



## A MEDIA SYSTEM DEPENDENCY THEORY PERSPECTIVE ON ICONOGRAPHIC EUROCENTRISM AMONG THE YOUTH IN KENYAN UNIVERSITIES

Nancy Adagala-Ombuya<sup>i</sup>

Maasai Mara University, School of Arts and Social Sciences,  
Department of Media, Film and Communication,  
P.O. Box 806-20500, Narok, Kenya

### Abstract:

Recent years have witnessed the youth immerse themselves in the consumption of media for various uses and gratifications. Icons (celebrities) have continued to dominate the pages of magazines and newspapers. This study introduces print media consumption amongst the youth as a predictor of celebrity content in their consumer activities. The youth have unwittingly accommodated and imitated these icons. Considering the growing interest of youth in the magazines and newspaper features, it becomes necessary to examine how these celebrities influence the choices the youth make. The principle questions this article addresses is whether icons' presence in the media fosters a new dependency, in other words diversifies dependency among the youth. This article is premised on the uses and gratifications theory, the use of dependency and reception theories in understanding the youth's choices. The article is organized as follows; - firstly, I focus on the uses and gratifications and the dependency theory, which postulates dependency relations between individuals and media based consumerism. Secondly, I explore related literature on iconography. Succeeding sections of the article develop the research method, present the findings and discussion, the conclusion and, lastly, the recommendations. The results show the existence of Eurocentric implications and a negation of Afrocentrism. The study employed a desktop systematic paper review method.

**Keywords:** Eurocentrism, Afrocentrism, iconography, celebrities/icons, culture historical

### 1. Introduction

The 21st century is witnessing an increasing wave in youth fascination with celebrity idolization. This trend is enhanced by the many available media of communication

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [nadagala@mmarau.ac.ke](mailto:nadagala@mmarau.ac.ke)

namely, the newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the internet. Schultze et al (2012) points out that these celebrities are presented in different shades, reflecting various fields of human attainment. With constant innovations in technology, Thompson and Heinberg (2009) posit the youths are totally equipped for constant touch with these apparent larger than life heroes who in the consciousness of the youth represent all that one needs to be in life.

Today, the youth do not need to attend the cinema or to be able to meet their celebrity idols. They have the internet and the various social networks such as you tube, Twitter and Facebook among other new and emerging technological media at their disposal. Yau (2008) says, with a click of the button on the right electronic device, celebrities pop up to the youth, cajoling and luring them to come over to their sunny side of life.

Icons have attracted a long history of scholarly interest that dates back to the renaissance. According to Pajares (2012), celebrities may be positive or negative compared to old time heroes, statesmen, luminaries and personages who were upheld as charismatic stars or downgraded as minor television personalities and would be praised or decried for their perceived innate talent or lack of it. Their fame, according to Alperstein (2004) is due to their high visibility in media formats and that they are celebrities because their fans take more interest in the mediatized details of their professional lives. Media plays a major role in the socialization process of the youth in terms of their choice of careers, leisure and lifestyle. Media provides the window through which we view our world. Clark and Dugdale (2009) argue that celebrity is a complex cultural and economic process. That in the representation of celebrities through commoditization of individuals through promotions is what brings about the process of cultural identity that is represented and formed through media.

Muuss (2010) observes that both print and electronic media give instant access to the very latest celebrity lives, lifestyles, fashion and scandals can launch and end a career. He adds that celebrities sell newspapers and magazines. Bandura (2010) notes that behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Individuals that are observed are called models. Youth pay attention to these people and encode their behavior. What they watch especially through mass media has a strong influence on their self-perception, culture and their behavior. Musau (2013) reveals that Kenyan media policy is premised on three principles namely: National integration; Cultural self-identification and Socio-economic modernization.

According to McQuail (1994) mass communication scholars today generally recognize the 'uses and gratifications (U &GT) 'approach as a subtraction of media effects research. Lazerfield is celebrated as the first radio researcher to launch the study of mass communication and directing it toward investigating mass media effects (Rogers 1997). He goes on to say;

*"Lazerfield became involved in mass communication research in an accidental way; he was the right man in the right place at the right time. The radio industry had been*

*developing for about fifteen years by the time Lazerfield began studying this new form of mass communication in the mid-1930s" (p265)*

Later, Lazerfield and Stanton (1944) developed a programme analyzer that was used as a media effects measurement tool. Lazerfield is famed for writing the famous novel *The People's Choice* (1944). In the same year, Herzog (1944), who is considered the first to create the theory of Uses and Gratifications identified three types of gratifications: - (1) Gratifications as a means of emotional release (2) Gratifications as opportunities of wishful thinking (3) Gratification as the advice obtained from listening to daytime radio programme. According to Papachirissi, the origins of uses and gratifications can be traced back to Laswell's (1948) model of who uses which media, how, and with what effect. Laswell recognized three major roles of the mass media: surveillance of the environment, correlation of events, and transmission of social heritage.

