

Media Portrayal of Female Celebrities in the Nigerian Press

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Abstract

The media portrayal of female celebrities in the Nigerian press can be analyzed through several lenses, including representation, stereotyping, and societal expectations. The paper examined media portrayal of female celebrities in the Nigerian press and the postulation of Feminist Theory was employed to interrogate the concept. The paper argues that with the rise of social media, the portrayal of female celebrities has become more direct and personal. Celebrities now have more control over how they present themselves to the public, but they also face more intense scrutiny. Social media platforms can amplify both praise and criticism, sometimes leading to a toxic environment where female celebrities are constantly under the microscope, not only for their careers but also for their personal choices. Nigerian media coverage is often influenced by the country's strong cultural and religious values. Female celebrities, especially in more conservative parts of the country, may face criticism for behavior that challenges traditional expectations of women. For example, the media may criticize women who dress in a revealing way, engage in public displays of affection, or speak out against societal norms. The portrayal of female celebrities in Nigerian media is complex and multifaceted, balancing between admiration and scrutiny, empowerment and objectification, personal choice and public expectation. The media plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions of female celebrities, both positively and negatively. The paper concludes that many female figures in entertainment, sports, and politics are portrayed as role models, especially when they defy norms and achieve success in male-dominated fields. Women like Genevieve Nnaji, Tiwa Savage, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, for instance, are often celebrated for their professional achievements and contributions to society. This narrative promotes women's empowerment, independence, and leadership.

Keywords

Media Portrayal;
Female Celebrities;
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I. Introduction

Fame and celebrity are nothing new to human civilization. As humans progressed from spending all their time hunting and gathering, those who excelled at war, sports, politics and the arts captured the imagination, Blake (Aliyu et al., 2023). The original Latin meaning of celebrity is “to be thronged.” Along with this comes a sense of visibility, a sense of being widely recognized, known and how frequently are you seen. Celebrities are at the center of many of the popular forms of cultural production that are connected with contemporary everyday life: music, television, motion pictures, journalism, the Internet, advertising and more. Yet, celebrity's role and the process of its creation remains little understood and, thus of only limited use in comprehending the shifting roles of popular and mass culture (Altman 2005).

Earlier scholars have discussed the rise of celebrities and the particular cultural phenomena that surround them but have linked it to the emergence of cinema (more specifically in the decade between 1910 and 1920), the rise of Hollywood studios, and the construction of the star system in film (Airaoje et al., 2023). Others have pushed the apex of celebrity even closer to the present. Such theories assume that the publicity required for creating a celebrity demanded the centralized culture industries that emerged in the early twentieth century.

According to Marshall in Aondover and Akin-Odukoya (2024) celebrity origin has a complicated, decentralized and contingent production than this industrial narrative implies. It is significant to note that celebrities emerged before the rise of mass media, yet it came into being during an important period of the expansion of print culture. Technological innovations in print and communications media contributed to, but did not create the celebrity. In the context of print media, “the celebrity” first emerged as a moral touchstone, as a way for writers of newspapers and periodicals to investigate individual characters and public values by using the lives of famous men and women.

The dawn of modern celebrity emerged when William Shakespeare arrived on the scene in the mid-16th century, a time where England had a very famous woman, Elizabeth making history, and dramatic shifts in science, religion and culture were occurring. The term Celebrity, began to appear in the 18th century with the increasing importance of the public sphere, Blake (Aondover et al., 2024). “As people came to recognize the public as an entity separate from the government and the church, newspapers began to turn their attention to items of public interest, a new class of people emerged as the recipients of widespread attention. The Elizabethan era witnessed popular theater becoming a major source of entertainment for the masses. The clergy and scholars may have disapproved of such “corrupt” entertainment, but it turned Shakespeare into London’s most celebrated playwright.

A phenomenon as culturally pervasive as celebrity must have numerous points of origin, numerous points of change. The clearest location at which it might have started to chart its various histories, however, American seems to be the motion picture industry at the beginning of the twentieth century. Incorporating the residue of the press agency networks developed around live theatre and vaudeville, and seeking a means of industrializing the marketing of their new product, the narrative feature film, the nascent American film industry experiences a number of significant shifts that resulted in the marketing of the ‘picture personality’ and, later on, ‘the star’ (Aondover et al., 2022).

