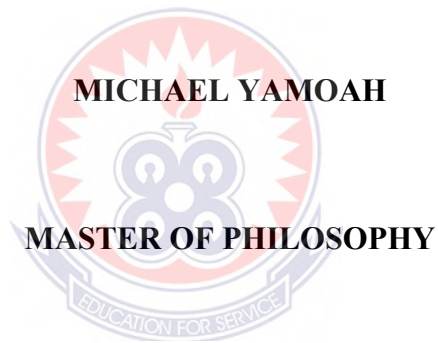


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE POST-PRIME LIFE  
OF SELECTED GHANAIAN CELEBRITIES**



**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE POST-PRIME LIFE  
OF SELECTED GHANAIAN CELEBRITIES**

**MICHAEL YAMOAH**

**(200027038)**



**A dissertation in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies,  
School of Communication and Media Studies, submitted to  
the School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Media Studies)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**March, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Michael Yamoah**, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotation and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....



### 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.

SUPERVISOR: Prof. Andy Ofori-Birikorang

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

## **DEDICATION**

To Akweley, Aba, Ewuradwoa and Ewurama

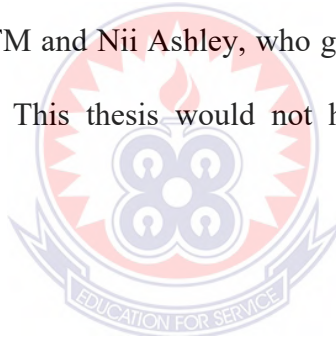


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to Prof. Andy Ofori-Birikorang for his guidance in undertaking this research work. His patience to see me work on this project is much appreciated. My new perspectives to research, I attribute to him. I am also grateful to Dr. Mavis Amo-Mensah for the support, and for encouraging me to pursue further studies. To Dr. Gifty Appiagyei, Dr. Christine Hammond and Mr. Kwesi Aggrey, I am most grateful.

And to my colleagues Nana Kojo Dadzie, Angela Ayimbire, Kofi Kotoku, Nana Yaw Kesse, Kathleen Lomotey, I appreciate your support.

To all the participants who shared their stories, and the gatekeepers, especially Kwame Dadzie of Citi FM and Nii Ashley, who gave me leads to the participants, I am extremely thankful. This thesis would not have been possible without your assistance.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	7
1.3 Research Objectives	10
1.4 Research Questions	10
1.5 Significance of the Study	11
1.6 Delimitation	12
1.7 Organization of the study	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	15
2.0 Introduction	15
2.1 Understanding Celebrity	15
2.1.1 Celebrity and the celebrity industry	18
2.1.2 Celebrity as a form of capital	19
2.1.3 Celebrity Capital Life Cycle and the Fame Cycle	21
2.2. Career transition and life changes	25
2.2.1 Ageing and identity changes	25
2.2.2 Celebrity life in transition	26
2.3 Loss and coping as a concept	29

2.3.1 Managing loss	30
2.4 Theoretical Framework	31
2.4.1 Role Exit theory	31
2.4.2 Identity Theory	34
2.4.2.1 Components of an identity	35
2.4.2.2 Sources of identity change	36
2.4.3 Coming to Grips with Loss Theory	37
2.5 Relevance of the theories to the study	40
2.6 Summary	41
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
METHODOLOGY	43
3.0 Introduction	43
3.1 Research Approach	43
3.2 Research Design	45
3.3 Sampling Strategy and Size	47
3.4 Data Collection Method	50
3.5 Data Collection Procedure	52
3.6 Data Analysis	56
3.7 Ethical issues	57
3.8 Trustworthiness	58
3.9 Summary	59
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	61
4.0 Introduction	61
4.1 RQ 1 - What are the experiences of the celebrities as they transitioned from an active celebrity life into post-prime?	62
4.1.1 First doubts	63



4.1.1.1 Disappointments	64
4.1.1.2 Adapting to industrial changes	67
4.1.2 Seeking alternatives	69
4.1.3 Turning point	74
4.1.4 Creating the ex-role	77
4.2 RQ 2 - How do the celebrities' identities change as a result of being post-prime?	81
4.2.1 Career identity conflict	81
4.2.2 Social identity tensions	83
4.2.3 Renewed family awareness	86
4.3 RQ 3 - What coping strategies do post-prime celebrities adopt?	88
4.3.1 Mourning	89
4.3.2 Resolving	94
4.4 Summary	98
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	100
5.0 Introduction	100
5.1 Summary	100
5.2 Main findings	101
5.3 Conclusion	106
5.4 Limitations of the study	107
5.5 Suggestions for further studies	108
5.6 Recommendations	109
<b>REFERENCES</b>	111





## LIST OF TABLES

1 -- Demographics of Participants

50



## LIST OF FIGURES

1 -- The celebrity capital life cycle	22
2 – The fame cycle	23



## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the post-prime life experiences of four Ghanaian. In exploring their lived experiences, the career transition and the changes in identity as a result of loss of fame and resources were analyzed using phenomenology as the research design, and interview as data collection method. Role Exit, identity and coming to grips with loss theories were used to analyze the data. Role Exit theory was useful in tracing the transitional experiences of the celebrities, because understanding the various types of role exit is critical to analyzing why certain celebrities maintain their fame and fortune, and others do not. Identity theory helped gauge the identity experiences of the celebrities whose identities are affected as a result of the transition, and Coming to Grips with Loss theory helped to analyze how the post- prime celebrities cope with their new identities as it places emphasis on recovery after loss. The findings revealed that the different phases of the transition journey were fraught with disappointments as a result of industrial choices they made, betrayal and their failure to connect with industry trends, thus the routes to alternatives adopted by the participants were largely unsuccessful. The study also revealed that the loss of reputation and capital forced the celebrities to adopt new identities partly from feedback from the public. In dealing with the loss of fame, the celebrities adopted a positive resilience towards the phenomenon as major coping mechanisms. The study recommended that the achieved celebrities employ professional management members to manage their affairs. Also, the intensifying of financial and investment education among members of the professional and welfare bodies in the arts and entertainment industry in Ghana must be prioritized.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The phenomenon of celebrity has been described as a social construct, which poses difficulty in conceptualizing and defining (Seifert, 2010). Regardless, celebrity scholar Nael Gabler sees celebrity as the great, new entertainment in a society that is hungry for entertainment (Gabler, not dated).

The contemporary celebrity will usually emerge “from the sports or entertainment industries; they will be highly visible through the media; and their private lives will attract greater public interest than their professional lives” (Turner, 2004, p.4). Turner believes that they do not necessarily depend on the position or achievements that gave them their prominence in the first instance; what matters is maintaining the prominence.

Thus, Rojek (2015) identifies three types of celebrities: ascribed celebrity, achieved celebrity and celetoids. Ascribed celebrity refers to “social impact that reflects bloodline, whereby hereditary titled individuals, such as kings, queens, emperors, ladies, duchesses, and so forth, are positioned in the social hierarchy to automatically command enlarged respect and deference” (p.1). The second type, the Achieved celebrity is identified by a known achievement or field of endeavor. Such status reflects social impact that derives from the individual’s recognized talents and accomplishments. Such celebrities include successful musicians, sports stars, comedians, authors, actors, among others. Celetoids are individuals who attain sudden and intense bursts of fame as a result of intense media attention. The celetoid status is attributed to such celebrities. The term, an “amalgamation of ‘celebrity’ and ‘tabloid’

(newspaper), gives a clue to the meaning of the phenomenon” (p.1). In the making of celestoids, the pivotal role of media communication in the process cannot be understated.

In the celebrity process, “one needs a performer..., a personal real-life, or purportedly real-life, narrative, even if it is only the foundation narrative” (Gabler, not dated. p. 10). Gabler considers publicity an essential tool for that narrative, and an audience, to appreciate the narrative and admire the famed figure.

Current scholarship has conceptualized modern fame as an open system in which people continually move in and out of celebrity status. Both scholarly work and public discourse suggest that “fame is short-lived in today’s world, due to rapidly changing fashions, and an unending search for the next big thing” (van de Rijt, et al., 2013, p. 269). And that, the same waves that generate sudden fame can lead journalists and audiences to just as abruptly, lose interest in and abandon a celebrity idol.

While many celebrities generate attention for years or decades, beneath this attention lies instability (van de Rijt, et al. 2013). Celebrity icons, as Alexander (2010) observes, “are transitional objects...mediating between internal and external reality, between the deepest emotional needs and contingent possibilities for their satisfaction” (p.325). Carrillat and Ilicic (2019) and Driessens (2013) affirm this, emphasizing the different life stages celebrities go through: acquisition, consolidation, abrupt downfall/slow decline, and redemption/resurgence, in some instances. This, thus brings to the fore, the ephemeral nature of celebrity life.

General discourse points to many celebrities suffering from what celebrity writer, Tiffany White, calls “burn out,” acknowledging that not all celebrities want to be famous forever. She asserts that the majority reach a level where “they get sick of the

business, while others simply stop finding work and give up,” (White, 2018, para 1), of course, being mindful of the pressures that come with being a celebrity. Forbes Magazine, in a survey of 165 talent agents and managers identified fear and anxiety that the successes the celebrities garner can go away anytime, as one of the topmost concerns of their highly successful celebrity clients (Prince, 2016). These concerns have indeed manifested in the lives of a number of entertainment and sport celebrities especially, as their dwindling fortunes continue to dominate the media space, primarily because of “overspending and poor and exploitive financial advice” (Prince, 2016, para 2).

### **1.1.1 Post-prime celebrity discourse in the Ghanaian media**

Public discussions recently about issues facing Ghanaian celebrities, who for one reason or the other have become less active from what they were celebrated for, is a regular feature on almost all entertainment shows on radio and television as well as online portals. Most of these discussions have centered around two main issues: their financial well-being and their physical health.

