



## **Impact of Social Media Projection and Rejection on Celebrities of Popular Entertainment Industries in the Asian context**

**Sreedevi VK <sup>1</sup>, Dr. Divya Kumari KP <sup>2</sup>**

### **Abstract**

The combination of Mass Communication and Psychology talks about the relationship between Media and Human behavior in a larger context. It also stresses the influence and consequences of the interaction of the same. In other words, it is also a continuous loop in which the advent of technology and other developments in terms of Mass Communication reciprocates with the consumer's response which eventually stresses Media Psychology. The study focuses on Projection in terms of Media hype given to the individual and the traumatic impact which is Rejection in terms of being replaced by another person on an individual level. The first portion which talks about projection is the media's role in promoting the individual and thereby making him or her popular and also acknowledging and accepting the individual's capabilities in relation to publicity stunts. The second portion stresses post-publicity stunts, where the individual feels rejected and this mental trauma leads to depression and eventually leads to suicidal tendencies. In order to understand the consequences, the methodology used by the researcher is Case Study Analysis which would portray difficulties from different levels, which ranges from social, cultural, family, or psychological backgrounds that the individual faces during this period and the then percentage will educate us on how many individuals would be victims of this dangerous cycle. The researcher has also identified the importance of this subject as numerous voiceless people might not be able to communicate their obstacles and which leads to depression and further suicidal tendencies.

*Keywords:* Projection, Personal traumatic experience, Individual rejection, Depression

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<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Department of Media Studies, School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, REVA University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, email: [sreedevi13.vk@gmail.com](mailto:sreedevi13.vk@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, REVA University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, email: [divyakumari.kp@reva.edu.in](mailto:divyakumari.kp@reva.edu.in)

## **Introduction**

Human life from time immemorial has countless attributions and nuances relating to human psychology and the related tones of association in every domain of humankind. With the advancement of technology and media, the discussion has received enormous opportunities and scope ranging from psychological facades to media bearings that enable a discourse towards the current scenario of cyber culture and its impact on humanity and individuals in particular. The scope of having an interdisciplinary research on both the arenas offers an array of opportunities towards the new discourses and innovations arising in these fields. The interdisciplinary nature of the study always keeps an eye on both the disciplines and seeks to create a combined result in which the understanding of an individual's mental adaptability to the recent trends in the cyber world becomes a matter of dispute and a question of concern.

Media progressions of the current scenario always come up with innovations that ensure a swift transformation in the understanding of the influence and impact played by the same to create a culture of communication in the audio-visual world. This changing and challenging culture of the cyber world influences the entertainment industry with unprecedented results with positive and negative impacts. Creation of a celebrity figure and the tarnishing of celebrity fame are part of the tendencies of objectification in a consumerist society that entails a cyber culture of fake identities and anonymities. On the one hand, the stakeholders of the entertainment industry optimize the chances and choices offered by the cyber world to be projected in the mainstream and the limelight. And on the other side, it always leaves a vacuum of depression causing continuous rejection after a particular timeline where the prominence declines with the creation of substitutes. The traumatic experience of frequent rejections offers the candidate continuous episodes of depression and the feelings of unwantedness. This feeling of worthlessness often generates emotional instability that plays a major influence on the cognitive elements of every

celebrity-figure-in-decline with a tendency of denialism impacting in the extremities including toxication, abuses and even the thoughts of ending one's own life (Schreiner, 2015).

At the juncture of media promotion and the publicity stunt, the candidate always ends up in the creation of a pseudo identity of projected features and exaggerated iconism for survival amidst the increasing demands of the entertainment industry. Being in the state of media projection and promotion would offer satisfaction, happiness, prosperity, and personal growth to popular figures in their respective spaces. But at the same time the recent developments and trends in the entertainment industry initiate new discussions on the subsequent state of rejection that follow many of the celebrity figures after their peak time of popularity. Great dreams of such celebrities include passion, fame, money and so on. Similarly, the business magnates of the production field also come up with other business motives or vested interests in promoting the popularity of different celebrities over a particular period of time. Often the declining stage of popularity begins at the moment where the interests of the celebrities and the investors of the industry drift apart.