## **2. The Uses and Gratification**

Mass communication theories are explanations and predictions of social phenomena that attempt to relate mass communication to various aspects of personal, cultural lives or social systems (Baran 2003).

In this article, I focus on the uses and gratifications (U&GT) theory which is one of the most popular theories of mass communication and which gained theoretical coherence in 1980s. Elihu Katz first introduced the uses and gratifications approach when he came up with the notion that people use their media for their benefit. For example, there are various reasons why people watch television thus contradicting older views that assumed the audience was naïve and passive.

The Uses and Gratifications (U&GT) approach perceives the audience as active, meaning that they actively seek out specific media and contacts to achieve certain results or gratification that satisfy their personal needs. The theory takes the media message as its starting point and explores one's communication behavior in term of direct experience with the media. It views members of the audience as actively utilizing media contents, rather than passively acting upon by the media. Thus, it does not assume a direct relationship between messages to use and that such usages act as intervening variables in the process of effect. This encompasses the idea that people use the media to maintain a direct relationship between messages to uses and that such usages act as intervening variables in the process of effect. This encompasses the idea that people use the media to their advantages more often than the media use them. Epistemologically, the receiver determines what is going to be absorbed and does not allow the media to influence them otherwise.

While some scholars have dismissed the value of this approach, Ruggiero (2000, p.3) has argued that *"any attempt to speculate on the future direction of mass communication theory must seriously include the uses and gratification approach"*.

The theory uses this approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. It majorly focuses on what people do with media, as opposed to what media does to people. This theory is an audience-centered tactic towards- understanding mass communication. The uses and gratifications theory in its approach employs positivity which is based in the socio-psychological communication tradition, and focuses on communication at the mass media scale. The driving question of this theory is: *Why do people use media and what do they use them for?*

### **3. Dependency Theory**

The main thinkers were Ball-Rokeach and De' Fleur (1976). They noted that dependency is a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party (Miller, 2005).

Media Systems Dependency Theory was to some extent a response to some of the issues raised under uses and gratifications theory that uses and gratification theories emphasizes the active audience to an extent that it paid little attention to other audiences. Uses and gratification and media dependency are similar in terms of their meta-theoretical commitments and objects of explanation e.g. they both emphasize the link between individual purposes and the large social apparatus of mass media.

The Media System Dependency Theory (MSDT) enlarges, codifies and complicates some ideas explored in uses in gratification research thus being wider in scope and having greater explanatory power. The MSD proposes a system where there exist dependency relationships amongst the media, individuals, their interpersonal environment and the social environment. Each component relies on another to satisfy its goals. It has at its heart a complex system in which the media, individuals, their interpersonal environment, and the social environment are seen to have dependency relationships with each other (Miller 2005).

### **4. Statement of the Problem**

The rate of moral decay amongst the youth is alarming. Youth no longer have close ties with their extended family and the media has assumed the moral guidance role. Media content has become sensationalism due to competition and celebrities have become media creations for marketing and news making. According to a recent survey by Youth Challenge International (2009), media has been blamed for promoting violence, sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, pornography, degradation of women and sexuality; advertising manipulation and the promotion of excessive consumerism and materialism.

In addition, youths learn a lot from the celebrities the pages of these magazines. The youth forget that these celebrities are human and have strengths and weaknesses. The youth are quick to uncritically access, accommodate and ape these celebrities. How

much influence these celebrities exert on the youths and the direction in which they influence the youths is an issue of great concern and therefore needs to be determined. It is for this reason that this paper investigates the influence of magazine celebrity features on the career aspiration and social modeling tendencies of youths. Consequently, negative and indiscriminate forces of modernization showcased by celebrities have made it difficult for the youths to retain their cultural identity and dignity. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effects of cultural dynamics through iconography of celebrities on youth through print media.

#### **4.1 Objective of the Study**

The principle question this article addresses is whether icons' presence in the media fosters a new dependency among youth.