Most of the post-prime celebrities are ageing; while a few, though quite young may have found themselves in a situation that calls for public help. The media has found the state of these celebrities worthy of highlighting; something that was ignored for a long time. In not too recent past, the state of the post-prime celebrity was one kept out of the public until the worst happened: death! When they die, then there is a resurrection of their plight.

However, with the media’s interest in the personal lives of celebrities, especially those who are not in good shape, the call for public support, in donations, has become a

regular feature. Celebrity blog Ghanacelebrities.com in a feature titled “Ghanaian Celebrities who have become broke and desperately begging for support” for instance, sums up the plight of the post-prime celebrity (Ghanacelebrities.com, September, 2021).

Public donations were solicited, in helping musicians Ewurama Badu, Jewel Ackah, Paapa Yankson, C.K. Mann, and comedians/actors Nkomode, Bob Okala and Super OD, who battled with years of finance and health challenges, before they passed on. In recent times, the stories of veteran actors Psalm Ajeteefio (TT), William Addo (Akpatse), Abeiku Nyame (Jagger Pee), Kofi Laing (Kohwe), Kojo Dadson and Emmanuel Armah have gained currency in the media, with the constant call for support for their health and financial needs. Veteran Ghanaian actor and broadcaster Mikki Osei Berko is on record to have said that “at least about 80 per cent of Ghanaian celebrities can’t afford decent healthcare” (Ghlinks, May, 2020), emphasizing these celebrities have dedicated their talents entertaining Ghanaians without getting much in return. Thus, in their dire moments, they need the support and goodwill of Ghanaians; and for some, claiming what they believe, is rightly theirs.

It is not surprising that former Ghanaian World Boxing Featherweight champion, D.K. Poison has been on a crusade to retrieve a \$45,000 (the prize money) he claimed he loaned to the government of Ghana in 1976 (Daily Graphic, 2019). According to the 69-year-old retired boxer, for 43 years, all attempts to reclaim the money from the state have proved futile despite promises by past governments to ensure he was reimbursed with the amount owed him. D. K. Poison, who now lives in “isolation and subtle anger in a house that shows signs of its old grandeur, but needed its old shine just like its master” believes he will have a fulfilling life once the state settles him (Nketsiah, 2020).

Mathews (2006) argues that much of the success of the media and entertainment industry centers around the successful positioning of its key assets: celebrities. Thus, it becomes bizarre for many followers of celebrities to realize in their later lives that they live in near penury. This is something Ghanaian and Nollywood actor Kofi Adjorlolo traces to industrial problems, including non-payments for work done. The actor has been on a crusade to retrieve all monies owed him by movie producers. His issue became topical when he threatened to name movie producers who did not pay for work done by actors:

Old man like me, they call me to come and work and they can't pay me. About seven producers, they owe me money...Why? About seven producers in Ghana here, they owe me monies. Why? And then I'm sitting at home and I'm hungry and when I'm sick, nobody... look we have elderly people sick lying there and producers owe them; they don't even give them money. Why? (Annang, 2020, para. 4)

Kofi Adjorlolo's sentiments bring to the fore a larger industrial discussion within the arts sector in Ghana: Do creatives get real value for their works? Are there royalties and welfare packages that accrue to them aside their personal investments?

The Ghana Music Rights Organization (GHAMRO), the Audiovisual Rights Society of Ghana (ASORG) and the Reprographic Rights Organization of Ghana (Copy Ghana) are the three Collective Management Organisations (CMOs) in Ghana. The three CMOs replaced the Copyright Society of Ghana (COSGA) established in 1985 (Monyatsi, 2018.) Apart from Copy Ghana, which collects royalties on behalf of authors and writers, GHAMRO holds the rights for music composers, authors, producers and publishers, while ASORG targets right owners in the audiovisual industry (movie producers, actors and writers.)



In spite of these legal structures put in place, creative artistes still complain of near zero benefit from their rights. Celebrated Ghanaian music and sound engineer, Zapp Mallet, who had once served as an official of GHAMRO, in an interview with Accra based Joy FM, believes he is “in the right profession, the right vocation, but in the wrong location” because revenue flow for him as a sound engineer has always been a problem, largely because “GHAMRO has a tough time collecting revenues of artistes from radio stations, TV stations and other medium, and that if the institution could fix its collection issues, generations coming would enjoy the fruits of their labor” (*Myjoyonline*, 2020, para 8).

The welfare associations within the creative arts industry, especially Musicians Union of Ghana (MUSIGA) and Ghana Actors Guild (GAG) have also had their fair share of blame for the plight of their members. The GAG has been battling with leadership crisis for some time, causing the breakaway of screen actors to form a new group, Screen Actors Guild, Ghana (*Peacefmonline*, 2019, March 12). MUSIGA, also, without a substantive President, has been the look-up-to welfare body for most musicians, although the young musicians do not consider it attractive, largely because of transparency issues (*Graphic Showbiz*, 2019).

With the establishment of the Ageing Musicians Welfare Fund (AMWeF) in 2013 to cater for musicians who are 60 years and above as well as incapacitated musicians, the immediate past president of MUSIGA, Bice Osei Kuffour said over 200 musicians had benefitted from the AMWEF Fund. “It started as a benevolent donation fund, every six months give every member GH¢200.00. They had about 102 registered members” (*Adomonline*, 2019, para. 4). On the whole, the AMWeF has not alleviated the plight of musicians; neither have the CMOs. For the Screen Actors Guild, Ghana,

which is in its formative years, it has a cause to chart to secure the future of its members.

Ghanaian actor, Lydia Forson's eulogy to ace comedian Bob Okala, when he passed in 2016 during a performance in Koforidua, in spite of his age-related health conditions, sums up the frustrations of the creative person in Ghana:

It's easy to assume we have it all, after all, how will you know we don't. To bring you the best, we often have to suppress our own challenges and discomfort just to entertain and live up to the standards you've set for us. Where do you think the money comes from? How are we constantly trying to bring out the best amidst your criticisms without any money? How? Why do we continue? Because it is a passion that you can't run away from, a passion that needs to be fed, a passion that needs to continue to give no matter how unappreciated, underrated or disrespected it makes you feel. (*Ghanagist.com*, 2016, para.3).

In spite of the challenges that come with celebrity status, it has become appealing for many because of the constant media spotlight, most of the time coming with it, wealth and access. As Marshall (1997) puts it, celebrity has become "a metaphor for value" in today's world (p.7). However, the alluring benefits of being a celebrity is often short-lived and when not managed properly, is lost. Kurzman, et al. (2007) speak of fame as "status on speed" (p. 347) in which people continually move in and out of celebrity status (van de Rijt, et al., 2013).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Celebrities rise to fame, plateau, and then decline before reclaiming, at least partly, their former celebrity status. As Currid-Halkett (2010) observes, the time span between the rise and evaporation of celebrity is getting shorter, and the capital value for a number of celebrities is diminishing. This thus require of celebrities to have a

recurrent media visibility to generate or maintain their celebrity capital in order to avoid fade and decline (Driessens, 2013).

Every year, news of actors, musicians, boxers and athletes in financial and health crisis in Ghana raises an important question about the management of celebrity lifestyle while in their prime. Of interest also are the preparations they make towards the imminent stage of being post-prime, and their life experiences of living as “non-active” celebrities.

Studies into celebrity life and the stages in the continuum of fame have been an ongoing area of exploration. Celebrities go through different transition periods as they try to maintain their attention capital. Carrillat and Ilicic (2019) in exploring the different phases of the celebrity life and its implications for brand endorsements, developed the celebrity capital life cycle framework, building on Driessens’ (2013). The framework comprises four stages: acquisition, consolidation, abrupt downfall/slow decline, and redemption/resurgence. They averred that brand endorsements and advertising targeting celebrities could be examined through the lenses of the celebrity capital life cycle as celebrity recognizability fluctuates over time.

The transitions in the celebrity career journey have also been investigated from the perspective of ageing, and how old celebrities construct new identities for themselves. Marshall and Rahman (2014), for example, explored celebrity as a point of expression between consumer culture and the reconfiguration of ageing lifestyles in Canadian magazines. They found the representations as positive, where ageing stars were generally presented as fit, fashionable, functional and flexible.

Of interest as well to researchers studying celebrity life in transition has been in the area of athletes transitioning into retirement. Carapinheira, et al. (2018) has explored the career termination of elite football players in Portugal. Rens (2017) and Rogers (2014) have also extensively investigated the changes in fame and fortune of American athletes after leaving the sport. Central to these studies are how the athletes adjusted to their new lives after retiring from the sport and moving into private lives.

Overall, the most elaborate work done on celebrity life, outside exploring career termination of sports people, has looked into the lived experiences of contemporary American celebrities. Rockwell and Giles (2009) investigated, through in-depth interviews, fifteen celebrities from various societal categories: law, business, government, publishing, music, television, entertainment and sports, discovering first hand, participants' experiences of living with the phenomenon of fame.

From the existing body of literature, minimal research attention has been directed towards the unique experiences of entertainment celebrities. These celebrities are touted as the conventional celebrities (Gabler, not dated; Turner, 2004) since their continuous existence depends on their media visibility. However, as Rockwell and Giles (2009) aver, it is difficult to recruit famous individuals as research participants, thus the seeming lack of study on the post-prime experiences of entertainment celebrities. In Africa and Ghana in particular, research into celebrity transition and lifestyle choices is minimal, as the bulk of studies have focused on celebrity brands and endorsements (Brew, 2019; Khalid, 2018).

