UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

REALITY SHOWS AS CATALYST FOR CELEBRIFICATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE *'BIG BROTHER* NAIJA' (BBN) ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

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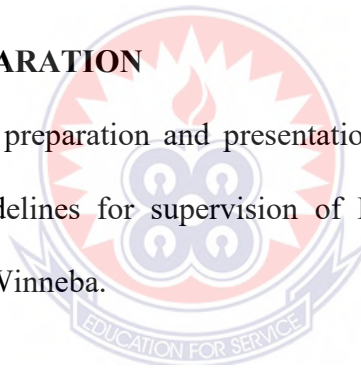
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DECLARATION

I, Akua Konadu-Dwomoh declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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DATE: ....

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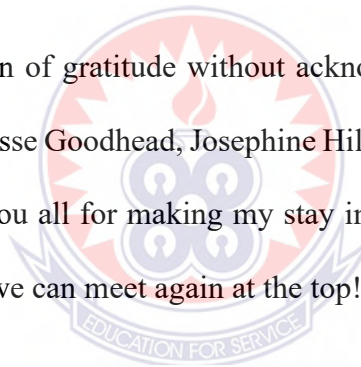
DEDICATION

Dedicated to my parents, brother and sisters. Kwaku Asante, Afia Serwaa, Eliza and Elizabeth.

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the phenomenon of reality shows as shared by audiences on social media shows in Africa and explores the rewards for participants. Through a qualitative content analysis of a popular reality show in Africa, *'Big Brother Naija'* the paper interrogates the celebrification processes used and thereby highlights how the elevation of the ordinary person is closely connected to the steady rise of reality TV as a contemporary television genre. The rising popularity of *'Big Brother Nigeria'* and its social influence has motivated deep public interest especially, on social media platforms. This study, anchored on Parasocial Relationship, Symbolic Interactionism and The Concept of Micro-Celebrity, analyses the influence of *'Big Brother Naija'* as a reality show on audiences. The results indicate that posts on twitter by audiences of the show on social media include text tweets, videos, polls, links and pictures. Findings also showed that not only do contestants of the reality show gain instant fame, also lucrative offers including endorsement deals, tours, and enormous social media following. These have become the motivating factors for participating in the show. Audiences of the show lend their voice and participate through posts and engagements such as fan wars, discussions and following contestants of the show on the various social media platforms. Again, findings showed that, closely knitted to fame are consequences such as cyberbullying, invasion of privacy and loss of authenticity and control. To address these issues, social media platforms should implement and enforce robust policies that explicitly prohibit harassment, hate speech, and cyberbullying. These policies should be clearly communicated to users, outlining the consequences for violating the guidelines. The study concludes that reality shows such as *'Big Brother Naija'* have become agents of celebrification for several participants.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the study, focusing on the background, statement of problem, objectives and research questions. It also outlines the significance, the delimitation of the study and the organisation of the entire research work.

1.1 Background of the Study

Reality Television as a television genre takes up the codes and conventions of documentary filmmaking but in a way that subverts and plays with its realist conventions, making unknown the boundaries between fact and fiction, entertainment and information (Hill, 2005; Patterson, 2001). In essence, reality television exists in a border territory between cinema truth and scripted entertainment. Reality television encompasses a rich and complex landscape of many different types of factual programming whose visual language testifies to its authenticity while at the same time, reproducing narrative structures which are deeply rooted in the established modes of presentation of both documentary and narrative drama (Walters, 2020). Reality TV is distinguished from other forms of programming by non-professional actors, surveillance footage, unscripted dialogue, hand-held cameras and real time display of events in front of the camera (Hill, 2005). This form of "famous factual programming" markets itself based on its claim to authenticity, and its appeal to a viewing audience. As reality television has expanded in both size and scope over the last two decades, its claim to being "real," already dubious has proved more so (Hill, 2017; Walter, 2020). Hill (2017), postulates that, audiences have proven to be savvy in their consumption of reality television, understanding that careful processes of casting,

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performance, and editing play a role in manipulating authenticity. Ironically, according to Andrejevic (2007), while audiences perceive reality programmes with less editing and fewer intricately crafted structural devices as more authentic, viewers tend to find more entertainment value in programmes that are carefully constructed, and in which participants have a greater tendency toward overt performance, or "acting out". Reality programmes also seemed to provide the perfect formula for audience integration and participation.

The theory of reality is the representation of the state of things as they are in the physical world; it shows the nature of things in their true form (Okpari, 2019). Again, Okpari (2019) opines that reality shows as a kind of media entertainment is based on the assumption that things are experienced in their natural state. Moreover, reality shows, involve ordinary people depending on the theme of the show, highlights personal drama, comedic or extraordinary situations where their every movement round-the-clock is recorded as they react to their environments (Laitto, 2015; Malekoff, 2005; Nwafor & Ezike, 2015 & Roscoe, 2001). Aside that, reality shows showcase the transformation of ordinary people relying on competition and a chance to become 'known' or successful into fully-fledged star (Driessens, 2013; Holmes, 2004). These fully-fledged stars are known as celebrities. The nature of reality TV, which often involves ordinary people becoming famous overnight, can create a unique kind of celebrity status known as microcelebrity status (Turner, 2014), as some of the well-known microcelebrities today got their start on reality TV shows, such as Kim Kardashian from "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" (Holmes, 2021).

Ofori-Birikorang (2017), simplifies a celebrity to mean, the state of being widely known or famous. Marshal *(*2006) in *Celebrity Culture Reader*, characterizes a celebrity by films, paparazzi photos that audiences initiate or give meaning to an individual to fit into a type of character and is being projected or 'celebrated'. Celebrification is a communicative and cultural practice in which celebrity logic is played out in various ways and in various, media circuits, depending on platforms' technological affordances, cultural and institutional modes of functioning (Jerslev, 2016). Couldry (2004) avers that celebrification is reserved for specific transitions from non-media to media person. That is, it labels the particular process by which ordinary people or public figures are transformed into celebrities. Dyer (2004) in his canonical work posits that, the transformation into celebrity entails commodification thus, stars and celebrities "are both labour and the thing that labour produces" (p. 5). stars are manufactured by the celebrity industry and producers, and are used to aid in selling other commodities. In this sense, the celebrity presents and personifies 'the two faces of capitalism—that of defaced value and prized commodity value'.

Senft (2008), posits that microcelebrity is basically a way of presenting one's self in such a manner that one sees himself or herself as a public figure ready to be consumed by others. The term "reality celebrity" however, is a comparatively recent one and finds its origins in the first decade of the twenty first century which has produced a lot of reality personalities (Aagaard, 2010).

The world is presently experiencing the second era of the Internet referred to as Web 2.0(and the third era of 3.0), which is distinguished by its unique ubiquitous nature in production and usage (Agboada & Ofori-Birikorang, 2018). According to Kaplan and

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Haenlein (2018), social media is "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (p. 61). Pew Research (2019), suggests that about three-quarters of Facebook users and half of Instagram and Twitter users visit their accounts and engage in different forms of communication on daily basis, with Facebook being rated as the most patronised. The internet era has opened up new avenues for ordinary people to get media attention, which may be turned into commercial opportunities and other benefits that come with being a celebrity (Brooks et al., 2021). Social media platforms according to Cirucci (2018), is a celebrity- making platform thus, the more a post is engaged with, the more of such content will show up in users' social media feeds and this gradually makes reality TV show characters more known. One of such reality TV shows that created an uproar on social media is *'Big Brother Naija'* show.

'Big Brother', a reality television show in which a group of people are made to live together in a large house, placed in isolation from the outside world, while being continuously watched by television cameras as well as personal audio microphones that listens in, monitor contestants (Okpari, 2019). *'Big Brother'* reality show has become a multi-billion dollar TV franchise with countries allowed to make their own adaptation of the show. Raicheva-Stover (2010) writes that, the show became so successful so much so that Endemol, the original right owner had sold out format to more than 30 countries as at 2009 including *'Big Brother'* for Netherland *'Big Brother* UK, *'Big Brother'* Germany, *'Big Brother'* Switzerland, *'Big Brother'* Sweden and *'Big Brother'* Italy.

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Chikafa and Mateveke (2012) posit that *'Big Brother Africa'* is a concept borrowed from George Orwell's fictional dystopia of Oceania, a world of never- ending surveillance in his novel titled '*1984*'. The dictator who watches over the citizens of Oceania is Big Brother, whose terrifying slogan is 'Big Brother is watching you'. In the *'Big Brother'* television show the house-confined contestants compete to avoid eviction so as to win the prize money. *'Big Brother Africa'* since its debut in 2003 has gained a large African audience because it featured and showcased the diverse cultures of twelve and fourteen contestants in seasons 1 and 3 relatively from fourteen countries in Africa including Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Africa to mention a few. (Chikafa & Mateveke 2012). DSTV, a cable network owned by Multi-Choice Nigeria, a consortium of Multi-Choice South Africa, owns the exclusive broadcast right of the *'Big Brother Africa'* Programme and continues to do so when *'Big Brother Africa'* paved way for Nigeria's own reality show *'Big Brother Naija"* BBN, an adaptation of the former, launched on March 5, 2006 (Folayan 2019). The reality show which is available on Multichoice's DStv has received viewership across the whole of Africa. Nigeria places first in terms of viewership followed by South Africa with Kenya, Ghana, Namibia, Botswana and Uganda placing third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh respectively (OkayAfrica, 2020). *'Big Brother Naija'* has been recorded as the most live streamed content of the year 2020 as fans of the show have become vocal about their support on social media (OkayAfrica, 2020).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Reality TV has become a source of entertainment for audiences around the world (Patterson, 2004) as well as a boost into stardom for the people who participate in it (Deller,

2016). Extant studies have looked at celebrification processes and dynamics of celebritization through reality television shows (Abidin, 2015; Deller, 2016; Lashley, 2016; Oliver 2013). Deller (2016), discusses the role these reality TV shows on celebrities can serve them at different levels of their careers. Deller (2016), argues that reality television appeals in diverse ways to celebrities at different points in the fame 'cycle'. Using a feminist cultural studies framework, Patterson (2013), examines Canadian women's motivations for participating in reality shows and seeks to understand the reality TV process. A total of 14 women contestants from across Canada, were interviewed using a combination of online and in-person modes. In Ghana Owiredua et al. (2016) explored the perceptions of university students in Ghana towards reality television, this study concluded that university students watch reality television become of the gratification they gain from it. Another study by Appiah and Amankwaa (2017) looked at the impact of reality television on the youth in Accra Metropolitan area of Ghana. With the advent of new media, works on celebrity culture abound. Studies have been conducted on celebrity culture occasioned by the dissemination of digital media thus, scholars have focused on the role of the media in ascribing celebrification status on individuals (Jerslev, 2016; Turner, 2014). Jeslev (2016), using Vlogger Zoella as a case, illustrates contemporary processes of celebrification and the celebrified self enabled by social media. The intention of her article was to pursue the argument that, in contemporary celebrity culture, different temporalities are connected to the performance of celebrity in different media. Abidin (2015), taking an ethnographic approach examined self-made celebrity and self-branding on social media. Owusu-Ansah (2018), in his study investigated the intricacies of self-presentation of three Ghanaian microcelebrities in the cyber world through social media.

 Although ordinary people through social media, attain celebrity status, the participatory nature of Web 2.0 and technological convergence, have changed the power balance enabling audiences to ascribe celebrity status to reality show contestants (Brown, 2017). In a quantitative study conducted by McBride (2015) involving 49 participants in relation to three reality TV shows (*Glee*, *American Idol* and *Project Runway*) which intended to find out whether or not audience engagement on social media (*Twitter*) about reality shows increased their popularity, it was discovered that there was no link between the engagement of audiences on social media and the popularity of the reality shows or even the characters therein. It was, however, found that audiences enjoyed interacting on Twitter about specific reality shows, be it *Glee* or *American Idol* or *Project Runway* as it appealed to their cognitive needs in providing information about the reality shows. A challenge to this study was the inadequate sample size and also the fact that all the participants were women hence as a recommendation, McBride (2015) recommended that future studies involved a larger sample size as well as men. The findings of this study disagree with that of Cirucci (2018) who found that celebrities got more popular as more people enjoyed and commented on their posts. This presents some kind of disagreement in existing literature with respect to whether or not audiences have that much influence on the popularity of reality shows by their engagement with the contents of the reality shows. The results of a mixed-method study by Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016), after textually analysing focus group data and developing a structural model from survey data to determine why consumers use social media to engage with celebrities, were that, fans follow celebrities on social media to obtain career and personal information about them, as well as to form some kind of emotional attachment to them.

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Unlike achieved celebrities who possess talents such as actresses, footballers and musicians, reality show celebrities seem to have nothing to offer except to perform as their ordinary self on the mainstream media (television) in which they emerge (Turner, 2004). Performance of the authentic self of reality show contestants shown on mainstream media has created an uproar on social media such that, although contestants perform on television, they are elevated on the internet to attain a certain level of celebrity status. Reality television shows use of social media as an extension of content in the celebrification of ordinary people into celebrities within a short period has been under explored. Using social media as the bridge between the two bodies of literature, this study therefore, seeks to explore how audiences watch the reality shows and celebrify individual contestants on social media. More importantly how Twitter is used as a social media forum has not yet been explored. Though studies have been conducted on reality TV shows and celebrification in general, there appears to be minimal studies on how audiences through their comment on Twitter contribute to the celebrification of individual casts in reality television shows

1.3 Research Objectives

1. a. To identify the forms of posts made by fans on Twitter that elevate contestants of reality shows to celebrity status.

   b. To explore themes in the content of posts share by fans on twitter that elevate contestants of reality shows to celebrity status.

2. To ascertain the criteria for attaining celebrity status by contestants of 'BBN' reality show

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3. To explore the risks associated with attaining microcelebrification via the 'BBN' reality show on twitter.

1.3.1 Research Questions

1. a. What are the forms of posts fans share on Twitter to elevate contestants of reality shows to celebrity status?

   b. What are the themes in the content of posts shared by fans on Twitter that elevate contestants to celebrity status?

2. What are the criteria for attaining celebrity status by the contestants of 'BBN' reality show?

3. What are the risks associated with attaining microcelebrification via the 'BBN' reality show on twitter?

1.4 Significance of Study

This study aims to discuss fame or celebrification in reality shows aided by social media. This study when completed will add to real academic debates and scholarly studies. Due to the recent increase in reality shows around the world and in Africa, the findings of this research will help reality TV producers and broadcasters, who are at risk of going out of business, broaden their boundaries to include social media platforms.

Also, the findings of this study is significant in a world increasingly influenced by social networks. Future researchers can also use this study to delve more into the phenomenon of celebrification through reality television and the use of various social media platforms.

1.5 Delimitation

The study was limited to Twitter as the prime social media website. This study was restricted largely to the 2021 edition of the BBN Programme dubbed 'Shine Ya Eye' to aid adequate retrieving of data as the show coincided with the timelines during data collection.

1.6 Organisation of the Study

The current study is divided into five main parts. Chapter one is the introductory chapter which is made up of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, research questions, significance, delimitation and the organization of the study. The second chapter reviews literature related to the study and further outlines the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

Chapter three presents the methods and the procedures that were used for the data collection. Topics under this chapter included research approach, research design, sample and sampling technique, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and method of data analysis. The fourth chapter elaborates on the findings and discussion of the study. It discusses in themes issues that came up along with theories which were introduced in chapter two to explain them. The final chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions for the findings and makes recommendation for further studies.

1.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter one provides a general background of the study where relevant issues were introduced and discussed. It focused on the key concepts in the study. Reality shows are known to make unknown people known, coupled with the advent of social media the divide is cut short. It gives a concise definition of who a microcelebrity is and came down to highlight the concept of social media. It mentions clearly the interactive nature of social media, making it possible for people to communicate with others all over the world and sharing thoughts which has the ability to make ordinary reality show contestants famous. Also, the objectives that guided the study and the research questions that the study aimed to answer were outlined. Finally, the significance of the study, delimitation and the organization of the study were also stated.
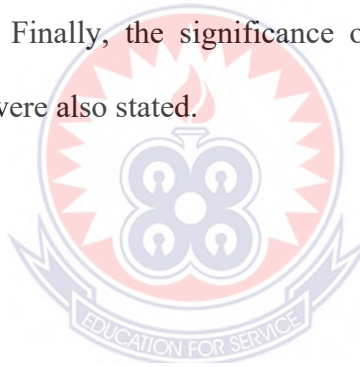
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section of the present study is the literature review chapter and it discusses the theories of Parasocial Relationship, Symbolic Interactionism and Micro-Celebrity to give meaning to the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, this chapter explains key concepts in the study and concludes with a review of related literature to situate the present study in the existing body of knowledge. A literature review is an indispensable tool in research since it assists the researcher to obtain relevant material in relation to the topic in order to conduct effective research. An effective literature review, according to Webster and Watson (2002), is one that establishes a solid foundation for knowledge advancement.

2.1 Reality Television

In the 1990s, the phrase "reality television" became widely used in academic studies, with early research focusing on crime, consumer affairs, and disaster formats like 999, Cops, and Crimewatch (Deller, 2019). The 1990s' makeover, chat show, and "docusoap" forms (such as, Changing Rooms, Jerry Springer, and Airport) caused the literature's emphasis and the word "reality television" to be used to refer to these genres as well. The early 00s resurgence in talent shows, heralded by the Popstars and Pop Idol franchises, as well as "social experiments" (like The 1900 House, Survivor, Big Brother), which surfaced at the new millennium, further expanded the genre. As a result, reality has drifted away from

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being a solitary genre and has instead become more of what Couldry (2009) terms a "meta-genre" (p. 47). According to Couldry (2009), the phrase "reality TV" is also a term that changes throughout time in terms of how academics, viewers, and the media use it. In contrast to today, when compared to an observation - based programme dealing with crime like 24 hours in Police Custody, which very much closely fits the framework of what is perceived reality television in terms of its use, it would be unusual for television companies and viewers to think of Crimewatch as a reality show. Dovey (2000), for example, deems British crime show Crimewatch (a studio-based show incorporating crime recreations and public appeals) to be reality television.

According to Walters (2020), reality television is a rich and complex landscape of many different types of factually-oriented programming, whose visual language attests to its authenticity while also reproducing narrative structures that have deep roots in both documentary and narrative drama's established modes of presentation. One insight that can be drawn out of this definition by Walters (2020) is that, reality television markets itself on the conclusion of originality, thus, audiences of reality television shows appreciate them because of the absence of manipulation through careful casting and alteration of other elements to achieve a particular objective (Hill, 2017). Some scholars such as Couldry (2003), have said that attempting to fix reality TV under one blanket definition appears to be impossible as it limits the understanding of the component of flexibility that comes with reality, which is the bedrock of what is reality TV. Nevertheless, Kavka (2012), offers a clear definition of reality television, claiming that it consists of spontaneous programmes with untrained performers being watched by a camera in carefully designed settings. As a

result of the non-professional feature of actors or participants, reality television does not cost much to produce, which also adds to its economic success aside its claim of realness (Doyle, 2013). Despite the claim of realness, Piper (2004), argues that since the inception of modern reality television, reality as entertainment has shifted away from the actual, resulting in reality TV's current nature appearing to be somewhat scripted rather than true observational documentaries. Furthermore, according to King (2006), reality television is a stylistic imitation of the kind of events that occur in ordinary life, and the programming is presented to the audience as real, whether or not the on-screen settings are actual. This assertion insinuates that reality shows are based on what is actual but does not suggest that what is shown on TV or social media (with respect to the production and drama elements) is real (Dubrofsky, 2007).

According to Kavka (2012), reality TV came about as a result of deregulation in media under the administration of Ronald Reagan who was president of the United States in the 1980s. The deregulation led to a cut-throat competition among television networks for audiences whose numbers had not so much increased. This scarce audience further affected the advertising revenue of television networks hence necessitating the innovation of an alternative to, first of all, capture the available audiences and then secondly, to possess some value that advertisers would be interested in with which they (the television networks) can boost their advertising revenue (Kavka, 2012). According to Hill (2005), the historical development of reality TV has been broken down into three categories (waves), separated by the dominance of a particular type or style of a reality show. The popularity of criminal and rescue services programmes fuelled the first wave of reality television,

while prominent observational films ignited the second phase. The third wave, on the other hand, was focused on reality game programmes (Hill, 2005).

McCarthy (2009) argues that reality television originated in the 1950s with a fellow called Allen Funt, who worked as a television producer for the Ford Foundation. He is most recognised for developing the first and most well-known hidden camera show, *Candid Camera*, which aired for seven years on *CBS Television Broadcasting Company* (1960-1967). The show gave audiences a fresh perspective on television in the post-war era, since they had never seen individuals on television acting in a realistic manner. Because the participants of the programme were not actors like many of the audience members, the audience could place themselves directly in their shoes. '*The Real World'*, which is regarded as one of America's longest-running reality shows, premiered in 1992 and is considered one of the most important events in the history of reality television. According to Kraszewski (2010), '*The Real World'* is considered by many to be the start of the modern era of reality television because it combined all of the most compelling elements of previous reality shows and elevated the concept of reality by selecting strangers to live in a house and have their lives taped for an audience.

These relatively cheap-to-produce reality shows came at an opportune time to fix economic challenges that had come about as a result of media deregulation (Hill, 2005). Television networks not only saved money by jumping onto the reality TV train but also were able to fill gaps in television broadcasting (Hirschorn, 2007) with the reality shows they produced. The filling of these broadcasting gaps attracted more audiences hence an increase in advertising revenue. The low cost of reality television allowed TV networks to save money

on other parts of their products that were more costly (Hill, 2005). As a consequence of its financial success in producing viewers at very cheap costs, reality TV programming exploded in popularity in the 1990s (Skeggs & Wood, 2012) and it is due to this spontaneous propulsion into popularity that it is argued to be the most prominent kind of television programming in the history of TV (Turner, 2010).

