Exploring Value Creation Derived from Celebrity Consumption: The paradigmatic elements of Celebrity Negative Information

Master Thesis in Business Administration

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Abstract

The celebrity status is seen in a wide variety of domains that ranges from entertainment, to sport, to politic communities. It operates as a way of providing distinctions and definitions of success within those domains (Marshall, 1997).

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate the paradigmatic elements of celebrity negative information across different celebrity domains. The word paradigmatic is used because over the years we have seen celebrities killing their careers as consequence of their wild behavior. In the other hand we have also seen celebrities booming their careers. This thesis is an attempt to improve our understanding on which factors are of relevance when celebrities’ meltdown causing potential sources of troubles to stakeholders related with them. In summations the objective is finding patterns among the paradox and inconsistencies over the years of real life celebrity cases.

We first analyze how the consumptions of celebrity offering yields different type of values to consumers that construct an OVP optimal value point. This OPV can be seen as a combination of enabling attributes and enhancing attributes. Enabling attributes such as “quality and efficiency” are a must for a human brand to even achieve celebrity status. The enhancing type of attributes such as “ethics or charity” bring that extra mile or added value not necessary to obtain success but beneficial to their overall image. In addition a discussion if celebrity negative information caused by illegal or immoral behavior can lead to value destruction affecting consumption patterns is presented whereas a qualitative study based on real life cases was carried out.

The results showed that “consistency” with the celebrity previous behavior and image are crucial to anticipate how the consumers will react to a case of negative celebrity information. The celebrity “domain” revealed some tolerance bringing or blocking effect towards negative celebrity information.

In conclusion this exploratory study is a good starting point to prove that not all negative celebrity information is negative to a celebrity and thus there is no general recipe to study these incidents. By bringing a framework like the one presented it is easier to isolate and study one case at a time. At the end of the paper we applied the framework and anticipated the response of Swedish consumer’s to a real drugs case scandal involving a singer.

Keywords: Celebrity consumption, celebrity negative information, value creation, human brands.
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### Definitions

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<tr>
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<td>Someone known to be known</td>
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<td>Human Brand</td>
<td>Individual subject of marketing communications efforts</td>
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<td>Role Models</td>
<td>Successful individuals within a domain that we care deeply about</td>
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<td>Optimal Vale Point (OVP)</td>
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1 Introduction

This section discusses how celebrities’ consumption yields different types of values to consumers; it concludes that celebrities perform experience-bringing services. The section ends with a brief discussion if celebrity negative information can lead to value destruction.

1.1 Creation of value through celebrity consumption

Consumer value plays a vital function at the heart of all marketing activity and thus deserves the attention of consumer researchers (Holbrook, 1999; Kotler, 2002). Improving our understanding on the dynamics of consumer value derived from celebrity consumption is relevant because to a large extent the success of the 190 billion U.S entertainment and media industry depends on the auspiciously positioning one of its vital assets, the celebrity (Thomson, 2006).

“Celebrity is a system for valorizing meaning and communication. As a system, the condition of celebrity status is convertible to a wide variety of domains and conditions within temporary culture. Thus, the power of celebrity status appears in business, politics, and artistic communities and operates as a way of providing distinctions and definitions of success within those domains”

- Marshall, 1997

Celebrity is commonly defined as someone known to be known (Andersson & Andersson, 2006). They are often persons subject to marketing communications efforts which make them qualify for the term Human Brands (Thomson, 2006). They are successful individuals within their domain. If that domain happens to be one that we care deeply about we will look up to them as Role Models (Lockwood & Kunda 1997). Independently of the categorization given to them they have always been a source of different types of consumer values attainable through consumption experiences (Holbrook, 2006). They provide us with a source of constant entertainment. They provoke self-enhancement and inspiration for millions of person with their success (Lockwood & Kunda 1997) and in some occasion they even work as insurance of expected quality (Caves, 2002).

Our expectations from celebrities are nevertheless dependent on their area of influence or “domain” they interact. Some of the attributes expected from a celebrity performing experience-bringing services must to be there in order for consumers to be satisfied, what Grönroos (2006) calls “satisfiers”. This first part of this study is to map those ideal attributes or satisfiers that will construct an Optimal Value Point (OVP) for the creation of maximum consumer value. The satisfiers are represented by different attributes that fit into a framework of consumer value based on Holbrook (1999, 2006). The second part is to analyze how negative events such as sex scandals, legal accusations and narcotics utilization will influence that OVP. Celebrity domain is expected to play an important role in the paradigm of what sometimes can elevate value and sometimes destroy it “negative celebrity information”.

Celebrity negative information might affect image and attitudes towards the celebrity (Hunter, 2009) however it does not necessarily affect consumption of celebrity offerings. Is proven in this study that what seems to be negative information destructing value in one domain can have an antagonis-
tic effect in another domain. Another contribution of this paper is that a new aspect for the typology of consumer value when dealing with human brands is suggested by the author: Consistency.

1.2 Background

Today there are various organizations that devote an outstanding amount of resources in an attempt to intensify consumer’s bonds with human brands such as Britney Spears, Martha Stewart and Michael Jordan (Thomson, 2006). This type of organizations will find useful to identify general constructs of optimal value points (OVP) and have an elaborated study of what consumers appreciate and consider worthy attributes of celebrities and how they should act when one of their clients is involved in a negative event.

From the quote underneath it can be appreciated that large corporations such as the International Management Group (IMG) see their clients as a portfolio of brands and each one of them hold its personal Brand Equity whereas value is part of that brand equity (Aaker, 1991).

“Today, we help hundreds of elite athletes, coaches, industry executives and prestigious sports organizations maximize their earnings potential and build strong personal brands.”


This idea of regarding humans as brands does not only apply to celebrities as we continue to have more authors starting to write about Personal Branding and the Brand YOU phenomenon (See Montoya, 2002; Peters, 2006). They suggest that people can be seen as brands that should yield some value to others parties like employers, co-workers, friends or consumers.

Kotler (2002) defines marketing as the procedure by which firms generates value for customers and build strong customer relationship in order to capture value from customers in return. The concept of customer’s value then is explained as the customer’s evaluation of the good, experience or service overall ability to assure his or her needs are satisfied. The Kotlerian perspective sees value in the sense that each party to a transaction gives up one thing in return for something else of greater value. With this in mind it can be argued that we consume celebrities when we give up our time and money in return for celebrity offerings that we enjoy. The offering can be packed in different ways and delivered by different channels: a song in a MP3, a film in a Blue Ray, a show in a TV format, sports in a live transmission and gossips in a magazine. The value can be transferred to a third party product that the celebrity happens to endorse. Tiger Woods endorsing Nike clothing and David Beckham promoting Pepsi. Nevertheless the consumer value does not only reside in the product itself, but rather in the consumption experience this enables (Abbott, 1955). Experiences are accomplished through activities, in order to carry out activities; material objects or the services of humans are most of times needed. Thus far Human Brands perform experience-bringing services, affecting the value of consuming the experience so they can be seen to an extent as “service providers”. Let’s assume Celine Dion is to release a new album (object) in one month. The album is a recording of the singer activity which in this case is singing. Playing the album is the experience.

How consumption of celebrities creates value for consumers is one of the fundamental interrogatives of this study which shall be answered by identifying different types of values that construct an optimal value point (OVP). This can be seen as a number of attributes that needs to be there so the celebrity is consider an appealable human brand. Moreover a neutral stand point is taken to see what happens when celebrities are subject of negative publicity caused by their wild behavior without assuming that negative is always negative. It is important to take into consideration that there is differ-
ent degrees of negativity. Louie & Obermiller (2002) provided three categories for negative behavior: high blame, moderate blame, and low blame. They suggest an extra one, complex culpability cases. The latter occurs when the celebrity is alleged to be guilty but proof happens to be insufficient against the celebrity. We will focus on high blame cases when celebrities harm others, low blame cases when celebrities harm themselves, and some real life complex blame cases where culpability is uncertain.

If Celine would happen to elicit some outlaw or immoral behavior prior to the release of her album, what would the consequences be? This research is an effort to understand how negative behavior of human brands in different domains: entertainment, sports, and politics affects the value of the actual consumption experience without prior assumptions, taking a neutral approach. Some researchers suggest that it affects the brand image of the celebrity and thus the brand equity (Aaker, 1999) but as you will see later in this paper, in some cases, the consumption remains strong even when the image is damaged, so the matter to investigate is if it will affect the consumption experience and thus produce a decrease or increase in demand of the celebrity and its offerings.

1.3 Problem Discussion

This topic deserves to be studied because of the paradigmatic elements that arise from comparing different real-life scenarios of human brands being attacked by the media in the past and today. Attacks based on negative events that proved deadly for a celebrity career might be a booster for contemporary celebrities. A compilation of findings in different academic areas that range from consumer behavior to social psychology present potential insights to solve this question but none directly does leaving an opportunity to further explore the subject. Studies from consumer behavior and marketing suggest for instance that celebrities enjoy more tolerance than regular people (Maltby, 2001) and how fans can block negative attributes of their role models (Fraser & Brown, 2002). From social psychology Taylor & Lobel (1989) show that “There is a strong preference to evaluate the self against less fortunate others but a desire for information about and some sort of contact with more fortunate others, such as the rich and the famous.”

Other studies have found that our interest is no longer on the career achievements of the celebrity but rather in the personal life. A content analysis of 1,253 cover-story trends over a period of 25 years of People magazine reflects that from 1974 to 1998 the themes drifted from celebrity careers to a concern with their personal problems—sickness, legal encounters, and sex-related matters. It was also noted that the basis for human brands appearing in the front page was often a result of a negative behavior. (Levin, Fox & Mazaik, 2005)

“During the early years, most of the stars where on People’s cover because they had accomplished a virtuous objective. More recently, however, the magazine heaped attention—perhaps inordinate attention—on the “accomplishments” of rapist, child abusers, drug addicts and murderers”

- Levin et al, 2005

Needless to defend, the quote above shows that our appetite for negative information has risen. The character of that statement is not to be only absorbed but to be analyzed. Have we become so used to celebrity negative information that bad or illegal behavior is no longer a reason to stop consuming

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1 People Magazine is a weekly American magazine of celebrity and human-interest stories, published by Time Inc. (People Magazine, 2010)
the celebrity, or has the nature and type of value we get from celebrities changed over the years. Can it be that there is actually a type of value created from scandals related matters? What is seen as positive or negative is a social construction that is non static neither is a standard among consumers therefore what used to be negative some decades ago does not necessarily has to be negative today.

Maltby (2001) suggested that some hardcore fan groups often resemble religious behavior and pointed out that they worship their idols. His findings presume that when a celebrity has achieved certain degree of admiration, extreme fanatics might overlook its idols misbehavior.

For instance, the elicit behavior of some stars is forgiven and explained away when similar behavior by non-celebrities would perhaps not.


