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Celebrities as human brands: An inquiry on stakeholder-actor co-creation of brand identities

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the co-creation of human brands exemplified by celebrities in a stakeholder-actor approach. Combining theoretical frameworks of brand identity co-creation and stakeholder paradigms, demonstrates how human brand identities co-create by multiple stakeholder-actors who have resources and incentives in the activities that make up an enterprise of a human brand, including the celebrities themselves, consumer-fans, and business entities. By utilizing observational, archival netnographic data from popular social media platforms, four exemplars of celebrity identities demonstrate the co-creation of human brands. Findings illustrate key stakeholder-actors' participation in the co-creation process as well as sociocultural codes, including social construction and negotiation of identities, parasocialization, influence projection, legitimization, and utilization of human brand identities. These human brand identity dynamics advance a stakeholder-actor paradigm of brand co-creation that adapts to the predominant consumer culture and human ideals that surround the celebrity. Results inform implications and future research on celebrity brand marketing management and co-creation.

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1. Introduction

Celebrities are human brands – their performances on- and off-stage, off- and online, public or private, are marketing and branding exercises. Their everyday life choices and values are intrinsically private, but performed in public. These actions create brands and branding identities. Consequently, the human brand identities sell product brands through endorsements and persuasions by giving personality qualities to inanimate brands; and they encourage consumption through being an idealized consumer and a commodity vessel (Holmes & Redmond, 2014).

This paper extends “human brands” as “any well-known persona who is the subject of marketing communication efforts” (Thomson, 2006, p. 104) by analyzing their identities as a “multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities” (Jenkins, 2014, p. 5). The recent development in branding literature shifts attention from merely focusing on brand image or brand differentiation to include brand identity in the total brand equity (Keller, 2003). The early definition of brand identity (Aaker, 1996) describes the phenomena as a unique set of brand associations that brand strategists aspire to create or maintain. Combining human brand and identities definitions support examining

celebrity's human brand identity as a multi-dimensional classification and mapping of human concepts (“who they are, and who they are seen to be... and who they are in our lives”, Jenkins, 2014, p. 3) because both individuals and community members are relevant to marketing efforts. Human brand identities can take place as collective, collaborative, and performative (von Wallpach, Voyer, Kastanakis, & Mühlbacher, 2016) aspects of a social co-creation process involving multiple providers of identity as stipulated by the service-dominant (SD) logic and adopted by the evolving brand logic (Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009). Complementarily, the stakeholder paradigm in co-creation is inherently compatible within the framework of human brand identity co-creation process—a set of interrelationships among groups that have a stake in the activities that make up a business. In this case, a celebrity human brand identity forms by co-creation.

Celebrity sponsorship and social media advertising serve as a context of marketing communication to examine how different stakeholders – advertisers, press, talent management, broadcast networks, consumers/fans, and celebrities themselves –gather together in an assemblage of service in co-creating human brand identities. In turn, these communications provide service back to these stakeholders' own incentives. Social media's advent marks a rich avenue of social reality. These outlets for co-creation serve as discursive and dynamic outlets for celebrity stakeholders to create, re-create, persuade, and negotiate identities for social and economic purposes (Boffard, 2014; Burgess & Green, 2009). This paper explores social media's role influencing the co-creation processes involving celebrity human brand

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identities among stakeholder-actors. The hybrid term “stakeholder-actor” refers to the combined functions of a stakeholder who can affect and is affected (Freeman, 1984) by the objectives of the celebrity human brand, and an “actor” who is not strictly a stakeholder (cf. stakeholder theory criteria) but a more sociological sense having the agency according to structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) and actor-network theory (Latour, 1988).

The present study seeks to understand a set of interrelationships among parties that have a win-win stake in the activities that make up celebrity human brand identity co-creation. Exploring co-creation under the lens of the SD logic, this study demonstrates that service exchanges and stakeholders' roles in the co-creation process are dynamic in adaptive, identity co-creating service systems, and founded in prevailing consumer culture (Gyrd-Jones & Kornum, 2013) mirrored in the social media interaction.