Unexpected news about the untimely demise of the celebrities from the entertainment industry across the globe offer mental shock to the audience with a puzzled state of mind about the projected sophistication of the industry. Some of the famous celebrities end up in the world of drugs, others with serious psychological disorders and others forcing their own death, unable to continue supporting the suffering they hide inside them. The cases of celebrities who untimely end their lives tragically become a trend-like situation in the recent scenario. Race for fame and popularity always have the other side too (Tommy, 2020).

## **Objectives**

- To assess the impact of Media Projection given to celebrities through Social Media.
- To understand the consequences of Social Media Rejection faced by celebrities.
- To examine the traumatic impact of individual rejection and the associated depression that leads to extremities.

## **Methodology**

This paper progresses as a qualitative study using nuances from the interdisciplinary context of Media and Psychology with the theoretical framework of Beck's Theory, through which the researcher aims to assess the impact of media projection and media rejection faced by the celebrities in the popular entertainment industries of Asian context with special reference to Korea, China and India with random sampling of case studies. Beck's Theory emphasizes on the three mechanisms which he thinks is responsible for Depression and these include Cognitive Triad, Negative Self Schemas and Errors in Logic. Here, the individual himself/herself thinks themselves to be low, helpless, inadequate etc. They interpret events as obstacles and consider the entire situation to be negative, that is feeling negative about Self, negative about the World and negative about this Future and this would eventually lead to depression and other extreme scenarios.

## **Findings and Analysis**

Based on research conducted in 2014 by Professor Dianna Kenny, a psychology professor at the University of Sydney, it was found that famous musicians and rock stars have a significantly higher likelihood of dying from unnatural causes compared to the general population. The study examined 12,665 individuals from the music industry who passed away between 1950 and June 2014. The research revealed that the risk of unnatural deaths among musicians and rock stars is five to 10 times greater than that of the general population. Furthermore, it was observed that pop and rock stars tend to have a life expectancy that is up to 25 years shorter than that of the average person.

Additionally, a survey conducted in 2010 by health.com indicated that individuals working in the arts, including musicians, ranked fifth among ten groups most susceptible to experiencing depression. Approximately nine percent of those surveyed reported experiencing a major depressive episode within the previous year. According to Yau's 2018 article, Psychologist Candice Lam, the Founder of Mind Care, notes that her patients experience a range of mental disorders that go beyond what ordinary individuals typically encounter. These conditions include panic attacks, difficulty sleeping, aggressive episodes, substance abuse, eating disorders, thoughts of suicide, addiction to sex, and engaging in unconventional or aberrant sexual behavior, among others. Lam's observation highlights the significant psychological burdens faced by her patients. (Yau, 2018).

Celebrities from different entertainment industries from Asian context have opened up about their personal realm of struggles with mental health in the recent decade. Many have bravely admitted living with issues ranging from the anxiety of expectations and projected images to depressive thoughts of rejection and death. In one of his public addresses former WHO

Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus observed: “Despite progress, one person still dies every 40 seconds from suicide; Every death is a tragedy for family, friends and colleagues. Yet suicides are preventable. We call on all countries to incorporate proven suicide prevention strategies into national health and education programmes in a sustainable way”(WHO, 2019).

The case study analysis of three randomly selected case studies from three different popular entertainment industries in the Asian context reveals the consequences of popularity race and the associated impacts of social media projection and rejection. The social media campaigning for the creation of stardom often takes a u-turn in the later stages where the candidates become victims of power politics, negative criticisms, business motives and denial of chances. The feeling of unworthiness caused by greater expectations and rejections often takes the candidates to alienation and depression. The following case studies prove the different scenario existing in the entertainment industries across the globe, especially in the popular industries of the Asian arena.