Reality television is exceedingly common in today's television programming, and its popularity implies a high level of interest in the genre among viewers (Hill, 2005). Many viewers are lured in by the idea that the programmes they are watching are made up of individuals just like them, which is one explanation for the high levels of interest (Barnhart, 2010). Furthermore, the need for fame engendered by watching reality shows grows with time (Barnhart, 2010) and this becomes a major reason for people to audition for reality TV positions as a 2007 study revealed that 51% of 18 to 25-year-olds auditioned for reality programmes with the primary aim of gaining popularity (Barnhart, 2010). Reality television is sometimes referred to as "popular factual programming," yet it can be difficult to tell how accurately real-life events are depicted on screen. Early reality television focused on actual video of police enforcement or rescue operations as a kind of extension of news broadcasting (Hill, 2005). Because it offers a "fly-on-the-wall" look into events as they happen, reality television was thus possibly unintentionally born of the cinema verite trend in documentary filmmaking (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). Programmes like Candid Camera, which had its radio start as Candid Microphone in 1948, helped bring this viewpoint to television (Clissold, 2004). According to Piper (2004), reality as entertainment has consistently moved away from the genuine early days of contemporary

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reality television, when rescuing and law-and-order shows were the norm. The most well-liked reality shows of the modern day tend to highlight the banalities of daily life and frequently resemble partially scripted impromptu plays rather than authentic observational documentaries. In contrast to more current reality fare, which is pretty visibly edited and casts serious doubt on the legitimacy of the image, programmes that incorporate actual footage and an over-the-shoulder view of emergency management personnel can be used to check their authenticity (Fetveit, 2002).

Although such a claim is crucial to the promotion of the programming, it is debatable if reality television has ever truly had a claim to the genuine (Hill, 2005). Whether the situations depicted on-screen are real or not, reality television portrays what may be described as a dramaturgical reproduction of the types of events that occur in regular life (King, 2006). Although unrehearsed or innovated situations may appear in reality programmes, the careful structuring (which includes methodically choosing participants, placing physical production elements in a certain order, and other formatting details) suggests that the performances are based on actual events without actually stating that they are reality (Dubrofsky, 2007). Despite this, the term "reality" is loosely used to describe a wide variety of factually oriented programmes covering a wide range of subjects, a catch-all category found in transitional areas between entertainment and information, documentaries and melodrama (Hill, 2005).

Kavka (2012) asserts that, realistic, gritty shows like Cops, staged dating contests like The Bachelor, complex surveillance operations like Big Brother, and so on make up modern reality television. Therefore, reality television serves as a catch-all phrase for a seemingly

unlimited number of mini-genres that frequently borrow story patterns from the parallel world of fictional television (Lashley, 2009). In a docu-soap, the spectator feels as though they are seeing a "slice of life" portrayal of real people, even while the more spectacular and attention-grabbing circumstances are brought to the foreground of the action (like MTV's The Real World) (Kilborn, 2003). To create entertainment that is easier to grasp, elements of traditional scripted drama are borrowed. Hours of film are severely edited, tales are serialized, tension and strife are developed using the same techniques as scripted television, and plotlines are revealed and developed gradually over time. The film format is improved and adjusted to meet the soap opera's structure (Kilborn, 2003). According to Lashley (2009), the "life intervention" programme, which operates under the guise of the reality participants' self-help, self-preservation, or therapy, merges the factual infotainment model with the principles of public service while the docu-soap is structured in accordance with the conventions of a cozy, preexisting narrative format. This genre offers people with certain lifestyle "problems" the chance to fix them. By portraying the participants as less intelligent, less knowledgeable, and less personally motivated than the projected TV audience, this type of programming distances the audience from the self-help activity while also inviting the audience to do so (Ouellette & Hay, 2008). The life intervention format assumes that there is a single, socially acceptable way of acting, and that an involved person has agreed to follow trained experts' observation and guidance in order to adhere to the norm (Ouellette & Hay, 2008).

Lashley (2016) divided up the subgenres of reality television. Notoriety and opulent lives are the celebrity sub-key genre's traits. The renowned person and their family are recorded

as they go about their daily lives. These celebrities typically lead unusual lives and enjoy great wealth, influence, and notoriety. The challenge reality show sub-genre follows, and it features both physical and mental toughness and can be characterized as the fittest survive. A challenge frequently requires someone to overcome a hurdle or provide reason. Fame typically comes from winning and signing big contracts to sell items. Natural talents, performance, and success potential are the major traits of the talent sub-genre. A crucial element is being assessed or voted on, which frequently involves the audience. It displays amateur performers who frequently compete in an effort to win praise or reputation. The improvement, remedial actions, life transformation or home renovation, and thriving in various environments are the main traits of the makeover subgenre. The reason why contestants participate in this kind of programme is to improve things concerning themselves or their way of life. Reality show producers of makeovers set out to locate "genuine" people who deserved a change in some aspect of their lives (Lashley, 2016; Watts, 2009).

The Concept of 'Celebrity'

Marwick and Boyd (2011) define celebrity as a behaviour rather than a collection of fundamental personal attributes or external designations, and that this behaviour entails maintaining a fan following over time, performing closeness, genuineness and creating a marketable character. From this definition, being a celebrity can be said to entail more than what is said or portrayed of someone based on how they look or dress or even where they happen to find themselves at a certain period. The concept, thus, transcends what is simply attributed to an individual and entails more deeply an entirely different way of life where

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people considered as celebrities are so because they behave or exhibit some peculiar ways of living such as maintaining contact with their fan base and being close (digitally or physically) to their fan base while at the same time positioning themselves as products worth being marketed. Given how simple it is for regular individuals to become celebrities because of the power of digital media (McQuarrie et al., 2013), celebrities must differentiate themselves from other celebrities in order to be marketable (Parmentier et al., 2013). This need to stand out is fuelled by media narratives about celebrities and fan reactions, which reveal all elements of celebrities to the public's eyes (in the case of the former) while also serving as a distinguishing tool to separate one celebrity from another (in the case of the latter) (Parmentier et al., 2013).

Celebrities may be found in a variety of industries, including theatre, sports, technology, and government (McCutcheon et al., 2002), and they have become important to consumers, with a percentage of young adults expressing significant affinity to a celebrity at some time in their lives (Flora, 2004). They serve as inspiring personalities and are sometimes referred to as idols, setting high standards for customers to strive after (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). This is as a result of the level of significance that people give to celebrities and the level at which they feel connected to them, which is, the result of how closely and consistently celebrities communicate with their fan base and also their authenticity. Celebrities are sometimes portrayed as heroes or idols (Escalas & Bettman, 2003), however, this conception gives off the impression that celebrities are, thus, so because of physical abilities and some significant stunts they may have done. Against this backdrop, Shuart (2007) contrasts between celebrities and heroes by emphasising that a celebrity's standing

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is only based on their notoriety, but being a hero entails the existence of certain traits, such as being a notable individual appreciated for their talent, courage, or noble nature. Adding to Shuart's (2007) assertion that celebrities are a product of fame is Fournier (2010) who believes that celebrities are created through the activities and reactions of fans who, as a result of the media's power and narratives about popular people, follow them and support their agenda, causing popular people to become celebrities.

Celebrity Culture

There are some practices that go along with celebrity, which are covered in detail in this chapter. The core meaning of the term "culture" is "the art, customs, rituals, values, and way of life that are shared by a particular group of people" (Zimmerman, 2017). Celebrity culture refers to repeating behaviours that are popular among celebrities. Celebrity culture refers to the methods utilized to make well-known particular individuals with qualities that society considers remarkable (Marshall, 2010). In this context, the term "exceptional" is relative and heavily influenced by the media. For instance, Kim Kardashian (a model) has taken over most television sets, however it might be argued that she possesses no obvious aptitude despite being adored and praised by the majority of American young girls.

Due to the reciprocal economic benefits received from each other's actions, the media has served as the foundation of celebrity culture. Most people are curious about persons who have little or no direct influence on their lives because the media has greatly increased the interest of its viewers in embracing the celebrity culture (Cashmore, 2006). This viewpoint is held by Driessens (2013) and he explains that:

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"It is ever-present in news and entertainment media—boosted by formats such as reality TV—in advertising and activism, and it has deeply affected several social fields, especially the political, but also the gastronomic and even the religious fields, for celebrity has become a valued resource to be used in power struggles" (P. 3).

Celebrity culture, according to Cashmore (2006), started in the early 1980s, about the same time that media outlets were remarkably pervasive. Perhaps this is the time when the media business began to understand how celebrity endorsements help with product promotion. When the topic of product marketing is brought up, people immediately think of advertisements or endorsements, which plays a prominent role in the economic climate of today. In today's corporate world, celebrity endorsement of consumer goods is a typical occurrence. Some could contend that is the purpose of celebrity is to advertise. However, Gurdip (2005) describes why celebrity endorsement of items actually sells in his book, "Conscious, Unconscious, and Superconscious Mind". His case is based on the human ego's need to be associated with an important or well-known figure. In other respects, the ego is content just because it has utilized something that is believed to have been employed by a famous person. Over 20% of advertisements in the United States of America include celebrities, according to Byberg et al. (2015). Even if some of the things that celebrities promote may not have been used by them, the culture of advertising has permeated celebrity behaviour.

Celebrity culture also includes a posh and expensive way of life (Armelin, 2012). The majority of celebrities are linked to luxury homes, vehicles, outfits, and accessories, among

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other things. They give worth to items that may appear insignificant, yet the audience will pay a high price for them just because a famous person is using them. Sometimes, the items that celebrities advertise are not all as pricey as we might think when we see them on television. According to Cashmore, the paparazzi are an integral component of celebrity culture (2006). Since celebrities are usually known for their seemingly infallible lifestyle, the iconoclastic 'The paparazzi' have a tendency to uncover aspects of celebrities' lives that aren't really intended for the public or the camera. According to Cashmore (2006), the media used to carefully monitor the public's access to information about celebrities' personal lives. Then the paparazzi realized that people were really interested in the celebrity's private lives—the ones where renowned faces were photographed in uncomfortable situations, acting inappropriately, and dressing inappropriately. Since the advent of camera phones, practically everyone has become a paparazzi. Nowadays, photos of places and individuals are taken without their permission and posted on social media every day.

Reality Television and Celebrification

The history of popularity as it relates to reality television spans thousands of years, from the era of Jesus to the present, when fame has, in some ways, been "democratized." According to Braudy, the idea of fame dates to the first human periods. The pursuit of fame was initially linked to a desire for individual honour and later became intertwined with ideas of nationality and faith (Braudy, 1997). Audiences have evolved along with communication techniques over time. While the renowned used to be the purview of powerful figures in politics, religion, or culture, and was therefore linked to the glory of

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the organizations such figures stood for, fame and popularity are now more readily identified as personal properties. Additionally, the audiences who support fame are larger and famous entities are more varied. Communities of fans replace more institutionalized audiences when celebrities become key elements in their own right. As celebrity gets more niche, there is more room for more famous people to be discussed in public (Braudy, 1997). The current situation (in the era of media presences like reality television and the internet), where stardom is fully democratized, possibly even beyond what he had imagined, results fairly naturally from following the evolutionary process that Braudy(1997) has sketched. In a piece that was published more than 20 years ago, Braudy (1997) draws the conclusion that compared to the preceding two thousand years, the essence of fame has altered more dramatically and fast in the last 100 years. Visual media rose to the status of the standard-bearers of global recognition, providing politics, religion, and the arts new forms. However, the image's replicability (and fame) both expanded its allure and diminished its originality (Braudy, 1997). Reality television and the internet, two modern media platforms that have increased the "reproducibility of the image" and significantly advanced the loss of uniqueness that he outlines here, were not yet common when Braudy's (1997) argument was published.

Turner (2006) describes the modern terrain as existing within the "demotic turn," where there is an unending stream of possibilities for regular people to ply their wares in the media eye, reality TV not least among them, helping to fill the gap between the time of Braudy's (1997) writing and today. Celebrity has changed from being the elite to the average (Turner, 2006). While the legacy of celebrity is rife with tales of ordinary people

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leading ordinary, banal lives who have been enhanced to stardom (indeed, it is extremely rare for someone to be born into stardom, the discussion on celebrity has undertaken a significant shift in recent years, due in part to reality TV, DIY internet sites, talk radio, and other similar media) (Turner, 2006). In other words, the new fame-seeking opportunities allow for a large and diversified set of identifiable people, whose renown is entwined with their very idea of being common, everyday people.

Their appeal stems in large part from their "ordinariness," which distinguishes the modern process of celebritization from the "overnight sensations" of the past (Turner, 2006). Along with the pace of disposability, the "demotic turn" has accelerated celebritization. Celebrities are in high demand, but there is an endless supply of them. The next generation of faces will soon be created, eaten, and the cycle of "celetoids" will start all over again, so to speak, giving the reality television star a limited life span. Producers of reality television must constantly locate fresh people in order to portray their participants as "ordinary," or else their claims to reality risk being disproved (Turner, 2006). Even while this new type of notoriety is ephemeral by nature, it is more desirable since those who make up media viewers see the new possibilities for recognition inside channels like reality television and frequently try to take advantage of these unique opportunities. As a result, reality television contributes to the blurring of the boundaries between stars and audiences by making new celebrities seem more relatable, which opens up new career prospects for people looking for validation through acknowledgment (Redmond & Holmes, 2007).

Moreover, Gritten (2002) claims that the idea of celebrity has surpassed its lowest point in the era of reality television. As a result, where fame once belonged to political figures and

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later developed into the era of movie stars and recording artists, celebrity now applies to those who lack any discernible skill set. Since *'Big Brother'* and Survivor, those seeking popularity have been very cunning admirers of the growing number of reality television shows. Those who auditioned for their television possibilities had calculated beforehand that such lengthy, intense exposure on television may enable audiences love them nearly as much as they loved themselves as a fast cut to long-term, if indeterminate fame (Gritten, 2002). However, public admiration is at most ephemeral, and long-term celebrity is rarely attained. Gritten (2002) contends that if there is a benefit to this latest celebrity market, it is the growth of an audience that is educated enough to see that idolizing celebrities has little to do with their personalities or abilities and is instead motivated by the exploitative character of tabloid culture and a need for mystery and controversy (Gritten, 2002).

Despite reality television's ability to create notoriety, some scholars (such as Hill, 2005; Murray, 2009) claim that the idea or status of celebrity has been diminished. This is because, when it comes to what makes someone a celebrity, predecessors of today's reality TV stars exhibited genuine skill that gained them famous status; as a consequence, they are referred to as 'achieved' celebrities, whereas today's are referred to as 'attributed' celebrities (Murray, 2009). A 'legitimate' celebrity, according to Boorstin (2006), is one who has been created on purpose to meet our inflated aspirations of human grandeur. By this, being talented and skilful, rather than merely showing up on TV, is the route to becoming a star. The issue that comes from this polar opposite view of who a celebrity is, is, "Why are there still so many attributed celebrities since their famous status is dicey?" One possible response is the economic worth of attributed celebrity production. Casting

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skilled actors and actresses is more expensive than casting laypeople with no acting experience or training (Bell, 2010). Furthermore, viewers enjoy seeing individuals they can connect with on television and the internet; as a result, spurred by consumerism, television networks create more of what their audiences want in order to stay relevant and profitable (Bell, 2010; Kavka, 2012).

Reality Television and Social Media

The phrase "social media" refers to a set of web-based broadcast technologies that allow people to migrate from content consumers to content creators, hence democratizing content (Scott & Jacka, 2011). Participation, openness, dialogue, community, and connectivity are all aspects of this type of communication (Veil et al., 2011). Technologies that make it simpler to communicate with one another have been created throughout human history (Carton, 2009). The rise of social media has changed people's relationships and communication all across the world. Social networks, on the other hand, is not a new notion. Many social networking sites arose in the year 2000 to facilitate and even promote contact between people who share a common interest. This change had an impact on how firms performed transactions and advertised. According to Junco et al. (2011), the development of various social networking sites in the 2000s gave social media a huge boost. This breakthrough has a significant impact on the interaction between individuals and organizations with shared interests that use social networking to connect. In the beginning, social media was limited to simple tools and websites that were mostly used by technology experts and geeks. Over time, social media has evolved into a force that is changing the way people interact and communicate with businesses, governments,

traditional media, and one another. The traditional media's monopoly of the message has been lost with the rise of social media due to the overwhelming influence of social media over traditional media (Kasturi & Vardhan, 2014).

Brief History of Social Media

A range of Internet-based apps that expand on the philosophical and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0 and enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content are collectively referred to as social media (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Several variants and types of social media exist, even though social networking sites are perhaps the most well-known variety (Boyd & Ellison 2007). Blogs, forums, business networks, photo-sharing websites, social games, microblogs, chat apps, and social networks are all characterized by Mangold and Faulds (2009). With new applications appearing practically daily, the social media scene is very dynamic (Phillips et al., 2014). The most widely used social media platforms as of the start of 2019 are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, and Instagram (Statista 2019).

Throughout human history, technologies have been developed that make it easier for communication with each other (Carton, 2009). Social media as a phenomenon has transformed the relationship and communication of people across the globe. However, social media is not a new concept. The year, 2000 saw the emergence of many social networking sites to ease and even enhance communication between people who share common interest. This development also affected how businesses conducted their transactions and advertisements. Social networks have evolved over the years to the

modern-day variety which uses digital media. In addition, it didn't start with the computer but instead the telephone.

During the 1960s, the world saw the advent of email (Borders, 2010). However, the internet was not available to the public until 1991. Email was originally a method to exchange messages from one computer to another, but both computers had to be online. Today, email servers will accept and store messages which allow recipients to access the email at their convenience which was not the case in some many years ago. In 1969, ARPANET was developed. ARPANET was an "early network of time-sharing computers that formed the basis of the internet." CompuServe, the third development of the 1960s, was also created in 1969 with a mission to provide time-sharing services by renting time on its computers. With very high fees, this service was too expensive for many (Rimskii, 2011; Ritholz, 2010). Social media was further developed during the 1970s. Multi-User Dimension (MUD) was a real-time virtual world with role-playing games, interactive fiction, and online chat. MUD was primarily text based and required users to type commands using a natural language instead of the computer language of zeros and ones.

Bulletin 10 Board System (BBS) was created in 1978, the same year as MUD. Users log in to the system to upload and download software, read news, or exchange messages with others. In the early years, bulletin boards were accessed via a modem through a telephone line by one person at a time. Early on, bulletin boards did not have colour or graphics as they were the predecessors of the World Wide Web. Conceived in 1979 and established in

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1980, the Usenet is similar to a BBS. Usenet is a system to post articles or news. The difference from a BBS is that Usenet does not have a central server or devoted administrator—messages are forwarded to various servers via news feeds (Ritholz, 2010).

In addition, blogging services such as Blogger and Epinions were created. Epinions is a site where consumers can read or create reviews of products. ThirdVoice and Napster were two software applications created in the 90s that have since been removed from the market. ThirdVoice was a free plug-in that allowed users to post comments on webpages. Opponents of the software argued that comments were often vulgar or slanderous. Napster was a software application that allowed peer-to-peer file sharing. Users were allowed to share music files bypassing normal distribution methods, which in the end was determined to be a violation of copyright laws (Ritholz, 2010).
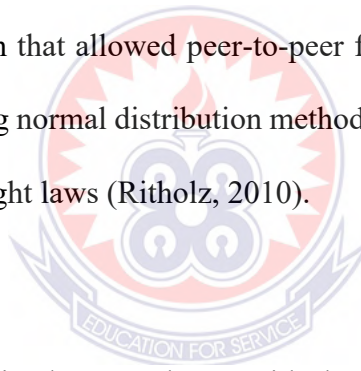
In 2000 social media received a great boost with the advent of many social networking sites. This development highly transformed the interaction between individuals and organizations who share common interests based on social networking. Among those that were launched included LunarStorm, Six Degrees, Cyworld, Ryze, and Wikipedia. In 2001, Fotolog, sky blog and Friendster were launched, and in 2003, MySpace, LinkedIn, lastFM, tribe.net, Hi5 and many others. In 2004, popular names like Facebook Harvard, Dogster and Mixi evolved. During 2005, big names like Yahoo!360, YouTube, Cyword, and Black planet all emerged (Junco et al., 2011).

Social Networking Sites

The first social networking site (SNS) SixDegrees came into existence in 1997 as a result of the concept that people are connected by six degrees of separation and is known as "the small world problem" in which society is thought to be becoming more interconnected (Boyd, 2008). In the scientific literature, social networking and social media use are frequently used interchangeably, however, they are not the same. The term "social media" refers to web 2.0 features that enable users to create, share, and collaborate on content online (i.e., user-generated content with a social component) (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). In light of this, a variety of social applications, including group projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual gaming worlds, and virtual social worlds, are included in the use of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Some examples of social networking sites are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat among others.

Facebook is a social networking website launched in February 2004, and it is privately operated by Facebook, Inc. (Facebook, 2004). Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and others when he was a student at Harvard; though when the site was initially launched, it was restricted to Harvard students only. Later the privilege was extended to high school students and later to everyone that is 13 years or older (Boyd, 2007). As of July 2010, Facebook has more than 500 million active users. In January 2009, Facebook was ranked as the most used social network worldwide. Also, in May 2010, Google announced that more people visited Facebook than any other website in the world. It declares that this was discovered from findings on 1,000 sites across the world. (TIMES, 2010). Users may create a personal profile; add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic

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notifications, photos and comments when they update their profile. Additionally, Facebook users may join common interest user groups, organized by workplace, school, college, or other characteristics. Facebook allows anyone who is at least 13 years old to become a registered user of the website.

Carlson (2010) explains Facebook as a social medium that gives people the opportunity to share photos, information, videos and more. People decide who can see their posts, whether it is publicly or privately amongst friends. From the beginning, Facebook was an instant hit. Mark Zuckerberg launched "thefacebook.com" in the year 2004, and today the page better known as "facebook.com" is one of the largest social media platforms. According to Statista (2017a), active users of Facebook in the third quarter of year 2017 were over 2.7 billion.

On a daily basis, traffic to Facebook network is on the rise. Facebook also became the top social network across eight individual markets in Asia—the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Vietnam. On October 24, 2007, Microsoft announced that it had purchased a 1.6% share of Facebook for $240 million, giving Facebook a total implied value of around $15 billion. Microsoft's purchase included rights to place international ads on Facebook; other companies have equally followed suit (STONE, 2007). For example, just during the 2010 FIFA football world cup, Nike did an ad with Facebook, and within minutes, an average of 8 million viewers had registered with Facebook (Kevthefont, 2010). As many people took to these social media

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platforms, specifically the social networking sites, advertisers saw it fit to reach these online audiences through these media. Below are some social media advertising platforms.