1.1. Stakeholder view in co-creating celebrity human-brand identities

Modern business roles such as publicists, journalists, writers, and other cultural intermediaries create the human-brand identity in celebrities (Marshall, 2006). Moreover, the brand co-creation happens, together with the televised shows and recordings, in interviews, performances, and social media interactions (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007). Ultimately, the entertainment and advertising industries as well as other organizations that profit and benefit from celebrities carefully monitor the performance outcomes of celebrity brand identities. Finally, celebrities as stakeholders (Schroeder, 2005) potentially receive the biggest gains, both financially and in terms of their intangible image and reputation. In other words, the ownerships, connection, and interactions of these stakeholders result to co-creations of human brand identities because each group's motivations and gains differ as a balanced centrality with key actors (Gummesson, 2008).

Stakeholder theory explains these ownerships, connection, and interactions among stakeholders of human brands in creating value for their varying objectives (Freeman, 1984). From the evolving paradigms on stakeholder theory, the overall idea still holds that a business, or in this context, the identity co-creation process is a set of interrelationships among groups who have a stake in the activities that make up a business. In this case, co-creation influences the celebrity brand identity.

Arguably, celebrity human brand identity co-creation is a social assemblage of a web of actors both humans (i.e., celebrities, consumers, fans, and other spectators) and ‘non-humans’ including organizations and service entities (i.e., media outfits and commercial firms). Successful co-creation of human brands depends upon the translation of social interaction and participation. Actor-network theory provides a theoretical backdrop explaining how a social project such as a celebrity human brand identity is a collaboration of all actors, both human and non-humans (i.e., organizations, businesses). Continuous sociological translations of the material-semiotic elements surrounding the project (human brand identity) achieve durability (Callon & Latour, 1992). Social arrangements, relational effects, and translations from other actor-networks (chains of translations) make the focal project sustainable. Actor-network theory (ANT), the “sociology of translations,” describes the mechanics of actors and their power to construct and maintain a network that involves human and nonhuman actor forces (Callon, 1986; Law, 1992). ANT describes how heterogeneous networks including people, organizations, agents, machines, and other objects transform and translate into a common project (Law, 1991). This theory explores how these networks evolve. This sociological translation involves “all the negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence, thanks to which an actor or force takes on... authority to speak or act on behalf of another actor or force” (Callon & Latour, 1981, p. 279). Social creation and recreation create the processes for a successful project.

Research gaps and calls for theory development support a need to study how the social media co-creation process affects human brand

identities. The present study seeks to broaden the current thought of service exchange and identity co-creation process by understanding a set of interrelationships among parties that desire a win-win stake. In this case, the desired outcome is a positive and congruent celebrity human brand identity co-creation developing in social media terrain. To explicate this theoretical development proposition, this study explores two research questions. First, how does human brand identity co-creation happen in a multi-stakeholder-actor approach? Further, what sociocultural codes guide stakeholders in their co-creation of celebrity human-brand identities?

2. Methods

Netnography (or internet ethnography) is a research technique that explores how social media interactions form the human brand identities among celebrities involving different stakeholders (Kozinets, 2015). Netnography includes a specific set of related data collection, analysis, ethical, and representational research practices, where a significant amount of the data collected and participant-observational research conducted originates and manifests through digital communication data. This study explores the Philippines' celebrity culture both as a scholar and as part of the audience's culture (i.e., ‘autoethnography’, cf. Holmes, Ralph, & Redmond, 2015) by observing how different social media actors (i.e., stakeholders) interact, reformulate, and stabilize celebrity human brands identities. The researcher is a real-time, unobtrusive observant on Facebook and Twitter social media interactions, while an active YouTube user and viewer. This real-time observational research tool reflexively makes the researcher to record both an emic (insider) and an etic (outsider) point of views. Archival netnographic data provide a cultural baseline for analysis, providing a large amount of data. Categories for interpretation emerge from ground up (Kozinets, 2015). Through the Internet, celebrities themselves or the agents that handle them, outside of the corporate streams, directly negotiate their fame and brand presentation. The flow of negotiation is complex that allows for media mobility, interactivity, and achievability of past records of the interactions, akin to an online public diary (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). Online brand communities have become acceptable and stable avenues for rich resources of brand creations (Vallaster & von Wallpach, 2013). This evolution occurs because a natural, qualitatively data-rich reservoir provides an unparalleled platform in a less restrictive, realistic, and engaging online presentations of identities, authenticity, power, and value (Vallaster & von Wallpach, 2013). This technique allows documenting and analyzing the co-creating parties in their natural environments. Prior studies demonstrate netnography's reliability as a brand research tool (Giesler, 2006).

Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were selected for data collection. These three social media platforms are among the most popular participatory resources of co-creation inputs from stakeholders. A two-week frame of social media interactions observations among the four celebrity exemplars was set for Facebook and Twitter platforms from March 11–25, 2015. This short timeframe provides a rich archival dataset for the two social media for their active usage and salience among users. ‘Official’ Facebook and Twitter accounts of the celebrity exemplars served as data touchpoints from where account information, posts, and comments were extracted. Meanwhile, a five-year data timeframe from March 2011 to March 2015 was chosen for YouTube video posts from different sources and comments elicited among the viewers. Topics vary accordingly, illustrating how various stakeholders apparently participate in the celebrity identity co-creation. In total, the social media archive data sample comprise of 304 total posts with 34,767 aggregated comments, including ‘retweets’ on Twitter. Apparently, these social media outlets have become discursive and dynamic outlets for celebrity stakeholders to create, re-create, persuade, and negotiate identities for social and economic purposes (Burgess & Green, 2009).

3. Findings

This section presents the findings illuminated from the analytical efforts into two major parts: (1) analysis of the human brand stakeholder-actor co-creation process in the four cases of celebrities; and (2) examination of sociocultural codes that facilitate stakeholders in their co-creation of the human brand identity. Stakeholders identified in this study play roles in the co-creation process through the explicit and implicit indicators of their involvement: participation, interaction, production, and consumption. In this study, co-creation follows social exchange including experiences, conversations, and interactions within stakeholders' brand communities.

3.1. Participants

The data collection method allows identification and classification of celebrity stakeholders. Both prior studies and data analysis helped classify celebrity stakeholders into three: focal, primary, and instrumental groups based on their roles as providers of co-creation service and stakes as beneficiaries of the co-creation.

3.1.1. Focal stakeholder-actor

Celebrities are animate identities who actively co-create their brands. In this study, their participation and interaction with the fans and consumers are apparent in the online communities. They are active agents of their own selves (Schroeder, 2005). Their use of language in their social media posts performs their human traits that await everyday reactions from the netizens. Celebrities as stakeholders structure themselves according to how an ordinary person should enact one's self. Thus, more connection can be built with the primary stakeholder – consumers.

3.1.2. Primary stakeholder-actor

Consumers see celebrity human brands as integral part of their lives. They feel social legitimacy to react, 'comment', express opinions to, and even eroticize celebrities. From the thousands of comments gathered in all social media platforms, consumers arguably are the most expressive, most free, and most active stakeholders in the co-creation of celebrity human brands. They willingly and ubiquitously form opinions, reactions, and involvement in the co-creation process. Their motivations may include intentional social actions such as participating in a group, and individual motivations determined by attitudes, behaviors, and emotions embedded in subjective norms and social identity (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002).

Fans and interconnected consumers who express enthusiasm and willingness to react the brand related posts are value creators and co-producers for the brand (Schau, Muñiz, & Arnould, 2009). Prior to the inherent value that these fans and celebrity-enthusiasts exhibit, brand identities are co-created through their socialization and interactions presented by the brand community. Social media changes the way celebrities interact with their fans. Parasocial interactions allow participants to receive greater gratification that create strong motivations for fans and consumers to become active community members (Frederick, Lim, Clavio, & Walsh, 2012), personal values and subjective well-being (Chia & Poo, 2009), and tribal innovations with celebrity affiliations (Hamilton & Hewer, 2010).

3.1.3. Instrumental stakeholders

Television networks, the press, advertisers, and talent management are some stakeholders who have business interests in celebrities. Participations in the co-creation are both distinct and similar. Role similarities include mediation between consumer-celebrity identity co-creation, and among other stakeholders. For example, ABS-CBN News features a Sharon Cuneta's new product endorsement contract; or Viva talent management regularly posts a Sarah Geronimo's behind-the-scenes footages of Sarah Geronimo's commercials.

These previously mentioned instrumental stakeholders are 'infomediaries' that influence the co-creation by adopting key identity issues of celebrities and influence other stakeholders (Deephouse & Heugens, 2009). Consumers indirectly attribute their source of knowledge about celebrities on these instrumental stakeholders, suggesting adoption and influence.