### **5. Literature Review**

The increase in the level of printed material in magazines also has a strong hand in the ways that youth view themselves. Thomsen et al (2013) reveals that teen, beauty and fashion magazines are filled with articles and tips aimed towards losing weight and being thinner like the celebrities.

Martin (2015) exposes that eight in ten teenagers read magazines, exposing them to thousands of advertisements as well as pictures of stick thin models and celebrities. The consumption and reading of these magazines alone becomes an important experience, allowing the teen to feel like they can and are relating to the models and celebrities that fill the pages and sell the products.

In addition, Fay and Yanoff (2011) argue that the magazines that teens read allow them to feel that they are crossing the boundary between inaccessible and attainable glamour. Katz and Blumler (2013) add that youth are confronted by the pressure to grow up very quickly and now eight to twelve year olds are reading magazines intended for the older teens in order to look more mature, grown up and more advanced than everyone else. Malkin et al (2009) points out that that magazines such as New Moon, Hues and Teen Voices offer empowering and nurturing messages for girls but they are often ignored and go for the magazines that push for the importance of finding boyfriends, buying the right clothes and perfecting their hair and makeup.

According to Kasser et al (2014), the media is also considered a key factor in shaping how society operates by articulating ideas and influencing perceptions and attitudes. Sometimes media and journalism are catalysts for change. In other words, the expansion or development of democracy is based on an educated and informed public which acts on what it knows and that information plays an important role in society. Straubhaar et al (2007) argues that the media is of great importance in the lives of young people who have high levels of access to and usage of a variety of media devices. Greene (2009) demonstrates that through their media use, young people are exposed to

a range of information on alcohol which may influence their alcohol-related attitudes and behavior.

Sobel (2007) sees teenagers as constantly changing since they want to show individuality yet they want to be in style and fashionable. They continuously buy new products to keep up with different trends and fashions. He further states that if advertisers can condition an adolescent to buy their product and like their product, then once the adolescent grows up he or she will be more likely to stay with that product then switch to a new one. In other words, this is the same principle as *“build good habits now because they will be difficult to change later in life.”*

Ettinger and Stefan (2007) call it the mere exposure effect. This effect is influential in competing clothing stores because the more you hear a name the more comfortable you are with it. The successful effectiveness of the mere exposure effect on adolescents can be explained by means of identity formation. Anderson and Sabatelli (2007) state that the establishment of a secure identity provides the foundation for the commitments one makes to a personal ideology, occupation and lifestyle. Muuss (2008) has characterized adolescence as the period in the human life cycle during which the individual must establish a sense of personal identity and avoid the dangers of role diffusion and identity confusion.

Forming one's identity is a continuous process. Ruggiero (2014) acknowledges that identity is fluid, partly situational and thus constantly under construction, negotiation and modification. Huntemann and Michael (2011) are of the view that forming an identity is actively constructed as it is expressed and vice versa. According to Saunders (2014), identity achievement means that an adolescent has to sort out his or her strengths and weaknesses, answer where he or she came from, who he or she is at this moment and who he or she want to become. Yue and Cheung (2014) further says that to find the answers to all of these has to be actively sought since society is not going to just give an identity to an adolescent.

McCabe and Ricciardelli (2007) notes in his review that even though research to date has shown remarkably small media effects, there are a number of possibilities that may ultimately allow for the salvaging of the massive effects notion. In particular, he notes that small main effects may be obscured by messages having different effects on different groups or as a function of different situations and by focusing on direct effects at the expense of indirect ones. Thus, the development of cognitive process models for media effects has the potential to uncover new relations as well as make sense out of old ones.

Wong and Ahuvia (2008) reveal that commercial mass media controlled by a few multinational conglomerates have become an antidemocratic force in supporting the status quo. The news is more entertaining than informing, supplying mostly gossip, scandals, sex, and violence. Political news is more about personalities than about their ideologies. It is also claimed that the watchdogs are barking of the wrong things. Thomson and Brown (2015) says that the media hunt for scandals in the private lives of celebrities and their families but ignore much more serious consequences of their

character. On the other hand, Lash and Urry (2009) adds that the media make us afraid of the wrong things where minor dangers are hysterically blown out of proportions while much more serious dangers in our society go largely unnoticed.

Chan (2015) complains that the media fail to report wrongdoings in the industry. For example, many media have suppressed information about the health hazards of smoking due to pressure from advertisers. Even more alarming is the claim that certain mass media especially women's magazines are promoting worthless alternative health products, thereby effectively conspiring with the industry to defraud consumers of billions of dollars every. If all these claims have any merit at all then we have to drastically revise our view of the way our democracy works.

