Impact of Celebrities' Scandalous News on Newspaper Readers (A survey Analysis from Urdu Newspaper Readers)

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Abstract

The study aims to examine whether the scandalous news of readers' favorite celebrity has any effect on the existing perception of their favorite celebrity. Based on Elaboration Likelihood Model, a survey of 420 students of undergraduate and post graduate level from University of the Punjab was conducted. The finding of the study reveal that though most of the readers did not have a strong affiliation with their favorite celebrities, but once the readers had developed an affiliation with their favorite celebrity, reading any scandalous news or its follow-ups about them, liking or disliking neither increases or decreases. The scandalous news on them is perceived only as a form of entertainment which contributes in the fame of celebrities.

Key Words: *Scandolous news, Newspaper readers, Celebrities' news*

Introduction

In contemporary world of communications, the media is considered indispensable and its deeply rooted effects sometimes seems having long lasting impressions on an individual's perception. Further, from media's various forms of communication, newspaper is considered the essential extensions of communication and one of

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the mature modes among other media vehicles. On the account of influence over its readers, it can be either way around. Sometimes it is positive accompanying the negative effects simultaneously.

In connection to Pakistani context, an advanced and well-matured Urdu newspaper industry functioning from several years in country have earned enough space in the impulses of its readers that whatever is proclaimed in it is predominately expected to be authentic and accurate. Therefore, according to a Report (2009) the circulation of newspapers have increased 4 million from 1997-2003. According to the same report, Urdu newspaper industry is so far most influential among the readers.

Generally, among Urdu newspaper readers, the concept of celebrity is viewed as implausible and people tend to take news related to it seriously and passionately most of the time. Boorstin (1987) has defined the term celebrity with the illustration of its acknowledged being for any reason focusing on its knowingness. It can be any individual with the capability of having any skills just as any news anchor, host, politician, or drama/film actor/actress. Most of the time, it happens that newspaper readers feel enchanting and delighting experience while having gossips in form of conversation about these celebrities. Parallel to that, their behavior sometimes, reflects these effects. These celebrities are considered to be the role model for its news readers and they develop different sorts of feelings with them in for of imitating their approaches. Readers form such type of figure in form of actual celebrity that perfectly matches with that personality. Derakhshani (2007) illustrate that celebrities tend to represent themselves as perfect

personalities and express their actions in way that motivate the people to spend money on their endorsed products.

Frequently, in relation to media and scandalous news about any famous and favorite celebrity of the readers, it happens as media escalate it with intension of getting prominence to get distinctive zone in media market. Sometimes, the news about the celebrity seems fictitious story and often it appears with factual base. Gabler (1998) exemplifies the relation of news media with celebrity news signifying that celebrities are considered part of daily discussions for news media because people associate intense feelings with them preeminent to their personal relationships. Holmes (2005) imply the term 'saturation' for defining the celebrity and contend that these celebrities being the part of news media tend to get immerse every day. He argues that this phenomenon comes under the category of celebrity culture where news media tend to get prominence on the expense of news related to celebrities.

The affiliations either firm or fragile, developed with the celebrity tend to shake the associations and expectations of the readers after reading any scandalous news. Therefore the present study focused upon the idea of evaluating the response of newspaper readers upon reading any scandalous news about their favorite celebrity and its relation with liking and disliking that particular celebrity. Reader's level of affiliation has been the central point of the study and illustration is on associations developed by the readers after reading such news. Moreover, the study move further on focusing reading the follow-ups of that news and their reaction if they like or dislike that news about their favorite

celebrity.

Significance of the Study

The study is important because so far, there are numerous studies that have been conducted on consumer buying behavior, celebrity endorsement, parasocial affinity and its relation with accomplice of celebrity representation. This dimension of liking and disliking on the basis of already developed affiliations with the celebrity has not been explored yet. Further, targeting the follow-ups precipitates more emphasis on the consequences of affiliations because such follow-ups reflect the extent of interests for the news of celebrity regarding the reader.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyzes the reactions of readers after reading celebrity's scandalous news.
2. To find out the impacts of celebrity's scandalous news on readers.