Between the periods of 1895–1920, when the first blocks of the modern celebrity system were sliding into place, everything was improvisatory, primitive. Something more was needed, something that could be on a fairly regular basis, provide the public with a reliable supply of sensations together with an equally steady, glamorous, and easy-to-follow real-life serial adventure. Something that could, as well, allow the press to return to a slightly more passive role in gathering and presenting the news of these creatures, not force it constantly to risk its reputation in prodigies of invention (Aondover et al., 2023).

Perhaps, Schickel is most specific in his claim that ‘there was no such thing as celebrity prior to the beginning of the twentieth century’. Before that, he suggests, they had people who were only successful and famous. But the trend changed on 24 June, 1916, when Mary Pickford signed the first million-dollar film contract with Adolph Zukor, it was at that moment the deal made headlines that reward began to detach itself from effort and from

intrinsic merit, when the old reasonable correlation between what and how one did and what one received for doing it became tenuous (Schickel in Aondover et al., 2022).

There are other contenders for the pivotal moment, although most nominate a point in the first two decades of the American motion picture industry when competition between independent producers was intense and new strategies were being sought to market their products. Film historians cite what is usually regarded as the first occasion when publicity is deliberately manipulated in order to build interest in a star. In 1910, producer Carl Laemmle planted a false story in St Louis newspaper that reported Florence Lawrence – an actress then known as ‘the Biograph Girl’ – had been killed in a trolley-car accident. Laemmle immediately denounced the story as fake and staged a highly public appearance where Lawrence was mobbed by her ‘relieved and allegedly adoring public’ (Hile et al., 2023).

Scholars from the field of communication and cultural studies have provided an insight of who celebrities are, the most famous definition is from Daniel Boorstin who is of the view that celebrities are individuals who are known for simply being well-known regardless of what field they are coming from (Idris & Msughter, 2022). Marshall in Maikaba and Msughter (2019) discusses celebrity as an “image” informed by the circulation of significant information by a variety of mediums. Dyer (2004) maintains that celebrity is not confined to professional images of a person; rather, the label is open to everything publicly about them. More recently, scholars have conceptualised celebrity as a “practice,” that is why Marwick and Boyd (2011) argued that the practice of celebrity “involves ongoing maintenance of a fan base, performed intimacy, authenticity, access and construction of a consumable persona”. Celebrity is a fashioned, maintainable practice, and a cultural symbol.

Couldry (2003) maintains that the myth of the mediated center or the assumption that the media are the privileged gatekeepers and access points to the imagined social center are categorical distinction between ‘media people’ and ‘ordinary people’ which is essentially hierarchical in nature. In other words, this myth implies that being in the media make a person perceived importance compared with those outside the media. The abundance of reality TV and talent shows in America illustrates that ‘ordinary’ people yearn for fame, while the number of fan communities is countless.

Thus, there are connections to the fields in which the famous people originate and the label they receive. In general, it could be argued that super stars predominantly belong to sports, film, and music, or the broader cultural field. Now even politicians and journalist are regarded as celebrity. Most of them attract people’s attention by exploiting a certain talent, or by achieving something which also applies to heroes, Idols and icons are usually related to pop music, actors or top sport athletes whereas celebrity seems not strictly related to a specific field but could be said to have a central quality in its media generated fame. The press is known for its information, education and entertainment functions. Pictures in the newspapers enhance the credibility of news story, and also attract the attention of it like “Die Hard” readers, because the pictures of people and event are capable of depicting reality. They also provide the evidence of the authenticity of a news story and at the same time give proof of an event that has occurred. A good visual usually attracts a good play, just the way a good story attracts a big headline. Furthermore, celebrity stories are not complete without having pictures attached to them. The importance of pictures in a story is very profound. That is why cutting back on words to provide space for the pictures are done by the press so that it will get a space in the story.

Newspapers add colour to words and at the same time capture moods; because words and visuals are most effective when they work together. In practice, the discursive regime of celebrity is defined by a number of elements. It crosses the boundary between the public and the private worlds, preferring the personal, the private or ‘veridical’ self, as the privileged

object of revelation (Maradun et al., 2021). Media can map the precise moment a public figure becomes a celebrity. It occurs at the point at which media interest in their activities is transferred from reporting on their public role (such as their specific achievement in movie, music or sport) and investigating the details of their private lives. Paradoxically, it is most often the high profile achieved by their public activities that provides the alibi for this process of ‘celebritisation’.

II. Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework

This paper is employed The Feminist Media Theory. The Feminist Media Theory relates to this paper, as it assists in exploring the roles of females within society as portrayed by the print media. Essentially, Feminist Theory is associated with women’s inequality and subordination. However, in the history of feminism, as culture has developed and changed, so has Feminist Theory. The juxtaposition of Feminist Theory and popular culture has an inevitable impact on the consumption of culture mainly because popular culture has the power to put up a mirror to our lives and show connections between media, socialization and identity. Pop culture is generally the images, narratives and ideas that circulate widely in contemporary culture. The Feminist Theory according to Kramarae in Oreoluwa et al., (2024) is a label for a group of theories that explores the meaning of gender concepts. Feminist theorists argue that almost all aspects of life can be understood in terms of gender qualities. A fundamental aim of the feminist critique is to expose the powers and the limits of the gendered division of the world. Ropers-Huilman and Winters (2011) indicate that the Feminist Media Theory began as an analysis of the ways in which women were discriminated against. It helped to develop and perpetuate the harms done to women, both conceptually and materially.

The Feminist Theory has increasingly developed over the past few decades. It began by assuming that gender is a pervasive category for understanding human experience. It is commonly argued that gender is a socially constructed system of values, identities, and activities. Writing during the time of the second wave women’s movement, Mulvey in Vitalis et al., (2025) objective in the essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” was to recognize and question gender asymmetry (power differences) within the visual arts and entertainment industries. Mulvey argued that the portrayal of women in various forms of film were primarily aesthetic in purpose. They are presented in ways that appeal to others, notably heterosexual men, most of the arts and entertainment industries were, and remain, controlled by heterosexual, as well as white men. Their perspective by sexualizing women and portraying them as objects of heterosexual desire were assumed to be most aesthetically pleasing and by extension, more profitable.

Vitalis et al., (2025) postulate that the Feminist Media Theory emerged through the recognition of the inadequacy of existing models to explain the position of women in the past and their potential for change in the present and in the future. The media has always been at the center of feminist critique and has been thought to act as a socialization agent which claims that the media fails to reflect change within society, including the role of women within it. Nevertheless, the print media play significant roles in contributing to the roles of women in society as they are shaped according to the changes that occur within the society. According to Raphaely in Oreoluwa et al., (2024) in the 1930’s and 1940’s women’s jobs were restricted and controlled by males. To the extent that majority of the women’s magazines were edited by males who focused primarily on magazine sales and profits and did not fully understand the needs of the audiences. The theory has assisted in the understanding of how the media influences decisions as well as refines the ability to predict the effects of

the media's messages on audience behaviours. Feminist media theory has its focus on how gender is communicated within the media. For Van Zoonen gender is a, if not the crucial component of culture, in particular when investigating the production of mass media meaning, which this research is focused on.

It is an undisputable fact that the Feminist Media Theory, like any other media or social science paradigm, is not spared from criticism. Charlotte Brunsdon, a member of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) Women's Studies Group, later reflected on the intellectual limitations imposed by "the notion of a women's studies group which is 'filling in the gaps' in an already existing analysis, and which has a kind of 'what about women' public presence." Such limitations had a general effect on the initial direction taken by feminist media scholarship, much of which was indeed concerned to "fill in the gaps" in communication studies by identifying areas that had been ignored or rendered invisible by the field's traditional categories of enquiry. Gradually, issues such as the mediation of male violence, sexuality, pornography, language as control, verbal harassment, the body, beauty, consumerism, fashion, and the study of "women's genres" magazines, soap opera, melodrama and romance were brought onto the agenda. A more fundamental revisioning, which would have an impact on communication research methods particularly in terms of the relation of the researcher to the subject of study also emerged, as new strands of feminism began to modify the original feminist critique of the media.