Eighmey and McCord (2008) argue that the available studies of diversity therefore fail to capture the central problems related to the democratic role of the media. Singer and Singer (2011) say it is necessary that media economists introduce other quality measures in studies of the relationship between market structure and the quality of mass media products.

According to Straubhaar et al (2007), media may themselves put attention-catching issues on the agenda for economic reasons, especially sensationalistic issues involving danger, crime, sex, and celebrity scandals. Zhao (2007) adds that access to the public agenda is a limited and precious resource that special interest groups often compete for. The role of family is crucial in the development of young people.

Myers (2008) maintains that parents influence over their children is highest when they are younger and that influence reduces as they grow older and is replaced by media and peers. In contrast, Lash and Blumler (2013) insist that the role of the print media in the process of national character building is too significant today more than ever. Fay and Yanoff (2011) suggest that advertisements are designed to convince a girl that she must make-up and make-over to look acceptable. Further, these advertisements promise to transform girls into something special but eventually undermine their self-confidence and contribute to negative body images. Moreover, since appearance has been considered to be an essential aspect of femininity, girls often strive to control their appearances in order to please others and to validate their sense of self-worth.

Roy (2009) says icons are highly visible, culturally variable and over determined auratic images. Campbell (2008) adds that icons are particularly powerful signifiers because they are immediately recognizable and carry complex cultural codes in a compact image. Katz and Blumler (2013) point out that media culture provides materials out of which we forge our very identities; our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be male or female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality; and of "us" and "them." Sobel (2007) adds that media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil.

## **6. Theoretical Framework**

This study is premised on Roys (2009) Uses and gratifications theory (UGT). UGT has considered being one of the most influential theories in media research. UGT has been used by many researchers namely: Katz and Blumler (2013); Schiffman and Kanuk (2009); Saunders (2014); Paik (2011); Thompson and Heinberg (2009) and Ruggiero (2014). It is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs.

UGT focuses on what media does to people and what people do with media. Ruggiero (2014) explains that UGT acknowledges individual use and choice and that different people can use the same medium for different purposes. Roy (2009) adds that UGT has been instrumental in understanding why consumers choose to continue with their use of a specific medium. On the other hand, Eighmey and McCord (2008) argue that, whereas people's initial encounters with a media might be accidental, due to curiosity about its novelty, continuing use would be highly unlikely if the medium did not provide them with specific benefits.

## **7. Research Methodology**

The study employed the systematic paper review method of data collection. This is where secondary data of not more than ten years is reviewed. The study reviewed studies done from 2016 to 2006 years which formed part of the systematic secondary data. The secondary data reviewed provided insights and provided a basis for discussion with regards to the problem under study. Secondary data was collected through the review of literature from libraries and on-line browsing of journals, peer-reviewed articles, official publications, periodic reports, newsletters, newspapers and magazines.

## **8. Findings and Discussion**

The study findings revealed that attitudes, worldview and behavior of youth is influenced greatly by the media. These findings are in line with the views of Greene (2009) who assert the power of the mass media to influence people. What this means is that media have a strong power to change people's attitudes. The study also found out that girls who frequently read magazines were more likely to diet and to feel that the magazines influenced their ideal body shape.

Thomsen et al (2013) concurs that more than half wanted to lose weight because of a picture they had seen in a magazine, while only 29% of those girls were actually overweight. Also, the study found that 70% of college women felt worse about their own looks after reading women's magazines. The study also revealed that while 59% of teens read at least ten minutes a day from a magazine, 77% of teens subscribe to some



magazine. Teen, women and fashion magazines account for 72% of magazines read by female's ages fifteen to eighteen years old.

These findings are in tandem with the views of Malkins et al (2009) that show that at least three in every four teenagers read beauty and fashion magazines on a regular basis. Anderson and Sabatelli (2007) are of the same view that magazines are the most influential media format to perpetuate and reinforce society's preference for thinness. The findings also revealed that approximately 115 million consumer magazines are distributed nationally each year and due to the unreliability of postal services, 86% of magazine purchases are done via newsstand distribution in retail stores rather than by subscriptions. These views are also shared by Oliver (2012). The findings also revealed that the youngest people however an average of 33% of 7-19 year olds have the media as the primary source of sexual and reproductive health information.

