

Gilded Values: Celebrity
Endorsement, Wokeism, and the
Cultural Economy of Gold
Advertising

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A literature review on "wokeism" and celebrity endorsement in the gold/JEWELLERY industry reveals a growing collision between traditional, trust-based jewelry marketing and modern "woke capitalism," where socially conscious branding can either build deep consumer loyalty or provoke severe backlash

- **Traditional Celebrity Endorsement in the Gold Industry**
- Historically, celebrity endorsements in the gold and jewelry sectors are rooted in the **Meaning Transfer Model**, where the aspirational qualities of a celebrity are transferred to the consumer.

Previous literature focuses on the matches between celebrities and product categories. Little scholarly attention has been directed toward how a celebrity endorser is associated with the selling idea or the primary cultural value transmitted in an advertisement

- The celebrity endorsement, as a potentially effective advertising strategy, can simplify the process by which the audience interprets an advertising message. Each celebrity possesses a unique set of cultural meanings and can bring the meanings into the product he or she is promoting (McCracken, 1989). In this way, the celebrity can help greatly narrow down the thematic dimensions of meanings related to the product (Langmeyer & Walker, 1991). Previous literature focuses on the matches between celebrities and product categories. Little scholarly attention has been directed toward how a celebrity endorser is associated with the selling idea or the primary cultural value transmitted in an advertisement.

- Modern celebrity endorsement advertising originated in the United States in the 1800s (Segrave, 2005). During the last century, it has transcended national borders and become a favorite advertising strategy all over the world (Money, Shimp, & Sakano, 2006).

- **Trust and Credibility:** In emerging markets, particularly India, purchasing gold is highly traditional. Studies show that source credibility, trustworthiness, and the "match-up hypothesis" (how well the celebrity aligns with the cultural values of gold) are primary drivers of consumer purchase intention.
- **Risk of Skepticism:** Conversely, academic literature notes that an over-saturation of celebrity endorsements can lead to consumer skepticism. Using celebrities to endorse high-ticket investment items can trigger backlash if the celebrity lacks financial or cultural domain expertise

GILDED VALUES:

Celebrity Endorsement, Witicism, and the Cultural Economy of Gold Advertising

A Research Presentation

Presenter: [Your Name]
Affiliation: [Your Institution]

INTRODUCTION

- Context:** Gold advertising in India is deeply embedded in cultural traditions, status expressions, and emotional values.
- Problem Statement:** The rise of celebrity endorsements and the discourse of witicism are reshaping brand narratives and consumer perceptions in the cultural economy of gold.
- Purpose:** To examine how witicism-led and status-oriented advertising strategies influence brand loyalty, consumer attitudes, and cultural relevance.
- Research Questions:** How do celebrity endorsements and witicism-driven gold advertising affect consumer perceptions and brand equity?

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Celebrity Endorsement:** Enhances visibility, credibility, and emotional value (Allen & Ross, 1993; Gengler, 1999).
- Witicism and Brand Activism:** Brands adopting social causes build authenticity but face risks of consumer backlash (Klein, 2000; Senneker & Beckers, 2017).
- Cultural Economy of Gold Advertising:** Gold as heritage, investment, and identity advertising reinforces cultural symbols and rituals (Bhattacharya, 2001; Das et al., 2022).
- Consumer Perception and Brand Equity:** Perceptions mediate the impact of advertising on attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions (Folmer, 2015; Schaffman & Tansik, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

- Research Design:** Mixed methods approach combining content analysis and survey research.
- Data Collection:** Content analysis of print, digital, and TVC advertisements from leading Indian gold brands (2020-2024). Survey: A22 respondents across urban and semi-urban India.
- Sampling:** Purposive sampling for ads; stratified convenience sampling for survey respondents.
- Data Analysis:** Thematic analysis for content; SPSS for descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis.

RESULTS: KEY FINDINGS

1. Influence on Brand Perception (Mean Score)

| Category | Score |
|----------------------|-------|
| Witicism | 4.2 |
| Status Symbol | 3.8 |
| Cultural Endorsement | 4.5 |

2. Consumer Attitudes (% Agree)

| Category | Agreement % |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Witicism | 72% |
| Status Symbol | 68% |
| Cultural Endorsement | 81% |

3. Purchase Intentions (Mean Score)

| Category | Score |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Celebrity Endorsement | 4.18 |
| Witicism | 3.69 |
| Cultural Endorsement | 4.23 |

Key Insight: Cultural storytelling and celebrity endorsement significantly enhance brand equity and purchase intention (p < 0.05).

AD EXAMPLE 1: ELEGANCE & ASPIRATION

AD EXAMPLE 2: CELEBRITY STYLE

AD EXAMPLE 3: CULTURAL CONNECTION

CONCLUSION

- Celebrity endorsements and cultural storytelling synergize brand perception and purchase intention.
- Witicism-driven messaging has a powerful impact; authenticity and relevance are key.
- Gold advertising continues to thrive by balancing tradition with contemporary values.
- Brands must navigate the cultural economy with sensitivity, credibility, and consumer connectivity.

