ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Exposure to Online Celebrity Influence on Female Students' Lifestyle in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University

GENEVIEVE NWEDO-NZERIBE, FESTUS CHIGOZIE NTOMCHUKWU & LOVELYN CHINENYE PIUS

St. Paul University, Awka vievezeribe@gmail.com; ntomchukwufc@gmail.com Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus piuslovelyn@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined whether exposure to online celebrities can influence female students' lifestyles in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU), Igbariam Campus. The specific objectives of the study were among others to assess COOU female students' frequency of exposure to online celebrities and to ascertain whether COOU female students' exposure to online celebrities has positive influence on their lifestyles. The study was anchored in Social Penetration theory. The survey research design was adopted to study a sample size of388 selected from the 8,542 female student population of COOU, Igbariam Campus. The purposive and simple random sampling techniques were adopted to select the sample. The study found among others that more than two-thirds majority of the respondents acceded to have had very good exposure to online celebrities and that respondents' lifestyles were influenced in different areas through exposure to online celebrities. The study recommended among others that parents must stand up to their guidance roles to the youths by monitoring their consumption of online media products and that youths especially students should focus on media products that can contribute meaningfully to their studies while discouraging celebrity worship which influences their lifestyles negatively.

Introduction

One of the most important psychological influences of media, particularly during adolescence, is the formation of para-social relationships (Giles, 2002) with media figures. These may take the form of intense attachments to celebrities where the values of the celebrity are highly influential, providing young people with attitudinal and behavioural exemplars (Larson, 1995). During adolescence, these figures may begin to usurp the role accorded to parents in earlier periods as teenagers become increasingly independent (Giles & Maltby, 2004). Celebrity worship is nowadays common among young people around the world (Wood, Senn, Desmarais, Park,& Verberg, 2002) and may stem from a developmental need for identification and intimacy (Josselson, 1991). Response to celebrity appearances in television commercials sometimes goes beyond emulation. For instance, some research suggests that young admirers spoke of celebrities as if they had a "real" relationship with them. The celebrity's messages became part of the individual's social construction of reality (Martin, & Kennedy, 1993). Celebrity worshipping could thus have a prevalent influence on shaping their followers' values, attitudes and behaviours (Shaw, 1995). Advertisers and marketers also capture the opportunity to encourage young followers to consume the products endorsed by their celebrities.

Research on celebrity worshipping of young people focuses mainly on antecedents to celebrity worshipping or the juvenile deviant behaviours resulting from celebrity worshipping (Martin& Kennedy, 1993). It becomes extremely worrisome as online platforms nowadays portray online celebrities in almost every sphere of life, becoming more or less models to young people. Young people, who have become addicted to and are frequently exposed to online platforms via smart phones and other internet enabled gadgets, stand the risk of frequent exposure to online celebrities with its attendant consequences (Giles & Maltby, 2004).

Recent research has suggested that the type of interactions between individuals and the celebrities they worship may have important consequences for aspects of mental health. McCutcheon, Lange, and Houran (2002) proposed an 'Absorption–

Addiction' model to explain such cases of celebrity worship. According to this model, a compromised identity structure in some individuals facilitates psychological absorption with a celebrity in an attempt to establish an identity and a sense of fulfillment. The dynamics of the motivational forces driving this absorption might in turn take on an addictive component, leading to more extreme (and perhaps delusional) behaviours to sustain the individual's satisfaction with the para-social relationship. Several studies based on the Celebrity Attitude Scale (Maltby, Houran, & McCutcheon, 2003) are consistent with this proposed model and suggest that there are three increasingly more extreme sets of attitudes and behaviours associated with celebrity worship. This study therefore seeks to investigate the influence of online celebrity on the lifestyle of female students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University.

Statement of Problem

The issue is whether social comparison and imitation of celebrity models contribute to the positive or negative values among female students and young people. Based on a theoretical model of endorsement of values among youths, studies have shown the influence of interpersonal communication on social comparison and the influence of advertising viewing on imitation of celebrity models (Chan & Prendergast, 2008). In the same vein, studies have shown how both social comparison and imitation of celebrity models contribute to young people's endorsement of values that can contribute positively or negatively to their lifestyles as young people (Martin & Kennedy, 1993).