Clark et al (2009) concedes by saying that eight in ten teenagers read magazines, exposing them to thousands of advertisements as well as pictures of stick thin models and celebrities. The consumption and reading of these magazines alone becomes an important experience, allowing the teen to feel like they can and are relating to the models and celebrities that fill the pages and sell the products. McRobbie (2007) also concedes that magazines that teens read allow them to feel that they are crossing the boundary between inaccessible and attainable glamour.

Musau (2013) argues that historically, aspects of youth culture have included language, music and dress in varying combinations so as to establish identity. The findings also showcased the tendency to hijack words and create mutually exclusive language has often been seen as a negative or exclusionary trait of youth. However, Thurlow (2007) suggests that young people are routinely misunderstood by adults and whose communicative power or capital is greatly reduced.

Muuss (2008) indicate that the sharpening of communication tools assists individuals to develop self-identity, establish social relationships with others and provide the basis for collective social activity. The findings demonstrated that the youth's perception of their rights. The study revealed that for between 25 and 28 percent of the sample, students felt that their rights to advocacy, privacy and fair treatment received little or no support in schools. Therefore, teen magazines are thought to contribute to the socialization of girls into traditional appearance-based standards of femininity.

Pierce (1993) suggests that teens are not yet secure in their social realities because they are still learning about the ways of the world and this makes them vulnerable to the messages that the media are sending. The study also revealed that media, particularly in celebrity and advertising realms have the ability to develop and preserve perceptions of youth. Berk (2009) corroborates this observation of how youth are classified and argues that media place emphasis on negative visions of young people. Additionally, Hood (2010) outlines that images and cultures of young people are appropriated and commodified by mainstream market forces which elide any notion of agency in young people and the youthful concepts they sell.

Pajares (2012) argues that with the passing of the hippies in the early 1970s, the youth subculture concept moved away from mainstream sociology and into criminology where deviance remains a key analytic variable. The study revealed that criminological work often takes youth culture at face value, focusing on correlations and effects rather than on cultural processes.

Hood (2010) maintains that throughout history, youth have been studied as a troubled subculture, categorized by hormonal upheavals, ritual and cultural practices and rites of passage from child to adult status. Giddens (2010) insists that the culture and framework of young people must be understood in order to both perceive and assist in the negotiation, prevention or arresting of behaviors that are detrimental.

Radway (2015) explains that the effects of acculturation can be seen at multiple levels in both interacting cultures. At the group level, acculturation often results in changes to culture, customs, and social institutions. Noticeable group level effects of acculturation often include changes in food, clothing, and language. At the individual level, differences in the way individuals acculturate have been shown to be associated not just with changes in daily behavior, but with numerous measures of psychological and physical well-being.

Giddens (2010) posits that mainstream sociologists have been particularly concerned with issues of youthful deviance and delinquency, in ways that often entail a pathological view of young people. The findings revealed that youth particularly from marginalized or subordinated social groups are frequently constructed as a social problem or at risk. This then serves to legitimate various forms of treatment the work of social, educational, and clinical agencies that seeks to discipline or rehabilitate troublesome youth, or to define and correct their apparent deficiencies.

Cyril deRun et al (2010) reveal that sociologists understand these phenomena in terms of social factors such as poverty and inequality rather than as a matter of raging hormones: their interest is not so much in internal personality conflicts, but more in the social uncertainties that young people face, for example as they make the transition from the parental home to the labor market. Sociologists acknowledge that the nature of youth varies significantly according to the social context, and particularly in relation to factors such as social class, gender, and ethnicity.

The study revealed that the invention and use of a category like "Generation X" reflects both the importance and the complexity of age-based distinctions in contemporary consumer culture Lash and Urry (2009) contest the view of youthful expression as simply a function of adult attempts at socialization. However, Thomsen et al (2013) says that much of this work has focused on specific youth subcultures groups such as hippies, skinheads, punks, goths, ravers who are seen to be resisting or opposing the imperatives of the parent culture, through fashion, dance, music, and other cultural forms. Subcultures are seen here not just as a subordinate but also as subversive. They arise from contradictions and tensions in the dominant social order and represent a threat to established social norms

The study revealed that magazine celebrity features are attracting youths to a point of concern is magazine celebrity features. These agenda could be of benefit, just as they could be detrimental to youths. Considering the growing interest of youths in these magazine features, it becomes necessary to examine how these celebrities are influencing the choices of career of youths as well as their social mobility aspirations. Paik (2011) posit that young people are more susceptible to be influenced by celebrities as compared to mature population. In addition, Martin (2015) points out that teenagers tend to follow the footsteps of celebrities to accommodate characteristic that they are lacking in their personal life. Many teenagers dress and behave like their favorite entertainer. This allows them to compensate their low self-esteem.