Early Feminist Theory had emphasized the commonalities of women's oppression, neglecting profound differences between women in terms of class, age, sexuality, religion, race and nation. As its exclusionary nature became evident, the collective "we" of feminism was called into question. The inadequacies of feminist theorizing that conflated the condition of white, heterosexual, middleclass women with the condition of all women were highlighted in North America by the black and Latina feminists, in Britain by Black and Asian feminists, and by the analyses of lesbian feminists. Such critiques evoked the concepts of "interlocking identities" and "interlocking oppressions". Black women's experience of sexism, as one example could not be conceived as separable from their experience of racism. Women of color do not experience sexism in addition to racism, but sexism in the context of racism; thus, they cannot be said to bear an additional burden that white women do not bear, but to bear an altogether different burden from that borne by white women.

Related and more radical analyses came from feminist scholars in the Third World, where quite different agendas were called for. These critiques highlighted the irrelevance of Western feminism's analytical frameworks to the lives of most women around the world, and attempted to reposition feminist debate within broader social, economic and cultural contexts of analysis advocated by scholars such as (Oreoluwa et al., 2024). Yet feminist media criticism survives, despite the regular appearance of "post-feminist" arguments and the onslaught of moreover the backlash.

III. Result and Discussion

3.1 Female Celebrities and Advert

Over the years, advertising has been a prime target of attack and scrutiny by gender sensitive media critics. The basic explanation for the critical focus on sex-role portrayal in advertising which lies in the close relationship exists between advertising, the consumer goods industry and the crucial economic role of women as consumers. As a result, a large portion of commercial messages envisage women as their primary target audience (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022). According to Jagdish Agrawal and Wagner Kamakura's study, "The Economic worth of Celebrity Endorsers: An Event Study Analysis," celebrity endorsement

contracts are generally viewed as a worthwhile investment in advertising. According to the research, celebrities make advertisements believable and enhance message recall. Celebrities also aid in the recognition of brand names, create a positive attitude toward the brand, and create a distinct personality for the endorsed brand. Ultimately, celebrity endorsements are believed to generate a greater likelihood of customers 'choosing an endorsed brand.

Celebrity endorsement acts as a signpost to quality and can significantly enhance the reputation of a brand. They are much more likely to be "invited in" by customers' than other forms of advertising. Stars, by definition, have very high public awareness and people are able to visualize them very easily as they are so familiar with them. Celebrities are carefully chosen to suit the brand they are endorsing. This provides the meaningful resonance and positive disposition which leads to "subscription" and the building of a successful relationship. There is a clear link between higher awareness, or "fame", for a brand and more favorability towards it. Familiarity easily translates into favorability or likeability (Msughter et al., 2022). Ben-Nwanko in Msughter et al., (2022) acknowledges that until a few years ago, the phrase 'Celebrity endorsement or brand ambassador' is not frequently used in Nigeria. Today, many top-rated entertainers and 'important enough personalities 'are paid to be faces of brands. Apart from being well known faces, these brand ambassadors also have a huge fan base, a prerequisite for getting endorsement deals.

Osae-Brown in Msughter et al., (2023) further asserts that Nigeria is increasingly leveraging the entertainment industry to cast their goods and services in better light and this has opened up a N500 million for music artist, actors and sports men. The issue of celebrity endorsement platform for driving sales by companies in Nigeria, in Osae Brown's view is still evolving. According to Brown, 2012 alone, these brand ambassadors were signed to endorse some brands like; Wizkid and Tiwa savage (Pepsi) Don Jazzy (Loya milk) Ini Edo (Hollandia), Patience Ozokwo (MTN) Omotola Jalade (Hollandia) Ekehinde, Genevieve Nnaji (Range rover sport) Bouqui (Samsung) and Blessing Okagbare (first bank).

The public fascination with celebrities and the use of celebrities in advertising is not a new phenomenon. As discussed by Joshua Gamson in Obasi et al., (2023) in "The Assembly Line of realness, Celebrity in Twentieth-Century America," celebrity, as a selling device, has been evidencing advertising nearly since the beginning, primarily through endorsements. There is a welcome element of escapism and fantasy as consumers put on a style made famous by a particular star and in so doing, they join the fan club and identify with the celebrity's lifestyle.