Findings from earlier studies suggest that in female adolescents, there is an interaction between intense-personal celebrity worship and body image between the ages of 14 and 16 years, and some tentative evidence has been found to suggest that this relationship disappears at the onset of adulthood, 17 to 20 years. Results are consistent with those authors who stress the importance of the formation of para-social relationships with media figures, and suggest that para-social relationships with celebrities perceived as having a good body shape may lead to a poor body image in female adolescents (Giles, 2003; Botta, 2000; Giles & Maltby, 2004). On the basis of the above, this study is set to examine whether exposure to online celebrity presence can influence the lifestyle of female students of the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. assess COOU female students' frequency of exposure to online celebrities;
2. to ascertain whether COOU female students imitate online celebrities they are exposed to;
3. ascertain whether COOU female students' lifestyles are influenced by imitating online celebrities.
4. determine whether COOU female students' exposure to online celebrities has positive influence on their lifestyles.

Research Questions

1. What is COOU female students' frequency of exposure to online celebrities?
2. To what level COOU female students imitate online celebrities they are exposed to?
3. Which aspects of COOU female students' lifestyles are influenced by imitating online celebrities?
4. To what level has COOU female students' exposure to online celebrities positively influenced their lifestyles?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Social Penetration theory developed in 1973 by psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor. The theory states that relationships begin and deepen through self-disclosure. According to Altman and Taylor's social penetration theory, orientation is the first step a person would experience when they meet someone new. This phase allows individuals to make first judgments as to what the personality of

the individual would be like based on things they can see and hear. Twenty years ago, this type of interaction would be more commonly found offline. Today, initial connections can be established in a computer-generated environment where individuals can look for a partner online. By integrating the use of social network site (SNS), new acquaintances may self-disclose information during preliminary interactions to help establish a relationship.

Self-disclosure is "an interaction between at least two individuals where at least one intends to deliberately divulge something personal to another" (Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006, p. 411). Self-disclosure reinforces components of love such as trust, intimacy, and commitment, and is crucial for the development of a relationship (Park, Jin, & Jin, 2011).Typically, more personal offline self-disclosure is a reciprocal action where individuals are likely to disclose to those who are likely to disclose back to them. Park, Jin, and Jin (2011) indicate that SNS allow users to interact by sharing photos, status updates, posts, and messages.

The act of sharing information online is a form of self-disclosure. Reciprocation to this disclosure occurs when users respond to the content that was shared by commenting, liking, or sharing the material. Some users do not respond to self disclosure in that way; rather, as a response, they will choose to disclose information about themselves. If the responders choose to reveal information about themselves, Park, Jin, and Jin (2011) explain that a respondent's self-disclosure will trigger the original discloser to divulge once again. Self-disclosure on or offline provides individuals with an exchange of information that can be beneficial to a new relationship (Marshall et al., 2012). As relationships have branched into online environments, the components of love are dealing with new influences on the way they affect the couple. Papp, Danielewicz, and Cayemberg (2012) concluded that the use of Facebook has altered the way people interact and develop relationships, having found that"we can no longer disregard the potential connections between SNSs and intimate relationships, which serve as one of the most important contexts of individual growth and development" (p. 85).

Exposing oneself to celebrities online can be done on social networking sites. These sites allow individuals to join groups that may interest them, and in turn, the group provides profile pictures of those individuals who are also involved in the group. Seeing a profile picture online is comparable to seeing a person from across the room where then a person can decide if they are attracted to them. From the point of initial attraction, online platforms allow users to add the individual as a friend, inbox message them, or 'poke' them with just a few clicks.

This stage of meeting or getting to know someone online allows for generations of people to develop relationships in a unique way, due to the nature of the technology. Tokunaga (2011) said that "early or intermediate stages of a new relationships (are used) to obtain more information about others" (p. 706). Tokunaga is illustrating how the level of self-disclosure can help progress a relationship to the next stage in both an online and offline environment. For those individuals who are using online-based networks to display information, they are allowing others to identify with them (Gershon, 2011). Identifying factors such as groups and interests can allow the start of a relationship. Depending on how much a person or their partner reveals, Marshall et al. (2012) argue the insecurity of individuals can play as a direct factor in relationship stability. Someone's behavior online may unknowingly hurt his or her potential offline relationship. In the beginning of a relationship, SNS are a great way to interact with another person online, by getting to know that individual person better, or to maintain and enhance a long distance relationship (Tokunaga, 2011).