Instagram was identified as a social medium that gives people the opportunity to share with friends and followers of their lives, hobbies, day to day basis and more, with one photo or a video at a time (Instagram, 2017). On Instagram active accounts each month are over 800 million, active every day are over 500 million users. Instagram defines them as a society that individuals, celebrities, and organisations use for visual storytelling and advertisement. The founders, Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, posted the first photo to Instagram on July 2012, and since then the medium has developed and introduced all kinds of new features to make communications between users easier and user-friendly.

Snapchat gives people an opportunity to take snapshots of their daily lives that last for 24 hours and then it disappears. Snapchat (2017), identifies them as a social medium that gives individuals the opportunity to improve the way they express themselves in communications and live in the moment by reinventing the camera. Snapchat in the year 2016 reached 10 billion views per day. Snapchat identifies itself as a camera company first and foremost. According to Statista (2017b), Evan Spiegel and Bobby Murphy originally launched Snapchat in the year 2011, and since then it has grown to be one of the most popular social media for people to trade messages and photos worldwide. According to Statista active users on Snapchat in the year 2017 were around 166 million.

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Instant messaging is a form of social networking. With 1000 million active users each, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger are currently the most well-known messaging applications (Statista, 2017). WhatsApp is a mobile messaging app that enables users to connect with one another via messages and calls using their internet connection and mobile data (rather than minutes and texts on their phones) and was acquired by Facebook in 2014 for $22 billion (Frier, 2017). As a result of this acquisition, there have been concerns raised about Facebook's data-sharing policies due to the fact that Whatsapp phone numbers are linked to Facebook profiles.

According to Kuss and Griffiths (2017), microblogging can be a kind of social networking. Microblogging is a variation on more conventional blogging, which is sometimes referred to as an online journal for individuals. Another way to think of microblogging is as a combination of blogging and messaging, where messages are condensed and meant to be shared with the writer's audience (which often consists of "followers" rather than "friends" found on Facebook and similar SNSs). Twitter is a well-known example of a microblogging platform. According to Statista (2017), people can exchange views and opinions on different subjects and matters that are going on in the society with simple hashtag "#" on Twitter. Twitter is a medium that is popular to use whenever there is something going on in the society, elections, and sport events and so on. On the official homepage of Twitter (2020), it is stated that Twitter provides a service of online news and social networking. The mission Twitter stands for is to give individuals the power to create and share information's, ideas, thoughts or opinions without any barriers through a "Tweet". A "Tweet" is in a simple way a short message that an individual can post on his

or her Twitter account, using text, hashtag or even tag a person or an organisation in that message (Twitter, 2020).

YouTube, founded in 2005, is the world's most popular online video community, where millions of people can discover, watch and share originally-created videos (YouTube, 2005). YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a major distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers, large and small. YouTube is based in San Bruno, California and uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos. In November 2006, within a year of its launch, YouTube was purchased by Google Inc. in one of the most talked about acquisitions to date. YouTube has entered into a number of partnership relations with content providers such as CBS, BBC, Universal Music Group, Sony Music Group, Warner Music Group, NBA, The Sundance Channel and many others (YouTube, 2005). YouTube offered the public a beta site of the site in May 2005, six months before the official launch in November 2005. The site grew rapidly, and in July 2006, the company announced that more than 65,000 new videos were being uploaded every day, and that the site was receiving 100 million video views per day (YouTube, 2005).

According to Oakes (2019), the introduction of social media has had a major impact on television viewing, and as a result, young people choose to use social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube rather than sit and watch TV. This evolution also presents a

problem to reality show producers, who have had to come up with new methods to provide content to their fans in order to stay relevant (Deller, 2019). Few TV series are currently solely shown on television, and reality TV creators and broadcasters are in danger of being unable to survive. Because of this, social media platforms are being included in reality television shows, and the gap separating social media and television in terms of content is widening (Deller, 2019). Reality television and social media have allowed TV fans to have very intimate and loving interactions with celebrities. They have also narrowed the divide between celebrities and viewers by changing viewers into active participants in the media industry (Chung et al., 2014). This means that, unlike in the pre-social media era, when interactions between celebrities and their fans were always initiated by the celebrities themselves, such as through publicity stunts, social media networks have revolutionised this relationship by allowing fans to contact, follow, and communicate with their celebrities.
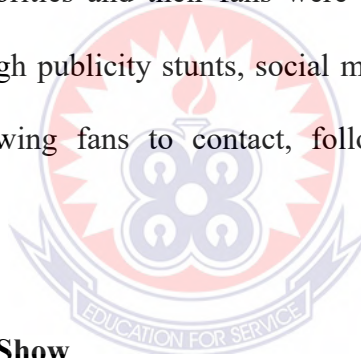
2.6 *'Big Brother' Reality* **Show**

'Big Brother' is a reality television programme in which a group of individuals are forced to live together in a huge home, cut off from the rest of the world while being constantly monitored by television cameras and personal audio microphones (Okpari 2019). The reality shows *'Big Brother'* has grown into a multibillion-dollar television brand, with nations free to produce their own adaptations. According to Raicheva-Stover (2010), the show was so popular that Endemol, the original rights holder, sold the format to more than 30 countries by 2009, including *'Big Brother'* for the Netherlands, *'Big Brother* UK, *'Big Brother* Germany, *'Big Brother* Switzerland, *'Big Brother* Sweden, and *'Big Brother* Italy.

'Big Brother Africa, according to Chikafa and Mateveke (2012), is a term drawn from George Orwell's imaginary dystopia of Oceania, a society of never-ending monitoring in his novel 1984. *'Big Brother'* is the tyrant who keeps an eye on the people of Oceania, and his terrible motto is "*'Big Brother'* is watching you." The house-bound competitors battle to escape eviction in order to earn the prize money on the *'Big Brother'* television programme. Since its debut in 2003, *'Big Brother* Africa has attracted a wide African audience since it featured and exhibited the varied cultures of twelve and fourteen participants from fourteen African nations, including Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and South Africa, to name a few (Chikafa & Mateveke 2012).

'Big Brother Africa's exclusive broadcast rights were retained by *DSTV*, a cable network operated by Multi-Choice Nigeria, a consortium of Multi-Choice, South Africa, when *'Big Brother'* Africa made way for Nigeria's own reality show, *'Big Brother Naija'* (BBN), which premiered on March 5, 2006. (Folayan et al., 2019). *'Big Brother* Naija' has been dubbed the year's most-watched live stream entertainment show. On social media, fans of the programme have gotten loud about their support. Reality show genres are already expanding as a result of the rise of digital media. Coupled with the rise of other participatory and "audience-produced" media such as blogs and social media applications like *Instagram, Youtube, Facebook*, and *Twitter*, reality shows will continue to be a media form that allows audiences all over Africa to participate in discussions and cheer and support participants of the *BBN* show, which appears to have become universally accepted. The reality programme has attracted fans from all around Africa. In terms of viewing, Nigeria is top, followed by South Africa, with Kenya, Ghana, Namibia, Botswana, and

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Uganda coming in third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh position, respectively (Okayafrica, 2020).

Social Media as a Celebrification Tool

The internet era has opened up new avenues for ordinary people to get media attention, which may be turned into commercial opportunities and other benefits that come with being a celebrity (Brooks et al., 2021). In a qualitative study done by Brooks et al. (2021), 40 interviews in seven locations (Cincinnati, New York, London, Paris, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Toronto) were conducted and it was discovered that social media functions as a catalyst or a field where celebrities (who were previously 'nobodies') acquire celebrity capital. However, the process is not easy, since it entails a three-stage process, with creative activities coming first, followed by collaborative practices, and ultimately, evaluative practices. Corroborating this study (Brooks, Drenten & Piskorski, 2021) is a study conducted by Cirucci (2018) that was found that social media platforms, specifically *Facebook* is a celebrity-building platform as their features compel their users to want to be known in order for their content to be noticed. In this qualitative study which employed discourse analysis and focuses group discussions as methods of collecting data, it came to light that there is a competition or attention with respect to Facebook usage, thus, the more likes and comments one gets for a post, the more likely they will be noticed as their posts will show on the top of users' feeds. This phenomenon moves users of Facebook to post more in order to gain attention, which is often translated into being popular when the efforts for generating attention yield some harvest. This agrees with the study by Brooks, Drenten and Piskorski (2021), being linked by the assertion that social media

serves as a platform where celebrities (who were hitherto 'nobodies') become known by a wider audience. The point of difference in these two studies, however, is that whereas Cirucci (2018) talks about the regular user of Facebook being compelled by the features of the site to get noticed by constantly posting in order to be on the top of users' feeds, the study by Brooks, Drenten and Piskorski (2021) is concerned with how celebrities use social media platforms as a field to boost their following and also to attract other users such as advertisers, thus, increasing their online capital.

In a mixed-method study conducted by Wróblewski and Grzesiak (2020) with the objective of identifying the role of social media in shaping the personal brand of famous people, it was identified, after conducting 26 interviews and administering 324 questionnaires that celebrities are particular about how they are perceived publicly and as a result, their agents turn to social media where they churn out contents which are consistent with their brand. Celebrities, therefore post on social media exotic images and videos items, expensive holidays among others in order to attract and retain attention. Again, the study found that fans liked, commented and shared content posted by celebrities on social media because it appealed to them and also because they knew the celebrity who posted those contents. The findings agree with the competition for attention phenomenon of Facebook as postulated by Cirucci (2018), thus, the more fans liked and commented on the content of celebrities, the more popular they (the celebrities) became as their content consequently, appear on top of their fans' feeds.

Furthermore, audiences' activity in liking and commenting on specific social media posts of their favourite celebrities generate a phenomenon in which social media algorithms

show the most liked and remarked on posts first. As a result of the interactional aspect of social media, fan involvement makes celebrities more famous.

Micro-celebrity

The term "microcelebrity" is derived from the word "celebrity." Theresa Senft first used the word "microcelebrity" in 2008. While writing on her thesis, she first introduced the term "camgirls." She observed how kids record films and photos of themselves to post online in an effort to garner attention. She was more concerned with the ways in which these youngsters adopt various techniques to improve their appearance to gain attention online. She once more looked at how these youngsters perceive the phenomenon to see what they thought about it. It became out that the majority of these teenagers have opinions about brands and celebrities. These "camgirls" considered themselves to be consumable goods that they could package and provide to their fans. This is a crucial prerequisite for the emergence of microcelebrities.

The discussion of celebrities is receiving new attention as a result of the transition in the media world from conventional media to more interactive media platforms. According to Rojek (2001) as cited in Marwick (2015), The interactive aspect of modern media has allowed 'regular' people the chance to establish large fan bases through the usage of social media, even though celebrities and the media are closely intertwined (Marwick, 2015). Microcelebrities have adopted the "Do It Yourself" (DIY) culture (Senft, 2008), while celebrities are more closely linked to the mass media and rely on one other to flourish (Gregory, 2008). Microcelebrities can assume the role of a celebrity despite having a very

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small number of followers because of their use of social networking sites (Marwick, 2015). Microcelebrities are essentially "regular" persons who become famous on social media (Armelin, 2012; Khamis et al., 2016; Marwick, 2015; Senft, 2008). Furthermore, this new class of celebrity is referred to as "internet celebrity" (Armelin, 2012). She focuses on Marwick (2010) to explain how the diversity of the media environment has transformed fame from a "status" into a collection of behaviours and a method of self-presentation. Social media is simpler to obtain than conventional media since internet is often less expensive than traditional media airtime. Therefore, social media has become the most widely used medium for regular people to demonstrate techniques they have learnt from celebrities, leading to the term "the practice of microcelebrity" (Marwick, 2010). People are able to assume the role of celebrities thanks to online (social media) habits (Armerlin, 2012).

Additionally, Burke (2017) refers to micro celebrities as "Social Media Influencers (SMI)". In her research, it is determined that the best people to sway consumers' opinions of a product are those who are well-known on social media or who exhibit the necessary personality to promote a certain brand. Despite the fact that her work tends to be more business-oriented, it seems that microcelebrities may fit into practically every classification of SMIs. For instance, the individual using a personal endorsement (SMI) should be able to garner more attention than the average person in order to increase sales (Burke, 2017). Celebrities (microcelebrities), according to Austmann (2015), are persons who are able to draw the most social attention. However, based on the context of the research, the contrast between the words could stand out. Burke's (2017) work, for instance, has a business-

oriented focus, however, (Burke, 2017) identifies strong trustworthiness, considerable social media engagement, distinct brands, significant followings, and tremendous exposure as the universal traits of SMIs. These traits are identical to those listed as microcelebrity determinants in Armelin (2012), Marshall (2010), and Marwick (2015).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theories are formulated to explain, predict and understand phenomena and in many cases to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical assumptions. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists (Swanson & Richard, 2013). Furthermore, it helps to demonstrate an understanding of the theory and concepts that are relevant to the topic of this research work, and that will relate to the broader areas of knowledge being considered.

Theories that guided this research topic are:

1. The Theory of Parasocial Relationship

2. Concept of Micro-Celebrity

3. Symbolic Interactionism Theory

2.2.1 The Theory of Parasocial Relationship

The Parasocial theory is a field of study that has been mostly explored in communication studies, however, work has also been done in psychology, sociology, and allied fields. The concept was first proposed in 1956 by Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl in their article "Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction," in which the authors claimed that television, as well as other forms of media in general, had brought people into contact with people who were previously unknown and unknowable before the advent of visual media. Since the phrase originally emerged in a piece by Horton and Wohl (1956), the idea of parasocial relationship has solidified itself in the literature on media and communication. The initial definition of parasocial relationship was the appearance of face-to-face interaction between media characters and their audience. Media characters can comprise a variety of media entities (or personae), such as presenters, actors, or celebrities, whereas audience members are people who consume mass media. A viewer's perception of a persona is shaped by how they act in each interaction event (such as a television programme, commercial, or talk show interview), and this opinion is carried over to the subsequent parasocial episode (Auter, 1992; Perse & Rubin, 1989). In simple terms, a user's initial illusionary experience of being in a genuine social encounter with a media figure, but understanding that they are not, is referred to as a parasocial interaction (Dibble et al., 2016; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011). It was made to illustrate how prominent television and radio celebrities might stimulate the formation of one-sided interpersonal connections with certain members of their audience by giving a sense of proximity.

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Celebrities existed before television, but with the introduction of televisions into people's living rooms, it became possible to have a face-to-face parasocial engagement with someone whose image and personality had invaded the privacy of one's own home. A parasocial connection, for example, can take many forms, ranging from excessive adoration to regular love and friendship partnerships, to more negative interactions marked by apathy or even hate toward the mediated other (Hartmann, 2016).

When media figures address the audience immediately and directly from the screen of the television, television programmes and other media content (such as commercials) are able to give the impression of human interaction. According to Horton and Wohl (1956), this kind of connection creates the appearance of intimacy from a distance. This idea was expanded further by Auter (1992), who introduced the notion of a media character breaking the fourth wall. This concept alludes to the idea that a media figure might break character to address a crowd. For instance, stories typically develop inside a three-walled environment in television, just as they do in film and theatre. The fourth wall is the fictitious barrier that stands between a character and the viewer. The breaking of the fourth wall is seen to boost a character's parasociability for three basic reasons. These include the following: (1) the character who breaks the wall becomes more dominant because they are aware of both the characters they are interacting with and the audience behind the wall; (2) it helps acknowledge that the programme is only fiction; and (3) by speaking directly to the audience (and adapting to supposed responses), the persona raises the level of intimacy with the audience, increasing the level of interactivity of the content.

Ultimately, parasocial relationships depict social relationships (Skumanich & Kintsfather, 1998). For many television viewers, relationships with fictional characters and other celebrities are a constant, significant, and frequently important part of their social world, even though they are frequently less salient and intense than close social relationships (Skumanich & Kintsfather, 1998). Additionally, parasocial relationships, according to Perse and Rubin (1989), are similar to personal friendships in three aspects. First of all, parasocial connections (like friendships) are self-chosen and frequently have a personal focus. Second, both kinds of partnerships offer companionship, and third, both kinds of relationships begin with social attraction. Viewers frequently feel as though they recognize and comprehend the persona in the same intimate sense that they recognize and comprehend their close friends, despite the fact that parasocial connection is based on virtual interaction (such as watching television) rather than actual interaction. Based on the idea that a media celebrity is similar to other persons in the viewer's social circle, this kind of parasocial relationship exists. Additionally, parasocial engagement can resemble social interaction and is frequently improved by audience involvement (Perse & Rubin, 1989).

Participants on reality television are everyday individuals that viewers may relate to because they (the viewers) identify themselves in the TV personalities. Audiences consider these television personalities to have traits, abilities, and skills that they wish they had, such as boldness, beauty, and charisma, and as a result, they might develop a sense of "intimacy" with them. Furthermore, as time passes, the audience who finally becomes fans feels that they know the TV characters better and more intimately than others; that they understand and appreciate their beliefs and objectives.

2.2.2 The Concept of Micro-Celebrity

The concept of micro-celebrity was developed by Theresa Senft in 2001 to explain the efforts of people with the intention of amplifying their popularity on the internet by employing multimedia elements such as videos, photos and interactive social media platforms such as social networking sites. It is a set of calculated practices in which people construct their public persona as a commodity to be consumed by others (Hearn, 2008) while using strategic intimacy to appeal to followers (Senft, 2008) and also regarding their audience as fans (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). The concept focuses on the efforts or practices of ordinary people on the internet and how these practices earn them attention. According to Cottom (2015), the success of these online activities is measure by the number of actions taken on content posted, and these actions range from liking a photo or video, sharing them, commenting on them and also following these celebrities online. Being divided into achieved (which entails deliberate efforts to gain popularity) and ascribed (which is a production of media without any claims of actual performance) celebrity (Abidin, 2018), the concept of micro-celebrity is about the construction of identity as a product to be consumed by others and on interactions that treat the audience as a fan base in order to achieve social or economic benefits (Page, 2012).

The micro-celebrity concept examines how people modify their demeanour into media content in order to build and maintain fan bases. People achieve this by using a variety of web - based self-presentation methods, which typically feature three major practices: identity construction, fan interactions, and increasing visibility. Page (2012) frames identity construction as a relational act of putting oneself in contrast to others in order to establish a distinction. According to this theory, presenting information that symbolizes

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one's identity is by far the most explicit type of identity construction (Khamis et al., 2017; Marwick, 2015). Furthermore, the concept proposes that engagement creates and retains attention through reacting to fans, which is the primary activity of fan interactions. Several social networking sites, for example, provide capabilities that allow individuals to engage with audiences, making it simpler to establish and maintain fan bases. Still on the subject of interaction, Raun (2018) adds that celebrities pose questions and elicit opinions or insights to display inclusion and create a sense of debate between them and their audience. Finally, the concept explains that celebrities drive their identities and interactions to a pedestal where they can be discovered by a larger audience beyond their fan base in order to outsmart competitors and get attention on social media hence visibility promotion.

Ultimately, these essential activities are not autonomous since they are intertwined. According to this concept, selling one's identity to fans necessitates engagement with fans. Furthermore, one must increase their exposure by extending the identities they have developed via their interactions with their fans to other social media communities outside of their fan base. Despite its simplicity, the theory has been criticized for having a number of flaws. Turner (2013) believes that the notion of micro-celebrity provides people a great deal of choice over how they promote themselves and their relationships with fans. This control leaves fans at the mercy of micro-celebrities as they are fed by presentations of their stars which sometimes give them a false idea of success among other things.

2.2.3 Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Herbert Blumer is considered the founder or proponent of the theory of symbolic interactionism as he was the first to use it (Korgen & White, 2008). Because the

cornerstone of the theory, which is "meaning", is formed by people's actions in the direction of how they assess themselves and the objects or people around them, the theory of symbolic interaction is seen as a dynamic theory (Schenk & Holman, 1980). Therefore, it is the social actors that give objects significance or meaning. Based on the concepts of symbolic interactionism, interaction perspectives on the mind, society, and environment are developed (Mead & Mind, 1934; Cooley, 1902). This theory is centred on the meanings that come about from human connection, such as when people interact with one another in a social setting (Cooley; 1864; Reck, 1863; Blumer, 1986; Goffman, 1922). According to Blumer (1969), there are two ways in which individuals create "meaning": (1) Meaning is something that is ascribed to objects, events, phenomena, and so on. (2) Meaning that there is a "physical attachment" that people place on things and occurrences. According to Blumer, meaning is a condition that results from group members' interactions rather than an inherent quality of the thing (Tezcan, 2005). Thus, meaning is produced as a result of human interaction, and meaning enables individuals to manufacture some of the facts that make up the sensory world (Ibid). Human interaction, which emphasizes individual perspective through characters, indicators of body language, face expression, gestures, and human behaviour, is the source of the data for this theory (Marsh, 2002). This approach elevates the achievements of personal values above the weight of historical advantages (Siregar, 2016). This viewpoint makes the supposition that each person possesses the cultural essence, engages in social interaction within his society, and generates the meaning of "ideas" collectively (Siregar, 2016). According to the symbolic interaction theory, individuals coexist with their phenomena and the symbolic environment (Cooley, 1902; Mead & Mind, 1934; Blumer, 1986).

