

Impact of Mass Mediated Sports Heroes on Life Style and Product Purchase Behavior among Youth

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ABSTRACT: *Mass media have profound impact on youth. It changes their attitudes, beliefs and customs by a cultural coup d'état. This study focuses on the impact of mass mediated sports heroes on youth in terms of their change of life style and product purchase behavior. This is an empirical study conducted in Bangalore city. Data analysis has proven that mass mediated sports heroes have an impact on youth in terms of shaping their life style and Product purchasing behavior)*

Keywords: *Mass media, Youth, impact, life style, Product purchase*

I. INTRODUCTION

Mass media is a universal medium of communication (either print or electronic) that delivers messages and information to a mass audience. A mass medium (such as television) is often referred to as 'one -to -many' communication. A film director, an author of a book, a producer of a television program etc communicates to many people at the same time in a way that is largely impersonal that is, the communication is one-way, in the sense that those communicating a message to an audience do not receive simultaneous feedback from that audience. Mass Media could be either print media (which includes books, newspapers, magazines, journals etc); broadcast media (like television, radio, films etc which are broadcast to an audience), digital media (media that can be seen on internet).

1.1. Influence of Mass Media on Sports

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, sports is defined as an activity involving physical exertion and skills in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment. Sports have a universal language which unites nations transcending boundaries without any regional or cultural differences. Sports and Media are powerful influences on society which are highly intertwined with each other. Sports seem to be the single most profitable strategy adopted by global media industry. Rupert Murdoch (former CEO of News Corporation) emphasized that sports was crucial in making his British Sky Broadcasting Company, the most successful satellite television service in the world and in the full-fledged development of US FOX TV network. Consistent media coverage can benefit a sport in a number of ways by providing a visual profile and creating positive role models etc.

How media portrays a particular sports or sportsperson has a huge impact on both the sport and the sportsperson's credibility. Public attention is successfully grabbed when media focus is more on sports. Viewers identify themselves as fans watching or following a particular sport. The media and sports are said to be match made in heaven according to Michael Real (1998) who suggested that the world of sports in the age of mass media has changed since 19th century employing spectator- centred technology by making sports business a big gainer to media. Media also influences sports by marketing, branding, reporting on sports events and offering sponsorships. Sports events are telecasted as live programs and a majority of people watch it on TV while a few others enjoy attending the sports event in person. Social Networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter etc and personal blogs gives room for the interaction of icons and fans (majority of them being youth).

When we examine the extent to which sports have changed over the years, we realize the fast changing nature of visual technology. Whannel (1992) explains how visual media has transformed a sports event into television sports. Inglis (1977) asserts that sports have gained a special moral quality, a potential capacity for nurturing the natural impulses of generosity, heroism, grace and decorum.

1.2. Sports Heroes as Role models

A role model is an individual who is perceived as exemplary, who is always valued by someone else to be worthy of imitation. The concept of role model is frequently used in popular discourse and is commonly conceived as someone to look up to or someone to base your character, values or aspirations .It's a tough task to evaluate the impact of role models on their fans. John Jung (1986) has argued that the idea of role models has been popularly accepted by individuals and psychologists as a significant social influence. Some of the qualities that we seek in a role model include straightforward success, triumph over difficult circumstances, challenging stereotypes, being wholesome and a role model for the family etc.

Role models have a prime influence on our lives and we tend to follow their footsteps. They have the ability to shape the views and ideas of youngsters helping them to discover, plan and decide what they want to become in future. A role model plays a positive and responsible role in installing good moral values in youngsters.

Role models reflect contemporary popular culture which is well received and followed by the youth. Heroic figures are distinguished by their achievement or by virtue of their character. The nature of hero, the notion of 'sports hero' and the way they function in society as a communication phenomenon has been altered by the rapid advance of electronic media. Modern sports foster the illusion that heroes emerge from professional sports; however, these so called sports heroes are actually products of celebrification. Despite the cries of social commentators noting the lack of real heroes we continue to see endless titles relating to sports legends. Sports heroes have a huge impact on the likes and dislikes of youth. In this study we focus on how sports heroes serve as role models to youth. Hoch suggests that the influence of sports icons on youth has increased in the course of 20th century. Sports heroes' responsibility should not only be to their sports. According to Fish 2009, these heroes are the makers of the society and are important public figures with the potential of influencing the behaviour of teens and young children. Behaviours demonstrated by heroes has propensity of becoming public and hence besides the acting responsibility on camera their entire life should be acceptable by the larger society. According to Boock 2011, all the sports heroes need to demonstrate righteousness and decency without compromise. Sports heroes have the obligation to behave well in all facets of their lives to be good role models and ambassadors of good virtue due to their popularity and fame.

