

Example of research paper on the idea of fame and how media attention can change ...

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Introduction

In any given community, certain individuals possess outstanding traits. Such traits are portrayed through their ways of doing things as well as their careers. Depending on their location, culture as well as the technological development such people are given more attention in the community. The attention that they are awarded by the community prompts them to develop certain traits to enable them to uphold their high status in the community. In some instances, they are given special responsibilities that are geared towards the promotion of certain aspects of the culture e. g. their virtues. Additionally, due to their ability to number of people who admire them, they can be employed to promote certain products with their fans/audience as the target market. The recent technological developments in the communication industry gives famous people(celebrities) a lot of publicity. The idea of fame has undergone through many changes due to the evolution of communication technology that brought about a lot of media attention on celebrities an aspect that makes the individuals in question to change some aspects of their personality to meet the demands of their increasing public presence.

The Historical Aspect of Fame

In the quest for a term or rather definition that could describe the prominent people in the society, the American community coined some definitions during the revolution era. The famous people include the military heroes, romantic fictional protagonists as well as eminent salespersons who valued community virtues and self reliance. Towards the first half or the twentieth

century, the categories of famous people in America broadened to include movie stars, baseball players and politicians. This shift reflected a part of the vast cultural changes wrought by the communications revolution of the late 19th and early 20th century (Henderson 42). The rise of immigration and urbanization between 1890 and 1920 also played a pivotal role in the broadening of the types of famous people in America. In addition, it was propagated by the quest for self definition with reference to the American culture. The famous people during that time i. e. the heroes of the revolutionary era were meant to give the nation a sense of historical legitimacy. Henderson asserts that the heroes of the revolutionary era were gentleman scholars and patriots. They constituted the celebrities of that time. As the revolutionary generation died out, a new resemblance of heroes was sought. The society wanted something that could allure their affections an aspect that gave birth to famous novelists, poets, essayists, critics, historians and preachers. Henderson (49) notes that “ it was only in the later 19th century with the revolution of communication technology and the creation of mass urban landscape, that our heroic vision was altered.” The advent of mechanical means of image production and of facilities for mass dispersion of information lead to a new generation as far as fame is concerned.

Fame in the Contemporary Society

Most of the people who receive much fame in the contemporary society are celebrities. Contemporary celebrities obtain their fame from sports as well as the entertainment industries. The media plays a pivotal role in enhancing

their visibility to the world. Unlike the cases of famous political individuals, celebrities do not obtain their fame from the position in the nation.

Additionally, one's initial achievements may not necessarily be the basis of the fame. Research has shown that once an individual has been established as a rather unique public figure, their fame is likely to have outstripped the claims to prominence developed within their first public appearance (Kurzban 360). The contemporary celebrities may not claim any special achievements other than the attraction of public attention. The case of the 'Big Brother' is a good example of the 21st century celebrities.

There has been an increase in 'pseudo events' in the media during the twenty first century. A pseudo event is an event that is planned and staged entirely for the media, which accrues significance through the scale of media coverage, rather than through any more disinterested assessment of importance (Rindova, et al. 58). In such cases, the celebrity acts as its human equivalent—the human 'pseudo event'. The celebrity is fabricated for the media and evaluated in terms of scale of effectiveness of their fame or rather media visibility.

Without the ability of magazines, movies, reality television, radio and mass media to reach people across wide regions, cities and countries; people would not become famous. Today radio and TV presenters, singers, athletes, actors and disc jockey (djs) to name but a few have attained immense wealth and fame. These celebrities enjoy a massive audience not only in Europe and America but also across the globe. They yield too much influence in social matters, spending habits, fashion, music and even politics. A good example is Opra Winfrey, a former popular talk show host. At her prime the

Forbes Magazine named her the most powerful person in the world. So much was her following such that her 2008 political endorsement of Barack Obama for president shifted the opinion poll numbers in the aspirant's favour. Mass media is a key component of the American culture.

The influence of celebrities and pop culture can be clearly seen in tabloids, body image, music, use and abuse of drugs, secularism and politics. Fox News commentators like Green Beck and Bill O'Reilly have greatly influenced debate on immigration in the United States of America.

Fashion has a great influence in people's lifestyles as one of the tools of gaining more fame for celebrities. African American hip-hop artists popularized sagging Blue Levi jeans across the globe. They did this through their music videos, live concerts, merchandise sales and song lyrics. A notable popular fashion brand in the 90s was Sean John which was hugely associated with hip-hop mogul Puff Diddy Combs. Other fashion items popularized by celebrities include: sunglasses, sports cars, watches, jewellery, handbags, cowl necked sweaters, pencil skirts and mobile phones. These fashion designs influence both fashion designers themselves and customers as well. Lifestyle magazines keenly follow the latest trends in fashion to inform their huge audience.

Change of Personality due to media attention

Celebrities shape the preferences of people in different ways. This explains why they are used in making money by most business organizations (Turner 34). Their names as well as images are used to market different products among which are films, CDs, newspapers, magazines as well as television

programmes. Additionally, media entrepreneurs always opt to use celebrities in most of their projects since they believe that they are a tool for attracting audiences. Celebrities are used by film producers as a means of attracting investment to their projects. Moreover, marketers use celebrity endorsements as a means of profiling as well as branding their products. Television programmes feature guest appearances of celebrities to build their audience. In order to fit in all expectations of other people in selling their products, celebrities develop a new 'self'. They develop new traits that enable them to fit in other people's description of them. This enables them to retain their fame. It is noteworthy that if famous people in the society do not work hard to keep their image, they may lose their fame.