"Interpretation of the action" is a symbolic exchange process (Aksan et al., 2009). The theory of symbolic interaction has three concepts, according to Mead and Mind (1934): "mind," "society," and "environment." However, people shape and alter both their "self" and "society" through the "mind" and, ultimately, the peculiarly human capacity for role-playing (Mead & Mind, 1934).
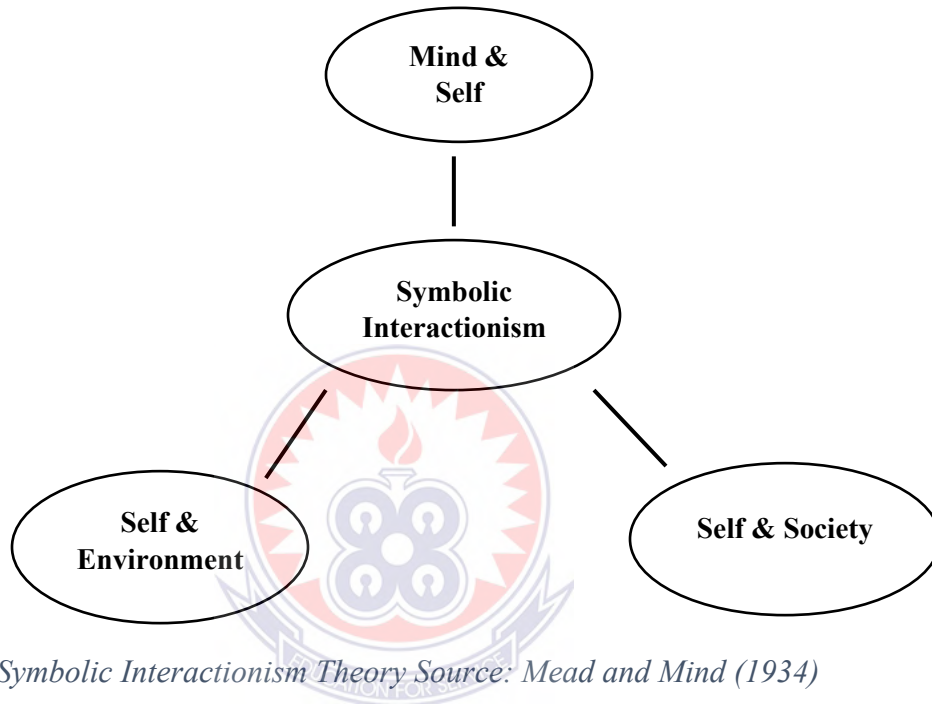
Figure 1: Symbolic Interactionism Theory Source: Mead and Mind (1934)

2.2.3.1 Mind and Self

The interplay between mind and self is thought of as the self being given meaning by the mind. How to describe the change from subhuman interaction by gestures to symbolic engagement where the meaning may be clarified in more detail (Mead, 1934). It will highlight the meaning theory's stance as a logic of natural meanings (Mead, 1934). The mind is the culmination of the actor's interactions with either himself or others (Mead, 1934). All of the actor's symbols are stored in the mind, arranged in the context of an

internal dialogue (Mead, 1934). When a problem needs to be solved, the most intense thinking occurs (Mead, 1934).

The self is the essential entity for any interaction since it can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways (Sean, 1994). Self will develop a stable pattern when it is consistent, and stable patterns of activity will be seen (Sean, 1994). According to Cooley's (1902) definition of self, the other becomes real in 'our conceptions of him'. According to Mead (1934), the self is a social emergent that develops as a result of social experiences and behaviours. As a result of the interaction with the process as a whole and other participants in the process, the individual is developed by this process (Mead, 1934). Through engagement with others, the self will forge bonds of understanding and lay the groundwork for future partnerships (Sean, 1994). The mind and self are intertwined, and they enable people to manipulate symbols to negotiate reality while also including all mental processes (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Sean, 1994).

The theory demonstrates that interpersonal engagement encourages self-reflection, which enables one to situate oneself at the beginning, middle, and end of the timeline (Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979). Additionally, people have the ability to examine themselves through the "looking glass" to see themselves from various angles and can show themselves in various ways to various audiences (Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979). It is demonstrated that a self can also see the individual as a product of the process (Mead, 1934). As a result, the self-mind interaction generates meanings that direct the actors' actions.

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2.2.3.2 Self and Society

Self and society interaction is a process of socialization that begins with interpersonal interactions between individuals where one person might have an impact on others (Cooley, 1902; Marsh, 2002). According to Goffman (1959, 1978), individuals must be understood in the context of the group, to which they both belong and return. It has been demonstrated that group members can sustain their social lives and individual identities through the procedures they engage in (Goffman, 1959; Marsh, 2002). Daily interactions include people interacting and participating in social formalities (Goffman, 1959, 1978). This premise acknowledges that social norms constrain each person's behaviour, but that ultimately, each person selects the options available in social society (Siregar, 2016). To understand the order and change in social processes is the goal of both the individual and society (Blumer, 1969; Siregar, 2016).

According to the principle of "self and society interaction," social interaction creates the social structure, whereas individuals and community groups are influenced by cultural and social processes (Blumer, 1969; Siregar, 2016). Strong (1983) suggests that the context of the group, which is the presence of signals and symbols of social interaction inside the context, still belongs and is returning. A particular meaning for a certain phenomenon develops as a result of the interplay between the individual self and society. As a result, the self-society connection generates meanings that direct the actors' actions

2.2.3.3 Self and Environment

There are two categories of the environment. The physical environment comes first, followed by the contextual environment (Smith & Bugni, 2006). Symbolic interactionism,

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according to Smith and Bugni (2006), is the main theory that can explain the crucial links between "self and environment" through architecture, the environment, and human thought, feelings, and behaviour. For a better knowledge of architecture and the surroundings, "self and environment" outlines three views (Smith & Bugni, 2006; Mead, 1934). First, the "self and environment" and created physical surroundings have the capacity to influence and manifest in other people. Second, "self and environment" can help us understand how intentionally constructed physical surroundings convey shared symbols and meanings. Thirdly, "self and environment" shows that a built physical environment is not just a backdrop for our behaviour since a select number of designed physical structures, locations, and items work as models to mould ideas and deeds (Smith & Bugnu, 2006).
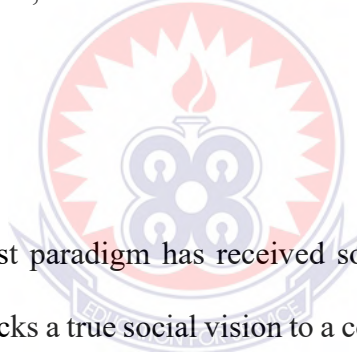
The symbolic interactionist paradigm has received some criticism, one of which is that symbolic interactionism lacks a true social vision to a considerable extent. To put it another way, symbolic interactionism does not present a theory or vision of society, because it occasionally implies that society exists simply in people's ideas (Slattery, 2007). This theory emphasizes the freedom of the person and the society's constrained role (Udehn, 2001). The second issue with the symbolic interactionist paradigm is emphasized most strongly and plainly: (i) paying little attention to social structure and (ii) paying little attention to human emotions. As a matter of fact, the first of these two deficiencies suggests that symbolic interaction is not entirely social, while the second suggests that symbolic interaction is not entirely psychological (Meltzer et al, 1975; Slattery, 2007).

According to this theory, meaning is something that spontaneously appears during interaction under specific circumstances. It disregards the fundamental social setting in which the interaction is situated. As a result, it fails to generate the sources of meaning. Additionally, symbolic interactionism forgoes describing society in a broader sense because it perceives no social reality other than the one that humans construct via their interpretations (Slattery, 2007).
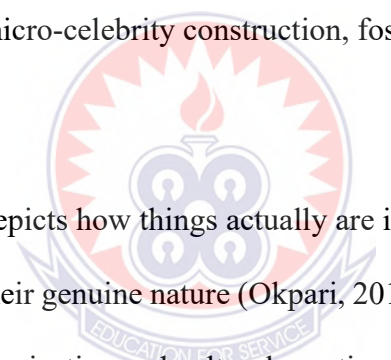
2.3 Relevance of the theories to the Study

2.3.1 Finding bearing on the parasocial relationship, fans, (who are usually social media users) use the search feature on social media to scout for posts about their favourite celebrities with whom they have established some kind of bond as a result of the continuous exposure to celebrities which consequently create a feeling of knowing between celebrities and themselves.

2.3.2 Notably, social media undermines the media's gatekeeping function, which is prevalent in conventional media. As a result, anyone with internet connection and the ability to create consumable material in their desire to become micro-celebrities may achieve stardom. Reality programmes must attract a large audience in order to sell, for reasons other than merely presenting material but also generating money. As a result, social media provides producers of reality programmes with a wide audience at a lower cost than conventional media. These social media platforms, such as social networking sites, include

features that make it easier to carry out the fundamental tasks of micro-celebrity concept, such as identity formation, fan interaction, and visibility promotion.

Ordinary people are celebrated as characters in reality programmes as a result of these practices. For example, the characters of BBN show have profiles on social media where they publish images and videos of themselves, among other things, in order to develop their identities for their fan base. These images and other content shared by these personalities also spark interactions with their fan base, who like, comment, and share them, resulting in the last practice of visibility promotion, since sharing these contents makes them available to new audiences. As a result of its various capabilities, social media, which is based on the concept of micro-celebrity construction, fosters the formation of celebrities.

2.3.3 The reality theory depicts how things actually are in the physical universe; it reveals how things really are in their genuine nature (Okpari, 2019). Celebrification, as defined by Jerslev (2016) as a communicative and cultural practice in which celebrity logic is played out in various ways and in various media circuits depending on platforms' technological affordances, cultural, and institutional modes of functioning, is the term used to describe this representation through reality TV. This is so on the flipside when focus is shifted to what meanings the audiences make of the show or specific elements in the show as a result of the viewers' interaction between some cultural (social), environmental and mental elements and themselves.

On social media as well, the interactions between the self and mind, society and the environment take place. The audiences of TV shows (in this case, the BBN) express or

show who they are in their minds and what ideologies they have of themselves. They do this by adhering to the provisions or otherwise restrictions that are present in the 'world' they are in, which forms the society. For some of the audiences, it could be a limitation born out of place or socialization, consequently, forming a mindset or perception about certain actions.

This society can be the group of audiences who watch the show. Behaviours are altered as a result of the group or society and certain behaviours are interpreted to mean what the group has accepted that it should mean. For example, it could be a phrase or a hashtag that the audiences usually use on social media. In the interaction between the self and the society (which is the group of audiences), a specific meaning is drawn out of that phrase or hashtag by virtue of the society and whatever canons that govern the interactions there. According to Blumer (1969), a particular meaning for a given experience evolves as a result of the interplay between the individual self and society. As a result, the self-society connection generates meanings that direct the actions of viewers, be it to like or to comment or otherwise, unlike or ignore.

The interaction between the self and the environment has to do with the communication between the physical and or contextual environment of the audiences at any point in time and what emotions or actions the environment or elements in the environment elicit from them. It could be a portrait of a religious leader in the environment that could indirectly make some audience members feel some form of reservations about doing or saying certain things or it could be the arrangement of certain things in the environment, eliciting a specific reaction. On social media, this could be as faint as a particular pop-up ad that elicits and certain response due to the meaning the viewer (at that point) made of the ad as a result

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of the interplay between the two entities. Even more contextually, the idea that there are evictions from time to time, pushes the viewers to vote more or less for a particular candidate.

The interaction between the self and mind, society and environment therefore, is what makes the viewers do/say or not do/not say certain things on social media. On social media, these elements of symbolic interactionism take place as the features of and layout of the platform causes the fans to take only certain actions such as to like or to comment. The 'laws' regarding the use of hateful speech and the consequences thereof withholds fans from saying or taking certain action, ultimately, creating an identity based on the meanings that fans have created as a result of the affordances and the restrictions of their mind, society and environment.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods and procedures adopted to collect and analyse data with the justifications for the choice of methods for the study. The chapter thus comprises the operational definitions that lend meaning to the themes that were adopted in collecting and analysing data. It also discusses the procedures for data collection and explains the methods used to collect the ton of data for each of the research questions.

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopted the qualitative research approach to scope out how reality shows enable social media stars to become celebrities. Qualitative research fundamentally seeks to analyse the experience of a social action or phenomenon with a motive to gain adept understanding of that phenomenon rather than subjecting it to mathematical or statistical transformations (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). According to Hancook (2002), qualitative research studies a phenomenon that has occurred or is occurring naturally without the influence of the researcher. To achieve the objective of the celebrification of otherwise unknown reality show contestants, the study adopted the qualitative content analysis technique to analyse the interactive tweets posted by active fans of the *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show on social media (Twitter). Qualitative research enables social science researchers to study a particular phenomenon or culture because it gives room for flexibility and the attainment of a deeper understanding of the subject or phenomenon (Yin, 1998).

Due to these reasons, this study adopted the qualitative approach to examine how reality shows act as catalyst for celebrification, through an analysis of the *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show on social media (Twitter).

3.2 Research Design

Through the qualitative approach, this study adopted the qualitative content analysis design as the method of inquiry. The study therefore selected the *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show where tweets were solicited as units of analysis. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), research design is a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project aimed at answering specific research questions or testing specific hypotheses. In other words, research design is the "blue print" of a research study and entails the overall plan of the research as to how the research questions would be answered (Sounders et.al 2009). Creswell (2014) also avers that research designs are methods of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches that provide directions to researchers. Sileyaw (2019) indicates that, after a researcher has selected a research approach for a study, it is crucial for the researcher to consider the mode of inquiry within the approach selected to serve as a framework for exploring the research findings. Simply put, research design as strategy of scientific inquiry (Denzil & Lincoln, 2011). A research design is a detailed method for obtaining data scientifically (Schaefer, 2004). Given the multitude of research designs, (Bhattacherjee, 2012) asks the question; "which design should researchers choose for their research?" Generally, researchers tend to select those research designs that they are most comfortable with and are most competent to handle, but the choice should depend on the

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nature of the research phenomenon being studied (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Creswell (2014) avers that the selection of an appropriate design depends on the nature of the research, the research problem, research questions, personal experiences of the researcher, and the type of audience for the study.

According to Bhattacherjee (2012), regardless of the specific research design chosen, the researcher should strive to collect data using a combination of techniques such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, documents or secondary data. That is, irrespective of the specific research design adopted, the goal of the researcher should be to collect as much and as diverse data as possible to help generate appreciable insights about the phenomenon of interest (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

3.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

According to Wach et al. (2013), qualitative content analysis is a research method for rigorously and systematically analysing the contents of written documents. Leedy and Ovmrod (2001) define qualitative content analysis as "a detailed and systematic examination of contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases". The method is designed to identify specific characteristics from the content in human communications (Williams, 2007). With reference to the above notions, this study intended to analyse the forms of tweets fans of the *‘‘Big Brother’Naija’* post on social media to elevate contestants of the show to celebrity status. In doing this, I became highly interactive on twitter and I was also interested in posts that included; text tweets, images, videos, links, polls and audios that related to the show.

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Again, Julien (2008) defines qualitative content analysis as the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into similar conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes. Deducing Julien (2008) assertion, this study set out to analyse and categorize data into a collection of themes in order to make it meaningful. Braun and Clarke (2006) aver that content analysis method of data analysis is a way of deducing and making sense of data and also deriving meaning. Palmquist (2005) also defines qualitative content analysis as a means of objectively examining the presence of certain words, phrases, characters, themes, concepts or any communicative language in a body of text. Per the above assertions, this study set out to analyse and organize data into a collection of themes to make meanings of posts relating to the *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show on Twitter.

Moreover, qualitative content analysis is the systematic analysis of the content of a text (example, who says what, to whom, why, and to what extent and with what effect) in a qualitative or quantitative manner (Bhattacherjee, 2012). According to Bhattacherjee (2012), qualitative content analysis is typically conducted as follows: first, when there are many texts to analyse (example, newspaper, stories, blog postings, online reviews), the researcher begins by sampling a selected sets of texts from the number of texts for analysis. Bhattacherjee (2012) avers that the process is not random, but instead, texts that have more pertinent content should be chosen selectively. Second, the researcher identifies and applies rules to divide each text into segments or "chunks" that can be treated as separate units of analysis. This process is called "unitizing". For instance, assumptions, effects, and barriers in texts may constitute such units. Third, the researcher therefore constructs and applies one or more concepts to each unitized text segment in a process called "coding". For coding

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process, a coding scheme is used based on the themes the researcher is searching for or uncovers as he/she classifies the texts. Finally, the coded data is analysed, often both quantitatively and qualitatively, to determine which themes occur most frequently, in what contexts, and how they are related to each other. Deducing from Bhattacherjee (2012) assertions above, this research classified tweets relating to the *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show into texts tweets, images, videos, links, polls to achieve the first research objective that sort to identify the forms of tweets fans posted on social media (Twitter) to elevate contestants of reality shows to celebrity status. Again, this research classified contents of tweet relating to the reality show into themes; *Excessive promotion, Fandom, Appeal for followers and votes* to achieve the q1b of research question 1.

Bhattacherjee (2012) stipulates that the following are limitations of qualitative content analysis: first, the coding process is said to be restricted to the information available in text form. Second, sampling must be done carefully to avoid sampling bias. Schilling (2006) addressed these criticisms by organizing analytic procedures into a spiral model. The model consists of five phases in interpreting texts: first, the researcher must convert recorded tapes into raw text data or transcripts for content analysis. Second, the researcher must convert raw data into condensed protocols. Third, the researcher must convert condensed protocols into a preliminary category system. Fourth, the researcher therefore uses the preliminary category system to generate coded protocols and, finally, the researcher analyses coded protocols to generate interpretations about phenomenon of interest. This study applied this model as I purposefully became interactive in audio "space discussions" held on Twitter to discuss issues that came up anytime the show was telecasted. I also recorded audios and converted them into raw text data. I took screenshots of tweets and compiled them into

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Microsoft word documents in order not to lose vital information. I further formulated categories that included the format of posts by fans of the reality show and classified the text data under the formulated categories which also comprises; text tweets, images, videos, links and polls. Coding protocols were also generated from the above-mentioned categories.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Sampling techniques or strategy directs the researcher as to the choices of what to observe or whom to interview in conducting research. That is, a good sampling strategy adopted for a study enables the researcher to make systematic contact with communicative phenomena with relatively a minimum wasted effort (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). Therefore, a researcher adopts a sampling technique that best suits the objectives of the research study (Taherdorst, 2016). For this reason, this study also adopted the purposive sampling technique to achieve its objectives.

Palinkas et al. (2015) define purposive sampling as specific data or subjects that can provide the desired information for a study either because they are the only ones who process it or conform to criteria set by the researcher. With regards to the assertion by Palinkas et al. (2015), this study selected a social networking platform that can provide the kind of information I want using "Top 100 sites" 2021, "Alexa ranking." Top sites Alexa Ranking is a mobile surveying platform known for ranking social networking websites on the frequency or number of visits. *Twitter* was purposively selected for possessing specific characteristics as being part of the most visited social media website in Ghana. Baxter and

Jack (2008) notes that convenience is at the core of purposive sampling therefore, I selected a social networking platform from Alexa Ranking (2021), which I am more abreast with due to how easy and convenient the social media site is to access. Another important justification for choosing purposive sampling as a technique is seeded in the fact that I was able to access the needed data for the study

3.4.1 *Social media; why twitter?*

The term social media refers to web-based and mobile technologies that turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Social media takes many different forms including internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, podcasts, photographs or images, video, rating and social bookmarking. In the midst of social media revolution in recent times, it is more than obvious that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, Myspace, Skype and others are used extensively for the purpose of communication (Baruah, 2012).

Baruah (2012) avers that social media category such as social networking sites comprising LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace and others provide a web-based platform for building social networks or social relations amongst people. They provide a means to interact over the internet, e-mail and now even mobile phones. This study purposefully selected Twitter because, according to Statista (2019), twitter users can exchange views and opinions on different subjects and matters that are going on in the society with a simple hashtag "#" on Twitter. Twitter has more interactivity than Facebook though the latter started first in 2004 and the former started in 2006 (Bosch, 2017). Due to this assertion by Bosch (2017), Fans of contestants of the *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show have been shown

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to be more interactive on "twitter" than any other social media platform, hence, Twitter was deemed suitable for the purpose of this research study.

3.5 Data Collection Method

According to Williams (2007), qualitative research involves purposefully describing, explaining, and interpreting collected data. Baxter and Jack (2008), aver that, in any type of qualitative study the data collection and analysis occur concurrently. That is to say, the type of analysis engaged in will depend on the type of data collected. Mohajan (2018) also avers that certain data collection methods have also been identified with qualitative research such as: observational methods, in-depth interviewing, narratives, group discussions and the analysis of documentary evidence. This study adopted the qualitative content analysis technique and for that matter, collected data through the utilization of an analysis of electronic documentary evidence.
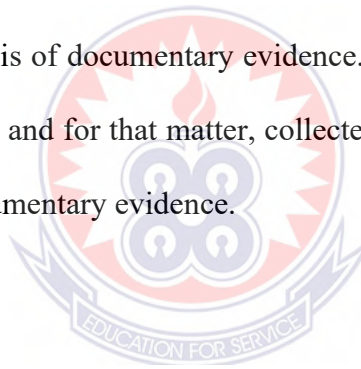
3.5.1 *Document analysis*

Document analysis is both a technique for collecting and analysing data and a research method. It is a procedure which encompasses the identification, verification and consideration of documents which are related to the subject studied. Its main function is to contextualize facts, situations or points in time. It takes an objective reflection from the original source, and allow the localization, identification, organization and evaluation of the information contained in the document, thus, comprising a systematic process of the collection, treatment and analysis of information (Andrade et al., 2018).

Mogalakwe (2006) asserts that documentary sources become necessary when the researcher wants to make references to past behavior that has been documented.

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Documents may be given different degrees of importance in a research strategy. For example, they may provide only part of the evidence in a study that draws on other sources such as interviews and observations. Or they may be the sole form of evidence that is used (Lee, 2021). Daymon and Holloway (2001) aver that document consists of words and images that have been recorded without the intervention of a researcher. Lee (2021) goes further to stipulate that the multifaceted qualities of documents have led different authors to offer different definitions of documents. For example, Hodder (2003, p.703) has described a document as "mute evidence, which unlike the spoken word, endures physically and thus can be separated across space and time from its author, producer and user ". Lee (2021) argues that Hodder's definition is useful because it expresses the way in which documents allow information to be transposed both temporally and spatially. However, not all documentary records are "mute". There have been an increasing variety of forms of records that are able to project sound and/or vision as well as the written word. These include film, digital versatile discs, compact discs and pages in cyberspace. Many are not mute in the sense of emitting no sound, although they may be unheard and unseen unless the researcher includes their manifest qualities in the research design (Lee, 2021).