Literature Review

As the study explored the level of liking and disliking of those newspaper readers who read the scandalous news of their favorite celebrities. In this regard, researcher prospected the literature review. Feasey (2008) examines the response of audience regarding particular publication in which readers engage themselves to read about the titles of heat magazine. The focus of the study was to analyze the importance of star fashions and celebrity gossips for the female readers. A focus group study was conducted form regular subscribers of the magazine and results indicated that their male friends considered the magazine as unworthy while female showed

a great deal of interest while reading and commenting on heat magazine's star fashion and celebrity gossips part.

On the scrutinizing the predictability of Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) Griffith, Aruguete, Edman, Green, and McCutcheon (2013) measured the reliability of a scale on different occasions within approximately three months and developed an hypothesis that attitudes of the people about the celebrities remain the same over time. The results of the study confirmed the hypothesis and reliability of CAS was attained in relation with previous studies as well.

While implying quasi-experiment as the method of the study, Apejoye (2013) examined the purchase intension of university students after getting the influence from celebrity endorsed advertisements. The projection of two advertisements of same product was used with one having the celebrity in it and the second without celebrity. The results indicated that there is great deal of influence on the students for the ad that represented the celebrity. Therefore, researcher recommends that image of celebrity is closely related with endorsement of the product.

In another study, the linkage of news related to immoral behavior of a celebrity and its connection with reaction of respondents has been viewed. In this regard, Jiang et al. (2011) experimented with the scandalous news about a famous celebrity as immoral behavior and reaction of the respondents about the news if that celebrity shows or does not show the actions in form of evidences that the person is committed to the values deemed to be the culture representative of that society. The hypothesis of the

study was that a cultural representative who is involved in a scandal can reduce the enormity of the people if he or she persuade or reassure them his or her commitment values. The results indicated that in order to alleviate the negative emotions, the scandalous person should be already a cultural symbol pertaining to be committed on moral deeds and this strategy can reduce the damage caused by the scandal.

There are countless studies upon the examination of negative information about a celebrity and its relationship in decreasing or increasing tendency of purchasing an endorsed product by the same celebrity. White (2009) examined the reverse relationship of the celebrity endorsement and negative information about the advertisement of a particular brand and at the same time, the negative information about the celebrity and its relationship with brand endorsement advertisement. A group of two types of subjects were recruited to experiment the study. The results indicated that transference in effects on subject was alleviated when respondents were exposed to negative information about the brand and effects of negative celebrity endorsed brand had more impact on the subjects.

Towards a new dimension of celebrity endorsement and consumer's high or low commitment with the brand, Um (2013) explored it with dispositional and situational attributes that consumer consign if it has negative information about the celebrity. For this purpose, researcher 90 respondents were taken as control group and 219 were as experimental group. The findings of the study revealed that consumers who make dispositional attributes tend to be more negatively judgmental about the endorsed brand

than those respondents who make situational attributes. Moreover, it was analyzed that a favorable attitude towards purchasing a brand has been viewed by those consumers who were more committed towards the brand. Graham, Jackson, & Lee (2014) concluded through a research study that male consumer's purchase intensions tend to get effect when it was measured with some association that were developed with their favorite athlete. The main focus of the study was to view the media portyal about the athlete endorser. Reaction towards the product and its relation with male athlete was compared. This study concluded that athlete with positive reputation were endorsed with the product at the time of purchasing intension of the brand.

McCutcheon (2002) has defined different levels of celebrity worship phenomena. The survey represented the worship level is more associated with music artists and sports person. The highest level of worship represents the individual identification with the celebrity's success and failure. Another level with same intensity is viewed in form of obsessive or extreme behavior. The lowest levels were measured as the levels in which persons just talk, listen, read or watch about that celebrity only with minimized effects of obsession.