Distinctively, instrumental stakeholders' influences vary as consumers create inferences on the motivations and incentives of celebrities on their appearance on certain stakeholders. For example, consumers have a strong lay theory of Sharon Cuneta's economic objective when she transferred to another television network, posted on a YouTube news clip. Nevertheless, instrumental stakeholders act as infomediaries, sources and channels that facilitate co-creation process of human brand identities.

Resource integration in celebrity identities accomplishes brand identity co-creation for the integrating stakeholder to make the celebrity brand identity thrive sustaining relevance and viability (Vargo, Maglio, & Akaka, 2008). Also, resource integration creates forms of new resources that "could be transformed into a form of currency (social, political, and economic) for exchange with other actors" (Lusch & Vargo, 2014, p. 131).

Celebrities as stakeholders potentially gain social and economic benefits as they can realize their social influence among the public and other actors which benefit them economically. Because they actively co-create their own identities as manifested in the social media participation, celebrities also gain control of their human brand's identity resources. When celebrity human brand identities are successful both socially and economically over time, they satisfy the celebrities themselves, consumers, and the industry actors who have stakes in the co-created identity as a resource.

Fig. 1 illustrates the interrelationships among stakeholders of celebrity identity. The arrows show co-creation sub-processes that intersect the stakeholders in their participation and benefits in the celebrity identity co-creation.

3.2. The sociocultural codes in the co-creation process

This section describes these intersections and social translations among actors that make up the human brand identity co-creation. Additional examples of representative netnographic quotes are available at: <https://socialmediacocreation.wordpress.com>.

3.2.1. Negotiation and social construction

Human brand identities form through a collaborative (Holt, 2004), yet indeterminately orchestrated co-creation of human brand identities. These image emerge as stories and conversations about the celebrity collide. Stories and active engagement and participation by stakeholders are apparent in human brand identity co-creation. Interestingly, celebrities seemingly participate actively in the co-creation social project of their brand identity. For example, Manny Pacquiao's daily Twitter posts co-create his idealized identity. His followers see Pacquiao as a fighter for the country, God-fearing, and a man with norm-based wisdom. These posts manifest the active participation of Manny himself in co-creating his identity:

(1) "I will fight for the Filipinos!" (Celebrity Manny himself posts on Facebook, accompanied by his music video link. March 12, 2014). "I want to let people know there is God who can raise something from nothing. I owe everything to God. #MayPac (Manny's post on Twitter days before his boxing match. March 12, 2014).

Greater impact of an instrumental stakeholder's participation in the co-creation, however, may manifest from a more legitimate press or media content such as television news and documentaries. Biography channel, for instance, creates content of distinguished personalities across the globe, and eventually posts such content online. Arguably,