Furthermore, uploading photos of a significant other is a demonstration of commitment to others online. Facebook "pokes" are even considered public dispay of affection (PDA) (Bowe, 2010). Facebook pokes are a private way to flirt online, or

let a user know that you have been looking at their webpage. Users will receive a notification that they have been "poked" and who sent the poke. As a user, it was found that looking at a partner's page and seeing that they, too, are reciprocating the PDA postings can be satisfying (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). Bowe (2010) suggests in his study that couples found it important to reciprocate actions of posting about their relationship online.

Nonetheless, of the two sexes, women are more likely to express their affections online (Mansson & Myers, 2011; Marshall et al., 2009). Participants felt it would not only inform others that they were in a relationship, but also deter others from getting unintentionally involved. Online actions such as these can serve as an advertisement of the relationship to others while providing security to a couple.

Affective exchange: The third stage of social penetration theory is affective exchange. During this stage of the relationship, both parties are quite comfortable with each other, and conversation could carry itself. An individual's true self is apparent as more personal information is revealed in conversation (Tosun, 2012). There is clear connection based on the casual nature of the relationship and the awkward pauses decrease. The use of personal expressions and idiomatic vocabulary is established. During affective exchange, people start to develop more intimate feelings toward each other (LaSalle, 2004). During affective exchange, individuals who are getting closer can declare that they are in a relationship.

Facebook as a medium allows users to serve as their own gatekeepers of information, but for affective exchange to be successful users must accurately represent themselves online. Online representations of the true self are important as they can transfer into an intimate relationship during stable exchange (Gershon, 2011).

Stable exchange:

The last step in this relationship progress model is stable exchange, where partners engage in the most honest and comfortable conversation with each other. Few people reach this final phase. Individuals may experience negative feelings toward the others as a result of the brutal honesty that occurs in this phase (LaSalle, 2004). Relationship threats and intimacy issues are struggles felt during this phase. Online platform users do not always consider how a public forum could truly affect their personal relationships (LaSalle, 2004).

Intimacy is a huge portion of a relationship. Intimacy is not always defined in sexual terms, but it can also be defined by the quality of relationship interaction (Chan & Prendergast, 2007). Intimacy is the "feeling of closeness developed from personal disclosures resulted from interpersonal contact" (Park, Jin, & Jin, 2011). According to Chan and Prendergast (2008), verbal intimacy is an essential part of a relationship. They found that people in online relationships are able to adapt to the need of verbal exchange in online terms. Park, Jin, and Jin (2011) wrote that intimacy has become increasingly crucial for relationships in an online environment. "The more intimate a relationship, the more interactions are needed, and the more likely people are to adopt and expand their media use to support the exchanges" (Chan & Prendergast, 2007, p. 2761).

Women, in particular, found online intimacy as an ego booster when a member of the opposite sex had higher desires publically displayed online (Marshall et al., 2012). It's not uncommon to hear SNSs blamed for the failure or break down of a relationship. Gershon (2011) reported that students in her study claimed that Facebook caused their breakup. Unfortunately, for those intertwined with social networks, they may learn the real problems social networking can cause between friends and romantic partners (Tokunaga, 2011). One factor which may play a role in a relationship's demise is using SNS for surveillance.

Marshall et al. (2012) report that modern day online surveillance is easier and takes less effort than traditional offline surveillance. For an individual who has insecurities, they may find their partner's online actions to be a flaw, which could be

a diminishing satisfaction factor (Chan & Prendergast, 2008). Surveillance of Facebook pages may cause higher anxiety, mistrust, and jealousy, which will threaten the romantic relationship's existence (Marshall et al., 2012). Utilizing Shaw's (1995) social penetration theory, there is an understanding as to how relationships develop through the four stages. With relationships being developed and maintained in an online environment, it is important to explore what concerns SNS can cause. Modern couples using SNS may experience surveillance and feelings of jealousy based on social media use.