### **Korean Context**

The case study analysis of Kim Jong-hyun, the main vocalist of SHINee- one of the K-Pop bands, who committed suicide, discloses the gravity of their struggles and lives in the public eye. The multibillion-won K-Pop and K-Drama industries of South Korea get a critical spotlight on various hidden truths that are veiled under the power politics and unhealthy competitions prevalent in these industries where some artists are crushed under depression and subsequent consequences including ending one’s own life. In his death note Jonghyun writes, “I’m broken from the inside. The depression that has slowly eaten away at me has finally

consumed me, and I couldn't beat it." Onstage, K-pop acts exude confidence and smiles, but many, including Jonghyun, have openly admitted to experiencing immense stress and depression. Jonghyun's public confession on a local TV program shed light on the harsh reality he faces, where discussing his emotions becomes difficult due to the fear of public judgment and the absence of trustworthy individuals in his life. The mainstream entertainment industry showcases a paradox where the allure of fame and the pressures of survival can have detrimental effects. Celebrities who crave public attention often find themselves vulnerable to mental struggles and tendencies towards depression. Dr. Kim Byung-soo, a psychiatrist at Asan Medical Center in South Korea who treats several celebrity patients, has observed that insecure emotional states and a fractured sense of identity are significant contributors to their recurring depression. (Dam-young, 2017).

The demanding nature of the South Korean entertainment industry deprives young candidates of their families and relationships. The unique nature of K-pop stardom involves the signing of contracts with one of the entertainment giants of South Korea including YG, JYP, and SM Entertainment. This often turns up as a burden for the young stars as they are alienated from privacy and personal freedom. The Fair Trade Commission of South Korea has come up with strict measures to monitor the so-called 'slave contracts' offered by the entertainment companies. Even after the adoption of stringent measures, the companies find loopholes in the guidelines and impose indirect control over the candidates which leads to an unofficial ban on their chances and performances that subsequently take them to helpless mental struggles. These mental struggles offer them episodes of mental trauma including depression and make them find other alternative solutions including drugs and even ending their lives.

## **Chinese Context**

Chinese entertainment companies are very particular about learning from the successes of the K-pop and K-drama industries and improve their own fabrications. Chinese production studios view Korean TV drama production as a significant source of inspiration and guidance, as stated by Piao's research in 2008. Furthermore, studies examining the production and promotion of K-pop idols, Korean variety shows, K-pop music, and Korean films highlight their influential role in shaping the strategies and advancements of Chinese entertainment conglomerates. These research findings indicate that Chinese companies look to the Korean entertainment industry as a reference for growth and improvement, seeking to incorporate successful elements and approaches into their own endeavors. (Meicheng, 2022).

In the Chinese context the confession made by TVB actor Louis Cheung is an example of struggles associated with expectation and competition in the industry. He has been married to Canto-pop queen Kay Tse since 2007, but her swift upsurge to fame during their engagement apparently damaged Cheung's career with destructive criticism from the fans of Kay Tse. In a 2015 talk show, Cheung confessed that he used to be plagued by depression over negative comments made by Tse's fans, since she earned more money than he did. He was labelled "soft rice king", which means a kept man, because of the difference in their financial standings. They even addressed him as incompetent and a useless husband that even made him to think about suicide (Cam, 2021).

## **Indian Context**

The untimely demise of Sushant Singh Rajput, a popular young actor in Bollywood, has shed light on the challenges faced by individuals working in the Indian film industry. This tragic



event has not only highlighted the glamorous facade of the entertainment industry but also drawn attention to the underlying vulnerabilities. One specific aspect that has garnered significant focus is mental health, which is frequently stigmatized or misunderstood in India. Within the entertainment industry, renowned actors and directors encounter unique pressures, including difficulties in seeking help or support. Psychiatrist Dr. Dayal Mirchandani reveals that many of his celebrity clients express the need for home visits for therapy sessions, emphasizing the limitations they face in reaching out for assistance. “There is a pressure to keep up appearances, coupled with very little stability. You could be in a good position one day and then be nowhere the next,” he says. Bollywood actors also face a ticking clock, with a relatively short window to achieve success, which makes it an intensely competitive industry. The wide reach of social media has added to the feeling of living under constant scrutiny, says Amit Behl, film and TV actor. “It’s like always being on high alert.” Actor Amit Behl feels social media has put actors under constant scrutiny (Khan, 2020).