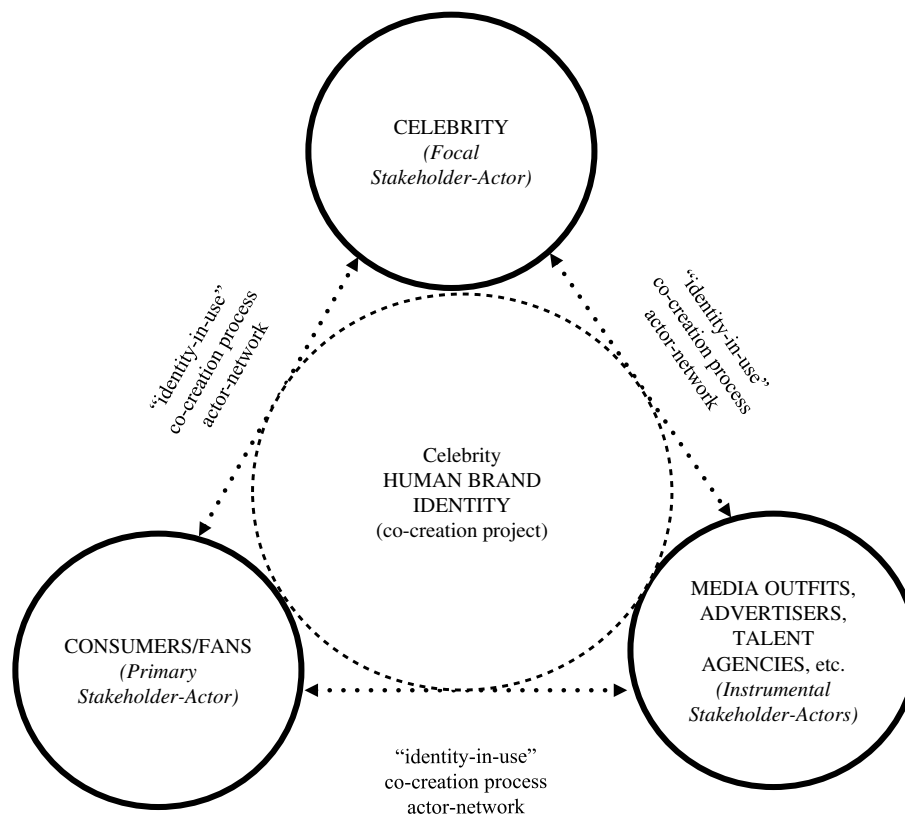


Fig. 1. Stakeholder-actor co-creation of human brand identity.

television content posted on social media makes more credible social construction and negotiation of brand identity through cultivation effects (Gerbner, 1998).

(4) “Emmanuel ‘Manny’ Dapidran Pacquiao, PHL (born December 17, 1978) is a Filipino professional boxer, basketball player, basketball coach, politician, actor, and singer...” (a YouTube posted *Biography* Channel 48-min documentary, <https://youtu.be/iPfCxOJYEok>)

This collective understanding of the celebrity’s identity constitutes the human brand identity validation process. Though several stories and narratives (i.e., resources) compose the overall identity, the celebrity’s identity serves as an essence of content and utility (“identity-in-use”) of the human brand according to the iterative nature of the stakeholder co-creation. Repetition and stakeholder responsiveness contribute to identity myth formation. In the example, the socially constructed and negotiated brand identity towards sports icon and politician Manny Pacquiao’s constitute his being a “modern national hero, aspirational, and mass icon and national idol” in his country. As Giddens (1991) notes, brand identities’ “becoming” is a result of social construction involved in their creation. Repeat interactions and negotiation with different actors cement these identities.

3.2.2. Utilization of human-brand identities

Reflexivity of identities means that dynamic, varying images of celebrities co-created as human brand identities depend on the context such as stage performances, product category nature, and creative design employed (Schroeder, 2005). Giddens’ (1991) conception of post-modern identities, self-identity presumes reflexive construction, and so are human brand identities, depending on the context at play. Such reflexive identities are strategically positioned to an overall utility of human brand identity.

One interesting example of this reflexivity mechanism is how celebrity brands differ in a multiple endorsement paradigm. Celebrities’

brand identities differ depending on product brand and commercial design. Brand identities are reflexive and contextual; however, they are pliable only to the extent that fits the individual’s range of constructed human identities. For example, Sarah Geronimo negotiates herself, framed by the advertisement, and arguably as directed by the advertiser, as a “sexy, pretty teenager with confidence to carry herself” in all situations (in a panty liner commercial), as “an elegant fine woman” (in shampoo and property development ads), as “a loving daughter” (in a pawnshop advertisement), as “a good singer and power belter” (cough syrup and karaoke advertisements), and as “a youth advocate” in a political campaign. Overall, stakeholders still see congruency underlying Sarah Geronimo’s human brand image. Her brand image remains consistent. People view Sarah as a good person, fine, and gentle, and a woman in strong moral fiber. Although human brands are reflexive and contextual, they remain stable and an overarching identity underlies such multiplicity of identity.

Identity reflexivity is co-created by stakeholders reflecting contexts and rhetorical strategies of the said contexts. Reflexivity is but a result of making human brands as “identities-in use” in the co-creation. In a deeper sense, reflexivity relies on the sociocultural norms and acceptable behaviors that the celebrity is able to showcase (resource to integrate) a priori to the production of meanings in the context that calls for reflexivity (Schroeder, 2005). Thus, a reflexive identity’s ability to utilize depends upon the social legitimacy the identities carry.

3.2.3. Legitimization

Legitimacy is a social fitness indicator, “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity (e.g., celebrity) are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions,” (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). Institutional theories (Scott, 2008) suggest social acceptability or legitimacy comes from cultural and normative institutions (along with regulatory). Human brands also undergo such legitimization process underlying normative and cultural fitness that are formed through collective

memory (Humphreys, 2010). These fitness indicators manifest through human brand identities in ways of talent/skill desirability, dominant social norms, shared values, national ideologies, and class-and-gender nuances.