The Review

The Low and Extreme Levels of Celebrity Worship

Low levels of celebrity worship have entertainment -social value and comprise attitudes and behaviours like 'my friends and I like to discuss what my favourite celebrity has done'. This stage reflects the social aspects of celebrity worship and is consistent with Stever's (1991) observation that fans are attracted to a favourite celebrity because of their perceived ability to entertain and capture attention. By contrast, intermediate levels of celebrity worship are characterized by more intense-personal feelings, defined by items like 'I have frequent thoughts about my favourite celebrity, even when I don't want to'. This stage arguably reflects individuals' intensive and compulsive feelings around the celebrity, akin to the obsessional tendencies of fans often referred to in the literature (Giles, 2000). The most extreme expression of celebrity worship is labelled Borderline-pathological, as exemplified by items like 'if someone gave me several thousand dollars (pounds) to do with as I please, I would consider spending it on a personal possession (like a napkin or paper plate) once used by my favourite celebrity'. This factor is thought to reflect an individual's social–pathological attitudes and behaviours that are held as a result of worshiping a celebrity.

Recent studies have suggested that the intense-personal aspects of celebrity worship are associated with poorer mental well-being through indices of neuroticism, worry, anxiety, and depression (Maltby, Houran, & McCutcheon, 2003), suggesting that people scoring high on the measure of intense-personal aspects of celebrity worship may be vulnerable to establishing worry or distortions in their body shape. The aim of the current study was to examine the relationship between celebrity worship and body image. Given the importance of celebrity attachments in adolescence, it is anticipated that the association between body image and interest in a same-sex celebrity with an admirable body will be stronger in this age group than either undergraduates or adults in general. Based on existing findings, it is also expected that the association will be stronger for females than males and associated more readily with an intense-personal interest in celebrity worship, rather than other dimensions of celebrity worship.

Social Comparison, Imitation of Celebrity Models and Materialism in Young People

Materialism is defined as the degree to which a person believes that the acquisition and possession of material objects are important to achieve happiness in life or are an indicator of his or her success in life (Harrison, 2000). Longitudinal studies among college and high school students indicate dramatic increases in the endorsement of materialistic values (Korton, 1999), and recent research shows that 95% of adults consider children to be overly focused on consuming and buying things. Material possessions are often used by young people as an expression of the extended self, and the adoption of materialistic values affects the balance between the private and public choices that they make throughout life (Goldberg, Gorn, Peracchis, & Bomossy, 2003). While some may view materialism as a positive value, others suggest that it is an undesirable value which in part is caused by advertising (John, 1999). In our opinion materialism is a negative value because it works against interpersonal relationships and it is negatively associated with happiness and subjective well-being (Kasser, 2002). High levels of

materialistic values have been found to create tension between the individual orientation toward materialistic values and a collective orientation toward family and religious values (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002).

A central issue in studying materialism, especially amongst young people is that of social comparison and the intention to imitate media figures. Due to the combination of rapid body growth and puberty, the early self-identity formed in childhood is no longer appropriate, and adolescents enter a period of identity crisis (Erikson, 1980). Young people need to formulate a new identity and establish autonomy from their parents. They become more independent in decision making. As a result, young people tend to seek personal relationships that give value to their perspectives and ensure that their feelings are understood. Peer groups, with their shared experience, are an inevitable source of these relationships.

Consequently, young people prefer to identify with peers. The frequent interaction with peers, even more frequent than with parents, can lead to peers becoming the primary basis for social comparison. A generalized social comparison theory states that individuals compare their own material possessions with those owned by significant others to ascertain their social status (Korton, 1999). Apart from comparing themselves to peers, young people may also compare themselves to celebrities. Celebrity worship has become common amongst young people around the world and may stem from a developmental need for identification and intimacy (Josselson, 1991).

Our basic thesis is that interpersonal communication influences social comparison while advertising communication influences imitation of celebrity models. And both social comparison and imitation of celebrity models, in turn, influence materialistic values. This is consistent with Kasser *et al*.'s (2004) argument that individuals learn to adopt materialistic values through social learning from family members, peers, and the materialistic messages that are frequently found in television programmes and their commercial messages.

According to Kasser *et al*.'s (2004) model, consumers (including young people) develop materialistic value orientation through experiences that induce feelings of insecurity, and from exposure to materialistic models and values. When the psychological needs of individuals are not met, they tend to move toward materialism as a type of compensatory strategy to lessen the distressing effects of insecurity. Kasser *et al*.'s (2004) model focuses on the individual's internal status. This study attempted to replace the insecurity and exposure to materialism in that model with variables related to social comparison and imitation of media celebrities. This is because social comparison and imitation of media celebrities are variables that measure the active mental processing of incoming messages about materialistic value.