Scholars have been slow to recognize why and how consumers can block negative attributes of their role models, leaving their Brand Equity and effect on consumption basically unaffected in some cases. Advancing the knowledge on which type of value gets harmed and which remains constant when a celebrity is related to negative activity is relevant for the service and experiences providing enterprises. Oliver (1993) sustains that a unique feature of services, as opposed to products, is that they require a deeper elaboration of the consumer’s consumption experience. Celebrities might enhance or diminish the value of consuming the experience by avoiding or provoking negative events. Hunter (2009) proves that when celebrities endorse a product or service, negative celebrity information led to a change in consumer attitudes towards the brand however his findings are orientated to when celebrities endorse a company and how the celebrity image would then be undesired and negativities would transfer to the company. Hunter (2009) uses the case of Michael Jackson accused for molesting minors and claims that Jackson’s image became undesired. Perhaps it did for a company like Pepsi but what about the products that derived from Jackson’s core experience bringing services “writing and recording songs” the actual material derived from his performance including CD’s, video clips, movies and concert tickets. Researchers have focused mainly in endorsing relationships that both in theory and practice there is a lack of managerial recommendations for other parties involved with celebrities like their labels, film studios, brand and management agencies, broadcasters, football clubs and booking managers. What should they expect from celebrities negative information, for them the story does not end only in disrupting association with a celebrity like it is for an endorsing company. This paper involves consumption of celebrities’ core experience bringing services. To clarify many celebrities like singers, actors, athletes and politicians, are to an extent service providers (Grönroos, 2006) as mentioned already. Each one of them operating in a particular domain where a core service is intended, for a singer the expected core service is to deliver a song or a live concert, for athletes is the actual performance of a sport and for politicians is to bring social welfare. We leave aside when celebrities get involved into transferring their brand image to a product, that issue has been already analyzed. For a study addressing how celebrity negative information might affect the endorsing company, see (Louie & Obermiller, 2002 ; Hunter, 2009 “ Balance Theory”).

1.4 Purpose

- Investigate the paradigmatic elements of celebrity negative information across different celebrity domains.
1.5 Research Questions

The first question to answer is related to the different types of values celebrities provide to consumers. This will allow for further differentiating which values are of enabling character or necessary and which ones are basically enhancing type of values, providing a “plus” as some of the participants called it.

a) Identify the types of consumer values to be attained in celebrity consumption to achieve an optimal value point?

After answering the first research question we will have the information to sketch out how value is created from consuming celebrities that interact in different domains. Moreover a neutral standpoint is taken to see what happens when celebrities are subject of negative publicity caused by their wild behavior without pre-assuming that negative is always negative.

b) How the consumption experience is influenced when celebrities engage in negative behavior?

As mentioned previously, different expectations are assumed to arise from different domains. And by consumption is meant the actual allocation of resources such as time and money.

c) Does the celebrity domain influence the consumer tendency to block negative information?

d) Is there any patterns arising from analyzing different celebrity domains?

If a domain has enough power to anchor a celebrity to a pre-conceived type of behavior shall be answer with questions c) and d). There is a potential for “stereotypes” to be transferred along a domain providing celebrities with a shield against negative behavior because of the expectation that arise from being part of a certain domain.
2 Frame of References

A compilation of previous research and literature related to the topic is introduced to the reader. The focus is to portrait how celebrities work as insurance for expectations and to discuss the paradigmatic elements when they happen to be involved in negative events. Afterwards the theoretical framework and model is presented.

Mostly academics have extensively researched the influence celebrities can have on those who identify with them and the attachment relationships they develop with them, (Matthew, 2006; Fraser & Brown, 2002) how their physical image affect the perception of our self (Harrison & Kristen, 1997) and how celebrity entrepreneurs perceived emotional involvement in their venture by the audience can drive us to consume their offerings. (Hunter, 2009)

Matthew Thomson (2006) explores the strong relationship that consumers develop with Human Brands through the use of Attachment theory. In the study he argues that if marketers have a clear understanding of what strengthens attachment they can elicit long term relationship with customers and comprehend “customer-based brand equity”. Thomson’s research suggests that:

“If an object is responsive to a person’s needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence (A-R.C), intense attachment may result.”

In the study results, the fulfillment of autonomy and relatedness weights more in explaining attachment strength that competence does when applied to Human Brands. Attachment theory has been used to explain strong relationship between people and Human Brands. Their findings support the argument that consumers develop love which is a type of value.

In their work Boon and Lomore (2001) show that young adults are to some degree attracted to media figures they acknowledged as idols in their lives. They look into whether more than a few qualities of the relationship between fan and celebrity may perhaps elucidate the extent of influence celebrities has on these young adults. They discuss the idea that para-social interactions (mediated by the media) can lead people to develop a high level of involvement with a celebrity which can then persuade attributions of blame for their behavior. Involvement will also affect to what extents stories of the celebrity are assimilated by the audience (Fraser et al., 2002).

In the following section additional literature will be reviewed. Insights on how celebrities are used to assure expectations thus creating a source of value for several actors in the media and service industries by diminishing consumers perceived risk of consuming new offers is discussed. Followed by a representation of different theoretical sources suggesting that celebrity negative information has proven inconsistent and thus negative celebrity information seemed to the off-putting for some celebrities and effective for others.

2.1.1 Human Brands as Insurances

Literature in economics of the entertainment and arts suggest a source of value for companies providing services that are produced and consumed at the same time like most live performing arts. It argues that top list celebrities are working as guarantees (Andersson & Andersson, 2006). Some Human Brands manage to jump into the superstardom category which means that the market output is concentrated on just a few names that get the majority of the big contracts, the “superstars” (Adler, 2006) often used to insure expectations on expected consumer value satisfaction. They are vital for the media industry where demand is uncertain because predictions of how consumers will value a new creative offer (TV show, film, sports match, and political debate and news editions) cannot be
fully forecasted. They are intangible goods and therefore “Nobody Knows” if the offer will be accepted until the moments it is actually consumed due to the subjective perceptions and taste of each person (Caves, 2002).

There is no manner you can know if you will like a movie unless you watch it. However expectations can be built if your favorite actor is on the play. Celebrity’s name-value is avidly used by the industry to hedge the risk of failure. Well known Human Brands can enhance the chances of success and increase the willingness to give it a try and actually consume the product. This practice is quite common in the film industry where actresses/actors such as Julia Roberts, Morgan Freeman and Brad Pitt are used as catalyst for economic success and box revenue profits. A-list names have the potential to make or break a film independently of other factors because once an actor has a strong human-brand-equity they serve as guarantee or insurance that the product is valuable. Other practices in which celebrities are used as guarantees for expectations and value creation can be seen in sports, business and politics. Stock market companies rely on celebrity CEO’s (Hayward, Pollock & Rindova, 2004) or well known entrepreneurs and political parties rely on the strongest candidate. The European football teams rely on well known athletes to attract fans to the games. (Guardian, 2010)

Many of the times we decide to engage into consuming a product or an activity is because a celebrity that we like or admire is to be the protagonist. They provide value to consumers by enhancing confidence in purchasing decisions (Aaker, 1991). There is just something about celebrities that we seem to enjoy whether their luxury lifestyle, physical attraction, or eccentric consumptions, it will be too broad to just say that they deliver value to our society when we consume them. Exploring the nature and type of value based on the typology provided by Holbrook (1998) will assist to map an Optimal Value Point (OVP) that emerges from consuming celebrity that will further contribute to the understanding of how the value is created and which attributes are needed in each domain to enable this development.

If traditional brands such as Dominos Pizza, Coca-Cola or Toyota\(^2\) have seen effects on their consumption value and their brand equity affected for engaging in corporate scandals, non ethical business or not delivering what expected, one can theorize that Human Brands should be subjected to the same faith when being part of bad or illegal behavior referred to as infamy (negative events, negative celebrity information), and failing public expectations, however this is not the case. This paper will look into the role that infamy has on the value on celebrity consumption which in turns has an effect on the value on the consumption experience. The role of infamy however has proven a paradox over the years being sometimes effective and sometimes offsetting as argued in the following chapter that depicts real celebrity cases and interest paradigmatic findings.

A study by Louie & Obermiller (2002) addresses the actions( associate or disassociate) to be taken by firms when a celebrity they are related with via endorsing activities is involved in what they call blameless or blameworthy for causing negative events. They conclude that companies are better off breaking associations with high blame human brands, and fare best when being endorsed by low

\(^2\) Dominos employees uploaded a video on YouTube of themselves farting and blowing boogers on customers pizza’s. (Dominos video 2010)

The Coca-Cola company has been accused for over-exploitation of scarce water resources in India. (Aiyer, A., 2007).

Toyota recalls thousands of Hybrid cars for unintended acceleration (Wallace, 2010)
blame celebrities. In their work no doubtful or complex culpability cases we face in real life was taken into consideration whereas the human brand is alleged to be guilty but proof happens to be insufficient. They suggest that further research into consumer’s reaction when having uncertain cases is appealing as a subject to be explored. This paper is not restricted only to uncertain or complex cases since many times the celebrity stand for his/her actions as Tiger Woods did when cheating in his Swedish wife. (ABC Sports, 2010)

2.1.2 Paradox & Celebrity Negative Information

Despite all the differences among successful personalities, there are noteworthy commonalities among them. Some contemporary celebrities are competing for end-consumers attention (Consumers Market) and finally for corporate marketing resources (Sponsors Market). Drawing on the proposal from Aris & Bughins (2009) that media company products/personalities are competing in these markets.

The Brands Agencies together with the client must balance their efforts to succeed in both markets and even then they often encounter conflicts of interest. Celebrities engaging in negative activities might trigger positive responses in one market while negative in other markets depending on the celebrity (domain) and the target market. Is no secret that actress Lindsay Lohan has won consumer attention by being part of several Hollywood scandals so it can be said that she is quite successful in the consumers market. She has a wide fans base, however her behavior portraits her as a non-reliable person therefore movie directors are skeptical to hire her even though she is certainly a famous actress (Kaufman, 2010) Is not clear that her behavior would result in value destruction and her fans diminishing it willingness to consume Lindsay. Perhaps her crazy lifestyle might enhance the experience of consuming the movie, or it might not. Some of the types of value that consumers get from consuming Lindsay need to be there, they enable the actress’s core service which is to act. Some others are not needed; however they will enhance the consumption experience. (Grönroos, 2006)

Regardless of the activity the celebrity under scope performs, all of them are simple person, perhaps more fortunate than the average to certain degree. And persons follow certain moral norms that are intrinsic in our society. Maltby (2001) explicitly says that we seem to overlook when the norms are broken by celebrities. If Snoop Dog is caught smoking a joint in the White House he will certainly make it to all headlines and tabloids worldwide. Surely none of his fans will expect an apology, and it will not be surprising that this bad and illegal behavior might be hip in Hip Hop circles and even increase Snoop’s consumption by many of its fans. His outlaw behavior might elevate the experience of listening to his music. For instance when he visited Sweden in 2007 he was arrested for suspected narcotics use after giving a concert in the Stockholm’s Globe arena. He was released after one day and went to Norway to continue his tour and the concert was packed.