Most notably, "cinema shops" in department stores, the increasing employment of film stars in advertisements for personal products, and the continued glamorization of stars and their lives through fan magazines and gossip in national presses kept Hollywood actresses and their apparel in full view, tempting consumers to emulate stars 'manufactured style. Again, the advent of photography certainly gave an enormous boost to the influence of celebrities over other people and industries such as cosmetics, hair care and toiletries. Celebrity endorsers ensure consumers that they attained their nearly flawless perfection from the products they promote, leading female consumers to believe that it is so easily attainable when in actuality it is not only far more difficult (if not impossible), but also unnatural. The study did not research on why these celebrities agree on endorsing some product and services, sometimes it is not only about the money but the prestige gotten from endorsing a particular brand name (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024a).

3.2 Images of Women in Print Media

Available research materials on portrayal in the print media deal mostly with the treatment of women in pictorial, textual and linguistic content of various newspapers and

magazine sections. Most of these sections have been criticized for perpetuating traditional perspectives. In her study published in 2002, Okunna analyzed images of women in pictorial, participatory and textual newspaper content. She equally analyzed the role of women vs. men portrayed in news photos appearing in five Nigerian newspapers and four news magazines. It was deduced from the study that in terms of people in the news, women were grossly invisible, as the findings show a very low participation of women in news making (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024b). The result of the study emphasized the under-representation of women in the print media. She argued thus:

...the fact that women make up at least 50% of Nigeria's population is not reflected in the number of women who make news in the mass media. In newsmagazines, a disproportionate 86% of people in the news are male, while women accounted for a mere 14%; 675 people appeared in the 42 new stories, 581 of them are men. Women's invisibility in the news is also reflected in newspaper coverage since only 93 (16%) of the 566 news stories involve women, and only 53 of these have women as their central focus.... (p. 8)

Okunna (2003) also conducted another study using quantitative content analysis, which she analyzed how women are pictured in picture news. Photos are among the first items to attract readers' attention and help establish the context in which they interpret the accompanying news story. Her study revealed that apart from under-representation of women in news stories, women are also denied prominence in being quoted and seen in photographs. Another criticism against the portrayal of women by the print media is that women are most often portrayed as mere appendages to men. According to Omenugha in Oreoluwa et al., (2024) this is so because news values as currently applied in Nigeria thrive on prominence (who is involved) and since men are often in power; this further marginalizes women who are often irrelevant.

Even the lucky ones from among women folk who eventually make news do so as appendages to the men in power and their cognition given to these women only contributes to the glory of the men they are appended to. Furthermore, Omenugha in Owens-Ibie and Aondover (2024) further identified the use of sexist language for the unfair portrayal of Nigerian women in English-medium Nigerian dailies. She reiterates that the use of the tag such tags like "Mrs." by the media further resonates with the common sexist practice in news discourse to make women appendages to men, and by extension, render women invisible.

3.3 Media Portrayal of Female Athletes

Shaller (2006) conducted a study on the way the media portray female athletes who have become celebrities in the sports world. According to the study, "sports journalism in the print media have been slow to react to social changes" (Vitalis et al., 2025). However, media professional argue that the media are simply providing what the public wants (Abba et al., 2021). If men would rather see a female athlete wearing less clothing and posing like a model rather than a sport figure that is what the media will produce. Resulting from this is the appearance that women's sport is unimportant compared to the real sport world of men. The majority of fans who read sports publication do not have a problem with safe, socially acceptable sports such as golf and tennis, so female athlete participating in these sports are more apt to be covered and presented to the mostly male audience.

Roberts (1993) conducted research in South Africa on media's coverage of women's sport in the hope of moving towards empowerment of female athletes. The Sports Information and Science Agency (SISA), an initiative of the South African Sports Commission, (SASC) conducted the research in 1997. As part of the study respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about the amount of coverage given in the major newspapers

and on television to sports dominated by women. A study by Sports Information and Science Agency (SISA) revealed that 80% of women felt that there was not enough coverage of women dominated sports on television. Major newspapers fare little better with 70% of women feeling that not enough coverage of women's sports was given. SISA (1997, p.67) states "All groups felt that enough coverage is not given to women's sports. Women participating in sport feel more negative about the coverage given to women's sport than those not doing any sport." Thus, the portrayal of female athletes as models and posing as sexual object is yet to become common in the Nigerian newspapers, and stories about them seems to be given little prominence and there is also the economy of portraying them as models wearing short wears.