Studies have shown that the family environment affects the endorsement of materialistic values. Parental styles and practices that do not fully meet young people's needs are associated with materialism (Kasser *et al*., 1995). Young people growing up in families that use socially oriented communication patterns, which stress harmony among family members and the avoidance of conflict, demonstrate higher levels of materialism (Hamilton & Waller, 1993).Young people growing up in families that use concept-oriented communication patterns, which encourage independent thinking demonstrate lower levels of materialism. Mothers' involvement in parenting reported by young people was negatively related to materialism while fathers' involvement was not related to materialism (Flouri, 2004). Young people who communicate less frequently with their parents about consumption have been found to be more materialistic (Hamilton & Waller, 1993).

Young people often form secondary attachments to media figures in addition to relations with family and peers. These attachments facilitate adolescents' transition to adulthood and

the formation of a mature adult identity. Using the ethnographic analysis, Caughey (1994) found that young admirers consider celebrity idols as their idealized self images. Admirers want to develop or refine personality traits that are similar to their idols. Young people reported that they wanted to revise their physical appearance, abilities, values and attitudes in order to imitate that of their idols. Caughey (1994) concluded that people's "imaginary" relationships with media figures will shape both their own self-identities and their subjective evaluation of self-worth.

A survey found that young people who reported that they shared a bond with their idols (all were media figures) were more likely to attribute their idols in guiding their choice of identity and shaping their feelings of self-worth. A majority of the sample reported that their idols had influenced their attitudes and personal values, in particular beliefs about work ethics and morality (Boon & Lomore, 2001). An empirical study indicated that direct role models (e.g. fathers and mothers) and vicarious role models (e.g. favorite entertainers) affected young people in brand selection, brand switching and lodging consumer complaints (Lyons, 2000). Young consumers reported that they were more likely to use products endorsed by entertainers or famous athletes (Larson, 1995). Overall, social comparison (with friends and media figures) and imitation of celebrity models (through advertising consumption) may influence the youth to be more materialistic. In this study, social comparison and imitation of celebrity models were proposed to be mediating variables that reflect the active processing of information from parents, teachers, peers and the media. By internalizing the information and making choices, social comparison and imitation of celebrity models leads to the endorsement of materialistic or non-materialistic values.

Technology and the Youths

Technological forces like those of evolutions are strong forces that have shaken up everything, especially the Internet in all spheres of personal, social and professional human life. Right from the mere ways of interaction to the running of huge systems, we are utilizing the conveniences provided by the existence of the Internet (Gershon, 2011). Technology is changing the way that people interact and communicate. New technologies are providing more ways to communicate with others and especially among the youth.

Although some researchers argue that these technologies are just a new medium for youths to use and that their patterns of relationships and quality of communication remain the same as with other forms of communication, since they treat the online environment as just another place to interact with already existing friends (Tokunaga, 2011), questions are still arising on the impact of these new technologies on the traditional modes of communication. The consequences of online communication especially through SNSs on interpersonal relationships among the youth are key in this study. Social networking sites, as well as email, instant messaging, blogging, and online journals are among the technological changes that have completely changed the way that people interact and gather information. They can be classified under communication technology.

Communication technology is a term that describes types of technology that are used for communication. Discussions about youths today have differed considerably on the role that technology plays in their lives (Gershon, 2011). Gershon adds that though the technologies used today by youths are new especially in terms of communication, the technologically mediated activities that youth participate in are similar to past generations. There is nothing new with the way adolescents are behaving with the Internet. Park et al. (2011) stated that they hang out in the Internet as they used to in the shopping malls, to gossip share and support each other. Nothing has changed, just the venue. Therefore the SNSs have only helped the youth link up with their friends from far and this has made the hanging out more fun.

Methodology

The survey research design was used in conducting this study. Survey research method enables the researcher to focus on a representative sample, derived from the entire population of study. The essence of using the survey method for this study is because it lends itself to the application of samples as a way of studying very large populations (Nwodu, 2017; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

Population of the Study

The population of COOU female students in the 2019 session, according to the office of the Registrar, is 8,542.

Sample size and Sampling Technique

A sample is a representative unit of a population (Asekun & Oluwa, 2010). According to Owuamalam (2012), it is a faithful representation of a specific population. The essence of sampling is to obtain external validity (Osuala, 2005). For this study, 388 samples were selected and certified appropriate according to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), who state that the selected sample size is good for a study population such as this. Also, both the purposive and multi-stage sampling techniques were used in selecting the actual sample for the survey.