Is not crystal clear if in today’s society we tend to overlook immoral actions performed by celebrities which acting in the same domains and professions that we did not so long ago. When Roscoe Arbuckle was found innocent after being charged for rape and murder in 1921, his carrier was ruined

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3 There is a number of Brand Agencies specialized in managing the brand equity of a persona. The agencies usually represent, promote and assist the client in several areas that range from personal image to mediating the client information thru different channels. I.e. IMG Talent represents many of the world’s most celebrated personalities including broadcasters, models and speakers.
Another case is that of Boy George love-heroin scandal with his gay lover that will never let him return to that idol status. Whitney Houston’s drug abuse destroying her career in the 1990’s. In the other hand there are people that became famous through scandals and some that managed to survive scandals. We have the heiress of the Hiltons family “Paris” whose sex tape made her jump to fame, basketball player Kobe Bryant accused for rape and many other cases where the effect on their career and fan base was not as negative as other times. (Top 10 Celebrities who ruined their careers, 2010)

Some researchers have even noted that some fans even neglect their role models miss behavior and have a hard problem to believe that they engage in such activities. From what I have lived, I can recall the case of Michael Jackson fans refusing to believe that he could have molested minors. Fraser & Brown (2002) found that Elvis Presley impersonators feel that there are some characteristic of the singer that are not attractive (womanizer, alcoholic, drug user) but fans tend to focus on the good attributes in Elvis, however the why is still unanswered and presents valuable information if we are to improve our understanding on speculating how a tabloid might affect our business or possibly not.

From the work of Aaker, D. (1991) we can learn that the value of each brand (Brand Equity) encompasses the consumers perceptions and attitudes regarding positive brand attributes and the results of brand use. Aaker proposes that Brand management is about enhancing brand equity thru the strategic use of different tools such as brand image, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary assets. Note that a Brands role is to provide consumer value. Brand management is important for positioning and differentiation strategies and to create favorable conditions for the brand to develop in consumers mind (Grönroos, 2007). The goal of brand management is to profit from endowing services and products with brands that will eventually yield value to consumers.
3 Consumer Value: A Framework for Analysis

In this section commences the theoretical framework utilized in this study. The first theory is that of Consumer value, followed by blame categorization and ending in an integrative model that comprises elements of both.

3.1 Introduction

At the beginning of this paper it was said that consumer value does not only reside in the product itself, but rather in the satisfying consumption experience this enables (Abbott, 1955). It was also mentioned that the Kotlerian view of value is limited to in depth analysis. The theory of consumer value by Holbrook (1999) is based on providing an ideal point of maximum consumer value based on different dimensions and attributes of the market space. From this idea of enabling maximum consumer value it appears of relevance understanding the (1) nature and (2) types of consumer values. In other words, by identifying what determines the locations of the optimal points (nature and type of value) for the segment of consumer being targeted and placing a human brand closer that optimal point we can achieve differential human brand positioning advantage (Holbrook, 1999).

Chris Brown would have more chances to yield maximum consumer value for his fans if he would have not assaulted the double-platinum singer Rihanna. He clearly deviated far from the optimal value point that consumer perceived ideal for an RnB young artist as it can be seen from the fieldwork of this study in later chapters.

This section utilizes the integrative framework provided by Morris B. Holbrook (1999). One crucial aspect is that we can only comprehend a certain type of value only by taking into account its relationship to other types of value. We cannot understand success unless compared to failure; nor failure without thinking how it differs from beauty. This principle gives reason to the structures of the framework.

Holbrook’s works exhibits a clear and coherent pattern underlying a simple but profound four word definition of consumer value applicable to a variety of consumer related issues His model helps to map the location of ideal points for my target segment which in this case are university students. This will aid at analyzing if celebrities deviate far from that maximum consumer value point when engaging in low, high or doubtful culpability acts. A deviating is seen as “value destruction” and can lead to a decrease in consumption.

The theory was utilized for its ability to provide non quantitative data that is valuable for the study. When analyzing consumer value there is no need for quantifiable variables, in fact if this study was of quantitative character another theory would have been more suitable. Since we cannot arrive to a conclusion if celebrity consumption decreases due to celebrity negative information via historical sales projection since we lack the data we can arrive to it by suggesting that if value is not harmed then consumption shall not plump.

The synergy with this theory with Grönroos (2007) adapted concept of “enabling attributes” and “enhancing attributes” is the key to spot paradigmatic elements across different domains as is explained in section 5.
3.2 The nature of consumer value

Holbrook defines “consumer value as an interactive relativistic preference experience”. The components of the definition are interconnected and its combination comprises the Concept of Consumer Value (CCV) (Holbrook, 1999), nevertheless for simplicity they will be presented apart from each other.

First CV is Interactive because it involves the evaluation of some object by some subject (consumer). An object of interest could be any commodity, service, place, experience, human brand and so on.

Second CV is relativistic in three ways:
(a) is comparative in that the value of one object in reference to another as evaluated by the same person
(b) is situational in that it changes according to the context.
(c) is personal and varies from person to person.

Third CV alludes to an evaluation of preference. From a general stand they include nomenclatures as attitude (like, dislike), affect (favorable/unfavorable) among others. The main property of this component is that they investigate ways in which something if preferred to something else based on some criteria.

Fourth, CV does not only reside in the product itself, but rather in the consumption experience.

3.3 The types of consumer value

In the previous section the nature of CV was laid out, in the latter we are to categorize the different types of consumer values (The Typology of Consumer Value) to be attained in consumption, reflecting on three dimensions of consumer value. (Holbrook, 2006).

Extrinsic / Intrinsic
An extrinsic value refer to a means-end relationship, when some object assist as the means to an end wherein in consumption is prized for its utilitarian function. An example would be that of a scissor, hammer or a DVD player. In itself the object provides no value, the value is in the ability to cut a paper, drive in a nail or play the actual DVD.

In the other hand, intrinsic value pertains to a consumption experience that is appreciated and prized for its own sake- self justifying. Listening to Madonna accomplishes no end beyond the experience enjoyed for its own sake. “Hence only an experience and not an object can be appreciated as an end in itself”. (Holbrook, 1996)

Self-Oriented / Other-Oriented
Value is consider to be Self-Oriented (for myself) when the focus is on “me”. How an object or experience is valued for how it affects and how I respond to it. I prize some features of the consuming activity in a selfish manner. By contras when the value is prized for others sake. Others range from family, to friends, community members and so on.

Active/Reactive
Value is active when it entails the manipulation of some object or experience by a subject. In simple words when we perform some sort of activity, when we engage in “doing”. By contrast reactive value results from a reaction triggered by the object, when the object does something to the subject.
Table 1. The Typology of Consumer Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Oriented</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>EFFICIENCY</td>
<td>PLAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>EXCELLENCE</td>
<td>AESTHETICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other-Oriented</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>STATUS</td>
<td>ETHICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>ESTEEM</td>
<td>SPIRITUALITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the sake of improving the readers understanding, a summary of how to apply these eight types of value by meditating in one of most successful basketball players of all times Michael Jordan is shown. A more in depth description can be found in (Holbrook 1999, 2006). Consuming Jordan involves watching his basketball games in the arena or when broadcasted, watching his movies, buying his merchandise, reading his biography and self written books among others. Whenever we meditate on a consumption experience it is important to recognize that such can contribute to some or even all the types of CV.

- **EFFICIENCY** (O/I, Convenience) happens when extrinsic value result from actively using an object or experience. Typical examples are goods we have with us in a regular basis that enable an end-purpose: a cell phone to place a call, keys to unlock a door, etc. The O/I adduce to an output and input ratio often used to measure efficiency. (Holbrook 1999, 2006) When the benefit is quantified in a currency (input), we refer to it as monetary efficiency, which in the case of a NBA club membership can be assessed as the number of games per dollar spent. When the input is time and the output is concern, efficiency is then labeled convenience. Several consumer goods like MP3s, TiVo and DVDs are used as time-shifting tools that allow for the storage of material for later consumption. By contrast they might provide an option to consume now and pay after like a credit card. This paper is confined primarily to objects (time shifting devices, tickets and memberships) that grant the possibility for celebrity consumption making the assumption that consumer buy them to actually store their favorite celebrity’s experience-bringing performances (services) or buy it to consume “live”. For instance I have bought the movie Michael Jordan to the Max at a pretty good deal and the NBA Dynasty Series - Chicago Bulls.

- **EXCELLENCE** involves appreciating object’s or experience’s used for its ability to function well as the vehicle to a self oriented end however not mandatory used for that purpose. In a sense this utilitarian function is linked to satisfaction and performance expectations which is said to constitute the heart of what is often referred to as “quality”. (Holbrook 1999, 2006) When I watched Jordan playing for the Chicago bulls back in the 1990’s he often took

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4 Adapted from Holbrook (2006)
the game to a more exalted level. I watched Jordan because his game full of surprises. From a quality perspective I can highlight: his potent acceleration that result in incredible offensive attacks, he dribbled with the best technique and speed, outstanding dunks and a precise shot. It was the quality of his game that motivated me to watch every bull's game.

- **STATUS** happens when a person’s actively manipulates his consumption behavior as means of influencing others. We pursue status through a form of impression management whereas the products, experiences and human brands we consume and admire are chosen to project an approving image to someone else. (Holbrook 1999, 2006). In my case I eagerly looked for the Nike Air Jordan sneakers because I knew that the other kids in the team would look up to me. I used his items as a positioning strategy in a sense and it actually worked. I instantly gain acceptance and connected with some other fans that were a bit older than me which at that age (12) I found it overwhelming. Accepting that Jordan was the best player ever to play in the NBA help me to make friends. I am quite sure that if I would have claim that Scottie Pippen was better they would have seen me as an enemy. I gain their social approval by simply having a common role model as them.

- **ESTEEM** is somewhat related to status but takes upon a more reactive role that result from the “passive ownership of possessions” and the approval of them by relevant other. It resembles the concept of *conspicuous consumption*— when an individual falls into a material personality and pleasure is derived from the mere contemplation or ownership of one’s own possessions. (Holbrook 1999, 2006). Even if my friends would come to my place once and not exactly to admire my NBA posters, its mere ownership bears a certain self-pleasure feeling. As of conspicuous consumption for hardcore fans the best example in my opinion would be that of collectible cards. To be more precise the "Holy Grail" of Jordan cards was the Fleer 1986-1987 Michael Jordan Rookie (RC) Card. (Top 5 Michael Jordan Basketball Cards, 2010) The “*Michael Jordan – 1986 Fleer BVG 10*” has a price of $82,000 (Top 10 most valuable Basketball Cards, 2010) I would suggest the owner gets some esteem value out from it since functional wise is a piece of thick paper and most likely he is not using for an utilitarian reasons.