3.4 Influence of Celebrities on the Youths

In the case of the youths, media contents create for them an appealing image and this, dictates the variety of material they incorporate into their daily lives. The youthful age is a vulnerable one and in a quest for belonging and discovery, this category of people follows the trends as seen in the media. Aondover et al., (2024) posit that "teenagers and young adults are more susceptible to be influenced by celebrities as compared to mature population. Teenagers tend to follow the footsteps of celebrities to accommodate characteristic that they are lacking in their personal life. Youths today look up to celebrities for their everyday fashion tips, movies, albums and their general way of life. The youthful stage is a very confusing period filled with changes and challenges, and is a period when an individual feels the need to "belong" and to be "accepted". When this need is created, the youth look for ways to fill the gap and most often turn to the media to perform this role.

Oboko and Onyejelem (2024) suggests that celebrities are most like salespersons. Adding that, they may not explicitly try to persuade their audiences, they are subconsciously altering the thoughts of the public. This can be seen through celebrity endorsements, press interviews, apparel worn during public events, items favored by celebrities, celebrity-branded products and celebrities' overall brand image all of which create epidemics of societal acceptance among various social groups. Many teenagers dress and behave like their favorite celebrity. Onyejelem and Nwokeocha (2024) attribute the reasons to Bandura's Social Learning Theory stressing that "humans learn about the world through observing the behaviour of others. He adds that by watching the effects of certain behaviours and examining personal responses, people decide on their own values about behaviour. Logically, people are likely to imitate the behaviour which they associate with success or successful people."

A study Onyejelem et al., (2023) also pointed out some effects of celebrity influence on the youths by observing that too many pupils are of the conviction that academic success was 'unnecessary' because they thought they would be able to make their fame and fortune quite easily on a reality TV show. They believe they are much more likely to achieve financial well-being through having a celebrity status, than through progression to higher education and a 'proper' career. Celebrities motivate the youths to aspire to be successful. They have a strong desire to like the stars they see on the TV, read or hear about. Celebrities propel some youths to pursue activities like acting, sports, writing, modeling, or even doing some business. Generally, this category of people looks up to celebrities as a perfect example of successful people and in that way try to attain perfectionism, and thus have desire to conform to the goings-on and avoid conflict, and also have a need for control. Plastic surgery is very common in America and Europe. However, in Nigeria and Africa, as a whole it is still something new and yet to be a reported. It is simply the case of a fan changing his/or her resemble to that of a celebrity he/she worships.

3.5 The Feminist Movement

Feminism today is widely recognized as the driving force for securing and defending equal rights and opportunities for women and raising awareness that these issues exist, which need to be addressed. High on their agenda is the matter of representation and this has always been a key battleground for feminism (Onyejelem & Ndolo, 2018). As far back in 1860s, feminists in Britain and America campaigned relentlessly about the treatment of women in newspapers and magazines. At the time, many women were beginning to seek increasing rights socially, educationally, politically and economically. None of the less newspapers and magazines chose to mock these women or even ignore them completely. According to Carter and Steiner, “The concern was that the sexist messages of these media forms socialized people, especially children, into thinking that dichotomized and hierarchical sex-role stereotypes were ‘natural’ and ‘normal’.

Therefore, in order for feminists to challenge these standards of representation, empirical evidence was required. The 1960s through the 1980s was an era where systematic research into media images of women burgeoned (Vitalis et al., 2024). In reviewing many of these studies from all over the world, Gallagher found striking similarities. Women were underrepresented in both media production and content, and the women that did appear in media content were mostly young and pretty, defined in relation to another man, usually their husband, son, father or boss, and characteristically portrayed as passive, dependent, indecisive or submissive.

In comparison, scholarly interest in the representation of men in the media and the construction of masculinity has not been as significant. The study of gender representation in the media have tended to focus on women, to the extent that the portrayal of men and masculinity have often not even been regarded as problematic but their roles have instead been viewed as positive, good, admirable and emulative. Feminist movement in respect to portrayal is very low in Nigeria in regards to how females and celebrities are portrayed.

In Nigeria, as in other society, there has always been a women’s movement which existed during and after colonization. Many of them may not fit in the class of conventional movement. In Nigeria, the oldest and largest women movement can be said to be National Council of Women’s Society (NCWS) founded in 1958. Feminism in Nigeria in its present form is consistent, organized, with clear objective and ideology came into being with the inauguration in 1983, of the organization Women in Nigeria (WIN) following the national conference on the same theme. WIN was a direct outcome of the national conference envisioned as a feminist movement and named.