Thus, my study on the lived experiences of Ghanaian entertainment celebrities who are no more in their prime, and have their careers virtually halted, might tell a story that is often left out of the media – what happens to these celebrities when they return

to their “real” lives? From the background and literature, a number of these stars go through emotional issues, aside the wealth and health issues that get media attention. I therefore seek to broaden the narrative by focusing on how the entertainment celebrities experience and make meaning of their post-prime, looking at it from the multi theoretical level. Employing Ebaugh’s (1988) Role Exit Theory, Burke and Stets’ (2009) Identity Theory and Cummings (2010) Coming to Grips with Loss theory, I, in bringing out their experiences, explore the various stages and processes the celebrities go through as they moved into post-prime.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate the experiences of celebrities as they transitioned from an active celebrity life into post-prime.
2. To examine how the celebrities’ identities change as a result of being post-prime.
3. To explore the coping strategies the celebrities in their post-prime adopt.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of the celebrities as they transitioned from an active celebrity life into post-prime?
2. How do the celebrities’ identities change as a result of being post-prime?

3. What coping strategies do post-prime celebrities adopt to match their new identity?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The overall goal of this study is to investigate the post-prime life of celebrities. In exploring their lived experiences, I seek to bring to the fore, the unique experiences of the celebrities as they transitioned from active celebrities into low-key celebrities. This approach is particularly important in an era where the media have massive interest in celebrities' lifestyle, but less interested in their lives when their attention capital drops, unless they are faced with challenges and misfortunes.

This study has both academic and practical significance. By highlighting the experiences of celebrities who have transitioned from active celebrity status to one of inactiveness, I adopt a multi theoretical approach to analyze different stages of their lives. Drawing on Ebaugh's (1988) Role Exit Theory, Burke and Stets' (2009) Identity Theory and Cummings (2010) Coming to Grips with Loss theory, I will explore the various stages and processes the celebrities go through as they moved into post-prime. Of particular interest is how they construct new identities for themselves and how they manage the loss of being post-prime. This approach adds to the body of literature in the application of the theories in understanding the lived experiences of entertainment celebrities in Ghana, Africa and by extension, post-prime celebrity life in general.

On the practical level, this study provides an insight into understanding the lives of entertainment celebrities. In the Ghanaian media, post-prime celebrities have been represented as neglected, poor, ageing, with diminishing capital. This research

attempts to bring out the underlying stories to these representations, from the actors' own perspectives. Their stories (as told away from the cameras and microphones) will provide their followers, stakeholders in the entertainment industry in Ghana, as well as policy makers, a more empathetic perspective to understanding their issues and instituting strong systems that reward the creative actors for their contributions.

On the whole, this research has applications for all those who are connected, one way or the other, to celebrities, and/or are concerned about their well-being. It is also applicable to those who aspire to be celebrities, and those who are constantly in the intense scrutiny of the public. This is important because an insight into the experiential world that celebrities find themselves, and the challenges that come with fame, can help prepare would-be celebrities to manage the fame that comes with the status.

### **1.6 Delimitation**

The study is focused on analyzing the lived experiences of celebrities who are past their prime. With the recent constant attention given to celebrities by the mass media when their accumulation of attention capital diminishes (Rojek, 2012), it is imperative to explore the lived experiences of these celebrities. This is important because it appears they are getting the attention of the media because of their plight, either because of their diminishing finances, or their failing health. It is worth noting that the majority of the celebrities whose stories hit the media are within the entertainment sector, mostly actors and musicians.

The study thus limits itself to Ghanaian entertainment celebrities who once enjoyed considerable national attention, and whose social impact, talents and accomplishments

are recognized: those Rojek (2015, p.1) describes as “achieved celebrities.” These achieved celebrities, have tasted fame for over two decades, and hence are in pole position to share their experiences from different perspectives. Post-prime celebrity life thus relates to the current life of achieved entertainment celebrities who have transitioned from their once known active celebrity life.

### **1.7 Organization of the study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the issues that form the scope of the study. This introductory chapter explained the research topic by giving a general background to the Ghanaian celebrity culture and how the post-prime life issues of entertainment celebrities are discussed, directing me to the concerns that led me to conduct this study. The research objectives and questions, significance of the study, delimitations, and the organization of the study are also presented.

A review of the literature associated with the research questions appears in the second chapter. The chapter reviews literature on the phenomenon of celebrity, celebrity life cycle as well as related studies on career transition. The theories that underlie the study is also discussed. Ebaugh’s (1988) role exit theory, Burke and Stets’ (2009) identity theory and Cummings’ (2010) coming to grips with loss theory are explained, and their relevance to the study will be discussed.

Chapter three explains the methodology employed in this study. A description of why a phenomenological qualitative study approach to research the post-prime experiences of Ghanaian celebrities is most appropriate for this kind of study is explained. The chapter also details the recruitment process for the research participants, data collection procedure and method of data analysis.



The fourth chapter is dedicated to the findings and discussions of the study. It presents a thematic analysis of the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. A discussion is done using the theories to analyze the post-prime experiences of the selected celebrities.

Chapter five provides a summary of the study. It draws conclusions and makes recommendations for further studies and also for policy direction. It will include recommendations for the stakeholders in the entertainment industry in Ghana as well as aspiring celebrities.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Introduction

This study investigates the post-prime life experiences of celebrities. In exploring their lived experiences, I seek to bring to the fore how they have transitioned from being well-known stars to a near-life of seclusion, and also highlight their coping strategies of being post-prime. This chapter reviews various works related to celebrity life. This chapter also discusses the Role Exit, Identity and Coming to Grips with Loss theories as a framework for the study. These are intended to help situate the research within context.

#### 2.1 Understanding Celebrity

Different scholars have generally defined celebrity as a person that stands out due to his or her visibility, which has been achieved through mass media (Giles, 2000; Marshall, 1997; Turner, 2004; van Krieken, 2012). As a result of this visibility, they have become well-known and recognized by different publics. Seifert (2010) sees celebrity as a social construct. As such, it presents some difficulty in conceptualizing and defining it.

The diversity of concepts stems from a number of factors, especially how the celebrity found fame, and the kind of label they attach to the fame. For example, it is common for actors and athletes to be referred to as ‘superstars’, while the terms ‘idols’ and ‘icons’ are usually used to refer to artistes in the pop music industry. Celebrity, thus, generally indicates a centralized value which is dependent on media-generated fame (Marshall, 1997).

Heroes and fame, not too new phenomena, have existed for years compared to the recent phenomenon of celebrity, which is a making of mass media (Moloney et al. 2007). Thus, since their inception, studies into the celebrity concept have looked at celebrities in the light of the media setting that produces them.

Scholars have studied celebrities and stars from diverse perspectives. Early star studies had focused on celebrities in Hollywood, produced through film, magazines and pseudo-events (Boorstin, 1961). Inglis (2010) introduces a differentiation between celebrity and renown. He argues that the notion of celebrity has displaced renown, or combined renown with some of the more transitory trends that the emergence of celebrity culture has created. For him, it is worth considering ‘renown’ in the present celebrity discourse as it has not disappeared entirely.

Inglis (2010) further argues that, “fame was and remains either the reward of social achievement in the public field or the tribute necessarily paid to power, wealth, and privilege” (p.10). It is clear from the assertion that fame encompasses elements of both renown and celebrity. Thus, celebrity has often been associated with fame. For Inglis (2010), celebrity is “either won or conferred by the mere fact of a person’s being popularly acknowledged, familiarly recognized, attended to, selected as a topic of gossip, speculation, emulation, envy, groundless affection or dislike” (p. 57).

Boorstin’s (1961) concept of a celebrity as a product, a human pseudo-event, staged entirely for the media, coupled with his famous definition of a celebrity being “a person who is well-known for his well-knownness” (p. 58), is not out of place. In contrast to the star, who possesses an innate talent that validates their exceptional status, the celebrity acquires his fame by just having a strong media presence (Cashmore, 2006, Rojek, 2001). In as much as many scholars agree with these

definitions, and others, it cannot be gainsaid that celebrity remains a dicey concept without any fixed definitions (Driessens, 2013b).

Rojek (2001), for example, further classifies celebrity status “in three forms: ascribed, achieved and attributed” (p.17). The ascribed celebrity is predetermined through one’s lineage. Such celebrities often modify their status through their own actions. For the achieved celebrity, which generally includes actors, artistes and sportsmen, they derive their status from “perceived accomplishments of an individual in open competition” (p. 18). Attributed celebrities are a creation of cultural intermediaries, one linked to Boorstin’s (1960) pseudo-events. Rojek (2001, pp. 21-24) further offers two terms to explain attributed celebrity. The first, celetoid, which he describes as a concentrated form of attributed celebrity, likening them to those involved in criminal acts or sexual scandal, whose fame is short-lived. The second is the concept of the Celeactor. Celeactors are fictional characters who develop from an “institutional feature of popular culture,” representing a “character type that sums up the times” (p. 23).

Right from Boorstin, celebrity research has highlighted and underscored the parallels that exist in the social functions of celebrity and religion (e.g. Rojek, 2001). Marshall (1997), for example, took up the study of celebrity production through mass media, focusing on television, and then the internet. Now that the internet is central to the celebrity, celebrity studies are paying attention to celebrity practices in online communications systems. Senft (2008) has explored the ‘micro-celebrity’ concept, especially techniques celebrities employ within the online space to enhance their celebrity status. Marwick and Boyd’s (2011a) seminal work on celebrity Twitter

practice, for example, show how traditional celebrities also perform intimacy with their online fans to maintain their presence and relevance.

