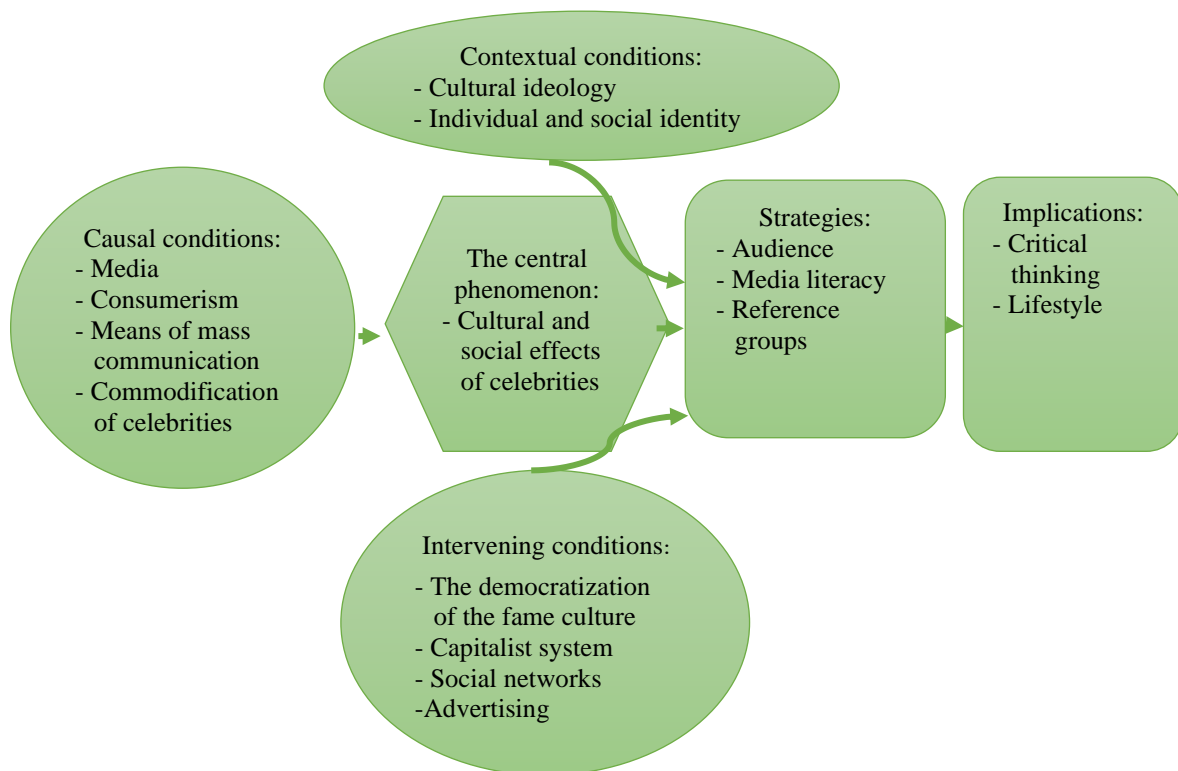
Media environment is now witnessing the emergence of active participants using new media to gain fame and increases the fans and followers by sharing activities appeal to an ever-growing number of users. Meanwhile, these celebrities with high levels of reputation and influence among different strata of society usually comment on various political and social issues, undertake public benefit works, and influence to a great extent the stance, opinion, and actions of a wide range of members of society on different topics. This research conducted in the framework of an interpretative paradigm uses grounded theory as a qualitative approach explores the social and cultural impacts of celebrities on Iranian society and also investigates the role of media in the emergence of the possibility of exerting such impacts. Moreover, the issue of directing these impacts using media management framework is analyzed. Due to the subject of the study and based on the chosen method, the sample of the research included experts from fields of fame, media, and university: 9 celebrities, 9 media managers, 8 academic experts; so a total number of 26 respondents participated in deep interviews till the acquired data reached theoretical saturation.