3.6 Celebrity Culture

Celebrity culture is a preoccupation with the famous. The site of this preoccupation takes place when celebrities are part of a collective world connected by media (Vitalis et al., 2024). The starting point of celebrity culture is when celebrities are so abundant in the media they develop in individuals’ everyday talk, resulting in celebrities becoming a social topic of discussion in many settings and conversations. Celebrity culture has a “pervasive presence in our everyday lives, perhaps more so than ever before” (Holmes & Redmond, 2006, p. 6).

Celebrity has become a defining characteristic of our mediatised societies. It is ever-present in news and entertainment media boosted by formats such as reality TV in advertising and activism, and it has not deeply affected several social fields, especially the political, but also the gastronomic and even the religious fields. Celebrity has become a valued resource to be used in power struggles. Celebrity status renders one discursive power or a voice unable to be neglected. It functions as a general token of success (Onyejelem & Nwokeocha, 2024). Such is the proliferation of celebrity culture that several authors have discussed its

importance for social cohesion and identity formation or as Ellis Cashmore phrases it: Like it or loathe it, celebrity culture is with us, it surrounds us and even invades us. It shapes our thought and conduct, style, and manner. It affects and is affected by not just hardcore fans but by entire populations.

Onyejelem and Nwokeocha (2024) contends that the social function of celebrity discourse is not a given and must first be empirically corroborated. Not everyone thinks that celebrity culture is important, just as it probably does not enable a general community feeling. Still, he continues, that attention is incessantly drawn to the discourse and performances of celebrities which makes them at least a recurring reference point for people's social practices. Discourses of celebrity invade all kinds of sites today, from contests in shopping malls looking for pre-teen Britney Spears look-alikes, to the management of major political campaigns, all demonstrate the importance of publicity, promotion and the exploitation of the media event. Wernick in Oboko and Onyejelem (2024) published a highly critical diagnosis of contemporary Western culture that claimed it was dominated by the processes of publicity and promotion. Originating in a critique of the pervasiveness of the practice of advertising and its underlying ideologies, in his book he accused contemporary commercial popular culture of a generic 'bad faith'.

Abba et al., (2021) argue that the spread of celebrity is not just the consequence of an accumulation of publicity handouts, advertisements, chat show interviews, or the shock-horror revelations in the tabloid screamers. The really interesting (and perhaps most surprising) aspect of celebrity is the degree to which it has become integrated into the cultural processes of our daily lives. As Richard Dyer points out, a 'star's image is also what people say or write about him or her, the way the image is used in other contexts such as advertisements, novels, pop songs, and finally the way the star can become part of the coinage of everyday speech'. The celebrity has a generally cultural pervasiveness, as the cultural meanings of and associations with the star sneak into all kinds of locations in daily lives as well as a specifically industrial reach – the range of territories into which the media industries and their 'smiling professionals' now gain (or control) access.

In other words, there are two broad perspectives on celebrity culture. The first champions the phenomenon as a populist force for democratization, representing freedom, the power of the individual, greater equality of opportunity and aspiration, and greater access to and engagement with social and political debates, through reality TV shows or by identifying with the life stories or views of celebrities. The second, however, is a lament for cultural decline, where the media are obsessed with constructing fabricated 'personalities' out of anyone, from runners-up on talent competition TV program 'X Factor' to politicians, where all debate and information provision is reduced to the emotive, personal or trivial. Implicit in this view is that the media, including news media in creating a dumb culture that plays to the lowest common denominator among readers and audiences in the pursuit of profits while undermining certainly not adding to the democratic processes Bernstein.

While critics of celebrity culture might argue that there is increased prominence in saturation coverage of celebrity, they were not specific on the periods but as Evans (2005) says even in previous centuries it was clear that commentators such as Henry James in 1880 felt overwhelmed by celebrity media. Celebrity culture has intensified after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. Paradoxically, it was her death that caused many critics to predict the 'death of celebrity and the star economy and attention economy of celebrities. In the Africa Culture, celebrities have become a very conspicuous concern of sociologists and social theorists. This development is being reflected in and promoted by the many journals and organizations devoted to cultural and intercultural matters which have been founded in recent years.

