

The influence of celebrities



The influence of celebrities especially in this century has extends far beyond the traditional role meant for it in the society. The World Wide Web is one of the major causes behind this phenomenon (Choi and Berger). We have now put the celebrities on a pedestal that is on the same or even a higher level than that of our leaders. Simply put, we treat them as the modern day gods. This phenomenon can be seen where in Twitter; Justin Bieber has a lot more followers compared to Barack Obama. (Mell) in his article discusses that it is noticeable that today's headlines often revolve around celebrity news than other types of news. The quantities of entertainment magazine such as Us Weekly are noticeably a lot more than any other types of magazine.

Generation Y's obsession over celebrities baffles the Generation X simply because they are wondering why are stars and celebrities are so popular. In his article (Callaway) explains about a new psychology study that helps determine on why some stars are popular. The study showed that people just need something to talk about and that it is a basic human desire to connect and find common ground with others. This basic desire pushes us to discuss on an already popular celebrities. The article also states that fame is self-perpetuating thing even when that celebrity is not doing anything that is fame-worthy anymore. Take Brad Pitt for example, he is a very famous actor and while he is now are doing less acting but when his name are mentioned most people would definitely know who he is.

(Austin) in her article discusses that the society paints celebrities and stars as they are just like us but they are the better versions of ourselves in every aspect. Her article also highlight that children these days sees fame as a cure for all problems and that fame appears to be an attractive way to fix

things. We aimed to be just like them because in our mind, they are living the perfect life - lots of money, fancy cars, big houses, perfect body, and many others. That is why celebrities and stars are so popular. Take Jay-Z for instance, he is a music mogul who was born in an area that is filled with gang violence but he rose from the slums of where he was born to become rich, successful and have a beautiful family. This is what makes celebrities famous because we relate ourselves to them and we want to be like them.

Each of us have our favourite stars and celebrities and for us the term stars and celebrities basically bear the same meaning but these two term bears a totally different meaning. According to (Merriam-webster. com), a celebrity is someone who is famous or well-known because of something that the person does. That person can be a socialite, a famous spokesperson, a radio deejay and many more. For example, Paris Hilton is a celebrity because she is famous for her luxurious lifestyle. Meanwhile according to (Dictionary. com) a star is someone who excels in their respective field and has an added charm to them or what we call as charisma. The combination of excellence in their respective field and their charisma is what makes stars stand out from the rest. An example of a star is Sandra Bullock; she is an award winning actress - she won an Oscar for Best Actress in 2010 because she possesses an excellent acting skill plus she has charisma.

With the rising demand for more entertainment shows, reality TV shows are created to fulfil the said need thus a new term are coined for its stars.

Reality TV shows stars are called media personality. According to (Urban Dictionary), media personality is celebrities that lack in natural presentation

talent. For instance, Kim Kardashian falls under the media personality category simply because she got no real talent.

Stars are worth millions or more in the entertainment industry. A star worth is based on their characteristics and personality. A star will worth more if they possessed good norms and ethics and of course a star worth more if they have credible skills in the field that they went into. For example, Cristiano Ronaldo, a famous football player in the world, is beating Lionel Messi and Gerard Pique. He gets the highest paid salary - estimated around \$21 million every year (Kornowski).

Beside Cristiano Ronaldo, there are still a number of famous celebrities who got paid the same or more amount as he is. One of them is Jennifer Lawrence. According to the (The Inquisitr News) Jennifer Lawrence was the most bankable star of 2013. Based on Hollywood Stock Exchange, it claims that at first the market value displayed of Jennifer Lawrence in last September is at \$125. 49 per scene and currently, her market value has significantly increase to \$147. 83 per scene (Perez). Stars are easy to rose to fame and fade away from it - they tend to become expandable. Thus, stars like film stars need to be worried if they want to remain Hollywood worthy. This is because they need to use their ability and profession to stay bankable. According to The Hollywood Reporter's author S. Galloway, stars have more pressure to be the first pick for studios because unless they have an impressive box-office record, they cannot demand and negotiate more about clauses that is in their contract (Kiisel).

In addition to that, people will judge the stars on how do they look, how do they dress themselves and how do they carry themselves. It means that, looks and appearance is very important for a star to gain popularity. An article by (Kornowski) stated that less attractive stars get paid less whereas good looking stars are paid handsomely. If we notice the current trend of how stars look is that almost all the star is good looking and they have a nice body shape which is slim and muscular. Arirang TV conducted a survey with 699 fans to found out which star has the best appearance. The result that came out was interesting. 2NE1 member and Sandara Park is ranked number one with the votes of 24. 5%. For the next survey, the question is which female star has the most perfect body. The result shown that 4Minute member, HyunA got the most votes with 13. 9% (Oh-dara. com). This shows that it is very important for a star to own a good appearance and perfect body.

Star image can be argued that they are the representative of person which they eventually change the ordinary preconception of what is it to be a normal human being in the society. However it is proposed that the society is what stressed them like others in the social group or class to which they belong (Wilson). For example, Lady Gaga is an image and definitely not the real person. Furthermore, star image is not a real person that is created out of range of materials. They could also be reappearing as icons and font. A star's images use different type of media forms to be recognized by the public. Many stars use their image for advertising and other purposes. Stars image representative of attitudes, shared values and to promote a certain ideas. The star image's quality is based on the audience's interest and views.

Stars image usually give the audiences a picture or idea of what people are supposed to be like. Stars are commodities produced and consumed on the strength of their meanings (Dyer). For example, Lady Gaga was made to create a physical embodiment of pop culture. Star image also influences the audiences or fans to copy them in the sense of fashion and hairstyle. Sometimes, stars have a unique image that is impossible to copy but the image they portray has created many fan bases.