- **PLAY** involves an experienced pursued as an end in itself. Therefore is placed under the intrinsic and self oriented dimension of the typology framework. It includes *having fun* from leisure activities and it should be distinguished from work activities.(Holbrook 1999, 2006) Clearly there is a difference in Jordan training vigorously at the Bull’s arena for his next game and being paid millions of dollar for it, and me playing or emulating him in the backyard just for fun.

- **AESTHETICS** by Holbrook (2006) “involves the reactive self-oriented appreciation of an experience prized for its own sake”- as when contemplating beauty or enjoying a scene. Beyond the fun involved in going to an NBA match, the sonic experience from gathering thousands of visitors in the arena cheering for the same team is something that can be appreciated in itself hence providing aesthetics value to the ones in the game. Or even the visual light spectacle
when Jordan was presented together with the robust echo triggered by fans screaming was priceless.

- **ETHICS** constitute altruistically doing something for the benefit of others. Pursuing a virtue such as ethics, justice, charity and morality. From environmental consumption, to donating money to Haiti to not eating cow often in order to decrease methane emissions. This type of value is aligned with an individual’s inclination to obey the law and avoid immoral behavior. Further illustrations of ethics would be donating money to the Red Cross, visiting cancer patients and paying taxes. (Holbrook 1999, 2006) Supporting a clean athlete or one none involved in steroid consumption would be relatively close or assimilate ethical social value for some people. Despite consuming Jordan for being a great player, he managed to portrait himself as a good human being. Founder of the Michael Jordan Foundation that supports families in need in the state of North Carolina and promotes education. Indirectly sustaining Jordan meant to me, sustaining his foundation. In a few words I knew some of the money I spent in his merchandise could actually go to some charity. However I have to recognize this was not a key driver for my consumption but only a plus. Assuming Jordan contributed to charity for marketing reasons then the value would jump to “status”.

- **SPIRITUALITY** regards an intrinsic motivated admiration or worships another whereas this other comprises an elevated entity such as a divine force, the cosmos or nature. Typical example would be praying for the sake of communicating with the relevant other and the experience purpose is a goal in itself. According to Holbrook (1999, 2006) the reactive nature of spirituality accords to faith. Notice that some fanatics in Argentina would refer to Diego Armando Maradona as “Dios Maradona” which in Spanish means “God Maradona”. The “Hand of God Curch” whose religion is football and leader is Maradona is a parody examples of the cult devoted to the player and his supernatural abilities. (Tim Vickery, 2002) As of Jordan I never worship him in that manner but I must confess that when he played he awaken a feeling a faith and believe that victory was more likely to occur for the Chicago Bulls.
4 Blame and its implications

Different blame categorization are explained that assist on the differentiation of negative events caused by celebrities.

As mentioned already Louie et al. (2002) address the actions (associate or disassociate) to be taken by firms when a celebrity they are related with via endorsing activities is involved in what they call blameless or blameworthy for causing negative events where a negative event is an action that damages the celebrity reputation. They mention that is important to take into consideration that there is different degrees of negativity and in their study they provided three categories high blame, moderate blame and low blame celebrities, and suggest an extra one, complex culpability cases faced when the celebrity is alleged to be guilty but proof happens to be insufficient. Since research is to an extent mixed in the perception of blame for negative events, this study utilizes only high blame, low blame and complex blame.

The readers should understand for high blame where a celebrity is responsible for harming others than her. This includes but does not limit to molesting minors, raping, extortion, assaulting and murdering.

Herein and after low blame will include celebrity behavior that mostly harms the celebrity therefore activities like drugs consumption, alcohol abuse, steroids consumption and bribery. Even though police bribery affects the governmental system (others) is not considered as a high blame action, neither is avoiding taxes. Louie et al. (2002) describe how Mike Tyson reputation suffered more for rape accusations than for police bribery.

As of complex blame cases is to be highlighted that research has shown that when a person is accused but not guilty for a negative event, individuals do not see it as unfavorable as when he is responsible. Louie et al. (2002) stress the potential appearance of “defensive distortions” that makes reference to situations in which individuals in this case consumers defend themselves through a psychological mechanism when another person suffers for a negative event they are not guilty. It is argued that we have a desired to believe in a just world in which terrible things do not happen to good individuals. This mechanism helps us protect this belief and when news come that an innocent has to suffer, the response involves downgrading the so called innocent to a state where “she/he seems deserving of bad fate” (Louie et al, 2002).

This theory was chosen to support the argument that negative information should be treated differently and that each categorization has its own implications. Another theory consider during this study was that refer to as “Attribution Theory”5. This school of thought suggest a more psychological approach to treating attribution of responsibility for negative actions thus resulting a less practical approach for consumer researchers.

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It addresses presumptions, hypotheses, and theories regarding how persons arrive at answers to “why” questions like: “Why did I fail in my career?”
5 Model Integration

The theory of Consumer Values and the Blame categorization are integrated in this model. The model comprises elements of both and highlights the differences between “enabling and enhancing” type of values. In addition some thoughts of domain relevance are depicted.

“A value is a belief that some condition is preferable to its opposite” (Solomon, 2009). Which conditions are preferable for celebrity status is thus the first pursue for this study. A consumer’s set of values plays a considerable relevant role in consumption activities. Solomon states that “Consumers purchase many products and services because they believe these products will help them attain a value related goal”. From this idea it appears of significance understanding and identifying the types of consumer values.

The typology of consumer value by Holbrook (1999) will assist to fulfill this purpose which is to identify the different types of consumer values to be attained in celebrity consumption to achieve an optimal value point (OVP) as in figure 1. The logic is that certain combination of attributes resembled in what Holbrook (1999) refers to as type of values will yield an ideal mix of attributes that consumers seek in celebrities. This is quite a similar construct to that of Bergmain & Klejso (1994) however they present different attributes refer to as criteria’s that build up quality. As mentioned before not all types of values are present all the time.

Is important to differentiate from the types of value that are needed for value to take place, the ones that Grönroos, C. (2007) calls “enabling services” in service marketing literature. In this study the idea is imported from that field however herein and after is referred to as “enabling values” meaning that they must be present in the consumption experience to produce value. A distinction shall be made to the types of value that are not needed but enhance the consumption experience the “enhancing values”. With this logic in mind one can suggest that as long as negative information is not hindering the enabling values, consumption would perhaps remain constant.

A visual representation of the bundle is depicted in Figure 1 where Holbrooks (1999, 2006) eight typology are illustrated by the outer circles. The circle in which the text is highlighted in black represents the “enabling attributes”. The arrows suggest a force trying to displace or move certain type of value, note that negative information does not necessarily will displace the entire Optimal Value Point (OPV). Each arrow consist of celebrity negative information and their weakness or strength will depend on the type of action (high blame, low blame and complex blame) in addition the type of value that will be subject will depend on the nature of the act.
In the results section three general OVP are provided based on 25 participant’s contributions. In this study an OVP for an entertainer, an athlete and a politician is shown. These general models can be replaced by specific niche domain models via a funnel approach. Expectations differ from one domain to another and so do stereotypes. Some of the expectations are built around marketing communication campaigns, word of mouth, public relations and brand image (Grönroos, 2007). A meticulous construction of an OVP will facilitate to turn implicit expectations (the ones consumers know but do not feel need to be communicated) into explicit. Being aware of what consumers expect from human brands in each domain will reduce uncertainty as of how consumption pattern might be affected when they engage in negative celebrity information.

**Figure 1.** Visual Representation of an Optimal Value Point and Celebrity Negative Information.

**Figure 2.** Expectations: From general to domain specific modeling.

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6 Motivated on Holbrook (2006) and adapted and improved by author.

7 Construction by author.
5.1 Premeditations on the Integrated Model

The first step is identifying the beliefs, associations and expectation related to a domain. The logic is similar to that of Expectancy Theory that asserts that human behavior is for the most part pulled by expectation of achieving desirable outcomes that imply a certain level of quality (Solomon, 2009). When someone performs the way it should be according to our expectations we will not give so much importance to it; when someone performs fails to live up to the expectations, this will result in cognitive dissonance and negative feelings. A set of expectations on a person will constitute a “stereotype”, this stereotype is directly linked to the domain and thus plays a crucial role in anticipating consumers reactions to celebrity negative information. Would you expect a Hip Hop artist to smoke marijuana?

In a sense the model of this study also resembles a research approach called The Means-End Chain Model. This approach predicates that we link specific product attributes to terminal values. People select among choices to achieve an end state (satisfaction experience) we value. (Solomon, 2009).

A visual representation of the model is more pedagogic than a table like one provided by Holbrook (1999) therefore easier to apply in different scenarios. The examples reflecting on Michael Jordan is a good starting point.
6 Method

Reasons and arguments that support the qualitative approach of this study are provided in this section accompanied with a brief of the data collection choices and the inductive/deductive reasoning.

6.1 Qualitative Approach

A reason for choosing a qualitative research approach is the nature of the research problem being an attempt to understand the dynamics of celebrities' negative behavior and the satisfying experience of consuming celebrity. This approach can be used to obtain the complex details about phenomena such as feeling, and thought processes (Patton, 2005). Getting access to celebrities and stakeholders directly involved with them is expensive and requires a vast network of contacts. Even though it would be particularly fruitful to get inside information from their side is nearly impossible to do so therefore the focus of this study are “consumers”.

There is no intent to quantify data because this is a not a hypothesis driven work and no theory is to be reproduced or tested. Motivated by Silverman (2010) every participant in the interviews has a unique voice, yet that voiced can be muted or debilitated by statistics therefore no strict mathematical measures are used. Furthermore, as celebrities (human brands) “are not just simple measurable things, but balances of complementary features which meet consumers rational, emotional, social and cultural needs” (O’cass & Grace, 2004) an in depth understanding of this is better through a qualitative approach.

Another approach to this study would be to collect numerical primary data to carry on a quantitative study those measures before and after effects of celebrity negative information on consumption. As said above a quantitative study will require the collaboration with a major music label, film studio, sports club or a political party.

6.2 An interplay of Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

Even though qualitative approaches tend be related with inductive reasoning, where the theory is derived from data. Kenneth F. Hyde (2000) argues that the qualitative researcher can adopt both inductive and deductive processes. As the paper was commenced openness to whatever that could emerge from the literature review was welcomed, in a sense an inductive reasoning. As the material was revised some patterns in previous studies started to appear that were of major interest and the focus changed to explore what appears to be coming up. Celebrities negative behavior being excused or simple ignored by the consumer (Maltby et al 2001, Fraser & Brown 2002) as well as a shift to outlaw behavior being a source of interest for readers and consumers (Levin et al, 2005). Many cases showed a record of hits and misses, meaning that some celebrities ruined their career and some managed to boost their carriers via illegal and immoral behavior. No obvious relationship is proven from the outset, Kenneth F. Hyde (2000) suggest that the application of deductive reasoning is not appropriate in this case. This it was opted to try finding a balance for induction and deduction. Pure induction would leave the study without concepts that can assist in exploring the phenomenon, and pure deduction would restrict the study from developing new theory.