Analyzing the collected data, 15 main categories were extracted and categorized within the paradigmatic model. The "cultural and social effects of celebrities on society" is considered as the central phenomenon of this research; causal conditions, intervening conditions, contextual conditions, the strategies and consequences of the paradigm were also determined according to the results obtained in the central coding stage and based on the opinions of the participants in the research. In the theory development stage, the scientific theories that corresponded to each of the main categories were determined. Finally, the result of categorizing the categories and expanding the theory was defined as follows:

- \* The main categories- the theory attributed to the categories- classification in the paradigmatic model
- 1. The democratization of the fame culture- Driessen's theory- Intervening conditions
- 2. Commodification of celebrities- Marx's theory- Causal conditions
- 3. Means of mass communication- Habermas' theory of communicative action- Causal conditions
- 4. Social networks- Giddens' construction theory- Intervening conditions
- 5. Cultural ideology- Althusser's theory- Contextual conditions
- 6. Capitalist system- Labor process theory- the Interventionist Condition
- 7. Media- Field theory- Causal Conditions
- 8. Lifestyle- Bourdieu's theory- Implications
- 9. Advertising- Persuasion theory- Intervening conditions

10. Consumerism- Bourdieu's habit theory- Causal Conditions
11. Media literacy- Media determinism theory- Strategies
12. Reference groups- Merten's theory- Strategies
13. Critical thinking- Frankfurt School (Critical Theory)- Implications
14. Individual and social identity- Mead's identity theory- Contextual Conditions
15. Audience- Planting theory- Strategies.

Based on the categories extracted from the in-depth interviews and the categorization of the categories in the paradigmatic model, the paradigmatic model of media management of the cultural and social effects of celebrities can be presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The paradigmatic model of media management of the cultural and social effects of celebrities

To describe the model, it can be said that the cultural and social impacts of the celebrities are formed on the basis of the effects of the media and means of mass communication in society and the promotion of the spirit of consumerism due to the commodification of celebrities with different strengths and weaknesses among the members of society. In order to manage these impacts, some strategies can be adopted by policy makers and cultural and media custodians

with different levels of effectiveness depending on the cultural ideology that governs the individual and society, as well as the personal and social identity of individuals. On the other hand, in the process of implementing the proposed strategies, attention should also be paid to the role and function of the capitalist system, social networks, advertising, and the generalization of the process of fame.

1. One strategy is to conduct an accurate audience analysis in the process of designing and implementing cultural and media programs in the society. Paying due attention to the taste of the audience and the needs of the audience is very important in the audience analysis strategy. It is also necessary to pay attention to the cultural characteristics and personal and social identity of the target audience in the programs.
2. Another strategy is to improve the media literacy level of the community members. Almost all the interviewees believed in the existence of an inverse relationship between the level of media literacy of people and the level of being influenced by celebrities. The more media literacy people possess, the less they are influenced by celebrities.
3. Another strategy is to pay attention to the influence of reference groups in society. One of the main reasons as to why people are influenced by celebrities is the need to role have models and follow reference groups and guides in society. The more effort is made to position and set the educated and thoughtful groups as reference groups in the society, the more impacting people happens at a noble and valuable level.

The following consequences are expected from deploying the above strategies:

1. Strengthening critical thinking in the society in such a way that individuals do not easily accept and believe everything they see or hear; the analysis by people of the behavior and speech of celebrities with a critical outlook will lead to reasonable and logical impacts.
2. Improving people's lifestyles by modifying their thinking and changing their reference groups will adjust the amount of attention people pay to celebrities and guide them in the right direction to a reasonable extent.

Based on the above findings and the opinions of the interviewees, the cultural and social impacts of celebrities on the society and the possibility of managing these impacts through the media have been confirmed and the model of applying this media management has also been proposed in the above paradigmatic model.

**Conflict of interest**

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

**Authors' contributions**

All authors contributed to the original idea, study design.

**Ethical considerations**

The author has completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc.

**Data availability**

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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