Also, Creswell (2009) stipulates that document analysis is an effective means of collecting data and can be accessed at any time convenient to the researcher while it helps save time and resources at the expense of transcribing. Moreover, Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents; both printed and electronic (computer-base and internet-transmitted) material. Heeding to these facts, this study adopted document analysis as data collection method to help save time in the process of transcription of documents, and also to make references to fans reaction (discussions),

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review and evaluate the transcribed data for the study. Document analysis is a useful method for this study due to its obtrusive, non-reactive nature (Bowen, 2009). This makes the documents naturalistic and possess a built-in level of authenticity (Leavy, 2014). The use of documents in research is valued due to the richness of the information extracted, and because it broadens the understanding regarding the subject matter of the study (Andrade et al., 2018).

On 22nd July, 2021 when the *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show dubbed "*Shine Ya Eye"* started, I also begun following it. The reality show aired on DSTV channel 198 every day. Mostly, I "followed" the show on Twitter with my smart phone. I also watched the show live whenever I had the opportunity to do so. With my smart phone, I took screenshots of the tweets the fans of *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show posted. I also saved images and recorded the videos. I was able to record the videos using the AZ Screen recorder app installed on my phone. I also took images of comments (Tweets) displayed on the TV screen. On 7th September, 2021, I began compiling the tweets posted by fans into a Microsoft word document. I then transcribed the data (videos) manually into a notebook and carefully reviewed the written texts as I played and listened to the videos repeatedly. I transcribed all the data, from 7th September, 2021 to 6th October, 2021 and designed a coding sheet on which I classified tweets (data) into text tweets, images, videos, links, and polls. Using the information on the coding sheet, I classified the tweets into *fandom, excessive promotion and appeal for votes*. The coding sheet helped me to identify the forms and contents of the posts by the fans of *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show on social media (Twitter).

3.6 Data Analysis

Boyatzis (1998) avers that "thematic analysis" is a type of qualitative analysis which is used in identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. That is, the technique is used to identify, analyse and present classification (patterns or themes) that relate to the data (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Thematic analysis includes coding, categorization and identifying patterns in order to indicate relationship between variables of a study to form a reasonable and logical chain of evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Marks and Yardley (2004) argue that "thematic analysis" is considered the most appropriate for any study that intends to explore concepts, ideas and describe human behavior using interpretations. In application of the above knowledge, "thematic analysis" provides a systematic element to data analysis. This strategy allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a "theme" or "pattern" with one of the whole contents. For the purpose of this study, it employed the knowledge of thematic analysis to generate themes from the collected data (Tweets). In line with the assertion in literature, Braun and Clark (2018), a thematic analysis was employed to generate themes from the data collected. The six-phase approach that Braun and Clark (2018), espouse on in thematic analysis involves: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing a report. This was done based on the screen captured post and videos that were coded. Interpretation of the findings was done using concepts and theories derived from the theoretical framework I based my study on.

To being the process of the thematic analysis, a coding guide was used to identify the various themes for each research question. This was done to enable the researcher find

types and content of posts embedded in each Twitter tweet. The guide book was first based on similar categories that were found in literature. Codes such as written text. Videos, fandom, excessive promotion (Senft, 2008; Horton & Wohl, 1956). This guide was then use to code the Twitter post included in the study. Where a post could not be suited into any of codes from literature, a new category was added to the coding guide. This was done to ensure that every single post was able to fit into the categories for creating themes and that, every post was accounted for. The coding guide included instructions on how each post should be coded regarding its. Two individuals were assigned to the coding of each post. All posts were independently coded by both parties. After codes were checked for, any inconsistencies were discussed in the presence of a third party. Comments and descriptions of important features were also recorded. Where a post was difficult to code based on the image or video only, the caption was incorporated to help with the coding of the post. This was done to achieve the second objective of the study that intended to find out the content of posts by fans on social media that elevate contestants of reality shows to celebrity status. To achieve the objective, I focused on tweets posted by fans of *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show. The tweets included, text tweets, images, videos, links and polls tweets. Interpretations of the findings were made in the context of the theories adopted for the study; the theory of Para social relationship, theory of symbolic interactionism and Concept of Micro-celebrity. Direct quotations of some tweets were also used to support claims, interpretations and discussions of the findings.

3.7 Trustworthiness of Data

According to Krefting (1991), any research inquiry of its approach is usually evaluated by peers, readers and sponsors or grant providers. Anney, (2014) in his paper "Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: looking at trustworthiness criteria", indicated that "the evaluators of research endeavor usually adopt some trustworthiness criteria that are agreed in the literature in relation to existing research approaches such as qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research".

Trustworthiness is defined as a methodological (research design, data gathering, data analysis) accuracy and adequacy of the research inquiry (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Anney, (2014) also avers that each research approach adopts different evaluation criteria to ensure the rigor of the inquiry. Unlike quantitative researchers that consider reliability, objectivity and validity as means of ensuring research trustworthiness, qualitative researchers consider dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability as trustworthiness criteria for qualitative study (Guba; 1981; Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007).

Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Macnee & McCabe, 2008). Anney (2014) indicates that credibility establishes whether or not the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants` original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants` original views.

Bhattacherjee (2012) asserts that a research study can be considered credible if readers find its inferences to be believable. The credibility of a research study can be improved by

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providing evidence of the researcher`s extended engagement in the field, by demonstrating data triangulation across subjects or data collection techniques, and by maintaining meticulous data management and analytic procedures, such as transcription of interviews , accurate records of contacts and interviews, and clear notes on theoretical and methodological decisions, that can allow an independent audit of data collection and analysis if needed (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

According to Li (2004), to enable judgments about how well the research context fits with other contexts, thick descriptive data, that is rich and expensive set of details concerning methodology and context, should be included in the research report. As Shenton (2014) argues that "without this insight, (thick description) it is difficult for the reader of the final account to determine the extent to which the overall findings ring true". Heeding to this criterion, this study adopted a theoretical framework within which vital concepts of the study were contextualized. Data collected were also subjected to peer reviews as screenshots of text tweets, videos and images of posts by fans of *‘Big Brother Naija’* reality show were documented using Microsoft word software. I also ensured that, I bracketed my biases and analysing data directly from the transcribed document although I had a favourite among the contestants (Cresswell & Miller, 2000).

According to Bhattacherjee (2012), confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings reported in research can be independently confirmed by others (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Anney, (2014) indicated that confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of the research inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. Confirmability is "concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the researcher`s imagination, but are clearly derived from the data" (Tobin & Beley,

2004, p.392). In order to ensure confirmability, this study adopted multiple data sources and data collected was subjected to "peer review". Data collected for the study including sources of literature reviews and their respective authors were cited and acknowledged respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses the data obtained from twitter on the *'Big Brother Naija'* reality show, 2021 edition, dubbed "*Shine Ya Eye"*. In addition, the chapter presents a qualitative content analysis of the data obtained during the period under study (July 2021 to October 2021). Themes were subsequently extracted from the sorted data in response to the research questions and analysed in line with the main theoretical underpinnings of the study, i.e., Parasocial Relationship; Symbolic Interactionism and the Concept of Micro-Celebrity. The research questions guiding the study are;

1a. What are the forms of posts fans share on Twitter to elevate contestants of reality shows to celebrity status?

1b. What are the themes in the content of posts shared by fans on Twitter that elevate contestants to celebrity status?

2. What are the criteria for attaining celebrity status by the contestants of BBN reality show?

3. What are the risks associated with attaining microcelebrification via BBN reality show on twitter?

4.1 RQ1. What are the forms of posts fans share on Twitter to elevate contestants of reality shows to celebrity status?

The aim of research question one was to identify and categorize into groups the various kinds of posts shared by fans on Twitter from the beginning of the reality show to the end of the show and how these posts contribute to the elevation of contestants to celebrity status through the lens of the Concept of Micro-Celebrity, Theory of Parasocial Relationship and The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism. A comprehensive investigation of posts shared on Twitter using #BBN during the '*Shine ya eye'* edition revealed that 6,300 posts were shared from the beginning of the show in July 2021 to the end in October 2021. The coding indicated that the posts comprised of videos with captions, images with captions, text tweets, polls, and links. According to Stever (2013), on a similar study argued that Twitter is a fantastic place to start a conversation, with the potential to continue the conversations to further levels outside of the platform. Hargittai and Litt (2011) discovered that interest in celebrities and entertainment news in general was a major predictor of Twitter use in the community of young adults studied. Most crucially, fans may send personal messages to the celebrity without the celebrity having to allow access to a personal blog or site. The celebrity can respond in kind, without having to join the fan's page or develop any type of formal relationship with the fan. Stever (2013) futher discoverded that Texts tweets are the most shared post on Twitter followed by Images.

4.1.1 Forms of post

According to Senft (2001) microcelebrity is obtained by ordinary individuals with the intention of amplifying their popularity on the internet by employing multimedia

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elements such as videos, photos and interactive social media platforms. The current study defines 'posting' as the act of updating a person's twitter homepage with a text, image or video. The forms of posts have been illustrated on the table below to give a clearer description of what fans were posting on Twitter throughout the show. It further gives the total number of posts shared under each form and the percentage distribution out of the total number of shared posts. These findings are supported by similar studies conducted by Siyam et al. (2020); Arcy (2018); Sibona (2020); Aleti et al. (2019) and Shevtsov et al. (2023), which assert that texts, videos, links, images and polls are the most shared forms of post on Twitter.

Table 1: Frequency Table of the forms of posts shared by fans from July, 2022 to October, 2022

Forms of post	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Videos with caption	394	6.3
Links	31	0.5
Texts tweets	3,897	61.8
Images with caption	1,964	31.2
Polls	14	0.2
Total	**6,300**	**100.0**

From the table above, fans shared text tweets more than any other posts (3,897, 61.8%), followed by Images with caption (1964, 31.2%). A significant number of fans also shared videos with caption (394, 6.3) whereas few people shared links (31, 0.5%) and polls (14, 0.2%).
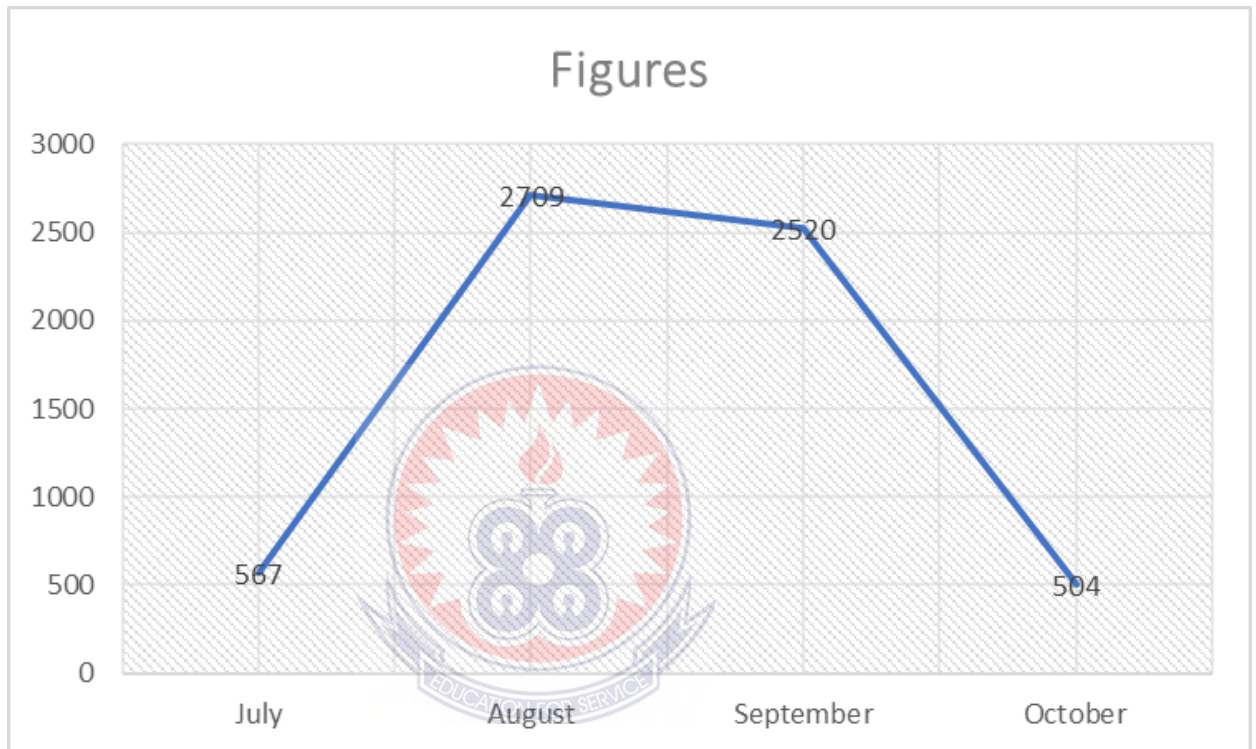
Figure 2: A line graph showing Posts Shared per Month from July, 2022 to October, 2022

The chart above illustrates fan's engagement on twitter from the beginning to the end of the show. Most of the posts (83.0%) were shared during the middle of the show between August and October. Few of the posts were shared at the beginning of the show in July (9%) and towards the end of the show in October (8%). The beginning of the show received an insignificant number of posts (9%) because this was the period where most of the fans were familiarizing themselves with the contestants of the reality show and picking their favourites.

However, the peak of the show is in the middle of August and also in September where most of the fans had picked their favourite contestants and were publicly promoting contents to increase their followers to ensure that their favourite contestants win the ultimate price. The issue attention cycle is a concept in media studies that describes the pattern of public interest and attention given to specific issues or topics over time. It suggests that public attention to an issue tends to follow a predictable cycle of rise and fall (Downs, 1972). In essence micro celebrities according to Austmann (2015), are persons who are able to draw the most social attention. In this case, fans through their acts of posting enable contestants gain that social media attention. For example, fans may share personal updates or reactions related to the contestant on twitter, such as their thoughts on a particular event, or updates on the contestant's personal life. This can help to create a sense of shared experience and community among fans of the contestant. Fans may also create and share fan art, memes, or other creative content related to the contestant, which can help to create a fan base and enthusiasm around them. This period would see enormous increase in posts because it is assumed that each of the selected finalists have built strong fan-bases and have more followers on twitter than when the programme began and would thus draw more support and attention to themselves. The appeal for votes by fans is also intensified during this period and would also contribute to the increase in the number of posts.

Week by week, housemates are evicted and the fan armies of these contestants gradually pull out of the social media postings and active twitter engagements. The posts from fans continues to reduce drawing to the end of the show and eventually receives an insignificant amount of fan engagement (8% of total posts) as shown on the chart as eviction continues

until the top five finalists are selected for the grand finale. A winner is declared at the latter part of the month and at this stage, more of the posts are almost from one fan base about the jubilations and other aftermath activities.

Overall, by sharing of posts reinforces their personal connection to reality show contestants, as fans contribute to the process of celebrification and help to elevate these individuals to celebrity status.

4.1.2 Extracts from the various forms of posts

Samples of the various forms of posts shared by fans are shown and discussed as this

4.1.3 Videos with caption Figure 3: Videos with caption

Posts shared by fans of *'Big Brother Naija'* on twitter come in the form of short videos or GIF (graphic interchange formats). Short videos on twitter have a maximum length of two minutes and twenty seconds, GIFs, mostly known for adding motion to a tweet can be useful to grab attention to twitter tweets. Most of these videos shared are fans personal best moments of the time of their favourite contestants in the house. They share such posts to

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create humour, draw attention to their favourite contestants, and create some form of personal engagement and affiliation with these housemates.

These video contents are sometimes deliberately posted to communicate an entertaining side and other good traits that contestants exhibit in order to appeal for votes, trends, attention, followers and others forms of support needed to keep contestants in the show. Others post contents to also ridicule rivals of their favourite contestants.

4.1.4 Text tweets

Figure 4: Example of text tweet

During the show, fan engagements come in the form of text tweets. Text tweets allow up to two hundred and eight (280) characters on twitter. Figure 4 and Figure 5 above are some of the tweets from fans about a host of matters. In text tweets contestants are mentioned over and over again with harsh tags created to promote the 'brand' contestants are known for. Fans become attached to contestants and constantly praise them mostly for their

personality traits, perhaps, another strategy to draw attention to their favourite housemate. Through texts tweets, fans also exhibit forms of action towards contestants they like, such as share their personal opinions on significant developments and events on the show, and make various forms of comments as if they are literally in the house with the housemates. This increasingly promotes these contestants giving them popularity on social media. Which is in tandem with the Theory of Parasocial Relationship that suggests that people can form one-sided relationships with media personalities, such as reality show contestants, and come to feel as though they know them personally (Rihl & Wegener, 2019). This can lead to strong emotional connections and a desire to support and elevate these individuals to celebrity status. According to Berryman and Kavka (2017) fans engage with reality show contestants on Twitter and share posts that reinforce their personal connection to them, over time this reflects in the growing number of followers and gradually elevates them to the status of micro-celebrities.

4.1.5 Images with caption

Figure 5a: Examples of images with caption   *Figure 5b: examples of images*

Fans are noted for posting images of their favourite contestants with captivating captions either selling various personality traits such as beauty or handsomeness in appealing for more votes, support and fandom from other twitter users. Twitter allows up to four (4) images in a tweet.

Figure 5b is a post by one twitter user, '*Soft'*, during the later stages in the show. The figure 5a is an image of Maria, one of the contestants on the show with caption "*Maria is official final 5. coz she trends back to back…..check her out in trend list…*". Clearly this is a post by one of the fans of Maria showing a fans unflinching support and loyalty backed by a strong commitment and a die-hard attitude to vote his favourite contestant. Posts with images are also meant to appeal to user's consciousness and to create their indulgence towards the post in an effort to draw attention for more support and popularity.

Figure 7 is another post from a fan with an image of one of the male contestants called, White Money, with the caption, "*My hands still hurts, its literally shaking when I try to use them to type. Especially my right thumb have never dedicate my time in voting this hard before…God crown our efforts on Saturday…#BBN*"

Figure 5b is a post by a fan of Whitemoney amassing votes for him to be crowned as the winner in where he announces that Whitemoney makes it to the top 5 finalist.

Fans are encouraged to share contents to keep their favourites trending and in the house in addition to voting. They thus, share images of their favourite contestants using all sorts of caption to draw the attention of other users on the twitter space to support their favourite contestants and increase their popularity. Images are used as visual aids to add a face for

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identification purposes throughout the show in order to ensure that if a fan is trying to draw attention to his or her favourite contestant with a post, the attention will be directed towards the right contestant at the end of the day. Furthermore, Twitter can amplify the reach of these posts and contribute to the process of celebrification by allowing fans to engage with other fans and create a sense of community around the contestant. According to Hambrick et al. (2015), as more people become aware of the contestant and their public image is shaped by their fans, they may become more widely recognized and celebrated, contributing to their status as a celebrity.

4.4.5 Polls

Polls differ from official voting results. Polls are compilation of voting results that are solicited by fans on twitter. Figure 6a and 6b depicts such Polls which is different from the official voting results as it mostly comes with a caption asking people to share their views in the form of votes. For instance, in Figure 6a one user known as 'General' asks "*if today is final, who's your money on to win #BBNaijaShineYaEye"*. This user then compiles responses from 660 followers and presents the final results to show the fans favourite at a particular point in time. According to the result of the Polls by General, 32.3% voted for Liquorose, followed by 30% votes for White Money. Maria receiveded 25.8% of the votes whereas Nini received 12%.

Another user's post in Figure 6b with *'Prince of Africa'* as caption asks *"Deserving winner of #BBN as it stands is?"* and compiles the views of 2,368 audience. Again, Liquorose

topped the polls with 39.5% of the votes followed by White Money (27.1%), Maria (25.8%) and Angel (7.6%) in the respective order.

Figure 6a: Example of polls   *Figure 6b: Example of polls*
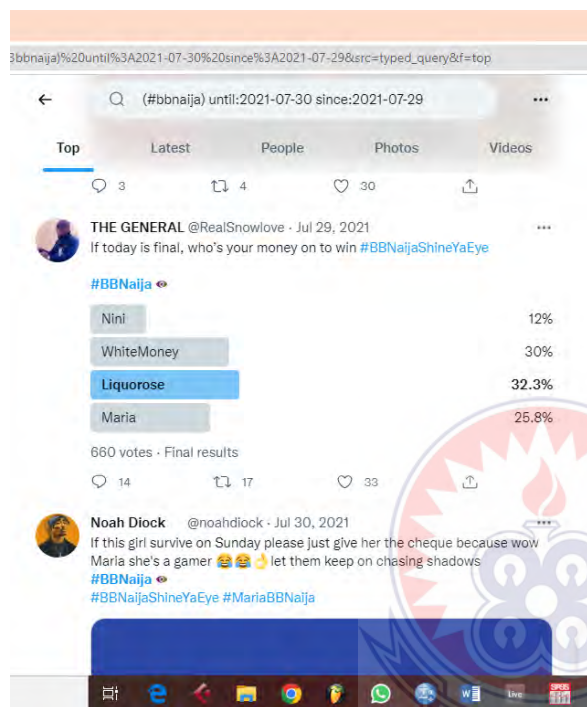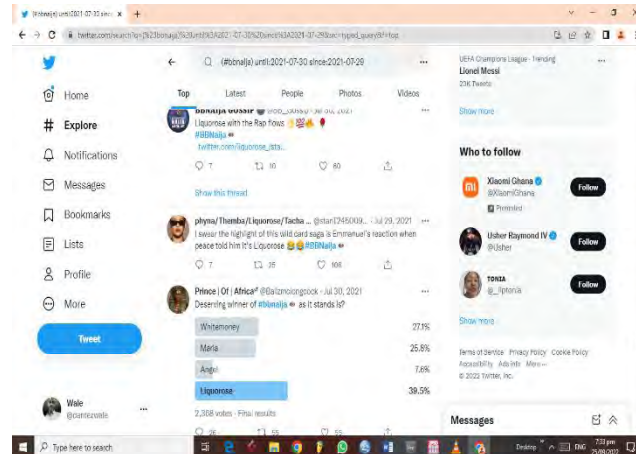
Polls are mostly a reflection of the views of groups of people on twitter and are not necessarily a true reflection of the official voting results. They are conducted and shared with the idea of appealing to followers and fan pages of the various contestants to increase their support and chances of winning the competition.