Studying the lived experiences of the post-prime celebrity requires that the status of the participants be established as celebrities. As discussed, celebrity is a product of the mass media and their lives are played in the media. Therefore, understanding the different strands of the celebrity concept is critical to this study as the problems of the post-prime celebrity are largely industrial.

### **2.1.1 Celebrity and the celebrity industry**

In the field of celebrity studies, there are many works that take into consideration the structural connection between celebrity and a celebrity industry (Gamson, 1994; Marshall, 1997), more so when celebrity is considered as a product.

Tracing the works, especially Adorno and Horkheimer's (1997) idea of the cultural industry, it is a fact that celebrities are believed to be part of a homogenizing industry, where their role as constant products or celebrity commodities are never in doubt (Turner, 2004). As Gamson (1994) posits, "Celebrity is clearly, then, an established commercial enterprise, made up of highly developed and institutionally linked professions and sub industries (...). As carriers of the central commodity (attention-getting capacity), celebrity performers are themselves products" (p. 64).

As a celebrity gains more prominence through a massive audience appeal and a sizeable market, the lifestyle of the celebrity is commoditized, so are their clothing, hairstyle, and everything that positions them to be commercially successful, if sold well. And in all this, the major profiteers of celebrity become the "large internationalized media conglomerates" (Turner, 2004, p 84).

Rojek (2001) and Driessens (2013a) opine that celebrities should not only be understood as mere commodities within a cultural industry, but also an embodiment of a dominant cultural frame. Marshall (1997, x) believes that “the celebrity as public individual who participates openly as a marketable commodity serves as a powerful type of legitimation of the political economic model of exchange and value, the basis of capitalism, and extends that model to include the individual.”

### **2.1.2 Celebrity as a form of capital**

Collins (2007) looked at celebrity capital, as “a particular configuration of symbolic capital that is required (among the other forms of capital) to inhabit and operate successfully as a cultural commodity within the field of entertainment” (p. 191). It is interesting to note that, Collins narrows celebrity capital to the entertainment field. He proposes that celebrity capital be measured by studying the accumulated media visibility of a celebrity, thus placing emphasis on the economic value of celebrity.

Hunter et al. (2009, p. 140) define celebrity capital as celebrities’ “public awareness, their favorability, their personality, reputation, and the public’s knowledge of past behaviors.” For them, celebrity capital is a kind of reputational capital that celebrities can capitalize upon to increase their credibility and reliability, which in turn, yields value.

van Krieken (2012) sees the celebrity as the “embodiment of a more abstract kind of capital - attention” (p. 54). He argues that people who have already chalked some level of success, for example in academia have the tendency of gaining more attention than their lesser known colleagues, and to the extent that when they even perform at similar levels. In his view, celebrity is “primarily a matter of the accumulation and

distribution of attention” (p. 55). This attention, Heinich (2012) further explores as a form of media capital. She posits that through the accumulation of media visibility and media representation, the celebrity asserts their capital. Her study suggests that celebrity capital’s basis is recurrent media representations or accumulated media visibility, and therefore, having a specific kind of attention-generating capacity. According to Heinich (2012), the circulation of images of public figures by the new forms of media has created public figures based on their visibility. She thus focuses on celebrity capital as a form of visibility capital, which is conferred by the media.

From the works of Collins (2007) and Heinich (2012), it is clear that Driessens (2013) backs celebrity capital as recognizability or accumulation of media visibility as a result of frequent media representations. He however disagrees that celebrity capital be equated to a type of symbolic capital as posited by Collins (2007).

According to Driessens, celebrity capital, because of its basis in the media, is more able to cut across different social fields. Thus, the media is a form of “meta-capital” that applies influence in several social fields, giving celebrities (those made famous through media exposure) a wide range of locations where they can exercise their capital. This celebrity capital can be traded in for economic capital in the form of product endorsements and social capital acquired through interrelating with other celebrities.

The post-prime celebrity, although less active and has a declining media attention, has public awareness, personality and reputation that they can capitalize on to create economic value for themselves. Celebrity capital framework therefore will seek to examine how the celebrities make use of their post-prime status to stay relevant as celebrities.

### **2.1.3 Celebrity Capital Life Cycle and the Fame Cycle**

For celebrities to maintain and enhance their celebrity capital requires being constantly relevant in the media. And being relevant to the media means retaining one's fame and visibility. However, fame is said to be ephemeral. And it can be attached to, and detached from individuals relatively easily (Marshall 2004). As a result, fame moves easily between the domains of the public and the private for public consumption (Marshall 2004).

Ferris (2007) concludes that “celebrity does not usually last very long” (p. 73.) As Currid-Halkett (2010) puts it, “increasingly, the time span between the rise and evaporation of celebrity is getting shorter” in spite of the massive accumulation of celebrity capital and its spin off benefits (p. 219.)

The ephemeral nature of fame has been largely attributed to the elevation of the ordinary (Gamson, 2011) whereby the public becomes more interested in the lives of otherwise everyday people. The supposed short span of attention span of today's celebrities is common in the arts and entertainment industry. According to Rojek (2001), fame goes through high mobility in especially music, art, literature and politics. When the celebrity capital and fame of celebrities fall, they look at avenues and opportunities to reinvent themselves.

Carrillat and Ilicic (2019) and Deller (2016) place the transitional and ephemeral nature of celebrity life and capital in frameworks – The Celebrity Capital Life Cycle and the Fame Cycle respectively. The celebrity capital life cycle framework stipulates that the celebrity capital of well-known individuals fluctuates throughout different stages over time, with the four stages of Acquisition, Consolidation, Abrupt downfall/decline and Redemption, stressing that “celebrities are at a crossroads and at

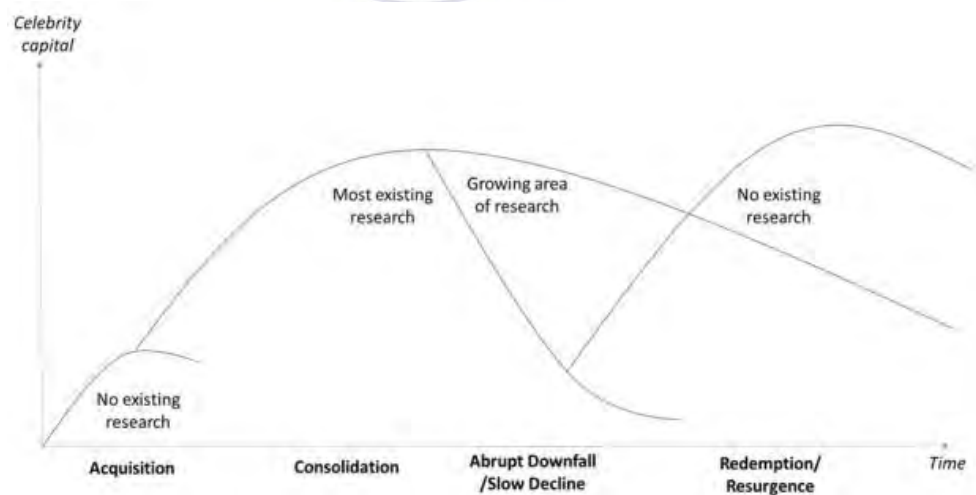


the end of each cycle; their capital may drop to zero or they may move into the next stage of the life cycle” (Carrillat and Ilicic, 2019, p.2).

The acquisition stage highlights the early stages of fame where there is potential the celebrity to influence the masses, hence are identified by businesses to tie up with their growing popularity. The consolidation stage is the height of fame, where the celebrity enjoys widespread recognizability and media visibility. It is at this stage their build most of their capital through endorsements and deals. The third stage, abrupt downfall/decline stage of the celebrity capital life cycle refers to a decrease in media visibility. The last stage, resurgence or redemption, refers to a returning and increasing media visibility and recognizability of the celebrity.

Aside tracing the different stages of celebrity capital on the continuum, the framework also highlights implications for research at every stage of the cycle.

Fig. 1. The celebrity capital life cycle

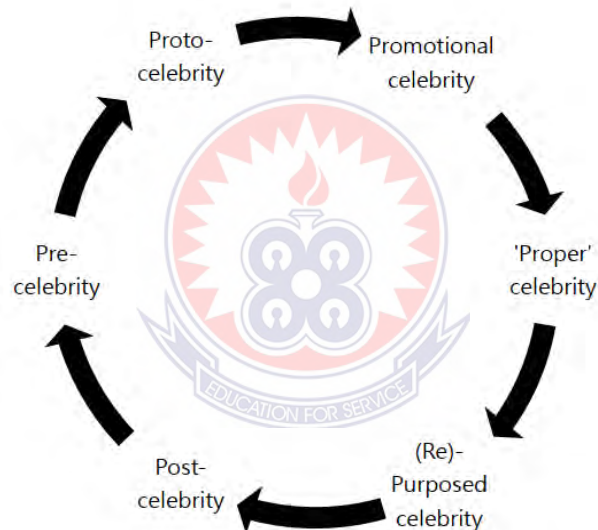


Source: Carrillat & Ilicic (2019)

Deller's (2016) fame cycle on the other hand, captures six stages of celebrity cycle: precelebrity, protocelebrity, promotional celebrity, proper celebrity, (re) purposed celebrity and post celebrity.

The fame cycle was developed to study how celebrities use reality television shows to relaunch themselves back into the industry after having suffered what Carrillat & Ilicic (2019) call the abrupt downfall or slow decline.