Holbrook’s works provided a categorization on the nature and types of values derived from satisfying consumption experiences that are used as guidance concepts. The deductive part of this study is to investigate which types of values(based on Holbrook’s work) can get harmed when celebrities go wild (drugs, sex, law problems). The inductive side is to further make an effort to identify potential patterns among different celebrity domains and the difference in the blame level of the act.
6.3 Choice of Data Collection

6.3.1 Open and semi-structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview is said to be in between an open interview and a pre-coded interview. Meaning that it takes the form of an informal conversation where a schedule is used to remind the interviewer of the main themes and issues to cover. An open approach is suitable because is not known what kind of answers will arise and is of interest to look for new ideas and information. (Fisher C, Buglear J., Lowry D., Mutch A. and Tansley C., 2007) The participant was not given a series of options to answer because the focus is to explore in-depth and openly his/her attitudes and opinions that emerge as the interview unfolds. A focus group would have been complicated for the author since the list of cases contains 25 celebrities therefore capturing the essence of every case with 8-12 people talking simultaneously would have ended in the researcher’s inability to spot patterns.

Pilot Semi-structured interviews of two participants allowed me to reconsider the direction of where the research was heading to. As the data was gathered it was analyzed, according to Silverman (2010) this shall help for the development and preparation of the final interviews. After a couple of them I realized that the draft questions were too broad and that a filter was needed. Instead of asking about the participants most admired human brands, a table of 25 celebrities was provided to them. The list consisted purely of celebrities that have been involved in negative behavior that ranges from low blame to high blame to doubtful blame. By doing that the participant will only focus on celebrities that have actually done something blame worthy and there is no need to construct a fake scenario where her favorite celebrity incurs into negative behavior. (see table 3)

When asked if their attitudes, feeling and consumption behavior change after the blame worthy action carried on by their celebrity of choice from among the list, the responses were categorized based on a framework on consumer value by Holbrook (1999) however some categories were more notorious during the fieldwork and some were barely mentioned or absent. The “words or short phrases derived from the qualitative inquiry symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” are referred to as a “code” by Saldaña (2009). The data in this case is an array of recordings emanated from the interviews that were recording with a mobile device- iPhone. The manual used for coding that data is that written by Johny Saldaña (2009). Mostly fundamental and intermediate coding method profiles were utilized.

The schedules with the main question to address the OPV construction used during the interviews can be found in the appendix. The participants agree to be contacted via-email once the attributes that constitute an ideal OVP for entertainers, athletes and politicians was identified. The last step was for them to rank from the most important attribute to the less. They were send the tables (4,5,6) via e-mail or Facebook named in the following section as OVP for Entertainers, Sport and Politicians and asked to give a numerical order of importance from 1-8. The ranking aided at creating hierarchical value maps.
Table 2. Celebrity Negative Information—Filter for primary data collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Blame</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
<td>H-C</td>
<td>Accused for molesting minors</td>
<td>Denied/complex/innocent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Domestic Violence vs Rihanna</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Britney Spears</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Drugs and Alcohol-mental instability.</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Kate Moss</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Drugs (mainly cocaine)</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting</td>
<td>Lindsay Lohan</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Drugs-Alcohol -Promiscuous Behavior - Sex Tape</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting</td>
<td>Paris Hilton</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Drugs-Alcohol -Promiscuous Behavior</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting</td>
<td>David Hasselhoff</td>
<td>L-H</td>
<td>Drunk arguing with the girl while trying to stuff a burger in his mouth</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting</td>
<td>Tom Cruise</td>
<td>VL</td>
<td>Campaign in favor of the Church of Scientology</td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>George Michael</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Being found in a public toilet in California (public sex scene)</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Whitney Houston</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Drug related problems</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Boy George</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Heroine Problems</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Plaxico Burress'</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Shooting himself in the leg- illegally possessing weapons</td>
<td>Guilty/Jail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimmer</td>
<td>Michael Phelps</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Phelps smoking marijuana from a bong</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX</td>
<td>Mike Tyson</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Guilty for rape</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBA</td>
<td>Kobe Bryant</td>
<td>H-C</td>
<td>Cheating on wife-denied rape</td>
<td>Accepted/Denied/Innocent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>Tiger Woods</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Cheating on wife with multiple sex partners</td>
<td>Accepted/Apology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Atlanta</td>
<td>Michael Vicks</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Perjury and cruelty to animals for staging illegal dog fights</td>
<td>Guilty/Jail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseBall</td>
<td>Alex Rodriguez</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Steroids use</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>Diego A. Maradona</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Drug related problems-addiction to cocaine</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL</td>
<td>O.J Simpson</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>Guilty/Jail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Monica Lewinsky's semen-stained blue dress</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Politician</td>
<td>Mona Sahlin</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Buy Candy with tax payers money</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister of Italy</td>
<td>Silvio Berlusconi</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Corruption-young women were paid to attend parties</td>
<td>&quot;I'm no saint.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A Congressman</td>
<td>Mark Foley</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Sending explicit messages to young male pages</td>
<td>Not enough evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Gov.</td>
<td>Eliot Spitzer</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Prostitutes : an escort agency-referred to as &quot;Client 9&quot;</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel's Premier</td>
<td>Moshe Katsav's</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Female employees accused him of sexual harassment- one for rape</td>
<td>Guilty/Jail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.2 Sampling

In a Canadian study by Boon and Lomore (2006) regarding perceptions of celebrity influence in identity, they argue that young-adults participants may be notably appropriate for studying celebrities because they constitute a strongly desired target market for human brand agencies and marketers. They noticed that it is common for them to build up attachments to human brands. Agreeing with their view and considering that young adults are exposed to all types of media and marketing efforts
and they do tend to build a fan relationship with some celebrities, students were used for the qualitative research.

Following the qualitative tradition of small scale interviewing and being aware that the sample size might not be representative (Fisher, 2007), the pilot study consisted of two participants and the final study of 18. The fieldwork was carried out at the Jonkoping International Business School in the country of Sweden and five of them in Stockholm. The size was based on resources constraints and an effort to properly transcribe the interviews and have the time needed for data analysis.

Table 3.- Participant Historical Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Participant No.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration(min)</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mattias B</td>
<td>Pilot-prior filter</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Oct 14th 2010</td>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Coffe House by George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo C</td>
<td>Pilot-prior filter</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Oct 15th 2010</td>
<td>16:58</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Lakatos Coffee Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markus D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Oct 18th 2010</td>
<td>15:14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>JIBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonimous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Oct 19th 2010</td>
<td>19:05</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Lakatos Coffee Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Oct 23th 2010</td>
<td>17:15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Lakatos Coffee Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janin C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nov 15th 2010</td>
<td>14:01</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>JIBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miia P</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Finish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nov 18th 2010</td>
<td>15:45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>JIBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mads B</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nov 18th 2010</td>
<td>17:05</td>
<td>22</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hector C</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Nov 18th 2010</td>
<td>19:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alejanda de la P</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Nov 22nd 2010</td>
<td>18:29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>JIBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos V</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Nov 23rd 2010</td>
<td>16:09</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda T</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>14:45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>JIBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carina P</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nov 29th 2011</td>
<td>15:25</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isabel A</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Nov 30th 2011</td>
<td>08:24</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dec 2nd 2011</td>
<td>02:52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Claras Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Dec 5th 2012</td>
<td>18:18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>JIBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian L</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dec 7th 2013</td>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>JIBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip S</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dec 10th 2014</td>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena B</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Dec 11th 2015</td>
<td>13:10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirin F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Dec 11th 2016</td>
<td>14:10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Z</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dec 11th 2017</td>
<td>15:05</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah N</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Dec 12th 2018</td>
<td>13:15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Secondary Data

I decided to commence this project with revising different theories that aim at explaining consumption and relationships with human brands to get a helicopter perspective of the phenomena or celebrity fanatics and its implications. Multiple-sourced secondary data was extrapolated from academic journals, books, newspapers, consumer forums, corporate sites and internet blogs. No distinction on the area (country) of precedence was made since we are not to run statistical or regression analysis
and celebrities are to an extent considered to be globally shared. (Wong & Trumper, 2002) The conceptual framework and theories derived from the Journal of Marketing, the Journal of Management, Journal of Consumer Behavior and the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, among others. The collection of data was in accordance to the purpose (Saunders et al, 2007). A precise reference on the material is found in the appendix.

### 6.5 Quality in the Qualitative Research

In order to avoid a bias problems caused by the researcher “me” the approach I’ve taken was more of a listener where I tried restricting myself of subjective thinking during the interviews. To develop the skills needed to carry on the interviews additional literature on conducting research projects was helpful specially the books from (Silverman, 2010; O’leary, 2009 and Saunders 2009). The risk of researcher bias is possible specially because this study only has one author so all comments and analyses are derived from one person.

Partially the analysis took place during the interviews in the form of small notations for each participant. The substantial analysis took place after by listening to the recordings all over, spotting the most suitable phrases and comments to be displayed in the empirical results section.

Saldaña (2009) proposes a coding system in which an array of words representing an attitude or feeling. During the reporting phase of the empirical results the researcher gathered words that could integrate an idea, i.e., when a participant reported to get goose bumps from music the words “goose bumps” making emphasis on a physical reaction of their selves to the music was coded as “ecstasy”.


7 Empirical Results & Analysis

For the sake of simplicity and clarity in this section the empirical results are presented together with an analysis of how they relate to the theoretical framework. This results are based on the primary data collected during the study and thus all suggestions and implications are limited to the sample utilized. The analysis tries to find patterns-paradigmatic elements across different domains.

The typology of consumer value aids consumer researchers at integrating contributions to a wide variety of consumer behavior related issues across different interest areas (Holbrook, 2006). It served to explore and map ideal points of maximum consumer value based on the (1) nature and (2) types of consumer values for three different celebrity domains: entertainment, sports and politics.

The idea behind this framework is that placing a human brand closer to that optimal point we can achieve differential advantage. By contrast the more we deviate from that optimal point the less value gained from the human brand and thus differential advantage. For example a fashion model provides an extrinsic self oriented value (excellence) from being attractive. The antonym would be non-attractive-repulsive-ugly. The closer she is to the antonym the less excellence value she/he will yield.

How the value is created will then be by being near the optimal point. This point varies according to the celebrity domain as illustrated by the results in the next section. By contrast un-creating (reducing) value would then be by departing from the optimal point.

Following this reasoning, celebrities blameworthy for causing negative events – high blame, low blame or complex blame–would deviate from the optimal value point and get closer to the antonym. The results from 20 in depth interviews show that this reasoning applies, and when engaging in negative events some types of value get affected however the domain and blame type depicted some interesting patterns. It is important to recognize that one weakness of this approach is historical effect bias that emanates when participant’s can’t recall completely their emotions, felling and behavior when the events shown in the filter happened.