Another aspect that makes most celebrities to tailor their personality or rather self is to be able to stand out among the other public figures in their field. As aforementioned, fame is used as a marketing tool. If a certain celebrity does not keep the trend e. g. fashion, design as well as the enthusiasm expected of them by the society, they end up losing a significant number of their fans (Hayward, et al. 641). This translates to a decrease of their chances to be chosen as influential figures by other bodies or rather organizations that promote their products through the celebrities. Since most of them are aware of all the matters at stake if they lack their public presence, they change their behavior to meet the demand of not only their potential employers but also those of their fans.

The close relationship between the famous individuals i. e. celebrities and the inauthenticity of the contemporary popular culture interprets celebrity as a symptom of cultural change. While this concern is clearly genuine and

shared by many, it is important to recognize that elite critiques of movements of popular culture have embraced this type of fame. Each new shift in fashion is offered as the end of civilization has known by many. The real motivation of the behavior of most celebrities is an elitist distaste for the demotic or populist dimension of mass cultural practices (Pype 550).

Therefore, it is up to the individual celebrities to learn all the new styles associated with the most popular cultures. This helps the celebrities to develop a learning culture of the several aspects that define fame with the course of time. It is important to note that the development of new celebrity traits is one of the most dynamic aspects of the twenty-first century fame characteristics.

Fame brings about certain shifts of culture. Research has shown that the more disinterested and less moralistic proposition that the modern phenomenon of fame reflects an ontological shift in popular culture. This constitutes a change in the way cultural meanings are generated as celebrity becomes a key site of the media attention and personal aspiration. Besides being one of the key places where cultural meanings are negotiated and organized. For the celebrities, this is associated with a shift of one's personality to accommodate the public demands of the key stakeholders in a popular culture (Pype 152). Most of the celebrities seem to lose their grip in most of their closest social relations such as the nuclear family, the extended family and withdrawal of the family unit from the wider suburban community.

The media has a great influence on how one's appearance should be. This aspect mostly affects the female celebrities. They are supposed to tailor

their dress code as well as other aspects of their physical appearance to be able to attract more audience. This is essential especially in the development of one's image above those of other celebrities who also seek to win the attention of the majority in the public. Their general appearance is tailored to communicate specific message to their audience as far as adopting a given culture is concerned. A research carried out in New York entailed asking young girls about their proffered role models. Many of the girls ascribed their preference to the general appearance of the celebrities especially the 'prettiness' of the models or rather celebrities. For instance, pop stars such as Beyonce, Jamelia and Rihanna provide the black girls with visible images of ideal femininity literally embodied by the black woman (Barbara 7). The preference of most of the black girls for black role models indicates how the singers encapsulate as well as embody several aspects of their personality to the capture and maintain the young black girls. Additionally, they have not only developed but also maintained an attitude of the femininity of the black woman even in the midst of all the fashions in the western world.

Once an individual becomes a celebrity, they gain a lot of media attention. This calls for a change in the type of friends that one keeps as well as the places where they spend their free time. Additionally, they develop a habit of continual improvement of their places of residence to ensure that it is in par with the public image that they present. This enables them to remain top on the list of the famous individuals in the world.

During their initial recognition as celebrities, most people do not possess the traits associated with the increased presence in the public. One of such traits is their ability to communicate fluently while addressing the public. However,

they are forced become familiar with increased media coverage or rather their increased media presence. Moreover, they develop good communication skills that enable them to pass comprehensive messages to the public. This explains why it takes some time before new celebrities can become actively engaged in public events that require them to directly address the public in using tactics that are not part of their source of fame. For instance, most celebrities in the entertainment industry take time to be able to deliver a speech to the public. However, this varies from one field to another, as it is not an issue to most of the famous politicians such as Obama.

Just like other people in the community, celebrities cannot be able to change every detail of their personality to meet the public attention. Media attention to most of the celebrities especially from freelance photographers (paparazzi) has resulted in a complete loss of the distinction between private and public issues for celebrities. The media has thus made some of the celebrities to develop such defensive strategies to address the issue. Most of them opt to use social media as a platform to update their activities i. e. the development of a social media culture presence. One of such platforms is the YFly. com (PR Newswire 2). This is a community-based network, which not only connects members of the society but also acts as a platform for celebrities. This enables them to update their fans about their lives on a personal level. In the past actors, singers, as well as football stars have used it to address rumors about their lives. The social networking platform has enabled the public to increase their access to their celebrities from all fields ranging from athletes, actors, actresses and famous musicians. The founder

YFLy. com noted that “ The opportunity for celebrities to break their own news and get direct feedback from their fans is extremely valuableit gives celebrities the opportunity to relate on a more personal level with their fans” (PR Newswire 3).

Conclusion

The idea of fame has undergone through many changes due to the evolution of communication technology that brought about a lot of media attention on celebrities an aspect that makes the individuals in question to change some aspects of their personality to meet the demands of their increasing public presence. The famous people during that time included the military heroes, movie stars and politicians. However, the use of mass media in the recognition of famous individuals only began after the communication revolution of the mid 19th century that led to the introduction of print media. Information about the stars occupied a relatively high portion of the newspapers of the time. The development of digital media especially the television increased the media presence of famous people. The title of the famous people was changed from ‘ heroes’ to ‘ celebrities ‘ towards the end of the first half of the 20th century. The advent of internet also helped in achieving the global presence of celebrities. Media attention causes celebrities to change their personalities in different ways. One of the factors that calls for a change in personality is their role in marketing several products which call for a specific combination of traits. Additionally, their lifestyle changes to suite the cultural values that they advocate. This may call for a change in the type of friends or a change in their religious believes.

Generally, media attention makes them to change in favor of the roles that accompany their fame.

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