Fig. 2. The Fame Cycle



Source: Deller (2016)

'Pre-celebrities' are ordinary contestants who are not known in reality shows, but seek to develop their own star image and with the hope of securing fame. 'Proto-celebrities' enjoy a certain amount of fame, but may not be famous beyond a certain niche. Deller, in this category includes a variety of people in these early stages of fame, such as partners or family members of celebrities, and people in specialized fields like models or budding sports people, celestoids, as well as local celebrities who

seek to gain recognition in another territory. ‘Promotional celebrities’ are active professionals, mostly newsreaders, actors and television presenters who seek to boost their career through reality TV appearances. ‘Proper’ celebrity, according to Deller (2016), is the pinnacle of fame. These celebrities are well-known and established stars who only appear in reality TV as guests, judges or mentors, using the medium as promotional vehicle to enhance their relevance. ‘(Re-) purposed celebrities’ have one aim - to rebrand themselves. Reinvention becomes necessary as a result of reputational damage and want public acceptance for their current state, rather than their former identity. The final stage of the fame cycle are the post-celebrities. These celebrities were, or may still be famous or enjoy some appreciable level of recognition, but are no longer as successful as they used to be.

The fame cycle, however, does not, in actual fact, end with the ‘post-celebrity’ or begin with the ‘pre celebrity.’ According to Deller, “not all celebrities will cycle through each stage: some may get stuck on one stage; others may bypass several stages altogether; and some may operate in two stages simultaneously” (Deller, 2016, p. 376.)

Since this study is interested in the transition life of the celebrities, the fame and celebrity life cycles serve as good literature to analyzing the experiences of the celebrities. Post-prime celebrities have the capacity to relaunch themselves back into active celebrity life as repurposed celebrities as indicated in the fame cycle to avoid as much as possible, moving into post-celebrity status, which is the third stage (abrupt downfall/slow decline) of the celebrity life cycle.

## **2.2. Career transition and life changes**

Research into celebrity life and the stages in the fame continuum have been an ongoing area of exploration. Celebrities go through different transition periods as they try to maintain their relevance Deller (2016). Apart from Carrillat and Ilicic's (2019) celebrity capital life cycle, which explores the different phases of the celebrity life and its implications for brand endorsements; and Deller's (2016) Fame Cycle, the transitions in the celebrity career journey have been investigated from different perspectives.

### **2.2.1 Ageing and identity changes**

Celebrity culture is touted as a culture of the youth (Jerslev & Petersen, 2018). However, in studying the post-prime celebrity experiences, it is imperative to explore literature on age and retirement, and how old celebrities construct new identities for themselves. This become necessary considering that the post-prime celebrities in this study are within the retirement bracket of almost 60 years and above.

Cook (2018) in his study, "Continuity, Change and Possibility in Older Age: Identity and Ageing-as Discovery," focused on how old age has been framed as a time of disengagement and withdrawal from social integration. The study which focused on 16 older people, explored how they construct their identity. Using participant generated imagery and interview data, Cook concluded that the participants experienced older age "as a time of continuity, discovery, possibility and change, where identity is multiple and fluid, and emerges through the links they make between the past, present and future" (p.178). Thus, in as much as the research participants conceded that ageing always came with its own difficulties, they challenged the

negative stereotypes of old age by constructing an identity, building on their past by actively exploring new experiences and possibilities.

Bauger and Bongaardt (2016) have also studied the retirement and old age identities by exploring the lived experiences of well-being in retirement of nine retirees from Southeastern Norway. Generally, the participants of the study had a good awareness of their health, and were appreciative of a functioning body; as well as that new experience of time presenting possibilities for action.

In as much as Cook (2018) and Bauger and Bongaardt (2016) did not focus entirely on celebrities or famed personalities, the studies present a useful grounding to this study, as the participants for this study for that matter, are within the old age bracket who are also exploring the transition journey with identity issues to content with.

Marshall and Rahman (2014) have also studied ageing lifestyle, focusing on old celebrities. Their study explored celebrity as a point of expression between the consumer and how their perceptions of them help reshape their identities. The study focused on ageing stars whose celebrity status was used to promote a particular vision of successful ageing. Drawing on Third Age identity theory, the study analyzed how old celebrities had been represented in a Canadian newspaper and found the representations as largely positive, where ageing stars were generally presented as “fit, fashionable, functional and flexible” (p.8), therefore concluding that old age also comes with it a positive identity.

### **2.2.2 Celebrity life in transition**

Researchers studying celebrity life in transition has focused on athletes transitioning into retirement. Carapinheira, et al. (2018) explored the career termination of elite

football players in Portugal. The study analyzed the retirement of elite football players in Portugal, specifically, the quality of retirement and the adjustment of the athletes to their new life. Sampling ninety retired professional footballers, the study concluded that most of the Portuguese footballers retired involuntarily. While more than half of the sample struggled to adapt to their new life, and experienced mental and physical disorders, the majority of the retired footballers had remained connected to the sport, even after retiring.

Rens (2017) and Rodgers (2014) have also extensively investigated the changes in fame and fortune of American athletes after leaving the sport. Central to these studies are how the athletes adjusted to their new lives after retiring from the sport and moving into private lives. Rens' (2017) study interviewed eight retired professional athletes, concluding that the athletes struggled to find time to prepare for retirement, noting that the circumstances concerning the end of their career influenced the transition to a new life, mostly as a result of injury, deselection, aging and decrease in performance, and personal career choice.

Rodgers (2014), like Rens, targeted male athletes. She argued in her study that although all the 28 professional football players she interviewed occupied a high appreciation of recognition for a short period of time, they entered and exited the role with different levels of status and capital. Thus, noting that the structural inequalities account for much of the difference in retirees' experiences in life after sport.

The work of Rockwell and Giles (2009) on celebrity life, outside exploring career termination of sports people, has looked into the lived experiences of contemporary American celebrities. Rockwell and Giles investigated, through in-depth interviews, fifteen celebrities in the field of law, business, government, publishing, music,

television, entertainment and sports, discovering first hand, participants' experiences of living with the phenomenon of fame and its fluctuating effects. Rockwell and Giles' participants in admitting to having enjoyed enormous fame, with all the nodes that come with, largely were not content. Rockwell and Giles (2009) identified loss of self, mistrust and demanding expectations, as the major regrets the celebrities held on to.

Living with regrets has spurred celebrities to position themselves to maintain a high level of relevance within the industry. In Africa and Ghana in particular, research into celebrity transition and lifestyle choices is minimal, as the bulk of studies have focused on celebrity brands and endorsements (Khalid, 2018). In studying the motivation and practices of growing personal branding in Ghana, Khalid (2018) interviewed the management teams of five Ghanaian celebrities, to gauge their motivations for building and managing their personal brands. The study also focused on the strategies and resources that are invested into the artistes to make them attract brands. The results suggested that celebrities in Ghana manage personal brands for marketing purposes. The celebrities saw their identity as commodities that they could capitalize on to bring them both economic and social returns.

Studying the stages of the celebrity life still remains a grey area, something this study attempts to cover. It is worth noting that the career sustainability of the Ghanaian musician has been studied, from the perspective of the actors themselves. Brew (2019) investigated the career sustainability of Ghanaian musician Okyeame Kwame, a pioneer of the hiplife/hiphop movement in Ghana. Using in-depth interviews and participant observations, the study traced his entrepreneurial skills, education and his utilizing of his creative outputs as some of the strategies that have contributed to his

consistent relevance within the music industry in Ghana. Like Khalid's (2018) conclusion, the celebrity's prime interest is to attract brands in order to keep them afloat. The study, however, is limited to his career as musician and its successes and takes little or no interest in his challenges and lifestyle choices.

### **2.3 Loss and coping as a concept**

To come to grips with loss is a process (Cummings, 2010). This requires adopting strategies that help in managing the loss. This review of the loss concept and the coping mechanisms adds to the Cummings loss theory to analyze how the celebrities try to overcome their loss.

Celebrities, like all individuals are confronted with numerous events and problems that they have to deal with throughout their lives. However, some of these events like “ending a close relationship, loss of a valued and beloved person, loss of work, loss of organ and loss of certain values” have a significant impact on life (Yasemin & Ozkan, 2020, p. 352).

Loss is an indispensable part of life and the individual goes through a process as a result of loss (Cummings 2010). The time of sadness after loss is defined as mourning. Mourning reflects the cultural dimension of the process (Yasemin & Ozkan, 2020). Mourning as a concept means severe and prolonged pain after a loss. The process of loss is related to people's beliefs and experiences in coping (Cummings 2010).

Murray (2001) argues that with each life change, there is a loss and a change in the state that was; consequently, this requires external and internal adjustments. While these transitions and this process of adjustment are occurring throughout life, it is only



when one is confronted with meaningful and significant transitions that the dynamic process of adjustment is observable in terms of grief.

Individuals may experience loss in different ways throughout their lives. According to Yasemin and Ozkan (2020), Freud was one of the first theoreticians to bring about a scientific clarity of loss, melancholia, and mourning, arguing that mourning does not only occur in reaction to death, but also for values and situations (Yasemin & Ozkan, 2020, p. 353), just as Cummings (2010) posits.

Yancey's (2013) perspective of loss from the perception of age ties into this study as the post-prime celebrities fall within the old age bracket. Yancey (2013) argues that middle-aged adults experience important life transitions, such as caring for aging parents, coping with marital changes, and adapting to new family roles, and for older individuals, the aging process can lead to developmental losses. Some elderly people may experience this loss more intensely, especially when they are physically dependent or feel close to death; however, depending on their previous experience, they may show flexibility after the loss and develop coping skills (Yancey, 2013).

### **2.3.1 Managing loss**

Kubler-Ross' (1969) five-stage mourning process - denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance has been a foremost model of adapting the mourning process to self-loss in order to guide expected behavior. The model studied the experiences of individuals who battled with terminal illnesses or end of life, thereby developing a process theory for handling such losses.

Cummings' (2010) coming to grips with loss, on the other hand, explains how people negotiate the process of resolving any significant loss, not pertaining to only death.