7.1 The case of Entertainers

7.1.1 Optimal Value Point

After analyzing words and short phrases derived from the qualitative inquiry I began codifying the material to see where it would fit in the typology of consumer value. When it comes to entertainers primarily the most relevant values from the most important to the less are: efficiency, excellence, play, aesthetics, ethics, status and spirituality. As of esteem being the last, only one person seemed to resemble a sense of joy from material possession of the entertainer vinyl albums, he is a hardcore fan of the Beatles. This is a form of “conspicuous consumption” and is not a surprising discovery. Several made similar comments about the pleasure evoked from consuming products endorsed by entertainer and mention that if they were to try to win approval from others they would focus on the brand and not who endorses it.

Efficiency took most often the form of convenience when in fact efficiency of consuming a celebrity was more related to time than to money. This contribution is a result of this study and not necessarily applies for other samples groups. Entertainers overall are efficient when they provide enough value to have a pleasant time from consuming their experience satisfying services however this seem to
be a type of value let’s say “indispensable” to be even be consider a entertainer. To wrap it up the common view is that an entertainer is supposed to entertain me. In addition the time shifting devices shall be attractive in price nevertheless a lot of the participants claimed to get free access to entertainment by streaming films and music. When having the opportunity to assist a live performance the price should be affordable otherwise it might result in not attending the live act.

**Excellence** involving quality perceived from the activity of singing and/or acting. My findings came to reinforce the idea from Caves (2002) and Andersson and Andersson (2006) that celebrities are used as insurances for expected quality levels as Leo C, recent graduate from university and sales manager for Swedish-held firm producing LED lights explained when asked to mark which celebrities from the list in appendix 1 he actively consumes.

Tom Cruise… for sure...the guy has been in only good movies since Top Gun. Actors like him are not likely to be in bad movies, is not like he is lacking offers so he probably gets some of the best scripts and movies in Hollywood

(Oct 23th 2010)

Singers and actors are to provide an intrinsic self-oriented type of value (Play) as Mads B. from Denmark currently studying his third year of orthopedics and perhaps one of the participants that showed the less amount of concerned in celebrities scandals and that mostly focus on the result of their activities and not personal life, coined it:

If the artist puts me in a good mood when listening to his songs then I know he is good… is a similar situation with actors, they should make me laugh, cry or be scared.

(Nov 18th, 2010)

The word “fun” was a common theme among the participants when they described what they expected from a celebrity in this domain to yield maximum value. In third place the appreciation of the output derived from the entertainer activity, be it a song, live performance, TV series or a film was said to be prized for its own sake therefore filling into the *Aesthetic* type of value which in some cases constitutes forms of pure arts (Holbrook, 1999). Thus attractiveness and looks are relevant for some domains in entertainment mainly acting and less music. In some domain this might even have a negative effect as is the case of Gangster-Rappers.

**Ethics** is a type of value that people does not really expect entertainers to resemble. One participant happened to worked for an American Broadcaster “Univision” for a period of one year. He argued that most celebrities are living a wild life, whether is the pressure to look good, stage panic or their popularity, a lot of them seemed to be involved in drugs and sexually open lifestyles. I have to highlight that most participants seem to see acts of low blame as normal for entertainers. This turns out to be an interesting finding and perhaps a result of mediated information. Levin et al (2005) noted the People magazine cover shifted from celebrity merits to celebrity scandals. If it appears on a constant basis sooner or later consumer will regards it as normal or accepted celebrity hebehavior.

Some would even neglect the idea that they are involved in pro-charity movements for altruistic reasons and this only because of marketing. I noticed a tendency among the female respondents to be more receptive in a positive way of celebrities fighting for social causes.
When asked if they have portrayed a favorable image (which is a question related to *Status*) by consuming or not consuming certain celebrities, the answer was yes in all cases. As Jo C. from Italy who happens to enjoy Pop music explained it:

After talking to my friends girlfriend for some minutes, I realize that the one thing we had in common is that we both hate Lady GaGa…you can say that it kind of help me break the ice.  

(Nov 23th 2010)

I also found out that most of them do not care that much what others think about the celebrities they admire and consume because they often consume them alone through their mobile, iPods or laptops. Others opinions proved somehow relevant when exactly five of them confirmed that they have admired a celebrity in secret because their friend taught he/she was not cool. They would continue to admire the celebrity but would not communicate it.

The last type of value and also a quite tricky one is that of *spirituality*. I noticed that participants were reluctant to disclose information regarding rapture, beatitude, ecstasy and so on. It can be assumed that they did not want to look like fanatics or groupies and those they simply not experienced this type of value. Since I am not in a position to draw conclusion I shall focus on what Linda T. described which was coded as *ecstasy*:

There have been times *when I get goose bumps* from listening to music; right now I can recall the song “my immortal from Evanescence”.

(Nov 29th 2010)

The following table resumes the attributes identified in general terms for an entertainer to elicit maximum or high consumer value.

**Table 4. OVP for the Entertainment Domain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entertainer</th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Oriented</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>EFFICIENCY (worthy of my time)</td>
<td>PLAY (fun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>EXCELLENCE (Uniqueness &amp; consistency)</td>
<td>AESTHETICS (attractiveness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Quality-singing-acting)</td>
<td>(valuable offer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other-Oriented</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>STATUS (Impression Management)</td>
<td>ETHICS (not harm others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Cool, trendy)</td>
<td>(Charity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>ESTEEM (Prestige)</td>
<td>SPIRITUALITY (ecstasy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typology based on Holbrook (2006) and applied by the author.
7.1.2 High Blame scenario

Keeping in mind that consumer value is an interactive relativistic preference experience, relativistic entailing that is comparative, situational and it varies from person to person (Holbrook, 2006), the responses from the participants were totally the opposite from time to time. An effort was made to find general patterns that shall be presented in the current and following section although I opted to present the most common thoughts among the participants and highlight the ones contrasting the most. (a description of the cases can be found in the method section). It is worth mentioning that when the participants were asked to pin point which celebrities they consume from among the filter list a lot of them were making comments for themselves while reading the list. This comments ranged from: “she is so beautiful, he rocks, I hate this guy, he is a wife beater, she is a junky, he is a pig, and I used to like him before she started being weird” and plenty similar and worse comments were made. Without me asking a single question about the celebrity, opinions were already popping out from merely filling out the filter.

For high blame actions the case of rising RnB singer Chris Brown illustrates how negative was for his fans and career that he assaulted singer Rihanna. Among the 25 participants half of them liked his music and approximately a quarter of them stopped consuming or supporting the artist after the negative incident. Only Mads B. from Denmark did not share this position:

I have been listening to Chris Brown since the release of his first album... I would go definitely go to his concert and I will continue to listen to him… he is a good singer I don’t care what happened with Rihanna. (Nov 18th 2010)

Mads B. stance is the opposite from Janin C. she actually mentioned during the filter “I despise Chris Browm” and hence I commended her opinion for forward development:

It just pisses me off to know that I indirectly support his shit actions…I don’t want my money to support the way they behave. (Nov 15th 2010)

The results of most participants are in line with the findings in the typology of CCV for an entertainer where “not harming others” was preferred. With the exception of the Michael Jackson that falls under a complex scenario, entertainers will deviate from an optimal point when causing physical or emotional damage to others but Michael Jackson did not. This corroborates Maltby (2001) arguments where he claims that we seem to overlook when the norms are broken by celebrities.

As of entertainers abusing alcohol the response from all participants was neutral and unless he or she engages in actions while being drunk, no strong deviation from the optimal point will occur, like the case of drunken David Hasselhoff video tape when he is arguing with a young girl while trying to stuff a hamburger in his mouth.

Drugs are seen as ordinary and nothing alarming since often we see on gossip magazines such as People that celebrities were caught with narcotics, had an overdose or are about to start rehab. Some claim that they might look down on them or their admiration for them would perhaps be affected specially with synthetic drugs (cocaine, amphetamines and heroin). Marijuana enjoyed more tolerance. Leo S. recalls that plenty of hip hop beats are about being high; he mentioned the song by Afroman- because I got high:
Even in the videos you see them smoking weed… they are so open about it that is just so normal…I know that some even go out on stage intoxicated…is just part of the show…as long they can perform… it does not bother me whatsoever.  

(Oct 23rd 2010)

Another young adult, Carlos V. who admired and grew up listening to Whitney Houston and watched the movie “The bodyguard” and thus actively consumed the celebrity gave insights to what later appears to be a commonality among participants. He reminisced:

I remember I played her music in the car and at home and that initially started listening to her because my parents did… after I found that she was taking cocaine and being part of all this scandals… she was no longer “The Diva” she used to be…she was just an ordinary junky to me and surely I never expected from someone like Whitney Houston…I was disappointed…She looked horrible, her voice was not the same, she could not even perform anymore.  

(Oct 19th 2010)

I followed with the question regarding further consumption and the answer was very straightforward from Carlos V. “I would not go to her concert.” An equivalent situation occurred with Britney Spears however for this person consumption remains strong. Participant #2 that did not want to reveal her name (anonymous) stated that it was hard to see a girl coming from a Disney program turned into the opposite of what she used to be:

She was sold as the innocent Britney that dated Justin...and suddenly she turns into a party girl, hanging out with Paris Hilton, shaving her head and doing crazy stuff… I guess that’s why it was so shocking for people to assimilate all that change surrounded with more and more scandals.  

(Oct 19th 2010)

She would continue to consume Britney, as she did when she went to her concert in Stockholm, Sweden in 2009. Participant #2 did say that her image about her changed. In both the Whitney and Britney case we can see how a lack of consistency causes cognitive conflicts among the participants which I will develop more in depth in the analysis section nevertheless consumers expectation seem to start having a role. The main difference among Whitney and Britney is that for one of them her behavior straightforwardly affected the quality of her voice. Having a direct impact of the excellence type of value which is ranked among the most relevant to achieve an optimal value point for the creation of value for a singer. Note that in the typology for entertainers it was not of extreme importance to be disassociated with narcotics which is not the case in the next two domains.

7.1.3 Complex Blame scenario

Michael Jackson´s case is without a doubt the most mentioned case of all and the most polemic and to some extent delicate. Christian from Stockholm who just finished her degree in International Management and is at the moment working for a Stockholm-Los Angeles held independent label that has been involved in music branding campaigns such as “Im Calling Out” for the Red Cross with artist Lazee and Apollo Drive, admitted that he is big time fan of the King of POP. While I posed the question about how he felt when Jackson was accused for molesting minors, he automatically took a defensive stand and interrupted me directly “he never did it”, I answer back saying that I never claimed he did so I stressed the “when he was accused” part from the question. He comment the following while raising his voice and avidly involving 200% more body language:
That is total rubbish. The media was always trying to destroy his career and they were aware that every time his name was printed in a cover, newspaper or whatever …it will sell lots. I would even there to say that the parent who left their kids there were just looking for an opportunity to exploit the situation…Macaulay Culkin himself denied everything…a pre-fabricated story from CNN, ABC and the networks taking the kids idol and the most controversial artist to sky rocket their sales.