The 21st century is witnessing an increasing wave in youth fascination with celebrity idolization. This trend is enhanced by the many available media of communication namely, the newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the internet. These celebrities are presented in different shades, reflecting various fields of human attainment. Globalization has paved way for celebrity and celebrity culture from America and Europe to Africa which Nigeria is part of. Globalization has brought popular culture commonly known as Pop culture, as the totality of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, memes, images and other phenomena that are deemed preferred per an informal consensus within the mainstream of a given culture, especially western culture of the mid twentieth century and the emerging global mainstream of the last twentieth century and early twenty-first century.

Before the arrival of celebrity culture from western countries to Nigerian entertainment industry, Aondover et al., (2024) state that home movies in Nigeria have the basic roles of cultural marketing, entertainment and serve as agent or means of social control. The concept of home movies in Nigeria was originally to exalt our culture and norms and also expose some evil that needed to be seriously treated. Celebrity culture has turned Nigerian entertainers as untouchables. They have become advocates for the people, like in the case of Bring Back our Girls, Child not Bride, fuel scarcity etc. The media now invites celebrities to give their opinion on politics and state affairs.

Ever since the spread of celebrity culture to Nigerian entertainment industry, movies in Nigeria have been presenting stars like Genevive Nnanji, Tonto Dikeh, Mercy Johnson, Motola Jalade, Uche Jumbo, among others and for the female musician, like Cynthia Morgan, Sheyishey, Victoria Kimani etc nudity is their selling point and part of the culture of being a celebrity. Nudity in home movies can be as a result of the role, a character is required to play such as prostitution, wayward, etc. It can also be as a result of the character's choice of appearance. Whichever way it appears, the society seems to shun at it.

Vitalis et al., (2025) observe that the Nigerian youths are rapidly losing touch with cultural values and that this could be seen in the alien culture which they portray; their bizarre dressing, dancing and language and so on which invariably affect other aspects of social life. Unfortunately, this is not peculiar to the Nigerian youths only. Nicolaidis (2012, p. 123) contends that the younger generation of teenagers in south Africa have for the most part abandoned their African culture and language, and often religion and try to be hip by imitating their mainly American rap artist role models who for most part display an acute lack of values and act immorally on television shows and who promote promiscuous behaviour especially in the lyrics of the music they write. The youths however are supposed to promote our culture and at the same time help to transmit it from one generation to the other. Therefore, it is deplorable when they fail to play this role. Africans are becoming celebrity obsessed society, following the footsteps of America and European countries who have large numbers of paparazzi and a rich celebrity culture. The confluence of popular culture and digital technology has thrown musicians, actors, and athletes into a new celebrity order.

IV. Conclusion

The media portrayal of female celebrities in the Nigerian press is shaped by a combination of cultural, social, and political factors, with varying degrees of positivity, negativity, and scrutiny. Nigerian media often emphasizes the physical appearance of female celebrities. Fashion and style are frequent subjects of coverage, with female celebrities often being praised or criticized for their outfits and personal grooming. This focus can sometimes overshadow their professional achievements or intellectual contributions. The scrutiny of

their appearance can also perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards, leading to pressure on these women to conform to particular aesthetics. Female celebrities in Nigeria, particularly in the entertainment industry (such as Nollywood actresses and musicians), are often subjected to sexualization in the media. Their personal lives, relationships, and sexual appeal can become focal points, overshadowing their talents or careers. This can lead to objectification, where their worth is measured more by their physical attractiveness than by their professional or intellectual achievements. Female celebrities, especially those in the music and film industries, are often portrayed in a controversial light, particularly when they take stands on social or political issues, or when they become embroiled in scandals. The media often sensationalizes these moments, sometimes portraying them as "bad girls" or "rebels," depending on the nature of the controversy. For example, when female celebrities assert their independence or engage in bold statements, they can be either celebrated or vilified, depending on how they fit into societal expectations. On a more positive note, Nigerian media also showcases female celebrities as symbols of empowerment. Many female figures in entertainment, sports, and politics are portrayed as role models, especially when they defy norms and achieve success in male-dominated fields. Women like Genevieve Nnaji, Tiwa Savage, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, for instance, are often celebrated for their professional achievements and contributions to society. This narrative promotes women's empowerment, independence, and leadership.

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