Traditional definitions of a celebrity often include their ability to perform in their site-specific talent arena such as the television, concert halls, or movie theaters. This basic requirement still holds value for the celebrity human brands. Stakeholders' co-creation resources in (social media data) discourses are sizeable in encapsulating the remarkable celebrity skills.

For example, Sarah Geronimo is often cheered at her tasteful singing, Manny Pacquiao for his eventful boxing performances, Sharon Cuneta is remembered for her melody in the past decades, and Kris Aquino, though not known for any artistic talent, is ubiquitously trivialized in her own personal current affairs and gossips. Talents and skills may be a fundamental criterion to carry a cultural, social, and economic worth; however, other themes emerge to further legitimize the human brand in celebrities. For example, a country's reputable social media news organization, *Rappler.com*, publishes a video (linked in YouTube and Facebook) that features a new Disney project for Sarah Geronimo. This project implies that the celebrity has a talent worthy of attention from an international franchising company. The news organization describes the video with as an act of Sarah's genuine talent.

The way consumers identify, empathize, and interaction with celebrities are inclined to a national ideology and values such as national pride and courage, like the way they cheer for Manny Pacquiao:

(19) "The fighting pride of the Philippines! We are proud of our race! We fight and we will win!"

[(Translated, comment on a Facebook post)]

Another nuanced legitimacy among celebrity human brands is their gendered identities. Insights from the social media data indicate normative behaviors and social stereotyping among celebrities. The parasocial identities (i.e., illusionary intimacies) generally relate to celebrities who also carry a gendered personality. For example, Manny Pacquiao is an athlete, a hero, a provider, a *godfather*, an idol, an authority, and an aspiration. A YouTube documentary featuring Manny's life demonstrates how these gendered roles are exemplified.

(22) "In the Philippines, he first entered the ring as a sixteen year old weighing ninety-eight pounds with the goal of earning money to feed his family. Now, almost twenty-years later, when he fights, the country of 100 million people comes to a complete standstill to watch. The army and the rebels cease-fire. There are no cars in the street. There is zero crime. An entire country becomes united." (YouTube video description, https://youtu.be/Qqi_DVcSMPY)

Co-creation between the news organization and the celebrity suggest other mechanisms of legitimization come from the peripheral embodiment of celebrities' personal lives. Through embodiment of stakeholders' shared vision, dominant cultural ideology, and social moral imperatives, human brand identities are co-created and legitimized. Common contents of social and cultural legitimizations include being family and socially oriented, success-driven, morally inclined, projections of humility, sociability, and skillfulness. Interestingly, a culture's moral and religious facets are also standard criteria of human brand legitimacy.

3.2.4. Parasocialization

In the co-creation process, the relational mechanism and content enhance social interface for identification and "parasocialization" where social distances are reduced (So & Nabi, 2013). *Identification* refers to perceptions of similarities in self-identities (Bandura, 1986). *Parasocialization* refers to sense of social intimacy and relatedness (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Stakeholders engage in these social media *interactions* where conversations, modifications, and discussions of identities occur.

Beyond their skills and talents, many celebrities have higher parasocial identity value. Expressions of love, hatred, intimacy and interpersonal distances create gestalt human brands anchoring identity and identification. Unlike the United States, the celebrities on Philippine television are also the celebrities across media platforms such as films and in recording industries. Through these multi-media avenues for celebrities, the parasocial effects of television towards the celebrity human brand are carried over across audiences of/in different media. Thus, this scheme provides a bigger and richer venue for consumers and other stakeholders to construct, project, sustain, and co-create celebrity brand identities.

The representation and construal of celebrities as friends, family members, and other significant others are salient in social media data of this study. Most celebrities frame themselves as simple, ordinary, authentic and "real" human being as they are. For example, a television network, ABSCBN, engages stakeholders by attracting them to review previously aired television programs posted on YouTube.

(23) "Watch Sarah sing with her father; showing respect and love." [(translated, YouTube video description)]

The representation and construal of celebrities as friends, family members, and significant others are salient in social media data of this study. Often, celebrities frame themselves as simple, ordinary, authentic and average people. For example, Sharon Cuneta writes in her Twitter profile: "The one and only.-) Proud wife to Kiko, happy mommy to Kristina, Simone, Mariel & Miguel."