On the account of associating different variables together, Spitzberg (2007) analyzed the association between parasocial affinity and worshiping the celebrity, entertainment needs, media connectedness and obsessive celebrity pursuits activities. The findings disclosed that a minor celebrity can get the attention of the audience even if the media does not pay enough consideration on

that celebrity. There was not measured any difference on gender base discrepancies. Further, it was revealed upon researcher that for prediction of intense fans behaviors the developed worship scale was seemed as reliable. On the same side, Lomore (2001) has measured the influence on the level of self-worth and sense of identity of youngsters who tend to associate themselves with their favorite personalities. The researcher found that only 15% of the celebrity idols were female. Work ethics and morality has been viewed being the top characters that respondents learned from their favorite celebrities and 58. 7% of the respondents admitted that they have changed their beliefs and attitudes after getting influence from their idols.

This study has developed the associations among different variables of increment in affiliations in form of liking or disliking the favorite celebrity of the readers and its interrelation with scandalous news of that celebrity.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based upon two theoretical grounds. One is Elaboration Likelihood Model that illustrates that people tend to associate their feelings with specific celebrity and develop their liking and disliking with them. This even leads people towards exploring their favorite celebrities' lives. The other theory is framing that is applied on this study because it tends to explore the ways in which media project these celebrities. The projection can be seen through structure, presentation and angle of the news about that celebrity. This framing leads the people towards exploring the follow-ups regarding their favorite celebrity.

Methodology

Research Questions of the study are;

RQ1: Do the readers show interest in reading the follow ups of celebrity's scandalous news?

RQ2: Do the scandalous news makes celebrities more famous among readers?

RQ3: Do the readers change their liking and disliking after reading celebrity's scandalous news?

RQ4: Do different genders react differently on their favorite celebrity's scandalous news?

Method

In this study, researcher used survey analysis to analyze the scandalous news of celebrities and its relation with exploring the influence on affiliations of newspaper readers. The questionnaire comprised on 13 close ended questions.

Sample

420 students have been taken from undergraduate and post graduate level studying in Punjab University, Lahore. Sampling techniques used for the study is convenient sampling and number of female respondents are more than male respondents. 290 female respondents and 128 male respondents have been taken for the study.

Operationalization of key terms

Readers

Readers are male and female students of undergraduate and post graduate level from University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Celebrities

Celebrities are national and international famous people from sports, politics, showbiz and social work.

Scandalous news

It is news about celebrity's sex scandals, love affairs, secret marriages and disputes.

Impact

It is adopting the life style of a celebrity and any deviance in liking or disliking the affiliated celebrity after reading scandalous news about him/her by the reader.
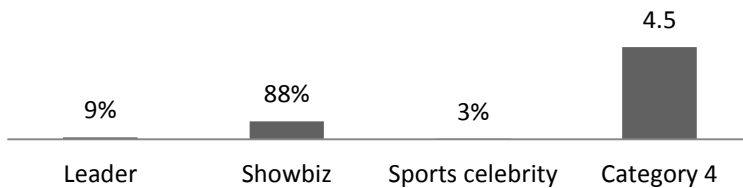
Results and Interpretation

(Categories are A, B, C and D)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 65 respondents, B= 155 respondents, C= 137 respondents, D= 73 respondents
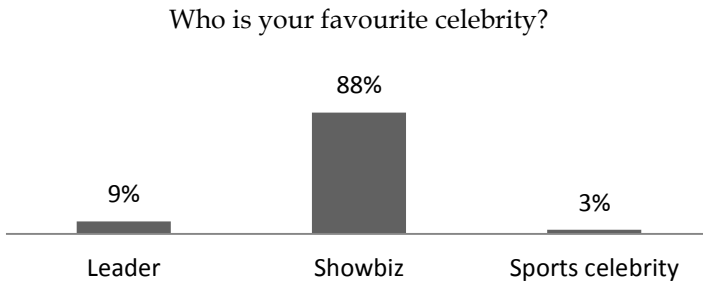
And in terms of percentage:

Figure 1.1: Reasons for reading scandalous news

Out of 420 respondents, 10 respondents haven't given the answer. The answers given by respondents are divided into 3 categories depending on their nature i.e. political figure, showbiz and sports celebrity.