All the seven faculties in Igbariam Campus of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University were divided into seven clusters while the simple random sampling without replacement was used in selecting one department each from the seven faculties thus:

1. Faculty of Agricultural Sciences (Department of Agric-Economics =55)
2. Faculty of Arts (Department of English = 60)
3. Faculty of Education (Department of Physical and Health Education = 58)
4. Faculty of Law (Department of Public Law = 55)
5. Faculty of Management Sciences (Department of Accountancy = 65)
6. Faculty of Social Sciences (Department of Mass Communication = 65)
7. Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences (Department of Pharmacology = 30)

The proportionate allocation formula was used in allocating the samples to all the departments selected for the study. This means that the larger the department, the higher the samples allocated to it.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Validity refers to the authentic nature of the measuring instrument in being capable of eliciting the necessary information applicable to the study (Owuamalam, 2012). To determine validity of any instrument, the pre-testing approach is very necessary. After producing questionnaire as the measuring instrument for this study, the researcher gave out 20 copies in a survey to a group of selected persons in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The exercise was repeated the second time after an interval of three weeks using the same number of measuring tool to the same number of respondents. This is referred to as the post-testing approach. It was found that results of the first and second (pre and post-testing) were similar. It implies that the measuring instrument was valid. When a valid measuring instrument is used, it makes for reliability and is capable of producing the required result from the study. Owuamalam (2012, p. 129) holds that reliability assures the researcher of the competence of the measuring instrument.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used in collecting data for this study is the questionnaire. It contained multiple choice questions. The questionnaire was administered on face to face basis. This was to ensure that the respondents have clear understanding of the questions from the researchers. Also, the researchers' presence ensured that the respondents fill the questionnaire without mistakes and return same to them on the spot.

Technique of Data Presentation and Analysis

Data collected through the questionnaire were presented in tables while frequency and simple

percentages were used in the analysis. Data were analyzed to exclusively answer research questions, present the results of the study in an understandable and convincing form using statistical tables.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 388 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to undergraduate students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) to ascertain the influence which their exposure to online celebrity has on their lifestyle. The filled copies of the questionnaire were collected and checked for usability. Out of the 388 copies distributed, 382 copies were returned and found usable, giving a return rate of 98.5 percent.

Research Question One:

What is COOU female students' frequency of exposure to online celebrities?

Table 1: Assessment of respondents' frequency of exposure to online celebrities.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	151	39.5
High	170	45.5
Low	41	10.7
Very low	10	2.6
Can't say	10	2.6
Total	382	100

Analysis of data in Table 2 above shows that 151representing 39.5 percent of the respondents answered very high when asked their level of exposure to online celebrities; 170 or 45.5 percentage answered 'high'; 41 or 10.7 percent answered 'Low'; 10 or 2.6 percent answered 'very low' while 10 or 2.6 percent answered 'can't say'. This analysis points to the fact that quite a higher number of the respondents were exposed to online celebrities.

Research Question Two:

To what level do COOU female students imitate online celebrities they are exposed to?

Table 2: Assessment of the level of COOU female students' imitatation of online celebrities they are exposed to

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high level	96	25.1
High level	128	33.5
Low level	82	21.5
Very low level	40	10.5
Can't say	36	9.4
Total	382	100

Analysis of data in Table 3 indicated that 96 representing 25.1 percent of the respondents answered 'very high level' when asked to indicate the level COOU female students imitate the online celebrities they are exposed to; 128 or 33.5 percent answered 'high level'; 82 or 21.5 percent indicated 'low level'; 40 or 10.5 indicated 'very low level while 36 or 9.4 had no opinion on the question. This is a clear indication that a majority of the respondents have a high level of imitation of the online celebrities they are exposed to.

Research Question Three

Which aspects of COOU female students' lifestyles have been influenced by imitating online celebrities?

Table 3: Assessment of the aspects of COOU female students' lifestyles that have been influenced by imitating online celebrities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Dressing/fashion	102	26.7
Speaking	81	21.2
Hair styles	85	22.3
Manners	104	27.2
Can't say	10	2.6
Total	382	100

Analysis of the data in Table 4 shows that 102 representing 26.7 percent of the respondents indicated 'dressing/fashion' when asked to mention the aspect of their lifestyles that has been influenced by imitating online celebrities; 81 or 21.2 percent indicated 'speaking' 85 or 22.3 percent indicated 'hair styles'; 104 or 27.2 indicated 'manners'; while 10 or 2.6 had no opinion on the question. This means that the aspects of respondents' lifestyles influenced by imitating online celebrities cut across different areas with 'dressing/fashion' taking the lead in influencing the students' lifestyles.