3.2.5. Projection of influence

This co-creation code refers to stakeholders' attributions and emphasis on social, cultural (e.g., role models and icons) and political (e.g., voting preferences and behaviors) economic (e.g., purchase behaviors) roles and influences of celebrities. The influence or power that celebrities possess is culturally rooted in the social world among the primary stakeholder consumers. Generally, the public views celebrities as people who have worked to the rationalization among audiences to give legitimate cultural value and meanings to the representations of these personalities have in their lives. Moreover, celebrities represent more than themselves. They evolve into personae or identities that are given heightened cultural significance in the social world (e.g., heroes, idols, or even villains). Finally, celebrities' cultural power comes from the subjectivities that audiences feel towards them as close affinities in social categories (e.g., friends, acquaintances). The activating power of human brands that translates words and images into behaviors or at least behavioral intentions are deeply ingrain into the relational capacity of the celebrity. Consumers express their behavioral intent to purchase a product a celebrity endorses as if the endorser is part of their social circle.

(28) "Sister (Ate) Sarah, you're so beautiful! And lovely long hair! Where can I buy this?"

[(Consumer comment to a shampoo commercial, posted on Facebook)]

This cultural power that stakeholders given to celebrities refers to the power of persuasion through ideas, cultures, and interpersonal politics, generally referring to culture and values of social entities that can employ persuasion in outward relationships to change attitudes and behaviors (McCracken, 1989). The celebrity endorsement literature confirms images that celebrities project serves as a source credibility, likeability, and attractiveness, have some behavioral influences on the consumers. Such behavioral effects from celebrities root from their human brands and the identification, relationship, and connection consumers can perceived towards them. In this study, manifestations of behavioral followings surfaced. The comments and reactions for each post by celebrities and other instrumental stakeholders suggest that the attraction that celebrity human brands radiate is worthy of consumers'

expressions of attitudes. The activating power of human brands that translates words and images into behaviors or at least behavioral intentions are deeply ingrained into the relational capacity of the celebrity. Consumers express their behavioral intent to purchase a product endorsed in celebrities in ways that they talk to a referent other in their social circle.

4. Conclusions

The stakeholder ecology works towards celebrity human identity co-creation in a mutually engaging and beneficial landscape of resource integrations. This co-creation process is a joint exchange of experiences, perceptions and insights that emanate from the stakeholders' incentives for participating in the process. The process is dynamic, adaptive, and yet simultaneous, undirected, and clustered across time and space. Both online in social media as an avenue of co-creation and offline through the traditional media consumptions deliver content. The overall nature and dynamics of social media interactions characterize the resource integration happening in this kind of brand identity co-creation.

Stakeholder participations play hand-in-hand through social interactions, engagement, and amplification of human brand identities through fast-paced, dynamically interconnected physical and virtual environments. Through the social media as an avenue of co-creation, human brand identities develop via a function of media experiences (with the celebrity on TV shows, films, and commercials), second-hand information (gossips, hearsays, and hand-me-down historical accounts), and even personal (face-to-face) encounters with the celebrities. Social media engagement enables all stakeholders in their mutually influencing inputs (Da Silveira, Lages, & Simões, 2013) to amplify such offline social encounters and further shape human brand identities.

Democracy-enabled co-creations are enabled by less strict, digitally engaging nature of social media, and the freedom of expression in the country of this study. Combining these forces of democratic environment, human brand identities in celebrities gain further incarnation of mythologies of previously regarded as distant superstars (Mosco, 2005). Stakeholders collaborate, converge, and become more grounded in their participation in identity meaning-making. Although in this study, social class and gender are seen relatively conventional in human brand identities, the online avenues may challenge such dominant ideology and offer new opportunities to question prevailing discourses of social positions. Finally, the present study focuses on the conventional idea of a celebrity as a person coming from the mainstream entertainment field co-created in most popular social media platforms for a limited timeframe. Future directions can examine how different sets of stakeholders co-create human brands in different influential human personae such as micro-celebrities, political celebrities, news celebrities, and insta-celebrities, diverse media platforms analyzed within a longer co-creation time scale, and other cultural contexts.

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