Political figure= 38 respondents, Showbiz= 370 respondents, Sports

celebrity= 13 respondents

Who is your favourite celebrity?

88%

9%

3%

Leader   Showbiz   Sports celebrity
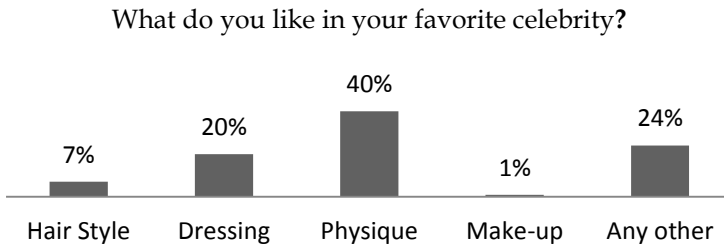
Figure 1.2: Area of field of favorite celebrity of the readers

(Categories A, B, C, D and E)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 30 respondents, B= 121 respondents, C= 172 respondents, D= 4 respondents, E= 103 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

What do you like in your favorite celebrity?

40%

20%

7%

1%

24%

Hair Style   Dressing   Physique   Make-up   Any other

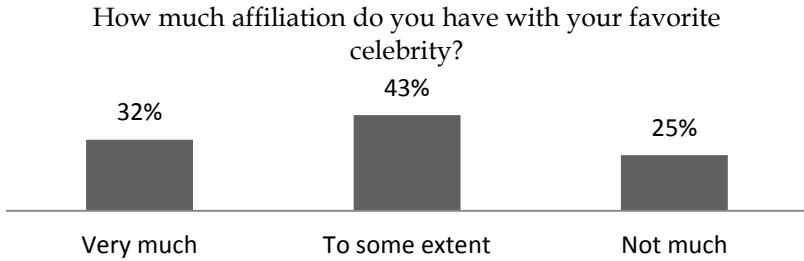*Figure 1.3: Reasons for liking the favorite celebrity*

(Categories A, B and C)

Out of 420 respondents, 3 respondents haven't given the answers.

The answers given by 427 respondents are as follows:

A= 137 respondents, B= 183 respondents, C= 107 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

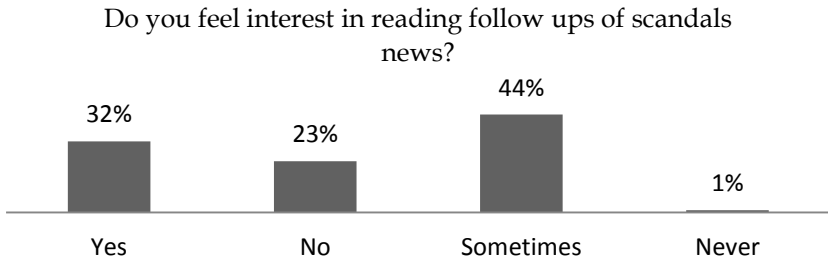How much affiliation do you have with your favorite celebrity?

Figure 1.4: Level of affiliation with favorite celebrity of the reader

(Categories A, B, C and D)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 138 respondents, B= 99 respondents, C= 189 respondents, D= 4 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

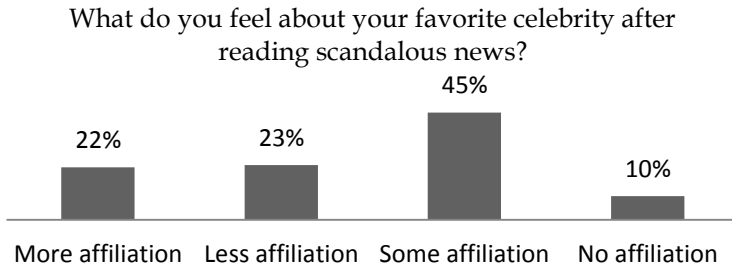Do you feel interest in reading follow ups of scandals news?