All three above-mentioned case studies are random representations of the different scenarios common to all entertainment industries, particularly to the Asian context. The impact of media projection and media rejection faced by celebrities in the popular entertainment industries of Asian contexts like Korea, China, and India escalates beyond the imagination. Beck’s theory emphasizes the three mechanisms which he thinks are responsible for Depression and these include Cognitive Triad, Negative Self Schemas, and Errors in Logic. Here, the individual himself/herself thinks themselves to be low, helpless, inadequate etc. They interpret events as obstacles and consider the entire situation to be negative, that is feeling negative about the Self, negative about the World, and negative about the future and this would eventually lead to depression and other extreme scenarios. In the first instance, the power politics and unhealthy competition prevalent in the Korean entertainment industry crush the artists into depression and following severities including

ending one's own life as in the case of Kim Jong-hyun who committed suicide. The application of Beck's theory suggests that the celebrity candidate was unable to handle the stress of the competitive industry and had episodes of depression and feelings of inadequacy that made him end his life.

In the second example, the Chinese entertainment industry has a similar situation where the stardom creation and the dismantling of the same occur with the motives of the companies. The impact of social media promotion and the criticisms are far beyond the mental stability of celebrities. The element of comparison often spoils the goodwill of the celebrity even with his/her own partners and it often goes beyond gender differences. The struggles associated with expectation and competition in the industry even put the financial standings of the couples in the industry which make the lowest income earner to think with an inferiority complex. As Beck's theory suggests, such experiences make celebrities think about their own incompetence which in turn put them into low self-esteem and negativities with depression.

The third case study from the relatively important context of Bollywood from India further suggests the impact of constant social media scrutiny and the setbacks in the careers of Bollywood actors that make them think about 'extreme solutions' in the intensely competitive industry. In the case of Sushant Singh Rajput, the nuances suggested by Beck's theory including the negatives about the Self, the negatives about the World, and the negatives about the future bring them to a state of helplessness and depression which end up in extreme decisions from such celebrities.

## **Conclusion**

Through this study, the researcher has made an attempt to understand the impact of Media Projection given to celebrities through Social Media. The stakeholders of the entertainment industry optimize the chances and choices offered by the cyber world to be projected in the mainstream and the limelight. The celebrities are exposed professionally and personally in order to cater to the company's needs and to increase their value amidst the audience.

The study has also understood the consequences of Social Media Rejection faced by the celebrities, as discussed in the findings, the researcher underwent Case Study Analysis by choosing three prominent entertainment industries and thereby, applying the case studies to Beck's Theory which talks about the three mechanisms which he thinks is responsible for Depression and these include Cognitive Triad, Negative Self Schemas and Errors in Logic. Here, the individual himself/herself thinks themselves to be low, helpless, inadequate etc. They interpret events as obstacles and consider the entire situation to be negative, that is feeling negative about Self, negative about the World and negative about this Future and this would eventually lead to depression and other extreme scenarios. With relation to this application, the researcher has understood the various levels of obstacles that the celebrities face while in the entertainment industry.

Besides these, the researcher has also randomly selected case studies from three different popular entertainment industries in the Asian context revealing the consequences of popularity, fame and the associated impacts of social media projection, rejection and also to examine the traumatic impact of individual rejection and the associated depression that leads to extremities. When studied about the Korean Context, the power politics and unhealthy competition prevalent in the Korean entertainment industry depresses the artists into following severities including ending one's own life and which directly relates to the professional context, when

studied about the Chinese context, the element of comparison often spoils the goodwill of the celebrity even with his/her own partners and it often goes beyond gender differences and which is directly proportional to the obstacles faced by the celebrity from his/her own personal space. When studied about the Indian context, the impact of constant social media scrutiny and the setbacks in the careers of Bollywood actors that make them think about 'extreme solutions' in the intensely competitive industry has led to drastic decisions which end their own life.

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