On the reason why celebrities are likely to be imitated, Chan (2015) observed that celebrities can damage children's education. Pupils' obsession with footballers, pop stars and actors affects their progress in school as well as limiting their career aspirations. In a survey for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, 60% of the 304 teachers quizzed said their pupils most aspired to be David Beckham. More than one-third said the pupils' motivation to become famous is only for the sake of being famous.

## **9. Conclusion**

There is no doubt that youth learn a lot from the celebrities that dot the pages of these newspapers and magazines. The celebrities themselves, being human, present their strengths and weaknesses which the undiscerning youths unwittingly and uncritically access, accommodate and ape. How much influence these celebrities exert on the youths and the direction in which they influence the youths need to be determined. It is for this reason that this paper sought to investigate the effects of cultural dynamics through iconography of celebrities on youth through print media.

The media have the duty of meeting the information need of the society and one can rightly say that the media are doing this to a great extent. However, quite frequently, these messages are misinterpreted by some segments of the society. One of such is the youth. They are vulnerable, and most times absorb whatever information the media offer them without question. When they access media content, they interpret it to suit their gullible dispositions. The study concludes that media in particular, magazines have a powerful influence on how people dress, behave and relate to others, as well as language, values and attitudes. Through the socialization function, the media contents help people to learn the values, beliefs and norms of other cultures in the process, individuals develop their own sense of self-worth. In the case of the youths, these media contents create for them an appealing image and by this, control the variety of material youths incorporate in their daily lives.

The study concedes that the youthful age is a vulnerable one and in a quest for belonging and discovery, they follow the trends as seen in the media. The media are everywhere and their jobs include finding the truth and telling it to people. In carrying out these functions, the media bring reports the bulk of which are dominated by

important people otherwise known as celebrities. The study also concludes that youths look up to celebrities for their everyday fashion tips, movies, albums and their general way of life. The youthful stage is a very confusing period filled with changes and challenges, and is a period where an individual feels the need to "belong" and to be "accepted". When this need is created, the youth look for ways to fill the gap and most often turn to the media to perform this role. The study also concludes that magazines often are the most accessible and celebrities are most like salespersons though they may not explicitly try to persuade their audiences, they are subconsciously altering the thoughts of their publics. This can be seen through celebrity endorsements, press interviews, apparel worn during public events, items favored by celebrities, celebrity-branded products and celebrities' overall brand image all of which create epidemics of societal acceptance among various social groups. These images of celebrities often provide the basis from which youths benchmark their thoughts, opinions and associations.

The youth perceive such images as the social norm and, thus, as a means to attain the social acceptance that is so vital to their personal maturation. The study also concludes that youths are affected by messages and images the media feeds them with. Some of these images give them ideas of how to look and act to be accepted in today's community. These magazines stress that the way you look defines the person you are. This causes people to be self-absorbed and self-conscious. Some go to the extent to add that a man is defined by the stuff he owns; while a woman is defined by the way she looks.

### **9.1 Recommendations**

Findings revealed that youths are more influenced by a desire to flow with the goings-on around them especially with what they see in the media. It was discovered that Kenyan youth admire and also approve of celebrities and they also consider magazine celebrities as successful people. The study also showed that the celebrities that most youths admire are business moguls. This is however different from the findings of some researchers as they assert that sports stars are recognized as favorite celebrity role models for youngest individuals. The study recommends vigorous and regular mentorship sessions for the youth so that they are guided on the dangers of the individual decisions they make to emulate certain individuals in the media. Based on the findings of this study, the study also recommends that reporters be careful when writing about important personalities or celebrities because most of them have effects on the people who read them especially young people. This means that they are to introduce a balance in the categories of celebrities they feature; they should feature celebrities from different fields of endeavor. While carrying out their duties of reporting newsmakers, the media should be careful not to celebrate negative aspects of a personality's life. In print publications especially soft sell magazines, there are celebrity corners most times called celebrity gist or celebrity gossip where there are stories of celebrities' majority of them are negative.

On the foreign scene, the reporters have stories showing celebrities who were caught drunk-driving and eventually sent to a rehabilitation center. In these portrayals, the negative aspects of the celebrities are often given more prominence. In doing this, the media are unwittingly projecting vices. This, probably, may be because the media see this as a way of projecting celebrities, but it could have negative effects on an unsuspecting youth. The study recommends self-censorship on the part of the journalists with regards to the selection and the angle of their stories take.