Figure 1.5: Interest in reading follow-ups of scandalous news

(Categories A, B, C and D)

Out of 420 respondents, 1 respondent hasn't given the answer. The answers given by 429 respondents are as follows:

A= 94 respondents, B= 99 respondents, C= 193 respondents, D= 43 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

What do you feel about your favorite celebrity after reading scandalous news?

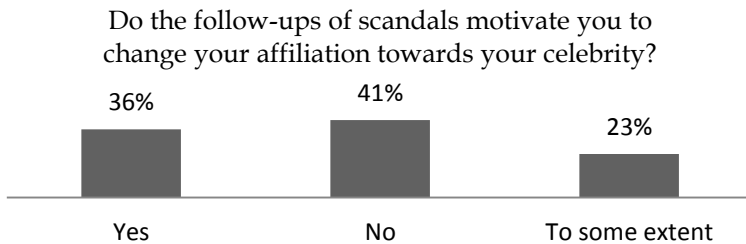|		45%	
22%	23%		
			10%
More affiliation	Less affiliation	Some affiliation	No affiliation

Figure 1.6: Feelings of readers after reading scandalous news about their favorite celebrity

(Categories A, B and C)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 155 respondents, B= 176 respondents, C= 99 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

Do the follow-ups of scandals motivate you to change your affiliation towards your celebrity?

	41%	
36%		23%
Yes	No	To some extent

Figure: 1.7 Reader's motivation to deviate affiliation after reading scandalous news about their favorite celebrity

(Categories A and B)

Out of 420 respondents, 7 respondents haven't given the answer.

The answers given by 423 respondents are as follows:

A= 144 respondents, B= 279 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

When do you change your affiliation towards your favorite celebrity?

66%

34%

After reading first scandal

After reading follow-ups

Figure: 1.8 Time of deviating affiliation towards favorite celebrity

(Categories A, B, C and D)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 65 respondents, B= 172 respondents, C= 159 respondents, D= 34 respondents
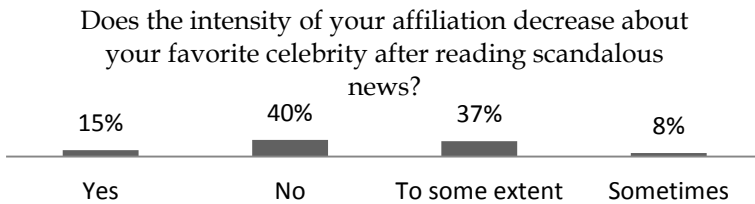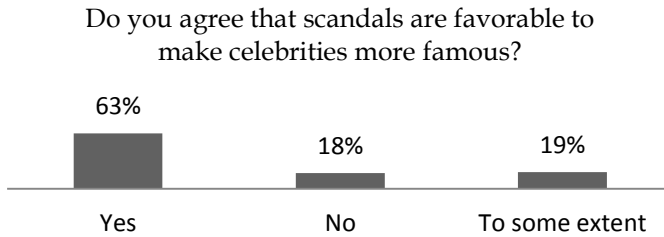
And in terms of percentage:

Does the intensity of your affiliation decrease about your favorite celebrity after reading scandalous news?

15%   40%   37%   8%

Yes   No   To some extent   Sometimes

Figure: 1.9 Level of decreasing the intensity of affiliation after scandalous news about favorite celebrity

(Categories A, B and C)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 271 respondents, B= 77 respondents, C= 82 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

Do you agree that scandals are favorable to make celebrities more famous?