The construction of celebrities as popular figures or making them unpopular is all in the hands of media. The Olympic medal winners like Marry Kom, Saniya Nehwal P V Sindhu and Sakshi Mallik etc have gained media attention through advertisements. Mass media makes a sports figure as an icon and sells him as a product to society. Sports stars that emerge as champions are turned into celebrities by media giving constant attention and news about them on the ground or off the ground. This constant and increasing popularity makes them sports icons. Based on their performance and strength, they become eyeball of media for the endorsements to sell their products.

McCrackes (1989) describes "Celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition by a large share of a certain group of people. Whereas attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills are just examples and specific common characteristics cannot be observed, it can be said that within a corresponding social group, celebrities generally differ from the social norm and enjoy a high degree of public reorganisation." There are movies like Bhag Milka Bhag, based on the life and struggle of Indian athlete, Milka Singh. Chak de India is a film based on women's hockey match. MS Dhoni-Untold story film on India's most successful cricket team captain etc in recent times. These movies entertain and raise the viewer's emotions. In the climax scene of Lagan enacted by Amir Khan the hearts of the audience throbs with the crucial six that he plays. Sports stars become a celebrity through their personal efforts and achievements. James Monaco (1978) discusses three categories of celebrity. He says in the first category that the hero is someone who has actually done something spectacular to attract attention of the audience. Star is the second category that achieves prominence by developing public persona than their professional profile. Monaco suggests that many politicians aspire to become stars for advancing their political careers. The third category is the quarter and this corresponds to what Turnevetal (2000) have referred to as the accidental celebrity.

Nowadays sports celebrities are utilized for money making. For the marketing purpose films, magazines, newspapers, sports channels use these celebrities for high rating.

1.3. How Sports Icons as Role Models Affect Youth?

Youngsters tend to be attractive, marvel in sports and studies and crave for popularity under peer pressure. They resort to mimic the mannerisms, clothing and styles of their favourite celebrities popularised by media.

We have several instances of sports persons indulged in public service campaigns like Rahul Dravid's active participation in social awareness, Graeme Smith support global campaign on children with HIV/AIDS, Mahendra Singh Dhoni for Save Tiger Campaign etc. By considering these examples we know that sports icons feature in endorsements not only for fame and money but also has some social commitment towards country and society.

In 2009, the top five brand ambassadors — MS Dhoni, Shahrukh Khan, Katrina Kaif, Sachin Tendulkar and Priyanka Chopra — endorsed 68 brands with Dhoni leading the pack at 19 brands. Vinod Mahanta & Prasad Sangameshwaran, ET Bureau Feb 3, 2010.

Turner. G (2004) speaks about present celebrities and media role in enhancing the celebrity status "The contemporary celebrity will usually have emerged from the sports or entertainment industries; they will be highly visible through the media; and their private lives will attract greater public interest than their professional lives. Unlike that of, say, public officials, the celebrity's fame does not necessarily depend on the position or

achievements that gave them their prominence in the first instance. Rather, once they are established, their fame is likely to have outstripped the claims to prominence developed within that initial location.

Raymond Royle and Richard Haynes(2009) in their book explains the present sports and role of mass mediated sports and sports heroes how they are developed into celebrities .It examines what television demands from its sports and the economic benefits which this stand of programming can offer TV speaks about TV and its relationship with sports.

Economically sports rather to TV be it public service Broadcaster (Doordarshan National and All India Radio) or commercially driven terrestrial and satellite companies(Star sports, ESPN, TEN Sports, SONY SIX) relying major events like world cup football, cricket, tennis, Olympics etc it delivers to larger audiences outside time viewing millions on TV sets. It is what exactly this research topic speaks about the Mass media sport and adds audience.

Michael Jordan, Inc. Make sense of a celebrated sports person –his popular image created by the convergence of corporate and media interests. Using Michael Jordan as a vehicle for viewing the broader social, economic, political, and technological concerns that frame contemporary culture. He plays an vital role in cult of celebrity, as sporting legend he innovative corporate connections particularly Jordan’s association with Nike. Jordan’s identity, and his achievement in his game . the global reach and influence that has accompanied the concerted commodification of Jordan by transnational corporations(multiple brands any where) he is to be noted highest paid sports person.