According to Cummings (2010) the four-stage loss cycle - discovering the loss, assessing it, mourning the loss, and coping - is the “core variable” of the loss process in that people experience loss (even if the same kind of loss), in many ways (p. 16). Thus, the loss theory provided a framework to make meaning of the reason people who share a shared loss, experience the loss in different ways.

According to Yancey (2013), life experiences can shape the methods used to cope with the stress of loss. The individual can first try his / her methods. When the usual coping methods do not work, they may need new ones. Emotional expression can be a way of dealing with loss. However, some individuals can better deal with loss situations when they focus on positive situations and optimistic emotions (Yasemin & Ozkan, 2020).

Yancey (2013) further notes that spirituality can affect the ability of the individual and family members to cope with loss. Positive practices, however, emphasize important aspects of loss, such as spiritual resources like well-being, peace, comfort, and tranquility, belief, support communities, friends, hope and meaning for life, and religious practices.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

The current study seeks to examine the post-prime celebrity life of selected Ghanaian celebrities. Since the study focuses on the career transition of entertainment celebrities, I employ the Role Exit, Identity, and Coming to Grips with Loss theories as a framework for the study.

### **2.4.1 Role Exit theory**

The Role Exit theory is credited to Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh, a professor of sociology, an ex, Catholic nun who abdicated to become a wife and mother. She

published her seminal work, *Becoming an Ex, The Process of Role Exit* in 1988. Drawing on interviews with 185 people, Ebaugh explored a wide range of role changes, including, ex-alcoholics, divorced people, ex-convicts, mothers without custody of their children, ex-doctors, ex-cops, retirees, ex-nuns, and transsexuals. As this diverse sample reveals, Ebaugh focuses on voluntary exits from significant roles. What emerged were common stages of the role exit process—from disillusionment with a particular identity, to searching for alternative roles, to turning points that trigger a final decision to exit, and finally to the creation of an identity as an ex.

Fuchs Ebaugh (1988) describes role exit as “the process of disengagement from a role that is central to one’s self-identity and the reestablishment of an identity in a new role that takes into account one’s ex-role” (p.1). The theory explains the process of retirement and the change of identity. Two major facets are evident from the definition - the leaving of a role and the recreation of a new role. This reinforces how people do not entirely do away with their identities when they exit a particular role, but rather reinvent themselves to fit into their new social circumstances. Ebaugh argues in the theory that there is always a “hangover identity” when a role is exited, thus retaining vestiges of the role as part of the new self-concept (p. 5).

The “hangover identity” brings to the fore the strains that exist between the present and past. Therefore, when one exits a role, people still view the role exiter as having, at a particular point in time, been associated with that role. This comes with it both positive and negative implications for identity transition and development. The transition often becomes less shocking for those who previously experienced identity foreclosure as they are able to imbibe some aspects of their previous identity into the new one.

The role exit theory thus becomes useful for analyzing the process of identity transition. Ebaugh (1988) identifies two main processes that role exiters experience: disengagement and disidentification. Disengagement refers to “the process of withdrawing from the normative expectations associated with a role” (p. 3). Here, individuals stop associating themselves with the expected behaviors that accompany a role. Disengagement is more about external role commitment, whereas disidentification is more internal. The disidentification process happens when role exiters “begin to shift their identities in a new direction; that is, they begin to think of themselves apart from the people they were in previous roles” (p. 4). Fuchs Ebaugh posits that “disengagement leads to disidentification” (p. 4).

According to Ebaugh (1988), role exiters go through a series of stages in the process of role exit. She identified four stages people experienced as they transitioned from one role to another: *first doubts*, *seeking alternatives*, *making a decision or turning point*, and *creating the ex-role*. The first stage of becoming an ex is experiencing first doubts. At this stage the exiters doubt their current role and essentially reinterpret and redefine “a situation that was previously taken for granted” (p. 41). Here, the exiters start to reassess the benefits and costs of their current role. Ebaugh notes that some never go beyond the first doubt stage, while others wave through swiftly on their way to becoming an ex. As the exiters begin to entertain first doubts, they begin to seek alternatives, where they start to consider themselves in new roles.

The third stage, the turning point, is the moment the actors actually exit the roles that have been very much part of their identities. Ebaugh breaks the turning point stage into five types - *specific events*, *the last straw*, *time-related factors*, *excuses*, and *either-or alternatives*. Specific events relate to important events in the lives of the exiter, like divorce or death, or any such event that holds a symbolic importance to the

person. The *last straw* turning point takes place as a result of an accumulation of multiple insignificant events and then occurs, a situation that forces the individual to make a decision. The third turning point, *time-related factors*, are events that are tied to time like age. *Excuses*, the fourth type of turning point, relates to “an incident that provided excuses or justifications for the need to leave a given role [because] some event or authority figure made it clear that an exit was necessary for the well-being of the individual” (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 130). The last turning point, the *either/or alternative* occurs when it becomes imperative for people leave a particular situation or experience a possible loss. For example, an alcoholic entering treatment or losing his job (Ebaugh, 1988, p 132-134).

After the turning point stage, actors start creating an ex-role. According to Ebaugh (1988), “... the process of becoming an ex involves tension between one’s past, present, and future. One’s previous role identification has to be taken into account and incorporated into a future identity” (p. 149). She emphasizes the need to acknowledge the exiters’ former role by incorporating the former role into the new role, in what she calls “hang-over identity” (p. 149). She further avers that the reaction of society and family and friends to the new role is an important factor within the creating the ex-role stage.

#### **2.4.2 Identity Theory**

Identity theory, historically grew out of symbolic interaction (SI), particularly structural symbolic interaction. Specifically, structural symbolic interaction is a version of symbolic interaction that stands in contrast to the traditional approach to symbolic interaction, with both versions drawing on the seminal work of the George Herbert Mead (Burke & Stets, 2019). Herbert Blumer is credited with coining the

term “symbolic interactionism,” and it was his ideas that led to the development of what we refer to as traditional symbolic interaction.

Central to this study, however is self and identity of the post-prime celebrity. In this regard, I draw upon Burke and Stets’ (2009) identity theory to analyze how the celebrities’ identities are affected as a result of the transition.

Burke and Stets (2009) define identity as “the set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person” (p. 3). Identity theory helps to establish the meaning of the different identities a person may hold and how those identities interrelate and affect a person socially and emotionally. It also analyzes how identities affect how people are connected to society (Burke & Stets, 2009).

According to Burke and Stets’ (2009) identity theory, people develop their identities in three ways. The first method is social learning. This involves the kind of environment people are raised, and how through play, learning and interactions, they experiment with different roles. The second is direct socialization, which involves specific training, education, or orientation of people to “act correctly” as regards their identity (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 194). The third, reflected appraisal method of developing identities explains how people view their identities based on the feedback they receive from others.

#### **2.4.2.1 Components of an identity**

Burke and Stets (2009) further identifies four basic components of an identity – *input*, *identity standard*, *comparator*, and *output*. These four components work as a cycle

and help to verify identities. The *input* refers to how people perceive their environment. In this instance, people try and match their perceptions to their identity standards, which tends to vary due to individualized identity standards. *Identity standard* relates to how a person expresses a particular identity. In every culture, there are usually related identity standards, though individuals also personalize their unique identity standards. The *comparator*, the third component, is the part that compares the input perceptions to the identity standards. The comparator tends to align the input and identity standard. In such alignment, if there is a major discrepancy, the comparator sends an “error signal” which changes the behaviors to better align with the identity standards (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 66). The fourth, the *output*, relates to the behavior that is exhibited based on the information provided by the comparator. Here, if there is a discrepancy between the input and the identity standard, the comparator will indicate a need for a change in behavior so that the newly acquired behavior, or output, is aligned to the identity standard.

There are instances individuals try to maintain their perceptions in alignment with their identity standards. But, in most instances, when they are unaligned, the output behaviors do not change the environment to create a new alignment. This is what Burke and Stets (2009) refer to as a “failure in identity verification” (p. 76). Accordingly, when this failure happens, people go through series of stress, hence interrupting the identity verification process. This causes a person to “find ways of reestablishing the normal identity process, or else find new identities” (p.77).

#### **2.4.2.2 Sources of identity change**

Burke and Stets (2009) identified four sources of identity change. The first source of identity change is the result of changes in a situation. There is conflict between the

identity standard and the situational meaning when the meaning of the situation changes. Change therefore ensues when there is difficulty in changing the situation to align with the identity standard. Burke and Stets cite examples such as winning the lottery and becoming rich instantly, or being robbed, or a home burning down, or people being “uprooted from family, friends, and job, and lose their normal means of verifying their identities” (Burke and Stets, p. 183). In all these, people’s behavior patterns are altered and their identities change, sometimes in unanticipated ways.

The second reason for identity change is identity conflict. There is a possible conflict between identities when people develop new identities, with such changes ensuring there is coexistence. This conflict can cause identities to change in order to coexist.

The third identity change occurs as a result of conflict between the identity standard and an individual’s behaviors. There are instances when the individual’s behavior is in not aligned with his or her identity standard. Such change in behavior, with time, causes changes in the identity standard. Negotiation and the presence of others is the last source of change. This change occurs when individuals see themselves from the perspective of others and thus, modify their identity based on how others see them.

### **2.4.3 Coming to Grips with Loss Theory**

Kate Cummings’ Coming to Grips with Loss theory is built upon Kubler-Ross’s theory regarding terminal illness or end of life. Kubler-Ross (1969) studied the experiences of individuals who battled with terminal illnesses, thereby developing a process theory for such handling losses. The theory provided five stages of grief - denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. These stages



related to how terminal patients behaved under the circumstances they found themselves.