## 9.2 Suggestions for Further Study

There is no doubt that the study's findings have revealed how young people are consuming media messages and allowing themselves to be carried away by them. Past studies have been silent on the remedies to these. There is need for future researchers to explore ways of countering the robust power of the media to influence behavior and attitudes. The study has demonstrated that at times young people can get inspired to be better persons in life by celebrities an issue that past researchers have not been keen to articulate in their studies instead they have concentrated on showcasing the negative effects of media messages of celebrities on young people. There is urgent need for more study's in the near future to be directed towards that direction.

## References

1. Alperstein, N. M. (2007). Imaginary social relationships with celebrities appearing in television commercials. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 35(1), 43-58.
2. Anderson, S. A., and Sabatelli, R. M. (2007). *Family interaction: a multigenerational developmental perspective*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.
3. Bandura, A. (2010). *Social Learning Theory*. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.
4. Beck, U. (2009). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.
5. Campbell, R. (2008). *Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication*. St. Martin's Press, Inc.: New York.
6. Chan, K. (2015). Store visits and information sources among urban Chinese children, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 22(4), 178-188.
7. Chan, K., and McNeal, J. (2008). Parent-child communications about consumption and advertising in China. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 20(4), 317-332.
8. Clark, C., Osborne, S. and Dugdale, G. (2009). *Reaching out with Role Models: Role Models and Young Peoples Reading*. National Literacy Trust. London, UK.
9. Cyril de Run, E., Butt, M., and Yen Nee, C., (2010). "The influence of role models on Young Adults purchase". *Jurnal Kemanusiaan* bil.15 Jun 2010.

10. Eighmey, J. and McCord, L. (2008). 'Adding value in the information age: uses and gratifications of sites on the World Wide Web', *Journal of Business Research*, 41(3): 187–194.
11. Ettinger, R.H., and Stefan H., G. (2007). *Understanding psychology*. California: Horizon Textbook Publishing.
12. Fay, J., and Yanoff, J. M. (2011). What are teens telling us about sexual health? Results of the Second Annual Youth Conference of the Pennsylvania Coalition to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 25(2/3), 169-177.
13. Giddens, A. (2010). *Modernity and self-identity, self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity.
14. Greene, A. L., and Adams-Price, C. (2009). Adolescents' secondary attachments to celebrity figures. *Sex Roles*, 23, 335-347.
15. Hood, T.(n.d.). 'Teen Icons: Cultural Images and Adolescent Behavior'. <http://smu.edu/center/discourse> (Accessed October 22, 2010).
16. Huntemann, Nina, and Morgan, Michael (2011) (n.d.). Mass media and identity development. In Singer, D. G., & Singer, J. L. (Eds.), *Handbook of children and the media* (pp. 309 – 322). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
17. Huston, Aletha C., and Wright, John C. (2009) (n.d.). Television and socialization of young children. In Macbeth, Tannis M. (Ed.). *Tuning into young viewers: Social science perspectives on television* (pp. 37 – 60). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
18. Joseph D. Straubhaar J. D., LaRose,R. and Davenport, L. (2007).Media Now: Understanding Media: Understanding Media, Culture and Technology, (7<sup>th</sup>ed.) Wadsworth, Cengage Learning
19. Kasser, T., Ryan, R. M., Couchman, C. E., and Sheldon, K. M. (2014). Materialistic values: Their causes and consequences. In T. Kasser & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Psychology and Consumer Culture*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychology Association.
20. Katz, E. and Blumler, J.A. (2013). 'Uses and gratification research', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4): 509–523.
21. Lash, S., and Urry, J. (2009). *Economies of signs and space* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
22. Malkin, A. R., Wornian, K., and Chrisler, J. C. (2009). Women and weight: Gendered messages on magazine covers [Electronic version]. *Sex Roles*, 40(718), 647-655.
23. Martin, A J (2015), "Trends in Youth Culture: Reply to the Discussion," *Marxism Today*, April, 1975, p. 114.
24. McCabe, M. P., and Ricciardelli, L. A. (2001). Parent, peer and media influences on body image and strategies to both increase and decrease body size among adolescent boys and girls [Electronic version]. *Adolescence*, 36(142), 225-240.
25. Mckee, B. (2009). *Negative influences of media on the society*. Retrieved June 5, 2010,