63%

18%   19%

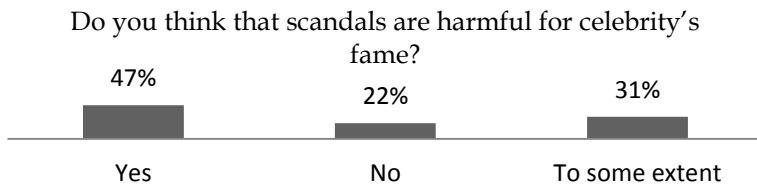Yes   No   To some extent

Figure: 1.10 acknowledging the utility of scandals by the readers for more fame of celebrities

(Categories A, B and C)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 202 respondents, B= 95 respondents, C= 133 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

Do you think that scandals are harmful for celebrity's fame?

47%   31%

22%

Yes   No   To some extent

Figure: 1.11 Reader's opinion considering the harmfulness of the scandalous news for celebrity's fame

(Categories A, B, C, D and E)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 26 respondents, B= 90 respondents, C= 34 respondents, D= 95 respondents, E= 185 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

Do you adopt your favorite celebrity's life style in
your real life?
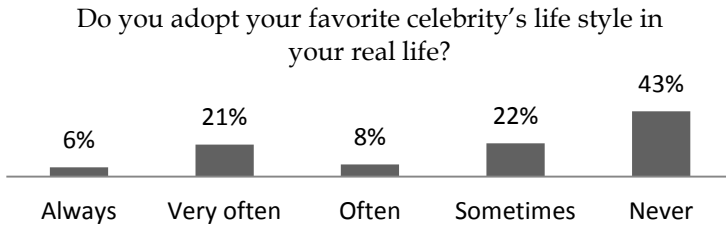
*Figure 1.12: Adopting favorite celebrity's life style in real life by the
readers*

(Categories A and B)

The answers given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 120 respondents, B= 310 respondents

And in terms of percentage:

Did you ever try to contact your favorite celebrity to
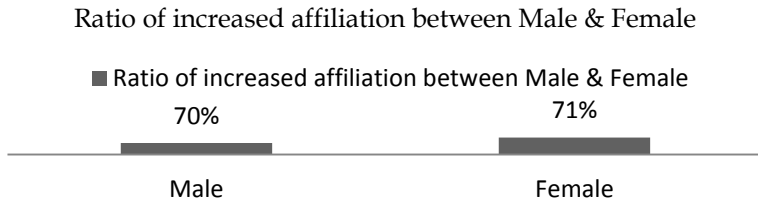know more about his/her scandal news?
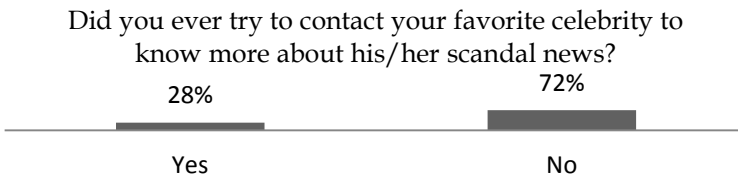
*Figure 1.13: Readers putting efforts to contact the celebrity for
exploring more about scandalous news*

The answer is given by 420 respondents are as follows:

A= 207 71% respondents, B= 89 70% respondents

Ratio of increased affiliation between Male & Female

■ Ratio of increased affiliation between Male & Female

70%   71%

Male   Female

Figure 1.14: Difference of ratio among Male and Female respondents in terms of affiliation with their favorite celebrity

Discussion

The purpose of the study is to apprehend the level of liking and disliking of newspaper readers after reading any scandalous news related to a celebrity. The study explored the behavior of those readers who tend to compose affiliations with any celebrity and their level increase or decrease with the passage of time after following the follow-ups of these scandals.