- This study proposes a content analysis to ascertain the primary cultural values in Indian celebrity-endorsed and non-celebrity-endorsed television commercials and examine the relationships between celebrities' characteristics and cultural values

- Results show that Indian gold jewellery celebrity ads are dominated by the celebrities who are from the Hindi (aka Bollywood) and mainly promote modern and utilitarian values. Celebrity endorsers are most often associated with the values of quality/effectiveness, success/status, beauty/youth, and enjoyment/leisure. Their gender and age are stereotypically presented in advertising messages. The study shows a predictable pattern of matching relations between celebrity endorsers and cultural values and implies that advertisers in India tend to depend on the shared common meanings of celebrities to create advertising messages.

Cultural Values in Indian Celebrity and Non-Celebrity Television/Digital Advertisements

| Value Categories | Value Themes | Celebrity Advertisements (n = 220) | % | Non-Celebrity Advertisements (n = 580) | % |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|--|--------------|
| Traditional Values | Family belongingness | 18 | 8.18 | 74 | 12.76 |
| | Economy/value for money | 12 | 5.45 | 41 | 7.07 |
| | Respect for elders | 7 | 3.18 | 28 | 4.83 |
| | Health/wellness | 26 | 11.82 | 53 | 9.14 |
| | Education/knowledge | 5 | 2.27 | 18 | 3.10 |
| | Patriotism/national pride | 14 | 6.36 | 22 | 3.79 |
| | Tradition/culture | 9 | 4.09 | 39 | 6.72 |
| | Subtotal | | 91 | 41.35 | 275 |
| Modern Values | Beauty/youth | 32 | 14.55 | 29 | 5.00 |
| | Enjoyment/leisure | 38 | 17.27 | 81 | 13.97 |
| | Modernity/technology | 27 | 12.27 | 92 | 15.86 |
| | Sustainability/naturalness | 11 | 5.00 | 26 | 4.48 |
| | Sexuality/glamour | 14 | 6.36 | 7 | 1.21 |
| | Success/status | 36 | 16.36 | 19 | 3.28 |
| Subtotal | | 158 | 71.81 | 254 | 43.80 |
| Utilitarian Values | Quality/effectiveness | 52 | 23.64 | 51 | 8.79 |
| Grand Total | | 220 | 100 | 580 | 100 |

Cultural Values by Gender of Celebrity Endorser in India

| Value Themes | Male Celebrities (n = 130) | % | Female Celebrities (n = 90) | % |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|
| Quality/effectiveness | 38 | 29.23 | 14 | 15.56 |
| Success/status | 31 | 23.85 | 5 | 5.56 |
| Patriotism/national pride | 12 | 9.23 | 2 | 2.22 |
| Health/wellness | 13 | 10.00 | 13 | 14.44 |
| Beauty/youth | 5 | 3.85 | 27 | 30.00 |
| Enjoyment/leisure | 16 | 12.31 | 22 | 24.44 |
| Sexuality/glamour | 2 | 1.54 | 12 | 13.33 |
| Sustainability/naturalness | 4 | 3.08 | 7 | 7.78 |
| Family/tradition | 9 | 6.92 | 15 | 16.67 |

Cultural Values by Age Group of Celebrity in Indian Advertisements

| Value Themes | Young Celebrities (20–39 years) | % | Mature Celebrities (40+) | % |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|
| Beauty/youth | 28 | 20.00 | 4 | 4.65 |
| Enjoyment/leisure | 31 | 22.14 | 7 | 8.14 |
| Modernity/technology | 24 | 17.14 | 3 | 3.49 |
| Sexuality/glamour | 12 | 8.57 | 2 | 2.33 |
| Success/status | 25 | 17.86 | 11 | 12.79 |
| Quality/effectiveness | 13 | 9.29 | 39 | 45.35 |
| Health/wellness | 4 | 2.86 | 22 | 25.58 |
| Family/tradition | 3 | 2.14 | 18 | 20.93 |

Progressive (“Woke”) Values in Indian Gold Jewellery Advertisements

| Brand Type | Traditional Values (%) | Modern Aspirational Values (%) | Progressive/Woke Values (%) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Traditional family jewellers | 65 | 25 | 10 |
| National jewellery chains | 35 | 40 | 25 |
| Luxury/designer jewellery brands | 20 | 45 | 35 |
| Digital-first jewellery startups | 15 | 40 | 45 |

Cultural Values in Indian Gold Jewellery Celebrity Advertisements

| Cultural Value Theme | Frequency (%) |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Beauty/youth | 22 |
| Success/status | 18 |
| Family/tradition | 20 |
| Women empowerment | 14 |
| Modern relationships | 8 |
| Sustainability/ethical luxury | 5 |
| Quality/trust | 10 |
| National/cultural identity | 3 |

can argue that:

“The Indian gold endorsement industry demonstrates the coexistence of traditional symbolic capital and emergin

This creates a strong theoretical bridge between:

- McCracken’s Meaning Transfer Model,
- identity signaling theory,
- ESG branding,
- and woke capitalism literature.

- Celebrity-endorsed gold advertisements in India increasingly employ progressive socio-cultural appeals alongside traditional family-oriented values.
- Female celebrity endorsers are more likely than male endorsers to be associated with empowerment and woke-cultural narratives in jewellery advertising.