4.1.6 Links

Fans also share external links to various social media pages and other websites for numerous reasons. For instance, the user, '*pretty Queen (lion king)*' shares a video from Instagram about a moment at the BBN house and captions the post "*Emmanuel cleaning*

Liquorose makeup is everything to me" with hash tags of her favourite contestants. Such links lead to various activities ongoing at the house which have been captured and shared on other social media pages to draw more attention to contestants of the reality show. Some of these links also lead to social media handles of contestants shared by their fans to appeal for more followers and increase engagement from users. For instance, the user KIDD CROSS BABY shares an image of Cross in Figure 7b, and captions it to aid visual identification whilst appealing for more followers on the person's Instagram handle. These are all done to publicly promote these contestants not only on the twitter space but on other social media pages as well increasing their popularity and elevating their status to micro-celebrity all the more.

Figure 7a: Example of links   *Figure 7b: example of links*
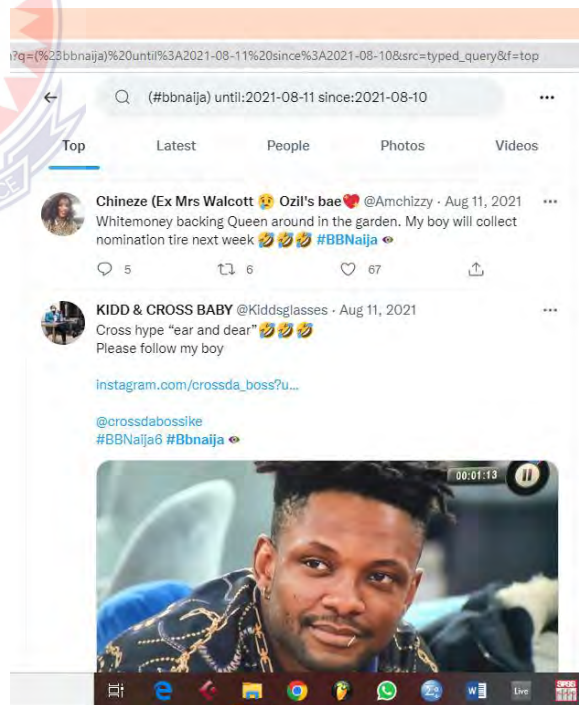
4.2 RQ1b. What are the themes in the content of posts shared by fans on Twitter that elevate contestants to celebrity status?

The themes in the content of posts shared by fans on Twitter that elevate contestants to celebrity status are identified and discussed into detail under this section. The major themes include *Excessive promotion, Fandom, Appeal for followers and votes*. The themes are subsequently explained with samples of posts (text tweets, images, and videos) that capture contents related to each of the identified themes. According to Prakash et al. (2021) the creation of hype or an excessive promotion among individuals by such great visualization seems to be a success element for both fame and business. Fandom has become a social and cultural phenomena in our digital age, particularly in developing nations. Fans are committed, and one method to demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm is to create fan text mostly on Twitter (i.e., text creation generated by fans about their object of fandom) (Smutradontri & Gadavanij, 2020; Rodriguez & Goretti, 2022).

Table 2

Frequency table of contents of posts shared by fans on Twitter

Themes	videos	Text tweet	Images With caption	Links	Polls	N(%)
Fandom	231	2511	365	0	0	3107(49.32)
Appeal for followers & votes	50	1286	588	0	3	1927(30.59)
Excessive promotion	113	100	1011	31	11	1266(20.1)

Field Data

4.2.1 Excessive promotion

Excessive promotion is a form of excitement and anticipation that can be generated by a variety of factors, such as the promotion of a new product or the release of a highly anticipated movie. In the context of Twitter, excessive promotion can be created by fans who are eager to see their favourite contestants succeed and gain recognition. As fans express their excitement and anticipation for a contestant's success, the contestant may respond by performing in a way that satisfies their expectations and further builds their reputation. Essentially, the show requires fans to post content about their favourite contestants to keep them trending on Twitter and other social media platforms and hyping them to popularity to increase followers and gain more votes to emerge as a winner. Fans create associations and affiliations with these contestants in their posts, some of the contents of these posts sound almost as if they have some form of personal relationship with these fans. It is intriguing that even though most of these fans are not known personally to these contestants, their unflinching support to their cause is resolute.

Thus, most of the identified posts are about hyping contestants i.e. promoting some videos of the best moments of contestants' weekly acts and performances to gain traction, posting images with various forms of praise as caption about contestants look, talent and other traits to draw more attention to these housemates. Through these actions, the fundamental tasks of micro-celebrity concept, such as identity formation, fan interaction, and visibility promotion are created (Page, 2012).

Figure 8a: Extract of post *Figure 8b: Extract of post*
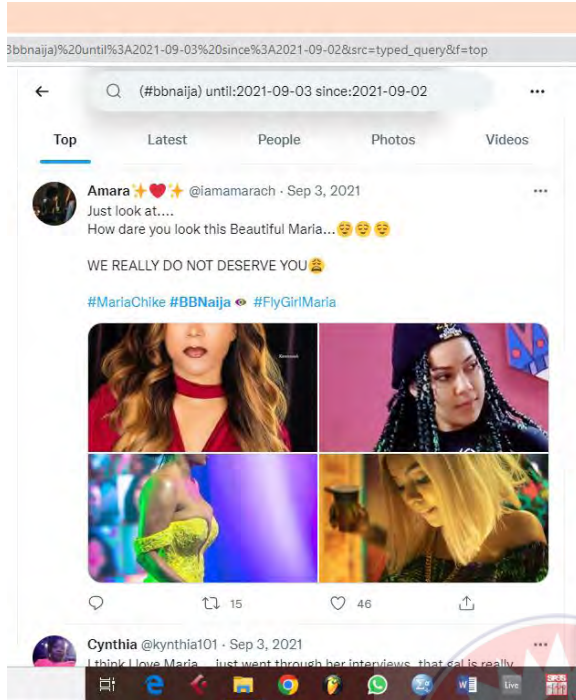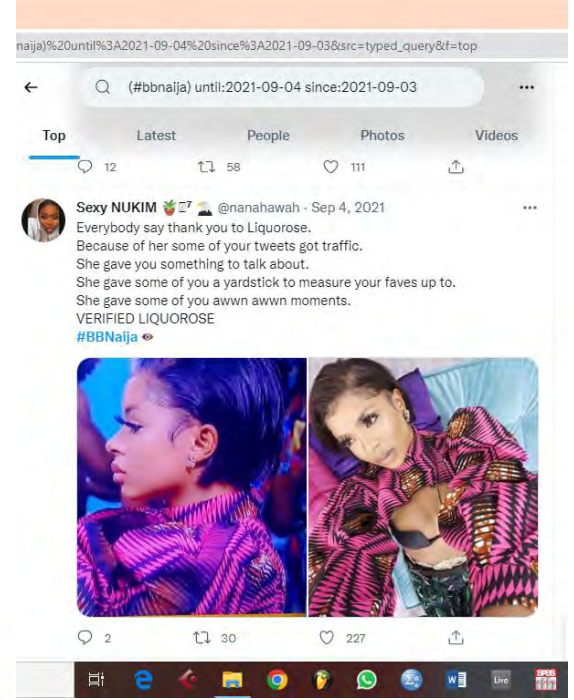
Figure 8a above is a sample of these posts hyping one of the contestants with her beauty. One user, *Amara*, posted an image of Maria with this caption, *"Just look at….how dare you look this Beautiful Maria…WE REALLY DO NOT DESERVE YOU…#MariaChike #BBNaija #FlyGirlMaria"*.

Another user, *SEXY NUKIM* also shared a post about Liquorose in figure 8b. *"Everybody say thank you to Liquorose. Because of her some of your tweets got traffic. She gave you something to talk about. She gave some of you yardstick to measure your faves up to. She gave some of you awwn awwn moments. VERIFIED LIQUOROSE #BBNaija"*.

Clearly, these posts emphasize outstanding features and traits of beauty about the named contestants to audience of the show with the intention to draw the interest, attention and support.

4.2.2 Fandom

Another one of the most popular themes generated from the identified posts that elevates contestants of the reality show to celebrity status was fandom. Fandom is described as a collective group of people that have created fan pages to support their favourite contestants using a familiar name. Fans can be an individual and can also be a group of fans (fandom). But membership can be more than one fandom (multi-fandom). According to Perse and Rubin (1989), parasocial relationships are similar to personal friendships that these 'fans' feel they have with the contestants of *'Big Brother Naija'* which first begins with social attraction for television viewers. Viewers frequently feel as though they recognize and comprehend the persona in the same intimate sense that they recognize and comprehend their close friends.

In most of the post, fans were seen chanting names of their favourite contestants. Fans who defended their favourite contestants are desperately considered by the same fandom members as "true fans". Fandom, or the state of being a fan of a particular person, group, or thing, can also contribute to the elevation of contestants to celebrity status. Some fans could simply not hide their admiration for some of these contestants and shared posts about their favorite housemates with captions acclaiming them. Fans are attracted to these contestants as a result of some likeable attributes such as beauty, gentleness, great act and weekly performances at the house, amongst several others.

Figure 9a: Extract of post
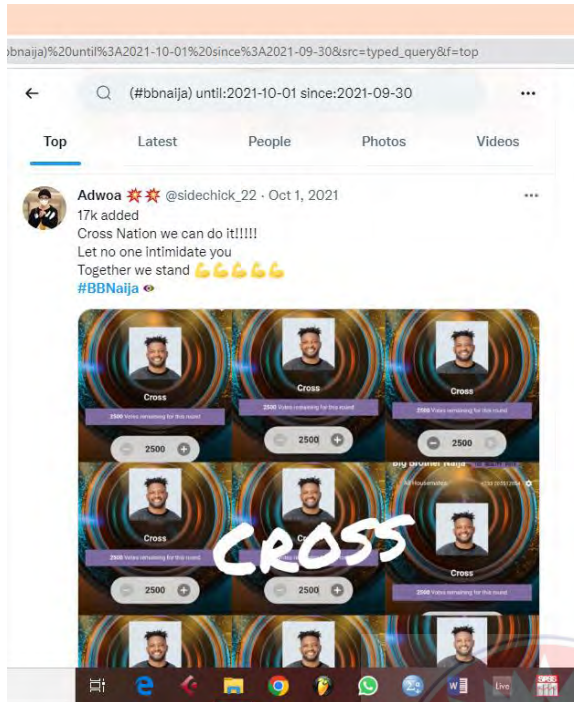
Figure 9b: Extract of post
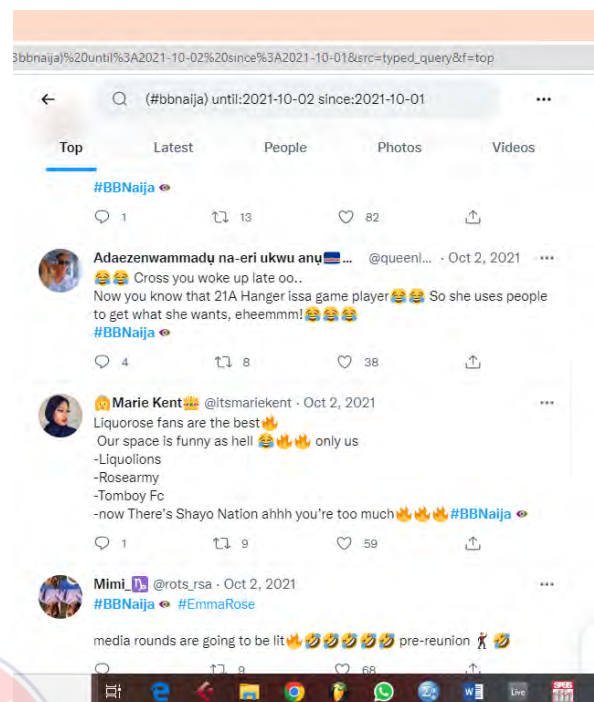
The figures 9a above represents some of these posts. One user known as *Adwoa* shared an image of the contestant Cross and with caption "*17k added, Cross Nation we can do it!!!! Let no one intimate you Together we stand…"* The post contains an image appealing for 2500 votes for the contestant whilst the urging the fan base of Cross known as Cross Nation to keep voting in a spirit of togetherness to keep the contestant in the competition.

Figure 9b above also shares another post by one user, *Marie Kent*, who tweeted "*Liquorose fans are the best…Our space is funny as hell…only us…Liquolions, Rosearmy, Tomboy Fc, now There's Shayo Nation ahhh you're too much…#BBNaija*".

Some of these posts emphasizes how people willingly come together to create a strong fan base to support their favourite contestants and come up with names that associates them to

the person such as Crossnation, meaning fans of the contestant Cross; WMG-White Money Geng, fans of the contestant White Money; Rosearmy-fans of the contestant Rose amongst several others.

This pool of fans provides all forms of support throughout the show to push contestants to the very end. Their popularity spreads far and wide on various social media platforms due to the continuous posting of images, videos, and other forms of content shared by their fan base. Whether these contestants emerge as winners or not, one thing is for sure and that is the fact that people have come to like them enough to support them through the journey and these fan bases will still function to keep them in the media stream for a significant amount of time. Another thing the fanbase engage in to make sure their housemate gain relevance is by indulging in fanwares with other fandoms. When a fanwar takes place, a person or fandom must choose a side where they are either fighting about who's the best or fighting about their idols. *'Big Brother* naija' audiences argue about who the best contestant or housemate is. Fanwar itself has impacted on the lives of fans, both online and in the real world. Positive impact includes relieving stress, getting new friends with fellow fandom (in different cities and/or countries), and feeling satisfaction when defending their idols. Lastriani (2018) argues that the participation of fans in the fanwar reflects their authenticity towards their idols.

4.2.3 Appeal for followers and votes

Appeal for followers and votes can also play a significant role in the elevation of contestants to celebrity status on Twitter. Contestants who are able to garner a large number of followers or receive a high number of votes may be perceived as more

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successful and desirable than their competitors, which can further fuel fandoms, emotional attachment and excessive promotion. The content in some of the identified posts also comprised messages of appeal to create the indulgence of viewers of the reality show towards voting for contestants. Some of these messages of appeal also call upon subscribers and users on various social media platforms to pay attention to the reality show, particularly the contestants, and follow their social media handle.

Figure 10a: Extract of post
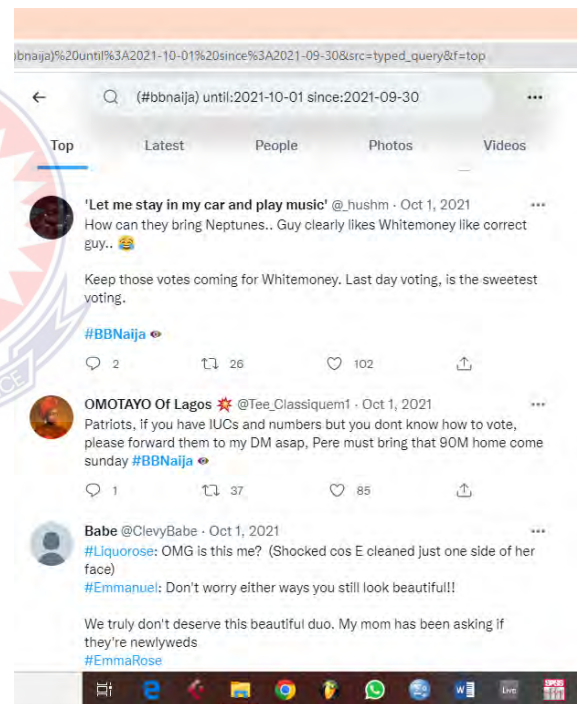
Figure 10b: Extract of post

Figure 10a is a post by one user *OBI_DIENT_ANGELS NET GUIDE.* The post contains an image shot of the Instagram handle of Angel Smith, one of the contestants on the BBN season 6 edition with the caption "*Follow Angel please*" indicating an appeal to users on instagram and viewers of the show to follow the named contestant.

Figure 10b also contains text tweets from users on twitter. One *OMOTOYA OF LAGOS* tweeted "*Patriots, if you have IUCs and numbers but do not know how to vote, please forward them to my DM asap. Pere must bring that 90M home come Sunday #BBNaija*".

Another user called '*let me stay in my car*' also tweeted "*how can they bring Neptunes, Guy likes Whitemoney like correct guy. Keep those votes coming for Whitemoney, Last day voting is the sweetest voting #BBNaija*"

The text tweets as well as other tweets are appeal for votes for their favourite contestants. All of such activities attracts more and more attention to these contestants over the media space and gradually increase their popularity and awareness amongst the general populace and earning them more followers on social media.

4.3 RQ 2. What are the criteria for attaining celebrity status by the contestants?

Towards this research question, the study sought to investigate the specific criteria that contribute to contestants on the *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6 show attaining celebrity status. The research explored various factors and indicators in line with existing studies (Brown, 2022; Davis et al., 2021; Johnson & Smith, 2020; Thompson, 2019) that play significant roles in determining the celebrity status of contestants. These criteria include: follower counts, media coverage, endorsements and collaborations (Brown, 2022; Davis et al., 2021; Johnson & Smith, 2020; Thompson, 2019).

A significant correlation was observed between the contestants' follower counts, media coverage, endorsements and collaborations, and public interest and engagement, and their progression from the beginning to the finals of the *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6 show. The

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study observed that most of the contestants who were evicted from the show had relatively insignificant follower counts, limited media coverage, few endorsements and collaborations, and minimal public interest and engagement.

However, a distinct pattern emerged among the finalists of the show. Those contestants who made it to the finals demonstrated higher levels of engagement and had substantial follower counts, media coverage, endorsements, and collaborations by the time the show ended in October. These contestants attracted a considerable amount of public interest and engagement through their social media presence, media appearances, brand partnerships, and active participation in fan interactions.

The study presents an analysis on the selected criteria in relation to each of the five contestants who made it to the finals of the show. By analyzing the data and observing the contestants' journey throughout the show, it became evident that the contestants who had higher engagement and significant numbers in terms of followers, media coverage, endorsements, and collaborations were more likely to secure a place in the finals. These indicators of popularity and public interest played a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of the contestants' progress in the competition and significantly increasing their chances of attaining micro celebrity status. Based on the analysis of the data obtained, 5 contestants made it to the grand finale. These contestants namely:

1. Whitemoney
2. Liqourose
3. Angel
4. Pere
5. Cross

Table 3: Criteria for attaining celebrity status

Contestants	Twitter followers (Indicators)	Media engagement (Indicators)
Liquorose	370,000	1.5m
Angel	350,000	1m
Cross	150,000	356k
Pere	200,000	1.9m
Whitemoney	700,000	2.5m

Source: Field data

4.3.1 Liquorose

Liquorose was one of the contestants who had attained micro-celebrity status by the end of the *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6 show. The analysis of Twitter data related to the show from August 2021 to October 2021 revealed that Liquorose had a significant increase in her follower counts on Twitter.

Followers on Twitter

At the beginning of the show, Liquorose had a relatively small following on Twitter, with less than 80,000 followers. However, as the show progressed and she became more popular, her follower counts grew significantly. By the end of the show, she had over 300,000 followers on Twitter, which is a remarkable increase from her initial following.

Media Coverage

In terms of media coverage, Liquorose also received a considerable amount of attention from the media, both online and offline. She was frequently featured in news articles and

blog posts, and her activities on the show were widely discussed on social media. She was also interviewed by several media outlets, which further increased her visibility and popularity.

Endorsements

In terms of endorsements, Liquorose was able to secure several brand deals during and after the show. For instance, she was announced as the brand ambassador for a popular travel agency in Africa, Wakanow. She is also secured endorsement deals with Kuda Bank and Infinix (Netinfo, 2022; Stella, 2022, Bamidele, 2022). These endorsements helped to further elevate her status as a micro-celebrity and increased her visibility among her fans and followers.

Collaborations

Finally, Liquorose also collaborated with other micro-celebrities and influencers on various projects, such as music videos, fashion shoots, and other creative projects (Ashong, 2021; Quadri, 2021). These collaborations helped to broaden her fan base and increase her exposure to new audiences, further solidifying her status as a micro-celebrity.

4.3.2 Pere

Here is an overview of Pere's journey in *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6, highlighting his follower counts, media coverage, endorsements, and collaborations:

Follower Counts

Pere started the show with a modest following on Twitter. However, as the season progressed, his engaging personality and strategic gameplay attracted a growing fan base. By the end of the show, Pere had amassed a significant following of over 200,000 followers on Twitter, showcasing his strong influence and popularity among viewers.

Media Coverage

Pere garnered substantial media coverage throughout his time on the show. His actions, alliances, and controversies sparked conversations on social media and attracted attention from news outlets and blogs. Several news articles and online publications featured him, discussing his gameplay, conflicts, and contributions to the overall dynamics of the show. This media coverage helped to increase his visibility and solidify his micro-celebrity status.

Endorsements

After the show, Pere capitalized on his popularity by securing endorsement deals with reputable brands. He became a brand ambassador for VSP Botanics, BOZ Jewelry amongst several others which provided him with opportunities for collaborations, promotions, and public appearances. This endorsement not only offered financial benefits but also enhanced his credibility and recognition as a micro-celebrity.

Collaborations

Pere actively engaged in collaborations with other influencers and celebrities following his appearance on the show. For instance, he collaborated with popular music artists such as J. Martins for cameo appearances in their music videos, leveraging his newfound fame to

expand his reach and connect with a broader audience (Oak, 2022). These collaborations further solidified his status as a micro-celebrity and allowed him to explore different avenues within the entertainment industry. Pere's participation in *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6 resulted in a notable increase in follower counts, media coverage, endorsements, and collaborations. With a significant following on Twitter, media recognition, brand partnerships, and successful collaborations, Pere established himself as a micro-celebrity and experienced post-show success in the industry.

4.3.3 Whitemoney

Here is an overview of Whitemoney's journey in *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6, focusing on his follower counts, media coverage, endorsements, and collaborations:

Follower Counts:

Whitemoney entered the show with a modest following on Twitter. However, his charismatic personality, strategic gameplay, and culinary skills endeared him to viewers. As the season progressed, his follower counts skyrocketed. By the end of the show, Whitemoney had amassed a significant following of over 700,000 followers on Twitter, showcasing his immense popularity and influence among fans.