A star image motif is a running theme for an artist and the aim is to help to establish the artist as a brand (Dyer). Basically, the star image shows how those medias promote or how they advertise in a way that they will make the star popular and earn money. For example, YouTube stars have to produce a good quality of image to attract more viewers and fans. Moreover, they can earn money by getting more views and subscribers. Some of the stars use their image as logo or icons to promote themselves through media. By that they can also earn money from there. For example, Eminem uses his star image in a style in which he has been using for many years like posters and caps. Even though he wasn't in the music industry for quite a while but he still maintains his style until today. He also earns more than a million by using his own style to promote himself. This idea makes him even popular because the brand makes him stand out and also makes his fans think that he never left.

Furthermore, most of the Korean stars use their image to promote themselves and become popular even though they are not very talented. This is because media is what makes them good looking and popular. Through media also helps them earn more money and also more fans. Pop

star like Justin Bieber, Rihanna, Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars earn more money because of their talent and also their appearance. On the other hands, they also promote themselves through their albums and also cover magazines that make them even popular and earn more incomes.

Paparazzi and journalist are known as the ones who publicize famous stars and celebrities for the public. Even though, they are known as annoying yet persistent stalkers who would go against their ethical practices to get the shot or story they desire “ but this day and age what we think and talk about with our friends and family greatly revolves around the glamorous, and usually scandalous, lives of the rich and famous” as said by (Tong).

Nowadays, we have created a new platform of entertainment by introducing stars and celebrity television program or better known as reality TV shows to parade themselves and earn money from us like TMZ, Perez Hilton, E! News, web-blogs, tabloids and so on. However, many argued that stars and celebrities chose a career that requires them to be in the public eye and receive a lot of attention. Many believe that if a star or celebrity stays out of the media, they could be unrecognizable and someone might steal their spotlight. Therefore, it is undoubted that the press who sells explicit photos, the public who buys them and the celebrities themselves are as responsible for the invasive journalistic practices that pry onto star and celebrities private lives.

All three parties are equally as responsible in such practice as the journalist; press and celebrity make money out of it. Paparazzi and journalist target famous people whom they consider the public to have voracious appetite for. The public obsession towards a star or celebrity could result in encouraging

paparazzi and celebrities to go above the limits of invasive antics. It is only when harm occurs that the public becomes outraged enough to criticize the news gathering techniques of the paparazzi. For example, "who would blame Britney for losing control or Lindsay Lohan for feeling she can't trust anyone" says (Tong). It is because people like us are the ones who pressure stars and celebrities to give portray and image we want to see the in. Whether or not it is bad or good. "They may be able to disgrace some people, but in the end, the publishers and readers will make a decision based on the bottom line of it, not whether it's right or wrong" says (Puente).

Frank Griffin, co-owner of the Bauer-Griffin paparazzi agency mentioned that paparazzi does not waste time on famous people whom they fail to cover in as time is the essence of money and the demand on different famous people changes all the time. The paparazzi "are so easy to avoid" Griffin says. "Just cover your face, and if you do that every day, they're not going to get any pictures, they're not going to make any money and they're not going to sit outside your door anymore." It is a cycle of demand where it is through the demands of the public that encourages paparazzi and journalist to covers on a certain famous people who they desire to know and is obsessed about. Thus, making the press company to buy photos and stories of famous people the public demand and publicize it. Although it may seem like famous people often avoid paparazzi and press but it was argued that famous people themselves wants to be publicize as well and be used for product endorsements and advertising schemes (Tong). Most of celebrities go to places where they know paparazzi will always be there. Some even call ahead of time to notify paparazzi and journalist of where they are.

An article by the (Urban Times) stated that “ There are even rumours that celebrities themselves asked their public relations team to alert paparazzi to their locations in ensuring maximum coverage. In some ways it is win-win for both parties; it’s certainly a complicated relationship.” Meanwhile, in a written article by (Anderson) said that “ the stakeouts and high-speed chases that the paparazzi are notorious for sound horrible, but if people didn’t read the magazines or didn’t care so much about the celebrities, there wouldn’t be a demand, and the paparazzi may disappear.”

In this era where the World Wide Web creates a ‘ limitless’ kind of world where information is literally at the tip of your finger celebrities are seen to be centre of it. The internet provides an easy and perfect platform for celebrities to further spread their fame and thus cemented their status in the public eye. From what we gather is that the society put celebrity’s life as benchmark for what a good life should look like – celebrities are put on a pedestal and they are our modern day god. Other than that, we learn about what makes a star bankable – their good looks. Also we look into the fascinating relationship between the stars and paparazzi where we can conclude that it is a win- win situation for both party but there are some boundaries to be obey because now the paparazzi does not only portrays the star alone but also they are lurking about the star’s family.

An article by (Schaefer) discusses about “ a bill aimed to protects the children of celebrities and public staff officials from paparazzi.” This bill basically protects the child’s star from any form of harassment including photographing or recording that child without parental consent. In a support to help this bill to be passed, actress Halle Berry and Jennifer Garner both

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testify in front of the legislative committee. Berry in her statement said “ They ask my daughter questions that are inappropriate for a 5-year-old to have an answer.” While fellow actress Jennifer Garner states that “ she made the decision to have a public life when she chose her career (acting), but her children are private citizens, just like anyone else’s.” This bill clearly creates a strain in this star-paparazzi relationship with the newspaper publishers are among those who oppose the bill stating that it would violate on the journalists’ ability to do their jobs. With all of this fame that the stars garnered over the years we cannot stop to but to wonder that with fame come great consequences. Julia Roberts once said that “ I don’t think I realized that the cost of fame is that it’s open season on every moment of your life.” This simply portrays that once you are famous your life are owned by the public or so to speak.

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