

The Influence of Celebrity Worship on Student Motivation in Learning

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Abstract

In this era of globalization, the celebrity worshipping phenomenon seems to be a common occurrence we meet in everyday life. Younger generation tend to idolize certain public figures and set them as their role model in life. In the midst of so many negative stigmas about idolatry of a celebrity figure, many of this is associated with extreme fanaticism. However, a lot of case studies showed that idolizing a certain individual could increase the percentage of student's learning motivation, especially in learning languages. This study uses a literature review method to examine the topic. The literatures used as research references come from a lot of different sources such as international journals, online media reports, books, as well as articles related to motivation to study in relation to celebrity worship. By using Watson and Morgan's Motivation Theory, researchers were able to figure out the relationship between celebrity's influence and students amplified motivation to learn. Watson and Morgan's Motivation Theory has four important points which are elaborated into these following research results: 1) The original drive consists of three innate emotions; rage, fear, and love; 2) Drive is a generalized motivation process; 3) The emotions are the original source of drive; 4) The level of performance is a function of drive and not of habit. In this study, the researchers seek for the relevance between celebrity worshipping activities as the "drive" of student's learning behavior. The results obtained through this study indicate that the phenomenon of idolatry—in this context it is of celebrity, is proven to increase students' learning motivation, although (in many cases) not permanently.

Keyword: Celebrity Influence, Celebrity worshipping, Watson and Morgan Motivation Theory, Drive, Student Motivation.

Introduction

Individuals get their motivation from a lot of places and direction, be it coming from intrinsic or extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation comes from within, while extrinsic motivation drives and rises from external factors (Hung et al., 2011). Hung et al., (2011) argues that in order for an individual or an organization to acquire knowledge or have the desire to acquire one, people naturally have extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. In their research, using a total of 118 responses used for analysis, the outcome matched with the initial hypothesis. It indicates that extrinsic motivation such as economy reward and social acceptance, combined with intrinsic motivation such as meeting personal satisfaction, curiosity, etc., are proven to be the "drive" of one's reason to pursue specific goals, such as further education, certain career aspiration, etc.

This aligned with Deci & Ryan (2000) statements that "*to be motivated means to be moved to do something*". Insufficient motivation prevents an adapt individual from accomplishing long-term goals even if perfect teaching and proper strategies are applied (Dornyei, 1988). That proves the high importance of motivation for an individual. Nowadays, students seeks motivation from all places and directions. We are currently in the era where every individual needs something to hold onto to continue pursuing their goals. This could be coming from having the needs of parental approval, society approval, and in this context, it could even be coming from idolizing a public figure or celebrity.

In this context, idolatry refers to considering a famous individual or celebrity as an object of worship. Today's youth often believe that an idol-like character they admire is idealistic, charming, and supremely powerful (Yue & Cheung, 2000). According to He (2006) and Niu & Wang (2009), worship also connotes

regard, respect, desire, envy, revering, adoration, and addiction. In addition to idolizing a deity, people may also look up to heroes, luminaries, role models, and pop culture stars who are also artists, celebrities, or athletes (Maltby, Day, McCutcheon, Gillet, et al., 2004).

Worshipping celebrity, particularly of pop culture and movie stars, has drawn a lot of attention in recent studies due to its popularity, social pressure, and potential negative effects on young people's self development (Maltby, Day, McCutcheon, Gillett, et al., 2004). Clarifying the nature of celebrity worship is important since it attracts significant resources and labor (Harrick & Jacquemotte, 2002). Moreover, the extent of idolizing celebrity vary among individuals across different age and background, and such variation offers a clue to study the nature of celebrity worship (He, 2006). But in another case, idolizing someone is also considered as the original drive for student to have desire to learn. Kumar (2021) study shows that idolizing some celebrity or celebrity-like figure is proven to improve student's performance in linguistic learning. However, a reconfirmation is necessary to identify whether idol worshipping is considered as a distraction for student's learning behavior, or is it actually beneficial as it could elevate the student's drive to learn.

The original Drive Theory by John B. Watson and J.J.B Morgan was published as an article in 1917, in which they introduced the term "drive" as a motivational construct. The theory explains that personal drive is in charge of activating and energizing functions that contemporary motivational theory subsumes with the use of the term.

The following represents an extraction of the assumption and postulations Watson and Morgan made about drive:

- 1) The original drive consisting three innate emotions; rage, fear, and love;
- 1) Drive is a generalized motivation process;
- 2) The emotions are the original sources of drive;
- 3) The level of performance is a function of drive and not of habit.

In this study, the research seeks the relevance between celebrity worship activities as the "drive" of student's learning behavior.