In this regard, on the account of distinguishing the reasons of reading scandalous news about the celebrity, most of the readers read such news just for the sake of entertainment and having fun. Least is those who read such news for discussing it with their fellows. On gender basis, 43% of the female and 21% of male read such news for the sake of entertainment. Women have been observed being more curious about reading such news.

For the question regarding area of field of reader's favorite celebrity, researcher came to know that most of the readers are interested in them because their profession is related to the showbiz. It reveals that most of the readers understanding regarding celebrities is that they belong to showbiz. Politicians and

social workers are not considered as celebrity by most of the people.

It has been noticed that physique of a celebrity is one of the prominent feature that is appreciated by most of the readers and this is the reason for having affiliation with that personality. Only 20% readers like celebrities for their dressing. Infrequent number of readers seems to have affiliations with their favorite celebrities while only 32% have enough tendencies to affiliate themselves with such personalities.

On gender basis, only 29% female were very much affiliated with their favorite celebrity, whereas 42% were affiliated to some extent and 28% were not much affiliated. On the other side, 36% male were very much affiliated, 41% with affiliation to some extent and 22% with not much affiliation. Overall, it shows male and female are affiliated to some extent with their favorite celebrity.

Most of the readers were interested the follow-ups of scandalous news sometimes with the percentage of 44% and only 32% were more interested in reading such follow-ups. After reading the follow-ups of such scandalous news, almost 45% of the readers feel the even some affiliation and only 10% of the readers tend to reduce their affiliation with their favorite celebrity. It shows most of the readers tend to have same affiliation and their level does not decrease nor increase with such news. In this scenario, 26% of the female and 28% of the male are less affiliated, 21% female and 21% of male are more affiliated, 44% of female and 36% of male's affiliation remain the same and 7% of female and 13% of male tend to show no affiliation after reading follow-ups of scandalous news. 41% of the readers have no impact on them and they feel no change

after reading the follow-ups. Their feelings remain the same. 66% of the readers have difference in their feelings after reading the first scandal and again reading follow-us have no impact on so many people.

Most of the readers think that their intensity of affiliation does not decrease after reading such scandalous news. 63% readers believe celebrities turn themselves towards the height of fame after connecting with such scandals. Most of the people believe that scandals are harmful for the celebrity's fame and very few with the percentage of 6% of the readers tend to adopt the lifestyle of celebrities and 43% of the readers do not prefer to follow the trends introduced by their favorite celebrities. Because readers do not have too much affiliation with their favorite celebrities, therefore, most of them never tried to contact them for inquiring more about the scandal. Upon observation, it has been viewed that 207 out of 292 female respondents, has admitted that their affiliation level with their favorite celebrity increases after any scandalous news while 89 out of 128 Male respondents claimed that their level of affiliation increases. In terms of percentage, this ratio is only 1% if we try to find out the difference between Male and Female.

Conclusion

The study concluded that most of the time, readers read scandalous news for the sake of entertainment and for discussing with their friends. Showbiz is the only field that is considered to be as the world of celebrities. Readers do not have any idea that celebrity can be from other fields as well. Furthermore, it seems that readers do not affiliate themselves with their favorite celebrity, but if they

affiliate themselves once, then their does not seem too much change in their interest. It means that there is no variation observed on reading scandalous news by the readers and its relation with level of decreasing the intensity of affiliation. Same is the case with reading the follow-ups of these scandals. It is also observed that such news can contribute to downplay the fame of celebrities with negative context. Affiliation level of liking or disliking the celebrity has no variation among the different genders.

Limitations and Future Research

The study entails the idea of exploring the decreasing or increasing level of affiliation in form of liking or disliking the favorite celebrities by the readers. But this study has few limitations. English newspapers can be added in the study to compare the results with Urdu newspaper. Further, in future, the study can explore the reasons of if the reading newspaper has been turned into viewing the celebrities on TV. Reader's level of awareness can be measured to find out as if the readers got more educated.

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