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1.4. Social Relevance of the Study

Sports endorsements cater to the emotional appetites of the viewers by plastering the appealing images of sports heroes who are an integral part of our lives especially of youngsters. It is the mass media that serves as an interface between sports stars and their fans (mainly youth).Media has a great responsibility in grooming a better society and even a minor flaw can create obvious negative instincts in the masses. This study analyses the impact of mass mediated sports heroes on today’s youth (whether they are influenced to buy products endorsed by their favourite sports heroes).The research also aims to examine whether youngsters are inspired by their favourite sports icon to stay involved in sports or to take up sports as a career, whether youngsters indulge in blindly imitating their sports star’s life styles and get themselves involved with drugs and such other anti-social activities and also if they are influenced by social awareness campaigns promoted by sports celebrities. There are several expectations about the results of the survey which are very general and may be summarized in the hypothesis-a mass mediated sports hero as a role model will have both positive and negative impact on youth. The methodology for the study consists of quantitative analysis with structured questionnaire, a random sample survey of 480 youngsters from Bangalore and content analysis of coverage of sports personalities in different media over a period of two weeks. The perception of respondents pertaining to watching sports, being sport professionals, their preference of kind of sports programmes they intend to watch on television were subjects of analysis. The primary objective of the survey was to know as how many of respondents have taken up sports as professional. The next query pertained to was whether the respondents are interested in viewing sports programmes through media. The fame that sports celebrities enjoy is a pivotal factor in motivating youth to imitate their favourite sports icons. Hence this study which throws light on the impact of mass mediated sport heroes on youth is highly significant in the present scenario as youngsters are always in the run for everything that is trendy and appealing.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study:

1. To examine the impact of mass mediated messages about sports heroes on today’s youth are influenced to buy products endorsed by their favorite sports heroes.
2. To evaluate the influence of Sports heroes on life style of youth.

2.2. Hypothesis

$H_0 = H_1 =$ There is no significant relationship between over all media (mass mediated messages by sports heroes) influence and product purchase.

$H_0 =$ There is no significant relationship between over all media (mass mediated messages by sports heroes) influence on youth lifestyle.

III. METHOD OF RESEARCH

This study made use of quantitative method. Data collection involves selecting group of students from various colleges age group from 16-to 25 to seek opinion. . a standard methods is utilized for seeking a valid sample from a group of students. This study aim to find out the impact of mass mediated sports heroes on youth. This study involves the urban youth of Bangalore has been divided into 5 units North ,south, east ,west and central. Questionnaire method has been utilized to gather information about impact of mass mediated sports heroes on youth. The questionnaire consisted of questions, divided into four parts section. There is order, gradation from general to specific question; total number of questions utilized for this study is 47 questions.

The first- part contains general introduction consisting of 6 questions generally related to personal information about the youth. Second part is related to youth most preferred or which media they use to watch the sports and weather they are a sports professional or not .It is to gather the information about the interest, awareness of each individual in newspaper, TV, radio, internet etc. It also gathers information about coverage of media on society.

Third part elaborates how mass media popularizes sports. It gathers more information about their favourite sports. Influence of sports heroes in their lifer and or they interested to take up sports as their career and also to find out about role of medias in popularizing the sports.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.

4.1 Profile of the respondents

This sub section begins with descriptive statistics of the profile of respondents under study. Firstly, a total sample of 480 students was considered and the classification of respondents by their gender is depicted in Table-1. Accordingly, 63.5 percent of the respondents are male and remaining 36.5 percent are female respondents.

Table-1: Gender representation of respondents under study

Gender	% of respondents
Male	63.5
Female	36.5
Total	100.0

Base = 480, Field survey

Table-2: Age group of respondents under study

Age group of respondents under study	
Age-group	Percent
15-20	68.2
21 -25	14.1
26-30	13.5
30-35	4.2
Total	100.0

Now, looking at the age group of respondents it is clearly evident from Table-2 that in four class intervals of age group defined viz., 15 to 20, 20 to 25, 25 to 30 and 30 to 35 respectively. Accordingly, 68.2 percent of respondents are in the age group of 15 to 20 years and 14.1 of respondents in the age group of 21 to 25 years. Similarly, 13.5 percent of them are in the age group of 26 to 30 years and about four percent greater than 30 years of age.