Media Coverage*:*

Whitemoney received extensive media coverage throughout his time on the show. His entertaining antics, cooking expertise, and interactions with other housemates became a subject of discussions on social media platforms. Numerous news articles, blogs, and online publications featured him, praising his contributions to the show's dynamics and

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highlighting his unique personality. This media coverage contributed to his widespread recognition and solidified his micro-celebrity status.

Endorsements:

During and after the show Whitemoney has capitalized on his fame and secured lucrative endorsement deals. He became a brand ambassador for Techno Mobile, leveraging his culinary skills and relatable persona. Additionally, he partnered with several other brands in the lifestyle and entertainment industry, further expanding his reach and establishing himself as a micro-celebrity with a strong commercial presence (Mimi, 2021).

Collaborations:

Whitemoney actively engaged in collaborations with fellow musicians and released several tracks with music videos. He also collaborated with renowned musicians such as Banky W amongst others on music projects, featuring in their music videos and promoting the collaborations on his social media platforms. These collaborations not only enhanced his visibility but also allowed him to tap into different audience demographics, further solidifying his status as a micro-celebrity (Olake, 2022).

Overall, Whitemoney's participation in *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6 led to a remarkable increase in follower counts, media coverage, endorsements, and collaborations. With a massive following on Twitter, widespread media recognition, endorsement deals with notable brands, and successful collaborations, Whitemoney established himself as a prominent micro-celebrity and experienced post-show success in various endeavors.

4.3.4 Cross:

Follower Counts

As of the end of the show, Cross had amassed a significant following on Twitter, with approximately 150,000 followers. His active presence on social media, engaging with fans and sharing updates, contributed to his growing follower count.

Media Coverage

Cross received substantial media coverage during his journey on the show. Various media outlets featured news articles, interviews, and updates about his activities, generating public interest and expanding his visibility beyond the confines of the reality show.

Endorsements and Collaborations

While specific endorsements and collaborations may vary, Cross's popularity and microcelebrity status attracted brand partnerships and collaborations with Binance, Bouvardia amongst others (Ashong, 2022). Other partnership deals include collaborations with fashion brands, lifestyle products, and appearances at events and promotions. Example: In figure 11 is an endorsement deal for cross who was a finalist in the "*Shine Ya Eya*" edition.

Figure 11: Endorsement deal for Cross

4.3.5 Angel

Angel, one of the contestants from *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6, also experienced notable changes in follower counts, media coverage, endorsements, and collaborations throughout the course of the show.

Follower Count

Starting with her follower counts on Twitter, Angel began the season with a relatively small following. However, as the show progressed and her personality and actions garnered attention, her follower counts steadily increased significantly. By the end of the show,

Angel had amassed a substantial following on Twitter, with over 350,000 followers actively engaging with her content and updates.

Media Coverage

In terms of media coverage, Angel received considerable attention from both traditional and online media outlets. News articles, blogs, and social media discussions frequently highlighted her participation in the show, her opinions, and her interactions with other housemates. This media coverage contributed to her visibility and the development of her micro-celebrity status.

Endorsements

Angel also attracted endorsements during and after the show. Brands recognized her influence and appeal among viewers and sought to collaborate with her. These endorsements include partnership with fitness company JBMoney and Getfit amongst other fashion, beauty brands, lifestyle and entertainment companies (Ashimedua, 2021). By aligning herself with these brands, Angel further solidified her position as a micro-celebrity and expanded her reach to her growing fan base.

Collaborations

Additionally, Angel actively engaged in collaborations with other influencers and celebrities. She participated in music video shoots, fashion campaigns, and other creative projects alongside notable personalities (San, 2021. These collaborations not only increased her exposure but also allowed her to tap into new audiences and establish herself as a versatile and influential figure in the entertainment industry.

The research findings demonstrate that the contestants who reached the finals of the *''Big Brother'Naija'* Season 6 show had a higher likelihood of gaining microcelebrification. The analysis revealed a strong correlation between their progression in the competition and indicators such as follower counts, media coverage, endorsements and collaborations, and public interest and engagement. By attaining higher follower counts, finalists were able to expand their reach and influence on social media platforms. This increased visibility and popularity allowed them to amass a dedicated fan base, which further contributed to their microcelebrity status. The larger the follower count, the greater the potential for engagement, brand collaborations, and monetization opportunities.

Media coverage played a pivotal role in elevating the finalists to microcelebrity status. Extensive media attention helped to build their public profiles, generate buzz, and increase their visibility beyond the confines of the reality show. Media outlets covered their activities, interviews, and appearances, amplifying their image and attracting more attention from the public. Endorsements and collaborations with brands and influencers also significantly enhanced the chances of gaining microcelebrification. These partnerships showcased the finalists' marketability and credibility, positioning them as influential figures within their respective industries. Endorsements not only provided financial benefits but also solidified their status as microcelebrities, as they were seen as trusted and valued brand ambassadors.

Public interest and engagement were vital factors in the journey towards microcelebrification. The contestants who elicited high levels of public interest, as reflected in fan clubs, fan art, fan events, and social media interactions, were more likely

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to be recognized as microcelebrities. Their ability to engage and captivate the public through their personalities, actions, and interactions fostered a strong and dedicated fan base, further cementing their microcelebrity status.

The research findings highlight how the finalists' chances of gaining microcelebrification were significantly enhanced by their progress in the competition. Their higher follower counts, media coverage, endorsements and collaborations, and public interest and engagement contributed to their increased visibility, influence, and marketability. These factors collectively propelled them towards microcelebrity status, allowing them to leverage their newfound fame for various opportunities in the entertainment industry and beyond. The findings is supported by existing research which has demonstrated that as contestants advance through the stages of a reality show, their exposure and visibility increase significantly. This heightened visibility often leads to greater public recognition, social media following, and media coverage, thereby increasing their chances of becoming microcelebrities. Contestants who make it to the finals tend to receive more attention and support from fans, leading to higher levels of microcelebrification (Hills, 2005). According to Hills (2005), contestants who reach the finals of reality shows have already survived multiple elimination rounds, which indicates a strong fan base and public support. These finalists have likely demonstrated qualities, talents, or personalities that resonate with viewers, leading to higher levels of public interest, engagement, and social media following. This increased attention can pave the way for endorsement deals, media appearances, and other opportunities associated with microcelebrity status. According to a study by Chan and Goldthorpe (2007), reality show contestants become objects of fascination and gain popularity through their participation in the show. This subsequently

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leads to increased public interest, media exposure, and the development of a microcelebrity persona. Bignell and Fickers (2008) add to it that contestants who capture the public's attention and maintain a strong presence throughout the show are more likely to be perceived as microcelebrities due to their sustained popularity and fan support.

4.4 RQ3. What are the risks involved in attaining celebrity status by the contestants?

In the context of *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6, the investigation into the negative implications and risks associated with celebrification through the show revealed several examples that highlight the challenges faced by contestants turned micro-celebrities. Here are specific examples within the context of BBN Season 6:

4.4.1 Invasion of Privacy
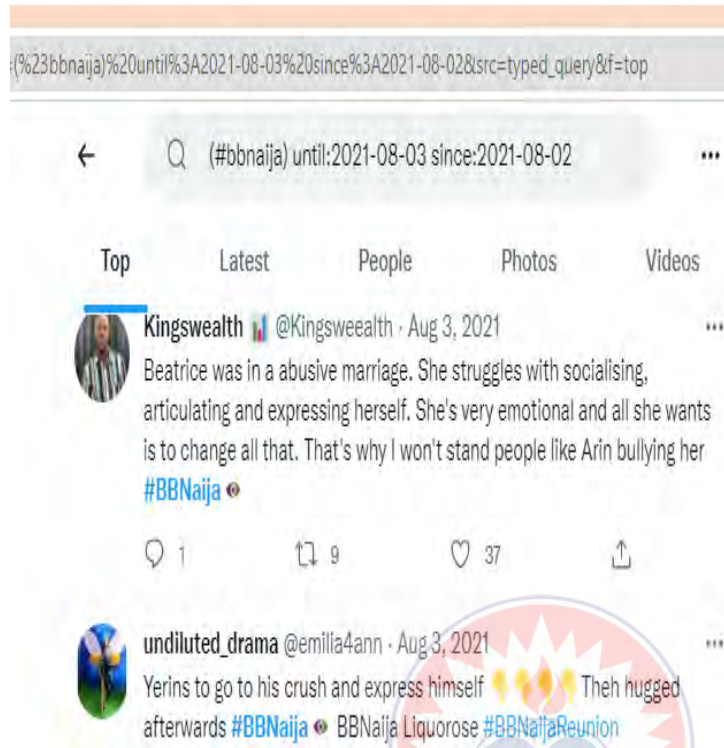
Figure 12: Post of Invasion of Privacy

Contestants such as Liquorose and Whitemoney experienced the invasion of privacy through relentless media attention and paparazzi following their every move. Their personal lives were constantly under scrutiny, with tabloids and online platforms publishing stories about their relationships, personal choices, and past experiences. In figure 12 above, one user, '*Kingswealth'* says this about a contestant of the show, " *Beatrice was in an abusive marriage, she struggles to socialize…."*

The risk of invasion of privacy faced by reality show contestants, as exemplified by Liquorose and Whitemoney, can be understood in the context of the parasocial theory. The parasocial theory suggests that viewers develop one-sided relationships with media figures, perceiving a sense of connection and intimacy with them despite the absence of direct

interaction (Giles, 2002). In the case of "*Big Brother Naija*" reality show contestants, their continuous presence on screens and social media platforms fosters a parasocial bond with the audience, blurring the boundaries between their public and private lives.

The relentless media attention and paparazzi scrutiny faced by Liquorose, Whitemoney, and other contestants can be seen as an extreme manifestation of parasocial relationships. The public's heightened interest in their personal lives stems from the belief that they have an intimate connection with these individuals. The media capitalizes on this fascination by publishing stories, rumors, and personal details, often sensationalized for increased engagement and readership.

This invasion of privacy has significant implications for the contestants' emotional well-being and personal relationships. The constant scrutiny and exposure can lead to emotional distress, feelings of vulnerability, and a loss of control over one's own narrative. It can strain personal relationships as intimate details are shared and dissected in public, potentially causing conflicts and strains among family, friends, and romantic partners.

Research by Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007) supports the negative consequences of privacy invasion in the context of parasocial relationships. They argue that the blurring of boundaries between public and private spheres can lead to stress, anxiety, and a sense of loss of control for media figures. Furthermore, studies on celebrity culture highlight the potential long-term effects of privacy invasion on individuals' mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being (Boyle, 2019).

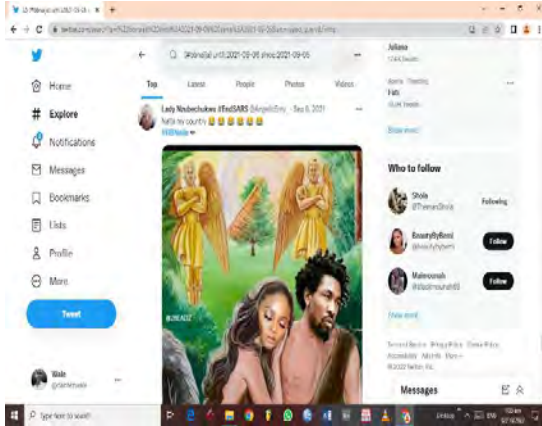## 4.4.2 Cyberbullying and Online Harassment

Figure 13a: Post of cyberbullying   Figure 13b: Post of cyberbullying

The post above figure 13a and 13b illustrates a posts where Tega and Yerins, contestants of the "*Big Brother Naija*" show are being subjected to various forms of cyberbullying and online harassment. Contestants like Angel and Saskay faced significant cyberbullying and online harassment after the show. They received hateful comments, derogatory remarks, and even death threats on their social media platforms. Such relentless negativity can take a toll on their mental health and well-being, creating a hostile online environment for the micro-celebrities (Miller 2020).

The risk of cyberbullying and online harassment faced by the reality show contestants like Tega, Boma and Yerins aligns with the parasocial theory and the concept of micro-celebrity. The parasocial theory suggests that viewers develop one-sided relationships with media figures, leading to a sense of attachment and identification with them (Horton & Wohl, 1956). As contestants of a popular reality show, Tega, Boma and Yerins garnered a

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significant following and fan base, which also attracted negative attention and online harassment.

The concept of micro-celebrity emphasizes the visibility and accessibility of individuals who attain celebrity status through online platforms (Senft & Baym, 2015). While micro-celebrities may enjoy the benefits of increased recognition and fan engagement, they are also susceptible to the downsides, including cyberbullying and online harassment. The online environment allows for anonymous interactions and the spread of hateful comments, which can have detrimental effects on the mental health and well-being of the micro-celebrities. In the quest to bully, BBN fans indirectly use objects and symbols to communicate or create certain meanings such as in the figures above, Garden of Eden would mean a holy place, but with the contestants being driven out, it shows they have sinned. According to Chan (2022) symbolic Interactionism Theory would suggest that these metrics of success are not just objective measures, but rather socially constructed symbols that are imbued with meaning and significance through the interactions of fans and contestants on Twitter.

Research has shown the detrimental impacts of cyberbullying and online harassment on individuals' psychological well-being. Studies indicate that experiencing online abuse can lead to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress (Patchin & Hinduja, 2017). The continuous exposure to hateful comments and derogatory remarks can create a hostile and toxic online environment for the micro-celebrities, affecting their self-esteem, confidence, and overall mental health.

Furthermore, the negative impact of cyberbullying extends beyond the individuals targeted, potentially influencing their fans and followers. Witnessing the online harassment of their favorite contestants can have a ripple effect, contributing to a culture of negativity and hostility within fan communities and online platforms.

4.4.3 Loss of Authenticity and Control
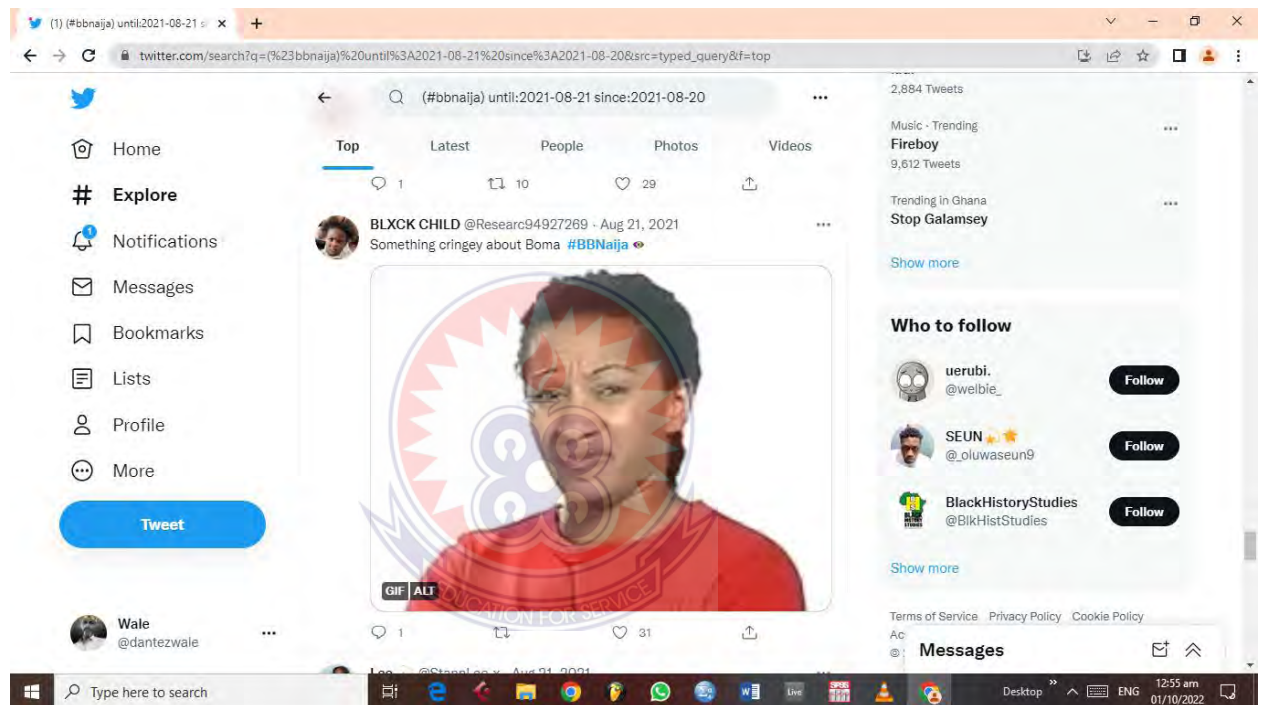
Figure 14: Post of Loss of Authenticity and Control image

In figure 14 above, a user '*Blxck child'* comments "something *cringey about Boma*". Some contestants, including Boma, Pere and Nini, felt the pressure to maintain a specific image and live up to the expectations of their followers and the industry. They struggled to express their true selves or pursue personal interests freely due to the fear of backlash or negative public perception. The risk of loss of authenticity and control faced by contestants such as Pere and Nini aligns with the concept of self-presentation and impression management in

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the context of micro-celebrity. While it may not directly correspond to the parasocial theory, it is closely related to the dynamics of celebrity persona and public image.

In the realm of micro-celebrity, individuals are often required to carefully curate their online presence and project a particular image to maintain relevance and appeal to their followers (Senft & Baym, 2015). This self-presentation and impression management can create pressures and constraints on the contestants, leading to a loss of authenticity and a struggle to express their true selves.

Research on celebrity culture has highlighted the challenges faced by individuals in the public eye when it comes to managing their public image. The notion of the "celebrity persona" refers to the constructed identity that celebrities present to the public, which may deviate from their true selves (Marshall, 2010). This persona is carefully managed to align with societal expectations and industry demands, often resulting in a loss of personal authenticity.

The pressure to maintain a specific image and meet the expectations of followers and the industry can lead to identity crises and conflicts for contestants like Pere and Nini. They may feel compelled to conform to certain narratives or behaviors that are popular or expected, limiting their ability to freely express their true selves or pursue personal interests. This loss of authenticity can be emotionally distressing and create a constant struggle to navigate the demands of their newfound fame.

Furthermore, the online environment amplifies these pressures as contestants are constantly under the scrutiny of their followers, media outlets, and industry stakeholders.

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Social media platforms, in particular, provide a stage for individuals to carefully curate and manage their public image, but it also opens them up to criticism and judgment.

4.4.5 Online Hate and Trolling
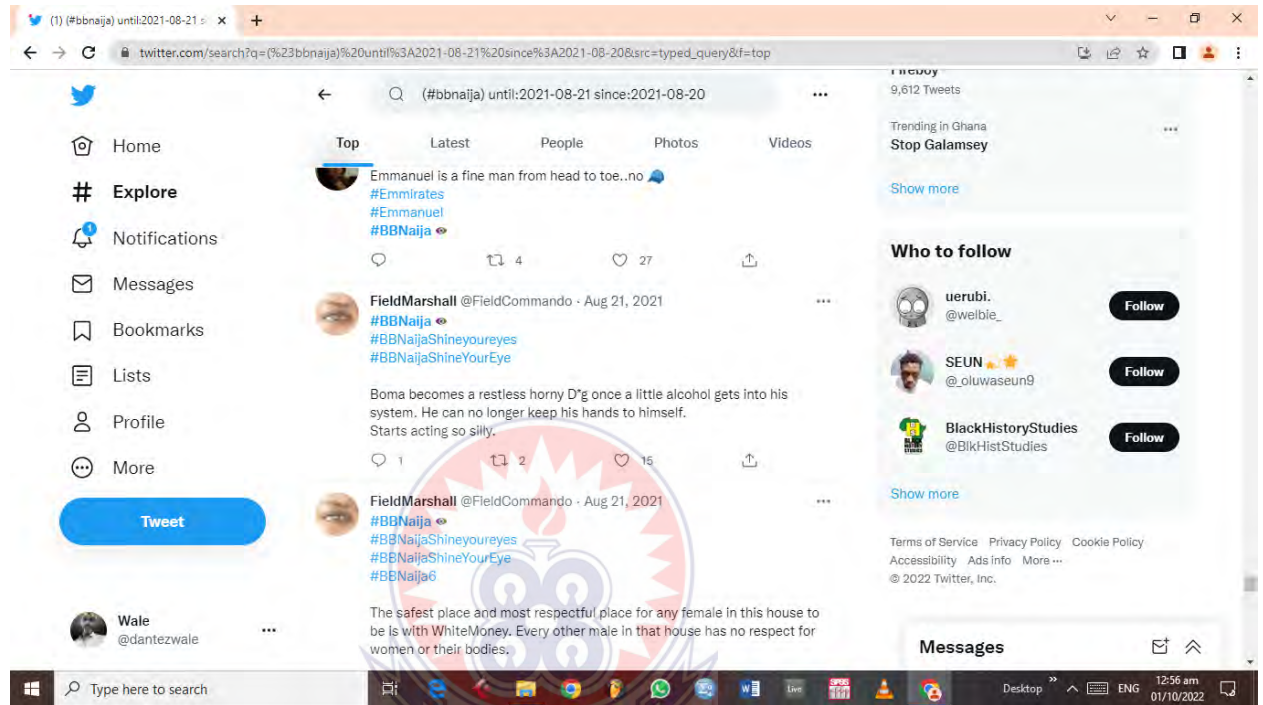
Figure 15: Post of Online Hate and Trolling

Contestants of BBN Season 6, such as Boma and Tega, also faced significant online hate and trolling. They became targets of relentless criticism, character assassination, and derogatory comments from both viewers and anonymous Twitter users as demonstrated in *figure 15* above. This online hate and trolling can have a detrimental impact on their mental well-being, self-esteem, and overall emotional state. It creates a toxic online environment that can be challenging to navigate and can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and social isolation for the micro-celebrities.

The risk of online hate and trolling faced by contestants like Jaypaul and Tega can be analyzed through the lens of the parasocial theory and the concept of online disinhibition.