Methods

The authors of this study conducted the research by using the literature review methodology. With this approach, the power comes from the research, reading, analyzing, and concluding supporting readings in the form of journals on the subjects being discussed. This approach aids in identifying issues from the study being done and teaches researchers about the nature and history of the subjects under discussion. This method of conducting a literature review involves multiple steps. Specifically, carrying out research by assessing literatures relevant to the theme to find any discussion-worthy gaps, followed by reading articles and other accessible sources of information, then analyzing the readings to determine their significance. Assessing whether the reading is pertinent to the authors' research is the next step, concluding how the article related to the authors' study.

Findings dan Discussions

In this era of globalization, it is not unusual for celebrity to appear as inspirational figures who can motivate an individual to remain passionate about pursuing certain goals and aspirations in their life. Based on Chen et al., (2022) in the study of *Idol Worship: How Does It Influence Fan Consumer's Brand Loyalty*, it shows that the brand loyalty of fan consumers is heavily influenced by celebrity worship when certain celebrity figures are linked with a brand. This also shows that the influence of an celebrity figure towards their fans is proven to be crucial and impactful.

For example, Jungkook of BTS (A member of South Korean boy group) accidentally revealed the brand of lip balm product he had been using regularly and the very next day, the said products were sold out from the

stores across lot of countries (Koreaboo, 2019). This example shows how big of an impact certain celebrity's influence is from just a small incident, especially to their fans. This phenomenon is quickly noticed by UNICEF, who then chose BTS as their global ambassador of "Love Myself"—a campaign to bring awareness of the importance of mental health with the belief that true love begins with loving oneself. BTS and UNICEF partnered to promote the #ENDviolence program to protect children and young people all over the world from violence. This phenomenon is obviously not a coincidence. The influence of celebrity figure shows a massive impact towards their fans and is used to promote certain movement for bigger impact. Hence, it is not impossible that the existence of celebrity figure in student's life could somehow turned out to be the drive of their motivation to study.

This behavior could also be explained by Watson and Morgan theory; the drive is in the reductive nature of the term as they used it. Not only they defined the term by its behavioral activating effects, but also equated the effects of drive to the "calling out of the secretions from the ductless glands" (Watson & Morgan, 1917, p.170) as projected at points below:

The original source of drive consists of three innate emotion: rage, fear, and love.

When idolizing a celebrity figure, one will feel many emotions. The feeling of joy, love, attraction, and other related emotion that would trigger happiness in an individual's heart. Idolizing an individual could also light a hope in individual's life, motivating the individual to set their goals and find a way to achieve it.

A study of Abdulrahman & Cahyati (2020) states that the influence of celebrity figure have a great impact towards student's motivation to learn and study. The study examined the interest of reading influenced by their favorite celebrity. For example, when their favorite celebrity is depicted as a certain character in a fan-made story widely known as fan-fiction, it intrigues the fans to read the story. Even when the lack of understanding of the language could be a hassle initially, the curiosity they have would motivate the fans to put more effort in trying to understand the storyline by learning the language.

It shows how a lot of people have experiences in honing their english proficiency through reading fan-fiction written in english. Abdulrahman & Cahyati (2020) managed to show that the influence of celebrity figure is capable of motivating students to learn, as it pushes the students to improve the skills that they initially did not have any interest to begin with.

Drive is a generalized motivation process.

Motivation is very closely related to the goals to be achieved, so that motivation also influences the activities to be carried out. In connection with this, Sardiman (2012, 75) explains that learning motivation means self driving force within students for learning activities to occur, guaranteeing the continuity of learning, and giving directions in the learning activity to achieve the desired learning subjects. In other words, the existence of motivation will develop determination for an individual to explore new things that would eventually lead to an achievement. This shows that the intensity of student learning motivation will determine the level of achievement in students' learning process and results.

The nature of the learning process according to Bandura's Social Theory begins with the explanation of mutative learning (imitation) as examined by previous theories. A book will not affect people unless someone starts writing and someone else starts reading or sets an initial action. Bandura argues that "The notion of social learning is that people are not driven by internal forces nor are they pushed by stimuli originating from the environment. Instead, the function of people's psychology is not explained as a continuous reciprocal interaction between personal and environmental determinants."

Jerome Bruner with Discovery Learning emphasizes that the learning process will go well and creatively if a teacher gives an opportunity for students to discover concepts, theories, rules, or understanding through examples they encounter in life in a realistic way along with the times.

Recently, a study conducted by Khuangga (2021) linked the relationship between celebrity worshipping and the increase in students' interest in learning new language. In his research, Khuangga (2011) examined the impact of the phenomenon of idolizing WayV (a boy group belonging to Korean company SM Entertainment

whose activities mainly held in mainland China and is targeted for chinese market) on students' interests and efforts in learning Mandarin. On average, 150 respondents stated that if it was not for WayV, they would not be learning mandarin as they initially had zero interest in speaking foreign languages.

The emotions are the original sources of drive.