(Dec 7th 2010)

Markus, Participant #2, Shirin and Helena among other participants state that they don’t believe it. Helena a normal marketing student from Stockholm University whose older siblings introduce her to Jackson’s music put it in pretty straight forward phrase “I don’t want to believe it” and she was not the only one. Carina from the U.S.A who was studying International Management at the Jonkoping International Business School and used to work as a lifeguard back in California received the same question, how did you feel after you find out that Jackson was accused for molesting minors?

“I was very, very sad… because he was my neighbor and he lives only ten minutes from us in a very small town so it was all over the news and everywhere in there was police and… God… news filming people… it was a very big deal.”

(Nov 29th 2011)

After her statement she was asked if she continued to consume Michael Jackson (music, merchandise, etc) the response was quite clear. “Yes, I did. I actually got more supportive” and since the purpose of this paper is not an if-type of question were only a yes or no is expected she was rapidly asked, why?

Because when I went to his ranch I saw how he treated children with cancer and stuff like that…they had like beds in the movie theater that they could lean since they could not sit in a real chair and I felt like if he was doing things like that for kids, I did not think it was not very logical that he would be molesting children.

(Nov 29th 2011)

To wrap it up, Carina’s admiration and consumptions increased after the accusation, the statement above reflects that some sort of cognitive dissonance or internal conflict arises when the image of a celebrity is no longer consistent and turns from good to evil in one day. Not all participants share the idea that the celebrity is an innocent citizen.

7.2 The case of Sports-Athletes

For high performance athletes the most relevant values from the most important to the less appeared to be: excellence, efficiency, ethics, esteem, aesthetics, spirituality, status and play as last.

Excellence- demonstrating outstanding physical skills and high technique in the domain where the athlete performs. Frequently it was mentioned that they have to be fast, resistant, and put their heart and mind into the game and “do everything to win” Hector C. explain in speech:
Terrel Owens from the Bengals is my favorite player, he has it all, strength, self confidence and he is cocky. He is the leader the Bengals needed...he cares for developing his team...I don’t admire him only as a player but as a person, I like his personality and he is a show man on and off the field.

(Nov 18th 2010)

The Means-End Chain Model approach (Solomon, 2009) could be applied in a quite straight forward way in this case. The model predicates that we link specific product attributes (strength, speed, technique) to terminal values. This type of value is perceived to be closely related to winning, achievements and records therefore resembling efficiency. Most participants mention that it is important for them to win. Fans asses’ efficiency as a ratio of victories per game especially for sports where no team is required. I decided to have excellence first because many of the favorites athletes of the participants are not champions or players of the lead team, they just happen to excel in the sport like the mentioned Swedish football player Zlatan Ibrahimović that according to Phillip S had the misfortune that there is no equal talent in the Swedish national team.

Ethical behavior showed to be more important than for entertainers. Steroids, dirty game, doping, humiliating the rival, violent behavior, smoking, alcohol and drugs are not accepted by the participants.(excluding the unique case of Diego A. Maradona) It appears clear that specially under season time all of the activities mentioned will affect the performance of the athlete therefore leaving the whole team with less chances of winning. Participant # 0 who had played in the Swedish football second division explained:

Any Barcelona supporter like me was pissed off when we saw the pictures from Ronaldinho partying and drinking at 2 a.m in the morning while he was supposed to be injured and be home resting...the team goes before the player so when he risks Barcelona’s chance to win, the fans will not excuse his “behavior” and neither the club. (Nov 24th 2010)

It noticed a sense of prestige or possession joy (esteem) from one participants as he was explaining to me that going to playoff games, final games or games where an athlete plays in a non habitual way makes him look cool, he mentioned:

Just being in the world cup final game gives you some sort of status… can you imagine the people that was there when Zidane head butted Materazzi… that is something to brag about…I was there! (Nov 22th 2010)

Aesthetics appeared mostly of appreciating the experience that the sport provides that can be enhanced by the athlete performance; some participants talked about the looks however I would not consider this a relevant issue unless a negative event has a direct effect on it.

As in my previous example of Michael Jordan providing a sense of faith to the fans, I noticed that others feel the same way. None claimed to worship the athletes in my study.

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9 The Cincinnati Bengals is a NFL team.
As of status in this case, I was told by all participants that what others think about their team or favorite player does not matter because in sports this is normal. The love their team and hate the rival, from my personal experience this was nothing new since I have personally been following a football team that has not taken the championship in quite a while. Participants said that showing preference to one team automatically bonds them to a tribe.

Play is more related to me doing something. Surely playing a sport would be the case but watching the sport also involves people doing something but at a lesser level. Since the participants exhibit to pursue hedonic attributes from consuming the sport overall it could be hard to isolate how much of that pleasure is caused by the player therefore this is the last but not least value derived from consuming athletes. One can also claim that this is the first in order of importance arguing that we consume sports because the pleasure is prized for its own sake (Holbrook, 2006).

Table 5. OVP for Sports Related Domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athlete</th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Oriented</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>EFFICIENCY (victory, medals, records.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>EXCELLENCE (outstanding skills, fast)</td>
<td>AESTHETICS (physical look)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(competitive, leadership)</td>
<td>(technical abilities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(strength.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Oriented</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>STATUS (Tribe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>ESTEEM (Prestige)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.1 High and Complex Blame scenario

Excellence appeared to be the attribute with the highest degree of relevance for a celebrity athlete. The impression that as long as the negative action is not affecting the performance of team or his/hers individual performance the participants seemed to be quite tolerant. They are not expected to be life role models unless they have sold themselves like that which is the case of Tiger Woods (Role Model, 2010) even then he was judge with more anger by the female participants while males seemed to give his actions less importance. They are sports role models that do not necessarily means that people admired them for their life outside the field or the arena as Thomas said. He will continue to admire Tiger Woods as long he keeps up with the game. He said:

10 Typology based on Holbrook (2006) and applied by the author.
I admire him for what he does as a golf player and I never saw him as, Tiger, the great husband and father or whatever…I do not support what he did since he has a family but as of consuming his products- I would not mind at all…Why should I stop buying NIKE merchandise just because he cheated on his wife…I will continue to buy NIKE as I have been since I am 10 years old.

(Dec 5th 2010)

Francis, Mads and Isabel said that they were surprised when reading the tabloids about Tiger Woods. It was not as shocking when Tyson was accused for rape even thought that is a stronger and legally worse accusation. Francis who was familiar with Mike Tyson’s career and enjoys contact sports like boxing and UFC an MMA “Mixed Martial Arts” said that from a guy like Tyson you can expect the unexpected. Tyson is a beast… he is crazy…he ripped off half of Holyfield’s ear…Who does that? Look at him, he’s got tattoos all over his face, what can you actually expect from someone like him…taking drugs, drinking, gambling, not paying taxes. (Dec 2th 2010)

Once again some sort of pattern arises whereas the celebrity’s image can be consistent with her/his behavior or not. For Tiger it was not but for Tyson it was. It seems that the damage and the shock is larger when someone jumps off dramatically from the image that consumers have.

As for basketball player Kobe Bryant the situation was closer to that of Tiger than Tyson however it was a complex and doubtful case since he was found innocent after a while. Even thought Kobe was alleged innocent of rape he apologized for cheating on his wife. Many of them refer to this type of cases as “happening all the time”, sometimes they are grounded on real facts and some other type the so called victims are just trying to profit from the celebrity. Both Markus and Daniel made me understand that is hard to know when is real and when are they being blackmailed. Daniel said:

I don’t give these accusations to much importance unless they are found guilty if not is like it never happened. These people have plenty of money and fame why would they even rape someone? … I am not saying that it cannot happen…I mean celebrities take lots of drugs, booze… but it can also be that they see an opportunity to get a generous amount of money to remove the charges…it’s complicated!

(Dec 11th 2010)

Some participants might be caught up in an attribution dilemma that promotes a non clear pattern for researches since the media is quite unpredictable. Is hard to anticipate if they will try to sink the celebrity or excuse her behavior when illegal or immoral. Thus they would play a vital function in the quest for the answer to questions like, why did the celebrity do that? Such attributions of responsibility will conflict the consumers ability to choose to support or not the celebrity. This attribution dilemma finding seems consistent with some of the ideology behind Weiner (2010).

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11 Women involved in sexual relationship with celebrities claiming that they were abused.
7.2.2 Low Blame scenario

Diego A. Maradona was by far the most used case in this category. Whether he had cocaine problems or not he is still the idol of Markus and Phillip who are football fanatics. They were too young when he played and never had the chance to actually watch him play life nevertheless they have seen recorded material and admire him for his achievements. They did not care about the drugs at all. We have another indicator that for an athlete, performance is vital.

Drugs and steroids were judged differently, drugs were seen as part of their personal life but anabolism was related directly to the sport and seen as a way of cheating or an attempt to boost his endurance. The illegal use of steroid in my sample group seems to be less tolerated than drugs. Thomas and Miia had a similar opinion whereas steroids users should not even be allowed to compete. Thomas put it like this:

    You are supposed to win because of your natural abilities and discipline not because you spent more money on buying growth hormones and testosterone pills

(Dec 5th 2010)

Most of the participants were not aware of Michael Phelps marijuana incident. The multiple Olympic medal winners were supported by one of the participants. The main argument was that no matter what he does, the sixteen medals he won will be his. When one of them found out from the filter that he had smoked marijuana from a bong, she claimed to be disappointed. “I do not support drugs she said and I don’t have the same respect as I had from him before”, clearly a statement that reflects the destruction of value as a result of Phelps behavior. This destruction of value led this participant to stop admiring the swimmer because he now represents something that she is totally against “drugs”. This findings support the “consistency” theory with the relevance of a celebrity image.

7.3 The case of Politics

For politicians or individuals campaigning in favor of a political party, the political party proved to lay out the foundation for what consumer associate with the human brand. Four participants talked about profiling the candidates (senators, congress men, presidents) according to the party they are enrolled in. Independently of this fact I stressed the focus on the “person” and some attributes to construct what a politician yielding maximum consumer value appeared to be: ethics, excellence, efficiency, spirituality and partly status. Esteem, Fun and Aesthetics types of values at least from my sample seemed to not play a critical role in this particular domain.