The parasocial theory suggests that individuals form one-sided relationships with media figures, such as celebrities, based on perceived intimacy and familiarity (Horton & Wohl, 1956). This theory explains how viewers develop a sense of connection and attachment to the contestants of reality shows like BBN, often leading to strong emotional reactions towards them. However, these parasocial relationships can also result in negative behaviors, such as online hate and trolling, when viewers feel a sense of ownership or entitlement over the lives and actions of the contestants.

In the online realm, the concept of online disinhibition is relevant to understanding the phenomenon of online hate and trolling. Online disinhibition refers to the reduced inhibitions individuals experience when communicating online, often leading to aggressive, impulsive, and hurtful behaviors (Suler, 2004). The anonymity provided by social media platforms can embolden users to engage in hostile and derogatory comments without facing immediate consequences.

According to Vigna and Kaplan (2016) cyberbullying and online harassment has indicated the detrimental effects of such behaviors on individuals' mental well-being and emotional state (Wang et al., 2018). Micro-celebrities like Jaypaul and Tega are particularly vulnerable to online hate and trolling due to their increased visibility and public exposure. The constant barrage of criticism and derogatory comments can have a severe impact on their self-esteem, mental health, and overall emotional state.

4.4.6 Short-Lived Fame and Relevance
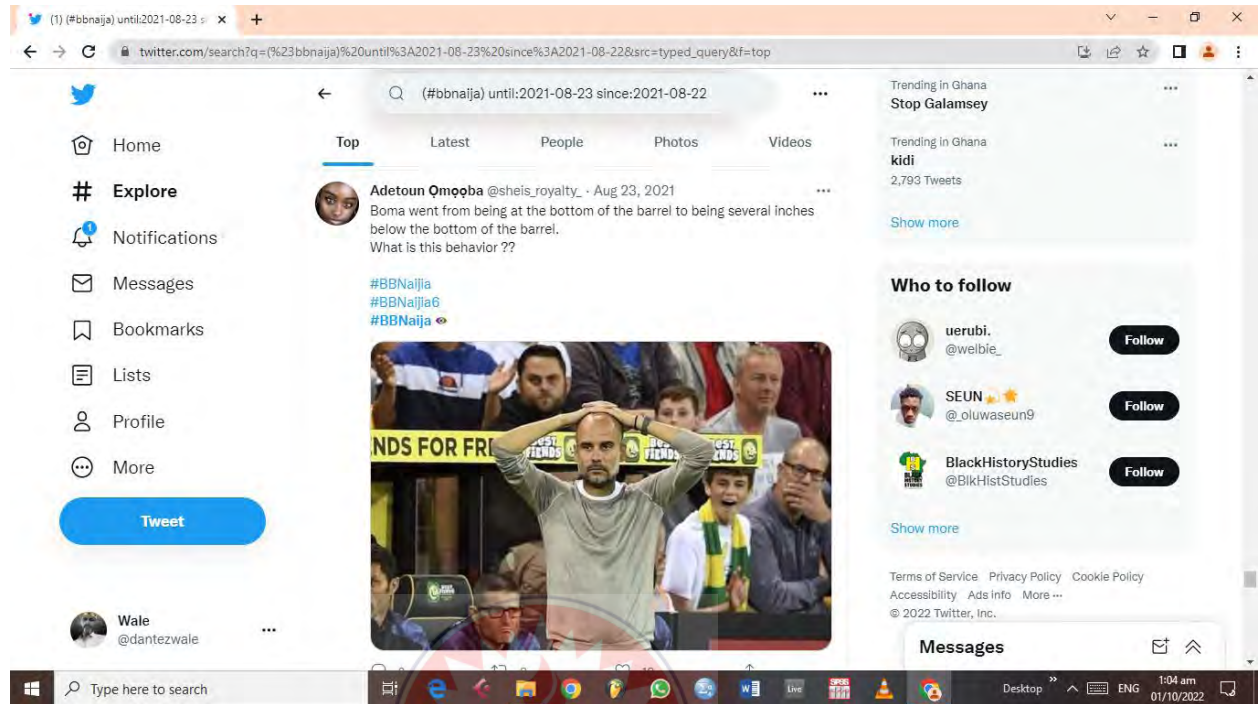
Figure 16: Post on short-lived fame and relevance

While contestants like Liquorose and Whitemoney attained significant fame during the show, the post-show period poses challenges in sustaining that level of popularity and relevance. The risk of short-lived fame and relevance faced by contestants like Liquorose and Whitemoney can be examined in relation to the parasocial theory and the concept of post-reality show transition. The initial excitement and public interest gradually fades, making it challenging to secure consistent opportunities in the entertainment industry.

The parasocial theory suggests that viewers develop one-sided relationships with media figures, including reality show contestants, based on perceived intimacy and familiarity (Horton & Wohl, 1956). During the show, contestants like Liquorose and Whitemoney experience a surge in popularity and fan following as viewers form parasocial connections

with them. However, sustaining this level of fame and relevance post-show becomes challenging as the initial excitement fades and public interest shifts to new contestants or shows.

The concept of post-reality show transition refers to the period following the conclusion of a reality show, during which contestants must navigate their careers and sustain their fame and relevance (Hill, 2005). This transition can be daunting as contestants face the challenge of translating their temporary reality show stardom into long-term success in the entertainment industry. The transition requires careful management of their public image, strategic career choices, and the ability to seize opportunities in a highly competitive industry (Hill, 2005)
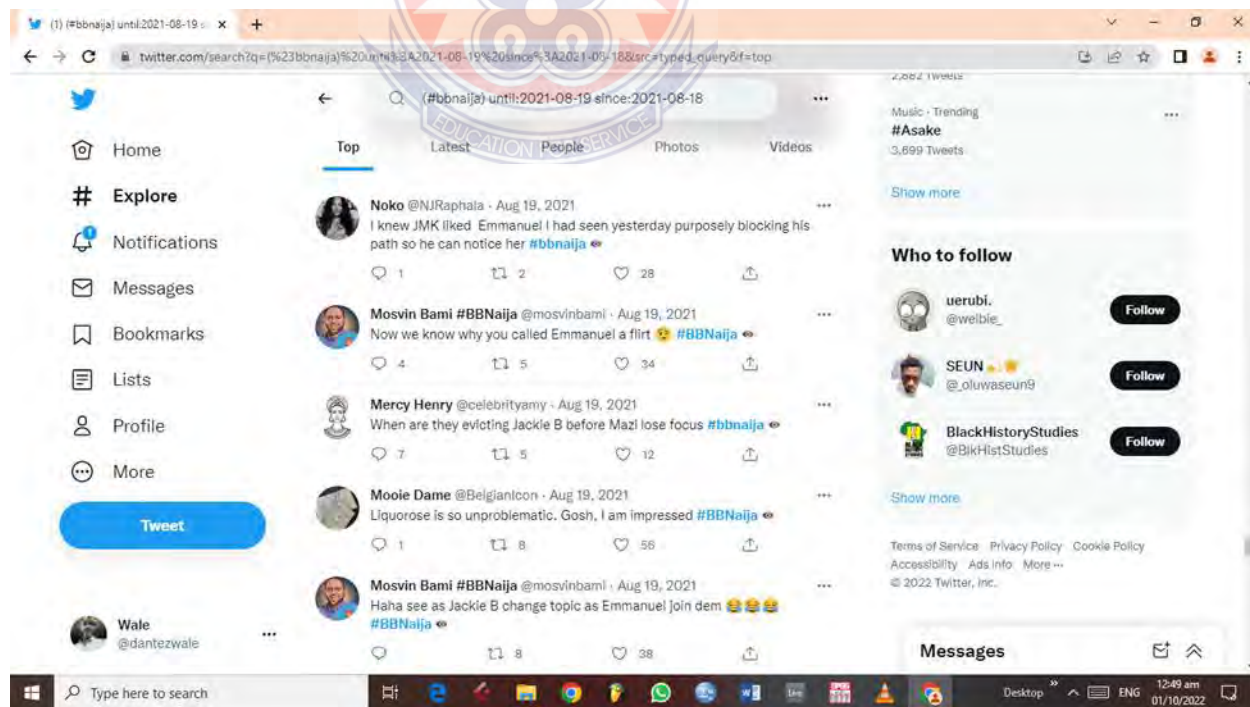
4.4.7 Exploitation and Manipulation

Figure 16: Post of Exploitation and Manipulation

In the context of BBN Season 6, micro-celebrities such as Cross and Maria may encounter situations where they face exploitation or manipulation by industry professionals. This could include being underpaid for appearances or forced into unfavorable contracts that limit their creative freedom or control over their brand. The risk of exploitation and manipulation faced by micro-celebrities like Cross and Maria in the context of BBN Season 6 can be analyzed through the lens of power dynamics and the concept of media manipulation.

Power dynamics play a significant role in the entertainment industry, where micro-celebrities may find themselves in vulnerable positions due to their relative inexperience and the influence of industry professionals (Turner, 2019). The parasocial theory, which emphasizes the one-sided nature of the relationship between media figures and viewers, further underscores the power imbalance between micro-celebrities and industry stakeholders (Horton & Wohl, 1956). This power dynamic can create opportunities for exploitation and manipulation.

Media manipulation refers to the deliberate control and shaping of public perception and narratives by media entities (McChesney, 1999). In the context of micro-celebrities, industry professionals may seek to manipulate their public image, restrict their creative freedom, or exploit their popularity for financial gain. This can manifest in underpaid appearances, restrictive contracts, or forced endorsements that do not align with the micro-celebrities' values or aspirations.

Literature on the entertainment industry highlights the vulnerability of micro-celebrities to exploitation and manipulation. Studies have examined issues such as unfair contracts,

profit-sharing arrangements, and limited control over personal branding and image (O'Reilly & Kerrigan, 2019). These practices can hinder the growth and progress of micro-celebrities, limiting their ability to exercise agency and make informed decisions about their career paths.

These examples within the specific context of BBN Season 6 highlight the negative implications and risks associated with celebrification through the show. It underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing these challenges to support the well-being and long-term success of contestants who become micro-celebrities in the aftermath of their participation in reality TV. The findings are supported by studies from numerous authors such as Hill (2005), Wang et al., (2018) and O'Reilly & Kerrigan (2019) who are reported numerous vulnerabilities contestants are exposed to during the microcelebrification process.
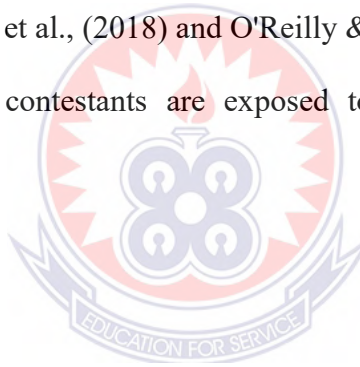
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter serves as a culmination of the research conducted on the topic reality shows as catalyst celebrification: an analysis of the '*big brother naija*' show on social media, with a specific focus on the *'Big Brother Naija'* Season 6. Throughout this thesis, I have delved into various aspects related to the elevation of contestants to celebrity status, the criteria for attaining such status, the risks involved, and the forms of fan engagement on social media platforms. In this chapter, I summarize the key findings, draw meaningful conclusions, and provide recommendation. By addressing the implications and risks associated with microcelebrification, as well as offering actionable recommendations, the study aims to contribute an understanding of the dynamics and impact of reality shows on contestants.
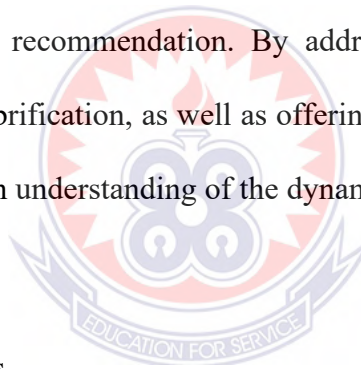
5.1 Summary of Findings

The study explored various aspects of elevation of contestants to celebrity status in *'Big Brother Naija'* (BBN) reality show dubbed "Shine Ya Eye". The findings highlighted the forms of posts shared by fans on Twitter, including text-based tweets, images, videos, hashtags, and promotional content, to support and promote their favorite contestants. Additionally, the content of these posts exhibited recurring themes such as excessive promotion, fandom, expressions of loyalty and appeal for votes and support. In line with the parasocial theory, symbolic interactioniasm and microcelebrity theory, fans engage with contestants of the show and create some form of personalized relationships with

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contestants through various posts shared on Twitter. These posts significantly contribute to the enhancement of their popularity and visibility on the media and consequently leading to their attainment of microcelebrification by the end of the show. The findings of the study is in line with existing research by Chan and Goldthorpe (2007) who emphasizes that through fan reactions and engagements, reality show contestants become objects of fascination and gain popularity. This subsequently led to increased public interest, media exposure, and the development of a microcelebrity persona.

The criteria for attaining celebrity status among BBN contestants include follower counts, media coverage, endorsements, collaborations, and overall public interest. Based on as assessment of these criteria, the study found out that the finalists of BBN Season 6, including Liquorose, Whitemoney, Pere, Cross, and Angel, gained significant attention, had higher follower counts, received substantial media coverage, secured endorsements and collaborations, and generated considerable public interest and engagement leading to the attainment of microcelebrification status by the end of the show.

However, it was noted that there are risks and negative implications associated with the microcelebrification process. These risks include invasion of privacy, increased scrutiny from the media and the public, loss of control over personal narratives and the pressure to maintain popularity and relevance beyond the show. Examples of posts that show the risks are provided, such as the invasion of privacy experienced by Liquorose and Whitemoney, which according to Miller (2020), leads to emotional distress and strain on personal relationships. These findings are congruent to the findings of O'Reilly & Kerrigan (2019)

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which highlight the vulnerability of micro-celebrities to numerous risks during the microcelebrification process and called for remedies.

5.3 Conclusion

The study has provided valuable insights into the process of creating celebrities through reality shows, focusing specifically on the *'Big Brother Naija'* (BBN) reality show. The findings demonstrate that fans play a crucial role in elevating contestants to celebrity status through their active engagement on social media platforms. The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of how reality shows create celebrities and shed light on the risks and challenges faced by contestants in the microcelebrification process. It is crucial for industry stakeholders, including show producers, media outlets, and fans, to be aware of these risks and to ensure the well-being and protection of the micro-celebrities. By addressing these risks and promoting a supportive and ethical environment, reality shows can continue to provide opportunities for aspiring individuals while minimizing the negative implications associated with their newfound fame.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the summary of findings and conclusions, the following are some of the proposed recommendations that can enhance the microcelebrification process through reality shows. The study suggests that against the risk of privacy invasion, measures to ensure privacy protection must be adopted. Privacy protection is a crucial aspect that reality show organizers and media outlets need to prioritize when contestants attain celebrity status. The

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journey from being a regular participant to a micro-celebrity exposes contestants to a heightened level of public scrutiny and media attention. Therefore, it becomes essential to establish measures that safeguard the privacy and well-being of these individuals (Lee et al., 2020). To ensure privacy protection, reality show organizers can implement strict guidelines and policies that outline boundaries regarding the disclosure of personal information and the invasion of contestants' private lives. These guidelines should address the conduct of media personnel, paparazzi, and other external parties involved in covering the lives of the contestants. Additionally, contracts and agreements signed by contestants should clearly outline the extent to which their personal lives can be documented or publicized, and they should have the right to approve or reject any intrusive coverage (Rojek, 2020).

Media outlets and news agencies should also play a responsible role in respecting the privacy of micro-celebrities. They should exercise ethical journalism practices by refraining from publishing or broadcasting invasive content without the consent of the individuals involved. Adhering to guidelines that prioritize privacy protection can help minimize the negative impact on contestants' emotional well-being, personal relationships, and overall quality of life (Papacharissi, 2011).

Moreover, reality show organizers can support contestants by providing access to resources such as legal advice and counseling support. These resources can assist micro-celebrities in dealing with potential privacy violations, managing media attention, and coping with the psychological challenges associated with sudden fame (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

Online safety measures are also crucial in protecting contestants and users from online hate, trolling, and cyberbullying. Social media platforms play a significant role in facilitating interactions and conversations related to reality shows, and they should enhance their efforts to combat abusive behavior and create a safer online environment (Wang et al., 2019). To address these issues, social media platforms should implement and enforce robust policies that explicitly prohibit harassment, hate speech, and cyberbullying. These policies should be clearly communicated to users, outlining the consequences for violating the guidelines. Platforms can employ automated systems and artificial intelligence algorithms to detect and remove offensive content promptly (Machin & Thornborrow, 2010).

In addition to policies, social media platforms should provide reporting mechanisms that allow users to easily report abusive behavior. Timely response and action by platform moderators are essential in addressing reported incidents and ensuring the safety of users. Platforms can also collaborate with organizations specializing in online safety and anti-harassment initiatives to develop proactive strategies and resources (Wang et al., 2019).

Education and awareness campaigns can also be effective in promoting responsible and respectful online behavior. By providing users with information about the impact of online hate and cyberbullying, as well as strategies for fostering a positive online environment, social media platforms can encourage users to engage in constructive dialogue and discourage harmful behaviors (Machin & Thornborrow, 2010). It is important to note that the parasocial theory offers insights into the dynamics of online interactions between micro-celebrities and their fans. Parasocial relationships can influence the behavior of fans,

both positively and negatively. Therefore, by implementing effective online safety measures, social media platforms not only protect contestants from harm but also foster a supportive environment that enhances the parasocial relationship between micro-celebrities and their fans (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

In addition, organizers of the show must communicate media ethics as a strong and key hallmark of the reality show for all interested media houses that wants to analyze, cover or take any form of interest in the show. Media ethics play a critical role in shaping the narrative and public perception of contestants in reality shows. Responsible journalism is essential to ensure accurate, fair, and respectful reporting that respects individuals' privacy and avoids causing harm or sensationalizing personal matters (Ward, 2008). Firstly, media outlets should prioritize accuracy in their reporting. It is crucial to verify information and fact-check before publishing stories about contestants. Misinformation or false narratives can have severe consequences for the individuals involved and can lead to public backlash or damage their reputation. Journalists should strive to provide truthful and reliable information to the public (Ward, 2008). Fairness is another key aspect of media ethics. It is essential for media outlets to present a balanced view and provide multiple perspectives when reporting on contestants. Bias or one-sided coverage can misrepresent individuals and influence public opinion unfairly. Fair reporting allows viewers and readers to form their own opinions based on a comprehensive understanding of the contestants' experiences and actions (Singer, 2010).

Respecting individuals' privacy is crucial in media coverage. Contestants, like any other individuals, have a right to privacy and personal boundaries. Media outlets should refrain

from intrusive or sensationalized reporting that invades contestants' personal lives or exploits their vulnerabilities for entertainment purposes. Respecting privacy ensures that contestants can maintain their personal dignity and protects them from unnecessary scrutiny and invasion (Ward, 2008).

In addition to accuracy, fairness, and privacy, media outlets should also consider the potential impact of their reporting on contestants' well-being. Sensationalizing personal matters or creating a hostile media environment can have severe emotional and psychological consequences for the individuals involved. Responsible journalism should prioritize the well-being and mental health of contestants, avoiding practices that contribute to their distress (Ward, 2008). By adhering to ethical standards, media outlets can contribute to a more responsible and respectful media landscape. This not only protects the rights and well-being of contestants but also enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the media industry as a whole. Responsible reporting allows for a more informed and nuanced understanding of the reality show contestants, their experiences, and their contributions to the entertainment industry (Singer, 2010).

There is also the need to provide Long-term support for contestants. Long-term support for contestant who attain microcelebrity status is essential to their continued success and growth beyond the show. While reality shows provide a platform for contestants to showcase their talents and gain initial recognition, sustaining that success and transitioning into long-term careers require additional support and guidance (Wang, 2017). Career guidance is a crucial aspect of long-term support for micro-celebrities. Many contestants may lack the necessary industry knowledge and resources to navigate the complex

entertainment landscape. Providing them with professional guidance and career counseling can help them make informed decisions about their career paths, identify opportunities, and develop strategies for long-term success (Deery, 2014).

Mentorship programs can also play a significant role in supporting micro-celebrities. Connecting them with experienced professionals in the entertainment industry who can offer guidance, advice, and industry insights can be invaluable. Mentors can provide valuable support, share their experiences, and help micro-celebrities develop the necessary skills and networks to thrive in the industry (Bourdieu, 1986).

Creating opportunities for professional growth is another vital aspect of long-term support. Micro-celebrities should be provided with avenues to enhance their skills, pursue further education or training, and expand their professional networks. This can include workshops, seminars, industry events, and collaborations with established professionals, which can help them refine their craft and stay relevant in the ever-evolving entertainment industry (Wang, 2017).

Furthermore, fostering collaborations and partnerships can open doors for micro-celebrities to explore various avenues within the entertainment industry. By connecting them with industry professionals, production companies, and brands, contestants can secure opportunities for endorsements, acting roles, hosting gigs, and other relevant projects. These collaborations can help them build their portfolios, expand their fan base, and establish their credibility in the industry (Deery, 2014).

Long-term support also involves assisting micro-celebrities in building their personal brands and managing their public image. This includes guidance on social media management, public relations, and media interactions. Developing a cohesive and authentic

personal brand can help micro-celebrities navigate the challenges of fame, establish their unique identity, and connect with their audience on a deeper level (Bourdieu, 1986).

By implementing these recommendations, the negative implications and risks associated with the microcelebrification process can be mitigated, allowing contestants to navigate their newfound fame in a more positive and sustainable manner.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Studies

Further research should be conducted to explore the long-term effects of microcelebrification on individuals and society. This can inform the development of regulations and guidelines that protect the well-being of contestants and ensure a fair and ethical landscape for reality shows.

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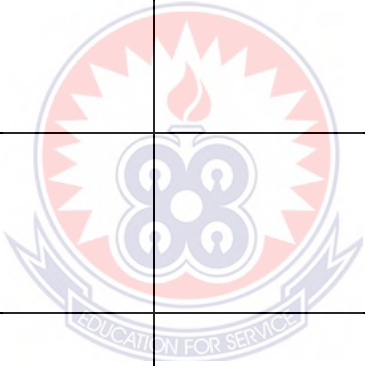
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APPENDIX

CODING SHEET

TYPES OF POSTS

Type	Number of post	Number of post
Written text		
Images		
Videogprahs		
Polls		
Links		
Total		

CONTENT OF POST	TWEETS	PERCENTAGES