Cummings, inspired by Kubler-Ross' decided to study loss from a wide range of perspective, other than death. Then a clinical director of a residential facility that provided treatment to women recovering from drug addiction and alcohol, and a doctoral student, Cummings wanted to "contribute to the field of addictions treatment and provide some new insight, using Grounded theory, into treatment for this devastating issue" (Cummings, 2010, ix).

Cummings (2010) differs from other loss theories as it explains how people negotiate the process of resolving any significant loss, not pertaining to only death. According to Cummings (2010) the theory is the "core variable" of the loss process in that people experience loss (even if the same kind of loss), in many ways (p. 16). Thus, the loss theory provided a framework to make meaning of the reason people who share a shared loss, experience the loss in different ways.

Coming to Grips with Loss theory is grounded on a four-stage loss cycle - discovering the loss, assessing it, mourning the loss, and coping. According to Cummings (2010), there are different ways people discover loss. The discovery could be through internal or external processes. When people identify changes in their faith, social status or relationship, for example, it is considered an internal discovery. Cummings (2010) cites the case of a seminary student who questioned his personal belief in the existence of God. The student's internal process of identifying the loss starts a phase of "coming to grips with loss." The discovery process of loss can also be external. Cummings further details how the sudden loss of a job can trigger such inquiry. In

such an instance, the affected person is stunned since external sources of loss evoke “intense emotional reactions of powerlessness, anger, or feeling victimized” (p. 29).

The next stage is assessing the loss (Cummings, 2010). Assessing a loss requires that people give value to the loss and determine its extent of impact. This stage gives a perspective of victim’s life experiences, the possible effects of the loss and the possible duration of the loss (Cummings, 2010). The premium a person places on a loss is “based on their priorities, hopes, plans, and expectations for themselves or others” (p. 31). Thus, the kind of life experience people have impacts the manner they assess the loss. Cummings, for example, describes the experiences of a woman who constantly had safety concerns after suffering a car break-in. Because the woman places value on her safety, she constantly comes to grips with her loss. According to Cummings, personal experiences exert the greatest influence on the loss process, and may be an important factor in determining the length of time people experiences the loss process.

The third stage of the cycle is the mourning loss (Cummings, 2010). At this stage, victims go through various emotions attached to the loss. The mourning process glides from “the initial reaction, to ongoing responses, to the evolving situation” (p. 34). This stage may involve different feelings, ranging from anger to sadness at their situation. The extent of the mourning depends on factors like the mental health of the victims, resources available to them, to friends and family. The ability of victims to process mourning could lead to developing coping strategies that will lead to dealing with the loss.

Coping stage is the final stage of coming to grips with loss (Cummings, 2010). During this stage of the process, people use various strategies to manage their loss.

The effectiveness of such strategies determine how survivors easily move through the cycle or otherwise. Two basic ways of coping with the loss entail delaying the process of coming to grips with the loss, and resolving the loss using the available resources to them and planning through the loss. According to Cummings (2010), the coping stage is not static as it takes place almost at the same time with assessing and mourning a loss.

## **2.5 Relevance of the theories to the study**

At the core of this study are the post prime experiences of selected Ghanaian celebrities. In examining this, I sought to trace their transition from being in the spotlight as achieved celebrities, to virtually being less recognized for what they used to be celebrated for. With such focus, I found Ebaugh's (1998) Role Exit theory useful in tracing the transitional experiences of the celebrities, because understanding the various types of role exit is critical to analyzing why certain celebrities maintain their fame and fortune, and others do not. Also, the theory helps to understand the ways in which the larger social and industrial issues contribute to their predicament, forcing them to "retire."

In as much as the Role Exit theory has been used in studying retirement experiences, especially athletes (Carapinheira, et al., (2018); Drahotka and Eitzen (1998); Stier (2007) because of the short span of their careers, and also because they go through different stages of transition (loss of form, injuries, deselection), the life and career of the entertainment celebrity is not bound and rigid like sport men. They may not retire, as athletes do, but they equally go through transitions, which invariably may demotivate them to continue being an achieved celebrity. As Carrillat and Ilicic (2019) notes in their celebrity capital life cycle framework, majority of research on

celebrities is on the consolidation stage of the cycle - the stage they had already attained much capital attention- with little or no research devoted to how celebrities acquire capital and the transition journey of trying to resurge after a dim in capital. Thus, I apply the role exit theory to study the transitional life of the post-prime celebrity, focusing on entertainment celebrities, not athletes or workers with terminal career paths.

Exiting a role requires adjusting one's identity. Once one exits a role, a new identity is created to match up with the new role (Burke & Stets, 2009). Thus, this study employed the Burke and Stets' (2009) identity theory to gauge the identity experiences of the celebrities whose identities are affected as a result of the transition. Since old identities are not merely done away with when one exits a role, new identities are created to conform to changing social circumstances.

In furtherance, applying the Coming to Grips with Loss theory particularly helps to analyze how the post- prime celebrities cope with their new identities. The theory is relevant as it places emphasis on recovery, and how "mourners" normalize grief. The impact of losing fame and the trappings that come with it are dire, especially for the participants of this study, celebrities who achieved considerable amount of fame and capital in their prime. They go through a cycle of loss; thus applying this loss theory to their situations will help bring to the fore, through analysis, how they manage their difficult experiences.

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter focused on reviewing related works on celebrity life transitions and the industry. Attention was given to the definitional concepts and the stages of celebrity

life and fame because of the focus of the study. In studying the post-prime celebrity experiences, the review explored literature on age and retirement, and how old celebrities construct new identities for themselves. This was necessary considering that the age bracket of the post-prime celebrities in this study. This chapter also reviewed literature on the transition life of the celebrities, where the fame and celebrity life cycles served as good models to analyzing the experiences of the celebrities since the post-prime celebrity has the capacity to relaunch themselves back into active celebrity life as repurposed celebrities. A review of how the post-prime celebrity manage the loss they experienced was also captured in this chapter. The process of loss is related to people's beliefs and experiences in coping, thus mourning as a concept of loss was explored as it serves as an anchoring mechanism to dealing with loss after the loss victim accepts their fate. The theoretical framework underpinning the study - Role Exit, Identity and Coming to Grips with Loss was also reviewed. Role Exit theory applied to tracing the transitional experiences of the celebrities, because understanding the various types of role exit is critical to analyzing why certain celebrities maintain their fame and fortune, and others do not. Exiting a role requires adjusting one's identity. Once one exits a role, a new identity is created to match up with the new role. Thus, the identity theory was reviewed to gauge the identity experiences of the celebrities whose identities are affected as a result of the transition. Coming to Grips with Loss theory was also discussed as the theory places emphasis on recovery, and how loss victims normalize grief.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This study examined the post-prime experiences of Ghanaian celebrities, with a focus on their transition from fame, and the changes in identity as a result of potential loss of fame and resources. This chapter presents the methods and strategies employed in data collection and analysis. I initially describe qualitative research approach and explain the reason it was the best approach for the study. I go ahead to describe phenomenology as the research design for the study and adduce reasons for its choice. A detailed explanation of the research process, including recruitment and choice of participants for the study, data collection methods, and analysis is also done. This chapter also focuses on discussion on the trustworthiness of data in the study, as well as the ethical guidelines I followed.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

Creswell (2013) draws a distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods - the two traditions of research. Researchers employing quantitative methods rely on numeric data to explain their study. Apart from relying on variables and statistics, a quantitative study also creates deductive processes and can be easily replicated, often testing a hypothesis. Studying the post-prime experiences of celebrities does not lend itself to be easily quantified, more so when the phenomenon of being post-prime affects individuals differently. I therefore adopted the qualitative research approach since it helped me “to better understand human behavior and experience” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 43) of the post-prime celebrities. Qualitative research methods allowed me to explore human experiences especially where there are unknown variables (Creswell, 2013).

Also, qualitative methods allow easy access to “the meaning, for participants in the study, for the events, situation, experience, and action they are involved with or engaged in” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 30). According to Bazeley (2013), qualitative studies provide grounds to analyze how people experience their world. Different factors interact and influence to affect experiences in qualitative methods, compared to quantitative where causal relationships between variables are established (Maxwell, 2013). Thus, I applied the qualitative approach in examining the post-prime experiences of celebrities from the actors’ own point of view to better understand how they made meaning of the experiences by voicing their personal narratives regarding the phenomenon.

Bogdan and Biklin (2007) notes that all qualitative studies need not necessarily match all the goals. Certain studies may fully develop some of these, while some may lack individual characteristics; however, the study remains qualitative.

Thus, in studying the post-prime experiences of celebrities, three of Maxwell’s (2013) goals for qualitative study apply. Understanding meaning is central to this study as I explored how Ghanaian celebrities experience the transition into post-prime. In so doing, the goal of the study is not only in the physical events and behavior of the participants, but also how they make sense of the meanings and how it influences their behavior. Understanding the context is also critical to this study. This study took into account the cultural environment and concerns of the celebrities. The industrial environment they worked as achieved celebrities very much contributed to their phenomenon. Context also helps shape the narrative of the allure of celebrity life, a take-home for aspiring and current celebrities in Ghana. The third, understanding the process by which events and actions take place, clearly defines the goal of the research. Studying the phenomenon of being post-prime takes into account the

transitional journey of the celebrities since it is a process and not an event. Thus, the study looked at the processes involved, including steps taken or not taken in their (un) anticipated situation in preparing for their post-prime life, and their experiences of this process. In a qualitative study like this, process plays a key role by providing an understanding of the phenomenon of being post-prime, rather than focusing only on products and outcomes.