Table - 3: Educational qualification of respondents

Educational Status	% of respondents
No Schooling	0.4
Higher primary	1.7
SSLC	6.6
PUC	31.3
Diploma	17.4
Graduate	32.0
Post graduate	10.0
Others	0.8
Overall	100

Base = 480, Source: Field Survey

Furthermore, on the academic aspect, it is observed from Table-3 that 32 percent of the respondents have completed their graduation – which is the highest percentage of respondents and followed by PUC with 31.3 percent with a cumulative of 69 percent enabling that a considerable proposition of respondents has higher

level of education. As far as technical qualification, it is observed that 17.4 percent of respondents completing their Diploma. On the other a cumulative of 10 percent of respondents were able to obtain only higher primary educational qualification.

Table – 4: Which medium do you prefer to get information about your favourite sport?

Medium	%
TV	75.4
Radio	2.5
Newspaper	15.5
Internet	4.7
Other source	1.9
Total	100

Base = 347, Source: Field Survey

In other words, out of total sample size of 480 respondents, about 133 respondents have categorically informed that they are not interested in viewing sports programme on media. Nonetheless, when asked to those respondents viewing sports programme through media on which is the most preferred media, 75.4 percent (see Table -4) of respondents selected Television as the media. Only 15.5 percent of respondents said that they prefer to obtain information on sports through print media and a meagre 2.5 percent through Radio. Although a significant revolution has been made in the field of internet technology, accessing information on sports updates by the sample respondents seem to be very negligible with less than five percent of respondents preferring to it.

Table – 5: How long do you spend on watching your favourite sports in a day?

	%
Less than half an hour	42.2
0.5– 1.0hrs	28.3
1.0- 1.5 hrs	22.1
> 1.5 hrs	7.5
Total	100

Base = 347, Source: Field Survey

The average time spent on watching favourite sports in a day, it emerge from Table -5 that 42.2 percent Of respondents on an average watch less than half an hour on a given day. Similarly, 28.3 percent of respondents devote about half an hour to one hour to watch sports programmes and another 22.1 percent of respondents spending about one to one and half hour in watching their favourite sports programme. This statistics would certain extent give a benchmark in analysing the impact of mass mediated sports heroes as role models on youth. Furthermore, a decline in percent of respondents viewing sports programme is observed with the increase in duration of time. This is substantiated by Kendall’s tau correlation coefficient (see table-6) where a negative coefficient of 0.136 is obtained. This correlation is significant at 5 % level. It concludes that there is an evidence (statistically) to say that there is correlation between age and average time spent by the respondents.

Table-6: Kendall’s tau correlation between age group and average time of time spent on watching sports programme

	Age of the respondent
Average time spent watching TV daily	- 0.136*

Base = 480 *Significant at 5 % level

The average time spent on watching sports programme is almost similar across the age group of the respondents under study.

4.2 Influence of sports heroes in life

In this section of the descriptive statistics depicted in this sub section is critical to the inference that would be drawn and make appropriate conclusions. In this regard, the basic query that was asked to respondents pertained to their favourite sport as this study finds out which sports is followed by the youth.

Table-7: Which is your favorite sports

Which is your favorite sport?	
Sport	% of responses
Hockey	10.1
Cricket	58.5
Football	8.8
Tennis	1.7
Badminton	15.2
Others	5.7
Overall	100.0

Base: 480, Field survey

Accordingly, it is again evident from the results shown in Table-7 that more than half of the respondents (58.5 percent) are avid followers of Cricket as a sport. This is followed by Badminton to which 15.2 percent of respondents considering as their favourite sport and 10.1 percent of them choosing Hockey as their all time favourite sport. The rest of percentages of respondents favour Football (8.8 percent) and other forms of sports (5.7 percent).

Table - 8: Why do you like that particular Sport?

Reason	%
It is played by my favourite sports hero	46.7
My friends play the sport	7.6
It is the most preferred game	25.7
My family members like that sport	5.2
Any other reason	14.9
Overall	100.0

when asked for reasons for choosing a particular sport as their favourite, it emerges from Table -8 that 46.7 percent of them saying that the sport is played by their favourite sport hero. This indicate that the influence of sports heroes in the minds of youth.