26. McQuail, D. (2015). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. Sage Publication Limited: London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli.
27. McRobbie, A. (2007). *Top girls: Young women and the post-feminist social contract*. Paper presented at ESRC Identities and Social Action public lecture, Milton Keynes, UK.
28. Musau, P. M. (2013). *The Liberalization of the Mass Media in Africa and its Impact on Indigenous Languages: The Case of Kiswahili in Kenya* Retrieved on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 from [www.quosa.de/.../6\\_10\\_musua.pdf](http://www.quosa.de/.../6_10_musua.pdf)
29. Muuss, R. E. H. (2008). *Theories of adolescence*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
30. Myers, D. G. (2008). *Social psychology*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
31. Norton, B. (2014). When is a teen magazine not a teen magazine? *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 45(4), 296-299.
32. Oliver, K. L. (2012). Images of the body from popular culture: Engaging adolescent girls in critical inquiry [Electronic version]. *Sport, Education, and Society*, 6(2), 143-164.
33. Paik, H. (2011). The history of children's uses of electronic media. In D. Singer & J. Singer (Eds.), *Handbook of children and the media* (pp. 289-307). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
34. Pajares (2012). *Overview of social cognitive theory and of self-efficacy*. Retrieved August 28, 2003, from <http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp.eff.html>.
35. Radway, J. (2015). *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy and popular literature*. Chapel Hill:
36. Roy, S. (2009). 'Internet uses and gratifications: A survey in the Indian context', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29: 878-886.
37. Ruggiero, T. (2014). 'Uses and gratification theory in the 21st century', *Mass Communication and Society*, 3(1): 3-37.
38. Saunders, S. (2014). Fromm's marketing character and Rokeach values. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 29(2), 191-196.
39. Schlecht, C. (2013) 'Celebrities' Impact on Branding'. [http://worldlywriter.com/images/portfolio/Proposals/Celebrity\\_Branding.pdf](http://worldlywriter.com/images/portfolio/Proposals/Celebrity_Branding.pdf). (Accessed September 26, 2011).
40. Schiffman, L. G., and Kanuk, L. L. (2009). *Consumer Behavior*. NJ: Prentice-Hall.
41. Schultze, Q. J., Anker, R. M., Bratt, J. D., Romanowski, W. D., Worst, J. W., and Zuidervaart, L. (2012). *Dancing in the Dark: Youth, Popular, Culture, and the Electronic Media*. Grand Rapids, MI: Williams B. Eerdmans.
42. Schwarz, G. (2014). Exploring media literacy with young adults. *The ALAN Review*, 50-54. Seventeen Magazine.
43. Singer, D. G., and Singer, J. L. (2011) (n.d.). Introduction: Why a handbook on children and the media? In Singer, D. G., & Singer, J. L. (Eds.), *Handbook of children and the media* (pp. xi - xvii). Thousand
44. Sobel, M. E. (2007). *Lifestyle and Social Structure: Concepts, Definitions, Analyses*. New York: Academic Press.

45. Thompson, J. K., and Heinberg, L. J. (2009). The media's influence of body image disturbance and eating disorders: We've reviled them, now can we rehabilitate them? [Electronic version] *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(2), 339-353.
46. Thomsen, S. R., Weber, M. M. and Brown, L. B. (2013). The relationship between health and fitness magazine reading and eating-disordered weight-loss methods among high school girls. *American Journal of Health Education*, 32(3), 133-138.
47. Thomsen, S. R., and Brown, L. B. (2015). The relationship between reading beauty and fashion magazines and the use of pathogenic dieting methods among adolescent females. *Adolescence*, 37(145), 1-18. Retrieved June 6, 2015 from Academic Search Premier Database. *YM Magazine*. (2015, July). University of North Carolina Press.
48. Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H., and Melody, J. (2010). *Growing up girl: Psychosocial explorations of gender and class*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.
49. Wong, N. Y., and Ahuvia, A. C. (2008). Personal taste and family face: Luxury consumption in Confucian and Western societies. *Psychology and Marketing*, 15(5), 423-441.
50. Yau, O. H. M. (2008). Chinese cultural values: Their dimensions and marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 22(5), 44-57.
51. Yue, X. D., and Cheung, C. K. (2014). Selection of favorite idols and models among Chinese young people: A comparative study in Hong Kong and Nanjing. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 24, 91-98.
52. Zhao, B. (2007). Consumerism, Confucianism, communism: Making sense of China today. *New Left Review*, 222(Mar-Apr), 43-59.



Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Social Sciences Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).