Research Question Four

To what level has COOU female students' exposure to online celebrities positively influenced their lifestyles?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high level	82	21.5
High level	128	33.5
Low level	96	25.1
Very low level	36	9.4
Can't say	40	10.5
Total	382	100

Analysis of data presented in Table 4 shows that 82 representing 21.5 percent of the respondents answered 'very high level' when asked to indicate the level COOU female students' exposure to online celebrities has positively influenced their lifestyles; 128 or 33.5 percent answered 'high'; 96 or 25.1 percent answered 'low level'; 36 or 9.4 percent said 'very low level' while 40 or 10.5 percent had no opinion on the question. This shows that the level respondents' lifestyles have been influenced by their exposure to online celebrities is high.

Discussion of Findings

From the data presented and analysed, it was found that quite a higher number of the respondents were exposed to online celebrity. This is evident in Table 2 where more than 82 percent of the respondents acceded to have had good exposure to online celebrities. These findings equally supports an earlier submission by Giles and Maltby (2004) who held that young people, who have become addicted to and are frequently exposed to online platforms via smart phones and other Internet enabled gadgets stand the risk of frequent exposure to online celebrities with its attendants consequences.

Other findings from the study show that a majority of the respondents have a high level of imitation of the online celebrities they are exposed to. This is seen in Table 2 where the majority of the respondents (58.6%) answered either 'very high' or 'high' to indicate that the level of imitation of the lifestyles of the online celebrities they are exposed to. These findings are in tandem with an earlier observation by Chan and Prendergast (2007) who posit that celebrity worship has become common amongst young people around the world and may stem from a developmental need for identification and intimacy. Response to celebrity appearances in television commercials sometimes goes beyond emulation. For instance, some studies suggest that young admirers spoke of celebrities as if they had a "real" relationship with them. The celebrity's messages became part of the individual's social construction of reality.

Again, the findings also show that respondents' lifestyles are influenced in different areas of life through their exposure to online celebrities with dressing/fashion taking the lead in the aspect of lifestyles influenced. The result is expressed in Table 3 of this study which shows that respondents' lifestyles are influenced in different areas through their exposure to online celebrities. These findings reinforce an earlier result of a study conducted by Greene and Adams-Price (1990) in which they stated that it becomes extremely worrisome that online platforms nowadays portray online celebrities in almost every sphere of life, becoming more or less models to young people.

Finally, findings from the study show that the level that respondents' lifestyles have been influenced by exposure to online celebrities is high. This is evident in Table 4 where 55% of the

respondents answered either 'very high' or 'high' to indicate that the level that respondents lifestyles have been influenced by exposure to online celebrities is high. These findings also reinforce an earlier submission by Livingstone (1998) who held that celebrity worshipping could thus have a prevalent influence on shaping their followers' values, attitudes and behaviours positives. Advertisers and marketers also capture the opportunity to encourage young followers to consume the products endorsed by their celebrities.

Conclusion

The observation by Giles (2002) that the most important psychological influences of media, particularly during adolescence is the formation of para-social relationships with media figures. These may take the form of intense attachments to celebrities where the values of the celebrity are highly influential, providing young people with attitudinal and behavioural exemplars. The foregoing tends to draw a good conclusion for this study.

However, based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made: a majority of the respondents were exposed to online celebrities; a majority of the respondents have a high level of imitation of the online celebrities they are exposed to; the lifestyles of the respondents are influenced in different areas by their exposure to online celebrities including: fashion, speaking among others, and finally, the level of respondents' lifestyles that have been influenced by the online celebrities they are exposed to is high.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since one of the most feared effects of the media is that, by glamorizing thin celebrities and models, they promote body shapes that are unrealistic and unattainable for many young people, it is therefore recommended that youths do not swallow everything they see or hear about the celebrities.
2. Youths should avoid unwholesome adoption of online celebrity traits.
3. Parents must stand up to their guidance roles to the youths by monitoring their consumption of online media products.
4. The youths especially students should focus on media products that can contribute meaningfully to their studies while discouraging celebrity worship which influences their lifestyles negatively.

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