Table -9 Descriptive statistics of with similar scale items on influence of media on sports

Item no.	Items	Percentage of Respondents					Mode	S.d
		S.D	D	N	A	S.A		
1	I feel that because of mass media, I am increasingly aware of various sports	0.4	4.3	18.1	31.1	46.0	5.0	0.90
2	Mass media is playing an important role in popularizing sports through sport celebrities	5.1	4.0	15.5	32.3	43.0	5.0	1.09
3	I think that sports celebrities appearing on media influences youth like me to take up sports as a career	2.5	12.3	25.0	28.4	31.8	5.0	1.10
4	How much you agree that sports celebrity can be a role model for youth in socio-economic development?	1.5	8.3	22.1	31.9	36.2	5.0	1.30
5	Have you ever purchased any product which is endorsed by your favorite sports hero	18.2	10.2	19.0	39.0	13.4	2.0	1.08
6	Would you like to follow the life style of your favorite sports Icon	20.3	17.4	18.7	24.3	19.4	3.0	1.12

S.A – Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D –Disagree, S.D – Strongly Disagree, Neu– Neutral

V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The key assumptions emerged from the analysis is summarized below:-

Watching Television depends on the age group in a sense it found that from the statistical analysis that age group of less than 20 years spend more time viewing sports programs on Television as compared to the higher age group.

Regarding the favorite sports it clearly emerged that more than 50% of respondent like cricket as their first choice of sports activity this is followed by badminton .youth interest of playing sports under the sample survey more than 40% played the sports because it is being played by their favorite hero. Furthermore it was found that about 40%pay either regularly or sometimes there favorite sports.

Pertaining to Interest of his/her favourite sport increased over the years because of wide media coverage, it is observed from that 46 percent of respondents *strongly agreeing* and 31.7 percent of respondents *Agreeing* that because of extensive coverage of media had led to respondents' interest towards their favourite sports.

Mass media is playing an important role in popularizing sports through sport celebrities, it is observed that 43 percent of respondents *strongly agreeing* and 32.3 percent of respondents *Agreeing* that mass media is

playing an important role in popularizing sports through sport celebrities. This clearly indicate that more than three fourth of respondents (cumulative) acknowledging that media – especially the Television has indeed played a pivotal role in popularizing sports through celebrities.

Sports celebrity can be a role model for youth in socio-economic development; it is observed from that 36.2 percent of respondents *strongly agreeing* and 31.9 percent of respondents *agreeing* that sports celebrity can be a role model for youth in socio-economic development. This clearly indicate that nearly three fourth of respondents (cumulative) acknowledging that that sports celebrity can be a role model for youth in socio-economic development

To the question on watching programmes / advertisements of sports celebrities appearing on various mass media, it is observed from that 46.3 percent of respondents indeed watch programmes always and 43.6 percent of respondents sometimes *watch programmes of sports celebrities appearing on various mass media.*

The correlation among overall rating of different components such as Media Influence, Product Purchase Influence and Overall Life Style Influence. Accordingly, it is observed that although there is a positive correlation between Media Influence and Product Purchase influence and Life style Influence, positive correlation between Product Purchase Influence and Social change, positive correlation between Life Style Influence and Social Change, yet it is not statistically significant. Furthermore, as coefficient values are very close to zero indicating a very weak or almost no correlation between two components. On the other, there is a negative and non significant correlation between Media Influence and Social change and also negative and non significant correlation between Life Style Influence and Social change of sports heroes on youth.

To the question on having purchased any product which is endorsed by their favorite sports hero, it is observed that only 13.4 percent of respondents indeed buying or purchasing product always and 39.0 percent of respondents sometimes purchasing a product that is endorsed by their favorite sports hero. On the other, more than one fourth (28.4 percent) of respondents said that they never Have you ever purchased any product which is endorsed by your favorite sports hero. Interestingly, nearly one fifth (19.0 percent) respondents did not give any comments on this issue by remaining neutral. The standard deviation 1.08 indicating the variation is more than one mark from each individual respondent's score. Likewise, most of other items have modal score of 2.0 indicating that respondents consent their view as sometimes purchasing a product that is endorsed by their favorite sports hero.

The question on following the life style of their favorite sports Icon, it is observed that 19.4 percent of respondents indeed always follow the life style of their sport icon and nearly one fourth (24.0 percent) of respondents sometimes following the life style of your favorite sports Icon. On the contrary, more than one third (37.7 percent) of respondents said that they never follow the life style of your favorite sports Icon signifying that lifestyle of favourite sports icon do not have significant influence on a large proposition of youth under the study. Remaining 18.7 percent of respondents did not give any comments on this issue by remaining neutral. The standard deviation 1.12 indicating the variation is more than one mark from each individual respondent's score. Likewise, most of other items have modal score of 3.0 indicating that respondents consent their view as 'No Never' on the issue of following the lifestyle of their favourite sports icon.

From the study we can observe that sports heroes have profound influence on youth in product purchasing and shaping their life style.

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