“Fairness, honesty, justice, virtue, morality and not-corrupt” occupied the main attributes for politicians, which are all related to ethics (Holbrook, 2006). This qualities were followed by leadership and capability related qualities which relate more to excellence considering that the politician is indeed valued for its capacity to function according to self oriented ends that each supporter might have. Some mentioned as a joke “a good politician in Sweden should decrease taxes (laugh)”. Holbrook (2006) states that efficiency happens when extrinsic value result from actively using an object or experience. A politician is used as means to an end as Linda T who comes from a country in Latin America that just joined the OECD explains:
Their job is to secure employment, fight corruption, decrease crime, provide proper education and health care systems for their people...they are granted power and resources so they can keep up to their promises. (Nov 29th 2010)

*Faith* is for politicians a key asset once they have earned it. We are no longer talking about football fanatics hoping for a championship, we are talking about social masses hoping for better paychecks, working conditions, health and education for their children. In some countries the needs go as low as clean water and food. I shall quote Carina from the U.S.A statement:

> When my country is fighting two wars in the other side of the world, the financial system has crashed and thousands are being laid off... when Obama said “This is your victory” when he won the elections...some broke into tears because they believed in him... he represents “hope” for many Americans.

(Nov 26th 2010)

Others opinion of our political preferences seemed to be important, especially when coming from family members nevertheless *Status* might to some degree blur between the lines of publicly communicating your political preferences and not.

What my friends think about the candidates I support is not important to me at all. First of all we usually not talk politics and if so, it’s already a given that is not likely that we all have the same opinions... anyway, I don’t care, “who do I vote for is a secret anyway” (November 27th 2010)

Table 6. OVP for Politics Domain¹²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politician</th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>EFFICIENCY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>(fulfill promises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCELLENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>(leadership, capability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other-Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>ETHICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(fairness, honesty, justice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ESTEEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SPIRITUALITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(faith)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹² Typology based on Holbrook (2006) and applied by the author.
7.3.1 High Blame, Low Blame, and Complex Blame scenarios

Not all the participants recognized every name provided in the filter however Bill Clinton, Silvio Berlusconi and Mona Sahlin were avidly utilized. Independently of the action committed by the politician the participants in general showed no tolerance for any type of immoral, racist, or illegal behavior. This is nothing really surprising except for the case of Bill Clinton were some of them continue to admire him and express willingness to purchase his biography nevertheless they claimed that they would not vote for him if they happened to be American’s even if his presidential shift was prosperous for the U.S.A. Alejandra from México brought ex-president George W. Bush into the conversation even though he was not mentioned in the filter. She compared Clinton with Bush.

“Clinton over Bush, without a doubt…at least he is not sending soldiers every time he’s got the chance” (Nov 22th 2010)

The case of the politicians was quite a sensitive topic where people’s opinion diverges from one to another. Often they focused on their political performance and economic measures so they ignore or could not really isolate only the negative information presented in the filter. For example as of Silvio Berlusconi they were asked to comment on this involvement with young women and parties but suddenly they were talking about TV monopoly, unemployment, etc.

Mona Sahlin who bought candy with government money received strong and unfavorable comments mostly by Swedish students. Sarah N an ex-student from the European Business School in London who supported the political party that Sahlin represented since she had the legal age to vote in the country of Sweden had the following comments:

She not brought shame to herself but to all Social Democrats…is not about how much money she spent is about the action…showing that she dare to do something that she was not supposed to…she is supposed to be an example for others in Sweden. (Dec 12th 2010)

It rapidly became obvious that a politician has more influence in our life than entertainers and athletes. As Christian L said, “they get the chance to influence the taxes and the law” Expectancy theory (Solomon, 2009) spotted clearly from politician. They are expected to create common welfare.

From the OVP construction in the previous section it can be seen that for people within politics “values” are a must and even a minor deviation from the OVP can harm their career and in this case there is no way back. It is not as easy as for athletes whereas one bad season is forgotten once they start wining again. Janin’s C opinion on politicians the effect on consumption that negative information might have is resumed in a few words.

With the politicians is not only about what they do…is about what they say…the media is always capturing public speeches and the followers can cease to support them if they don’t like a comment, a proposal or any type of statement. (Nov 15th 2010)
8 Conclusion

In the empirical results section we have identified the types of consumer values that consumers expect when consuming celebrities. A general OPV proposal for an entertainer, athlete and a politician was presented according to (Holbrook, 2006) where differences in the degree of importance of values differ from one domain to another. The “enabling values” proved to be the main driver for consumers to engage in admiring and consuming celebrities and thus the “enhancing values” come a second term. Focusing in the “enabling values” can be seen as focusing on the needed attributes of the artist and as long as this needed attributes excel they can overcome some negativities caused by low blame actions, especially if they are mostly affecting the “enhancing values”. Fraser & Brown (2002) argued that Elvis fanatics were able to block minor Low Blame actions by the artist and highlight his great voice, charisma and music.

Negative celebrity information does have the ability to influence the consumption experience however every case should be analyzed separately. Different blame scenarios could assist to map potential consumer’s reactions based on previous cases. Specific domain stereotypes could also give insight into how the public will react since expectations on celebrities differ from one domain to another. A third indicator is that of “consistency” with the celebrity previous behavior and image. The Warner Music Group should not be as alarmed if one of its rock bands like Linkin Park or Metallica are found under narcotics as it would be pop artist Seal or Latin Americans favorite ballad singer Luis Miguel.

Overall High Blame actions are causes of value destruction for any celebrity specially when dealing with murders and rapes that have been proved. Being guilty would most likely come with the implication of losing your freedom which indeed removes the celebrity from the spotlight and no matter how hard the label, movie studio, football club or political party tries, people will forget about them if they are not around.

Low Blame actions were seemed as part of the entertainer’s life style however they enjoyed less tolerance for athletes and none for politicians. Drugs do have the potential to disrupt equilibrium in an OPV especially when they have a direct effect on the “enabling values” such as singing, acting or physical performance. As long as that guarantee of quality is still present and is not dampened by the celebrity behavior their name will continue to be seen as insurance or guarantee. (Andersson & Andersson, 2006).

Complex or doubtful blame situations could be either beneficial or extremely damaging. If the celebrity is found innocent due to lack of evidence then there is a possibility for fans to get even more supportive and for the human brand to become “a victim”. Maltby (2001) findings that suggest that some consumer worship their idols even to the extent where they neglect or explain away their negative behavior. This turned out to be the case of Michael Jackson where participants mentioned that they did not want to believe in the accusations which could be seen as a sign of worshiping Jackson. If the King of POP would have been found guilty the outcome and impact in the singer’s consumption would have perhaps been different.

There are patterns arising from the domains analyzed. For instance entertainers overall are seen as having a wild lifestyle and even within entertainment sub-domains like rock and hip-hop are known for having quite many “bad-boys”. The domain does have the power to anchor a celebrity to a pre-conceived type of behavior as one participants said “football players in Spain are always gold-clients in Strip Clubs” illustrating an stereotype thus the domain can enhance or block the receptiveness of
celebrity negative information. The domain does have the advantage to save a celebrity from a ruining their career. While this paper was written the Swedish Idol 2010 contestant “Jay Smith” was found to be a user of marijuana during the competition. The Swedish media including some of the local newspaper like the Aftonbladet and DN were speculating if his popularity was to decrease. Jay Smith sold himself to the audience as rocker and thus was stereotyped as one. From previous rockers behavior is widely known that within that domain narcotics are common, “Drugs, Sex and Rock and Roll” as the Gun`s and Roses Lyrics says. Jay Smith popularity did not decrease whatsoever and he won the Swedish Idol in 2010 (Aftonbladet, 2010). As one of the participants said “he is a true rocker, he even takes drugs” this shows the importance on consumptions of the audience being targeted and how stereotypes on some domains can enhance tolerance to a celebrity’s wild career.

8.1 Key Contributions and Managerial Implications

In briefing manner the contributions of this study are:

- A more comprehensive basis model, building on “consumer value theory” for understanding the potential effects of celebrity negative information for consumers and the stakeholders related with.
- The verification of how the “domain” posses an enhancing/blocking effect for celebrity negative information.
- The identification of important celebrity elements, i.e., “consistency” which when disrupted leads to cognitive dissonance and confusion among consumers.

From a practical stand point various stakeholders related with celebrities are in the position to be financially damaged when celebrities meltdown. The cash-flow and future earnings of some stakeholders are related to the celebrities’ ability to live up to the expectations of the contractor (Caves, 2002). This study provides practitioners’ with a base of knowledge to forecast with more accuracy the potential effects of celebrity scandals on consumptions patterns. Decisions makers will have a theoretical framework to relay on before choosing to disrupt their relationship with a celebrity, cancel an upcoming show, giving a press release or choosing a political party member.

Principally fruitful practitioners may consider then inclusion of a “scandal indemnity clause” when in fact the celebrity should compensate the other party (label, sports club, film studio) if their actions are causing a misfortune.

8.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Due to limited amount of time and resources the scope of this research in restricted to small sample group and to three general domains. A more in depth study whereas specific sub-domains are utilized with the purpose of mapping the Optimal Value Point and stereotypes characteristics would be of interest for different parties in the media and entertainment industry. Furthermore the development of a model that deals with “Human Brand Crisis Management” with the objective to guide real stakeholders dealing with situations like this shall be appreciated for practitioners.
9 References


**JOURNALS, ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES**


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Top 10 most valuable Basketball Cards (2010). retrieved on November the 19th 2010 from http://www.infobarrel.com/Top_10_Most_Valuable_Basketball_Cards


10 Appendix

Step 1-Primary Data Collection- Nov 2010-Dec2011
“Master theses in Business Administration”

ATTRACTION

✓ At any point in your life, have you had or do you continue to admire one of the famous persons provided in the following list.

✓ Whom?

CONSUMPTION

✓ Have you engaged in consuming his/her music, movies, concerts, sports games, video games, magazines or products endorsed by him/her (beverages, perfumes, clothing, banking, insurances etc)?

✓ Was the celebrity an influential driver for you to consume that product/service?

EFFICIENCY

✓ When do you engage in celebrity consumption?

EXCELLENCE- quality

✓ Do you consume celebrities for its capacity to perform outstanding in his/her domain?

STATUS – Others

✓ Does your friends/family/co-workers opinion on your celebrities of choice matter?

✓ By admiring certain celebrity have you communicated a favorable image to someone else?

ESTEEM – Me

✓ Is there any celebrity you admire in secret?
Have chosen not to admire certain celebrity because your friends dislike him/her?

**PLAY**

✓ In your free time do you happen to actively consume celebrities products (Movies, DVD’s) information (Gossip)?

✓ Do you have fun while doing it?

**AESTHETICS**

✓ Can you describe some emotions from consuming your favorite celebrity?

**ETHICS**

✓ Do you tend to admire celebrities that defend an environmental or humanitarian cause?

✓ Do you tend to admire celebrities involved in charity?

**Step 2- Blame worthy Action Awareness** (Open conversation)

Are you aware that the celebrities you marked (from the filter) have committed this _________ action?

**YES** or **NO**

If **YES**

How did you feel about it? (Describe openly)

Did it affect your consumption?

If **NO**

How do you feel about it?

Will it affect your consumption (explain term)?