There are several reasons why an individual needs a celebrity as a motivational figure in their life. One of them is the need to increase their self-esteem. There are two sources of self-esteem, namely from oneself, and from the recognition of others (Feist, Feist, & Robert, 2013). Liking a celebrity-figure, in retrospect, would unconsciously make an individual adapt to the ideas, value, and attitude of the figure they idolize, eventually applying the positive attributes to their own personality for their self improvement. When certain positive attributes are associated with specific celebrity, the fans would usually adapt and apply these attributes to their everyday life as they would like to be the positive reflections of their favorite celebrity. This affects the pride and confidence of fans as it is considered as having the same qualities as the individual who is publicly known by a lot of people.

These feelings ultimately spur students to be able to pursue more in the academic field. Talking about K-Pop, individuals who are interested in this pop culture are generally aware of this specific fact; idols who has successfully debuted, spent years and years of hard work during their trainee days. They trained in a lot of subjects, such as singing, dancing, rapping, and acting among other skills needed to survive in the entertainment industry. What's important is that all of this was happening while the idols were also attending classes at school, as most of the K-Pop idols went through with their training during their school year. This shows how a motivated individual succeeded in pursuing their dream while not neglecting their education, unconsciously motivate the fans do follow the same. As previously explained, fans tend to adapt and apply their favorite celebrity's positive attributes to their personal life.

However, idolatry is growing in acceptance among young people nowadays (Giles & Maltby, 2004). Idolizing an individual is more than just the physical attraction. Beyond that, psychologically fans tend to admire celebrity who possess certain habit, traits, or specialty that appease their ideal persona. According to certain empirical studies (e.g., Engle & Kasser, 2005), celebrity worship can make up for the resources and traits that the worshipper lacks. In more detail, idolatry may serve as a kind of coping mechanism for their lack of psychosocial development, cognitive growth, inadequacy in attachment, companionship, social networking, and romantic relationships, among other problems. One's imaginary attachment to distant figures, illusory friendship, amusement, reflection of value or expectation, lack of psychosocial development, lack of cognitive growth, absorption and addiction, for instance, have all been associated with idol worship (Engle & Kasser, 2005; McCutcheon et al., 2003).

The compensation model also assumes that a worshipper will choose to worship something once they have found a better alternative. As a result, when a worshipper is content with something, they tend seek other experiences that have nothing to do with the previous one. Weak social ties, monotonous life experiences, and fragile or poor self-esteem have all been found to be factors of celebrity worship, according to the compensation model (Jenson, 1992). The present compensation model also suggests that celebrity worship is symptomatic of deficits in psychosocial and cognitive development and its resources. Deficits in psychosocial development may involve those about fear of separation, handicaps in sexuality, and the lack of freedom in personal development (Giles, 2000). Similarly, deficits in cognitive development occur in one's egocentrism or failure to take others' and societal perspectives, which results in one's overemphasis on uniqueness and imagination (Seiffge-Krenke, 1997). Apart from the individual's own deficiency, inadequacy in social relationships and other life experiences would be a concern for seeking compensation (Jenson, 1992).

According to Gilead & Maltby (2004) and McCutcheon et al. (2003), cognitive deficits in creativity, critical thinking, need for cognition, spatial ability, and crystallized intelligence were the root causes of idol worship, along with a lack of close and secure relationships, inadequacy in social complexity and cognitive flexibility, inadequate social complexity, and social complexity and cognitive flexibility.

These results demonstrate that idol worship is predicted by deficiencies in many cognitive and psychosocial domains. In addition to the shortfall in personal development, resources associated to social status or familial history appear to promote idolatry (Argyle, 1994). In other words, the act of worshipping a celebrity may be

viewed as a substitute for their lack of affection and the presence of a powerful person who could give them the confidence they need by gaining their approval.

The level of performance is a function of drive and not of habit.

A motivation is short-lived because it wanes the moment difficulties appear. Although we have a very sophisticated forebrains, our limbic system controls our behavioral and emotional responses, as humans are emotional beings. As for our innate and automatic self-preserving behavior patterns are controlled by the primal brain. This ensure our instinct and motivation to survive.

The homoeostasis of the human organism and physical survival are its primary goals. Your survival is its main goal, and it controls your movement, breathing, reproduction, and other essential survival functions. It regulates automatic behavior and is difficult to alter. Your efforts can be thwarted by the primal brain even while you're trying to establish a new habit. About 20% of human decision-making occurs in the thinking brain, which explains why behavioral change is frequently faced with resistance.

Conclusion

Learning motivation can be obtained from all places and directions. In addition to that, the current era of globalization and technology has increased the diversity of motivation sources. One of them is the influence of celebrity figures and the motivation they grow for their fans. From the results of research that comes from a variety of different literature studies, it can be concluded that idolizing a celebrity is more than just worshiping to feel deep euphoria. Examining Watson and Morgan's Motivational Theory, which states that every human being has an impulse called a "drive" within each of them, this can spur students to achieve their personal goals. Idolizing celebrity figures can provide feelings of comfort, security, and self-acceptance. Eventhough it is only momentarily in nature, the impact of celebrity figures is proven to be significant in becoming the drive that triggers student learning motivation.

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