

Media: celebrities

[People](#)



Coming from a Latin word *celeber*, the word *celebrity* means a person widely recognised by the public and the media, person who through his command in the public creates media attention and is widely covered. One of prerequisite of a person being *celebrity* is fame, but that has to be associated with the media attention. Masscommunication play a vital role in making someone *celebrity* as the person can be famous and well known but if the media is not piqued by that person, then the person cannot reach the *celebrity* level.

People become *celebrities* in accordance to their professions, what they do to the public; this can be politicians or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of certain large organisations such as Bill Gates, who stepped out of it few months ago, but still a *celebrity*. *Celebrities* to be in that status with the help of media are being known across the world, meaning can be famous not only in their countries but even outside their countries, and this category caters especially to the politicians and actors and actresses.

Religious leaders example Bishop Desmond Tutu for his involvement in freedom fight in South Africa and cultural leaders such as Dalai Lama of China for his outstanding performance in fighting for the rights of Tibet people; these people can be famous not only in their countries but not abroad due to their extensive coverage in the media. Excellence in sports also can make people famous not only in their countries but even worldwide such as Serena and Venus Williams are known globally due to their excellent performance in Tennis sport.

Apart from sports, some people become celebrated due to their nature of their professions especially the highly paid ones which make them in contact with the media in most of their work schedules. These include people in the <https://assignbuster.com/media-celebrities/>

media presenters who are highly paid and well respected due to their exceptional work to the public, interior decorators, movie producers and sports coaches to mention a few who have caught the media attention and have been covered in mass entertainment.

Some people become celebrities due to their family backgrounds, especially if some member of family were and are celebrities. This is found mostly in families engaged in music and movies industries like Jacksons, Winans and Osbournes while for politician families we can say Bushes, Clinton and Kennedys in United States of America (USA).

Nevertheless, in accordance with the definition of celebrity that is something that has to be commanded by a person both in public and through the media, most of people must asking themselves how these people have earned the celebrity title. Due to this some scholars did start studying this celebrity phenomenon, by looking at the celebrity characteristics, psychology and even the interaction with the members of public, which makes people sometimes get too carried away with the celebrity worship. In America the number of people worshipping celebrities keeps on going up which has even affected people psychologically. Famously the syndrome now is known as celebrity-worship syndrome (CWS), the term invented by media but psychologists call it Celebrity Worship Scale (WCS).

This situation has made people to look closely to the whole issue of celebrity, its attachment with the society and how people are reacting to it. Why people acting they way they do to the point of stalking celebrities. In survey conducted in USA, more people are affected by CWS which has led to people seek psychological help as Kate Douglas portrayed in her article when you <https://assignbuster.com/media-celebrities/>

wish upon a star, “ Psychologists are starting to suspect that worshipping celebrities is the top of a slippery slope that leads to depression, anxiety and psychosis.” (Douglas Kate, When you wish upon a star, 2003).

The effect is not only to the celebrities themselves, but the public also get affected by the whole issue of celebrity. Most of people wishing to be stars so as to be treated like star especially due to the media coverage these people get. Studying celebrity academically can help the society understand both parts that means celebrities themselves and the public which is affected by the concept of celebrity.

The effect is much grave especially to the adolescents who spend most of their time wishing to be star, having cuttings and pictures of stars in their rooms and things they possess. Yes teenagers can think about celebrities as it is bring sense of social attachment, but not that excessively which affect the way of thinking of these teenagers or even adult for that matter which sometimes experience difficulties when encountered with problems.

The effect if not dealt with early leads to more effects such as disorder to the worshipers like stalking celebrities or disillusion stalker gets that celebrity is love with him/her. The situation apart from stalking stars and celebrities, some of fans are copying what these celebrities are doing even if are bad things. This condition has sparked a lot of academics into researching the issue of celebrity and looking deeply for its effects to the society.

An example that can be used here is the case of John Warnock Hinckley, Jr. who stalked Judie Foster after watching the Taxi Driver movie. He was seeking Judie’s attention to the point of following her to another state, the

situation led into Hinckley attempting to assassinate President Ronald Regan in 1981 so as to catch Judie's attention. He was later charged but found not guilty on basis of insanity and admitted at Saint Elizabeth in Washington DC. With experience like this studying celebrity should be taken into account as to understand psychological effects that associate with celebrities.

The effect does not end to the fans only, but celebrities too are affected by the whole idea of being celebrity. Celebrities sometimes are also affected with the way society take them, their image and sometimes they are supposed to do things which is not in their heart simply because they have to comply with public especially in maintaining good image. The good image does not necessarily be the star image but sometimes can be the image of the organisations they are representing. This notion tend to make celebrities pretend sometimes especially in front of members of media and photographers.

In his book *The Image* (1961), historian Daniel Boorstin criticised the way American society was living where it was heading concerning public image. The image that keeps on being fabricated and staged by the influential people especially politicians, movie stars and other celebrities. " Just as there were now counterfeit events, so, he said, there were also counterfeit people - celebrities - whose identities were being staged and scripted, to create illusions that often had no relationship to any underlying reality." (Boorstin Daniel, *The Image*, 1961). The tendency, which has forced some of celebrities to get depressed and frustrated, hence seeking medical help which has led to some psychologists researching into the matter.

The good example here can be referred to an icon which has made history in Hollywood, Marilyn Monroe who died by overdose from drugs. Marilyn was under chronic depression which made her have constant contact with psychologists but later she paid with her life. Though not most of celebrities in movie industry die by overdosing themselves, but most of them undergo depression, which later on lead into drug addictions.

Not only movie superstars experience the other side of the coin, which is depression even politicians and other celebrities do. The good example being Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), the President of America in 1800s has also underwent severe depression too which was claimed to be associated with a horse blow he got when he was 10 years of age, while it sometimes associated with the death of his first love and mother. The only therapy in those days was through churches in Christian moral treatment but Lincoln managed to overcome his depression by engaging himself in politics which later on he become a well respected one.

Despite the fact that movie icons get into addictions, not all celebrities are like that as there is difference between these two categories. Film star is the one that get his/her stardom due to the participation in movie industry but celebrities can be from any field apart from film industry. Taking examples of film stars the list is long from Tom Cruise, Will Smith, Judie Foster, Meg Ryan and Nicholas Cage to mention a few.

In conclusion, it is worthy studying celebrity issues, as it is the only way of understanding the interactions between celebrities and their surroundings, the people they mingle with, how they maintain their personalities and images to the public. Many celebrities are being used to advertise products

such as David Beckham, Roberto Carlos and others like Christina Aguilera in Pepsi advert. This advertising involves media and through that people tend to question the authenticity of the products displayed, hence lead to more research on them.

Apart from advertisements, studies can be done to the people around celebrities, how are they interacting with them and what effects do they get, but all in all it is worthy a study.

Reference:

Boorstin Daniel, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, 1961

Douglas Kate, *When you wish upon a star*, *Newscientist*, issue 2408, August 2003

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