### **3.2 Research Design**

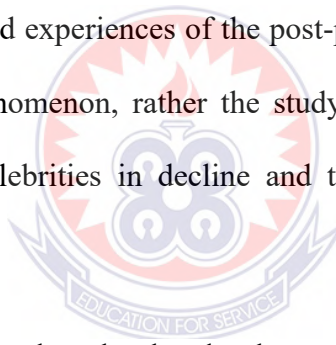
Creswell (2014) describes research design as a plan, strategy and a structure for conducting research work. The selection of a research design is also dependent on the nature of the research problem, the researcher's personal experiences and the audience for the study. Yin (2014) states that the design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions, and ultimately, to its conclusions. He adds that research design is also thought of as a blueprint of research, dealing with at least four problems: what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyze results (Yin, 2014). Research designs, especially in the qualitative studies, include narrative research, case study, grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology (Creswell, 2014).

Phenomenology served as the best design for this study because phenomenology explores the lived human experience. Phenomenology, as a qualitative research design, focuses on the life of the individual and examines individual experiences with regard to a universal phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). I explored the post-prime life of Ghanaian celebrities by using the experience of participants, and then creating clear descriptions of the post-prime situation, by allowing for the inclusion of composite



descriptions of the events, involving the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the experience (Creswell, 2013).

Two concepts in phenomenological research are lived experiences and essences (Vagle, 2014). Lived experiences are the ways people live in relation to a phenomenon. They define the universal structures (that is, essences) of the phenomenon. In distinguishing between other qualitative data and lived experiences, Vagle (2014) used the description of a tree as an example to clarify. According to him, other qualitative traditions may describe the nature of a tree by focusing on the branches, the leaves or the bark. Phenomenologists, on the other hand, will focus on how a person experiences the tree and the personal meaning they associate with it. Thus, in studying the lived experiences of the post-prime celebrity, my focus was not in the nature of the phenomenon, rather the study teased out how the participants experienced living as celebrities in decline and the meanings they make of their situation.



The concept of essence, on the other hand, relates to the common qualities associated with the phenomenon under study. Essences may be equated to “themes” from data in other qualitative methodologies (Vagle, 2014). Applying this to the study, the participants offered raw data of their stories and reflections about their lived experiences. The researcher then reduced the lived-experience information into the essences through bracketing, reflection, and data analysis (Vagle, 2004).

A number of studies examining how stars transition through their careers have used phenomenology. Rens (2017) and Rodgers (2014) used the phenomenology design to extensively investigate the changes in fame and fortune of American athletes after leaving the sport. Central to these studies are how the athletes adjusted to their new

lives after retiring from the sport and moving into private lives. Rockwell and Giles (2009) also used the phenomenology approach to investigate the lived experiences of contemporary American celebrities.

Phenomenology thus, is the best approach to gaining insight into the lived experiences of celebrities in their post-prime. The stories of these celebrities are appropriate to make meaning of those experiences as they existed without external meanings or preconceptions. Also, in investigating the universal qualities of a phenomenon like living as a post-prime celebrity in Ghana that have not completely been conceptualized in earlier research, phenomenology comes in handy.

### **3.3 Sampling Strategy and Size**

The study is focused on analyzing the lived experiences of celebrities who are past their prime. With the constant attention given to celebrities by the mass media when their accumulation of attention capital diminishes (Rojek, 2012), it is imperative to explore the lived experiences of these celebrities in their post-prime era, more so when their plight has gained intense media attention in the recent times in Ghana, either because of their diminishing finances or their failing health. It is worth noting that the majority of the celebrities whose stories hit the media are within the entertainment sector, mostly actors and musicians.

The study thus limits itself to Ghanaian entertainment celebrities who once enjoyed considerable national attention and whose social impact, talents and accomplishments are recognized: those Rojek (2015, p.1) describes as “achieved celebrities.” These achieved celebrities, have tasted fame for over two decades, and hence are in pole position to share their experiences from different perspectives.

In selecting the celebrities as participants for the study, I used purposive sampling selection. Purposive sampling is premised on the assumption that the researcher is interested in understanding, discovering and gaining insight, and therefore chooses a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). It also allows for deliberate selection of participants to provide information not readily available from other sources (Maxwell, 2013). In studying the post-prime experiences of celebrities, purposive sampling helped in selecting the participants that the researcher considered worthy participants because they live with, and have experienced the phenomenon under study. Purposive, as a qualitative sampling technique also allows for collecting rich, detailed and thick data (Patton, 1990). Thus, for a phenomenological study like investigating the post-prime experiences of Ghanaian celebrities, collecting detailed and rich data is of essence; more so when the researcher will rely on this to help make meaning of the description of the phenomenon as described by the participants.

In as much as I relied on purposive sampling technique in identifying the participants, the selection and recruitment process was not as easy as I had anticipated. With this, I had to resort to snowballing technique. Snowballing helped me to identify “cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information rich” (Creswell, 2013, p. 127). Having identified about six entertainment post-prime celebrities who had been in the news, and had publicly spoken about their phenomenon in the Ghanaian media, I reached out to five of them, who initially accepted to be participants for the study. However, only one opened up and accepted to be interviewed. It then became important to rely on the snowballing technique to identify other celebrities living with the phenomenon. With the referrals, I still had to purposively select those that met the selection criteria. According to Cohen et al (2000), in purposive sampling, researchers “handpick the cases to be included in the

sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs” (p. 103). And most importantly, in a phenomenological research study, participants are selected from a homogeneous group of participants to better help understand the true nature of the research subject matter (Cohen et al, 2000).

With the sample size, Creswell (2013) suggests that in selecting participants for a qualitative study, it is important for the researcher to determine the size of the sample they will need. Creswell, however, adds that “It is essential that all participants have [similar lived] experience of the phenomenon being studied” (p. 155). Thus, in a phenomenological study, the size of the participants can be between 2 and 25 (Creswell, 2013). He suggests that the selection of these participants must represent a homogeneous group. Smith et al. (2009) emphasized that phenomenology samples be relatively small sizes, and the aim is “to find a reasonably homogeneous sample, so that, within the sample, we can examine convergence and divergence in some detail” (p. 3).

In all, four participants were enrolled in the study. The participants are achieved celebrities who had lived with fame for over two decades, and now identify as post-prime celebrities. All four participants were male. A female participant was referred as participants but she declined. The relative small sample size, as Smith & Osborn (2008) indicate, allowed the researcher to do a deeper analysis of the participants’ experiences and also helped in identifying common or divergent themes that constituted the lived experiences of being post-prime. Table 1 gives a brief detail about each of the participants.

Table 1: Participants' demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Career and family
George	Male	67 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actor</li> <li>▪ Started acting before 1992; hit limelight from 1999</li> <li>▪ Currently not active; ill health</li> <li>▪ Divorced; 4 children</li> </ul>
Afrifa	Male	65 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actor/Broadcaster</li> <li>▪ Over 40 years as actor and playwright, broadcaster</li> <li>▪ Currently into part time teaching</li> <li>▪ Married; 5 children</li> </ul>
Benjamin	Male	Late 50s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Musician</li> <li>▪ Almost 30 years in music as solo artiste</li> <li>▪ Enjoyed enormous fame with hit albums</li> <li>▪ Moved into movie production</li> <li>▪ Currently in business and politics; music life is inactive</li> <li>▪ Married; 13 children</li> </ul>
Paul	Male	Late 60s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Musician</li> <li>▪ Over 40 years as musician</li> <li>▪ Currently inactive; ill health</li> <li>▪ Single; 1 Daughter</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Data Collection Method

This study used personal interviews as the main data collection source. The experience of each participant informed the research under phenomenological methods. My focus was to record and examine the description of the reality of the post-prime celebrity. In so doing, I did not focus on every account of the participants' story, I rather focused on their experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Braun and Clarke (2013) define interview as a professional conversation with the goal of getting a participant to talk about their experiences, and to capture their language and concepts in relation to a determined topic. They further note that, interviews are ideal for experience-type research questions, and since the focus of the study is to

gauge the lived experiences of the post-prime celebrity, using interviews will help explore their understanding, perception and the construction of things that they have some kind of stake in, so, will give out the rich and detailed responses needed.

A tenet of phenomenology is that the meaning of a lived experience can best be captured through personal interactions between the researcher and the participant. Thus, the main data collection method for this phenomenological study was in-depth interviews. According to Vagle (2014), the interview method is a preferred method of data collection in phenomenology because of its effectiveness in gathering rich descriptions from the participants. Vagle (2014) further recommend the use of unstructured interview method in phenomenological research. Unstructured interviews are conversational, dialogic and open. Unstructured interviews help in gathering rich information and make it possible for the researcher to clarify and address misunderstandings.

Unstructured interview was selected over semi-structured method (which is also ideal for qualitative studies) because of its uniqueness. According to Corbin and Morse (2013), participants in unstructured interviews, have control over the pace of the interview, the amount of detail to disclose, and even emotional intensity. In semi-structured interviews, participants “may withhold important information because the relevant question was not asked, may answer in a perfunctory manner, or not fully cooperate” (Corbin & Morse, p. 340).

Applying unstructured interviews best suited studying the post-prime lived experiences of celebrities. Getting celebrities to tell their life stories in face-to-face interviews is difficult because they are overexposed and over interviewed, hence are generally difficult to recruit as research participants (Driessens, 2014; Rockwell &

Giles, 2009). It is even more difficult if the celebrities are going through some personal struggles and may not be willing to open up to the world. Hence, using unstructured interview method presented the opportunity to make the interview sessions with the celebrities open, flexible, relational and natural without any strains of tension and suspicions.

In spite of the perceived difficulty in recruiting celebrities as research participants, a number of studies have used the interview method to study celebrities. Thus, my choice of the in-depth interview is not out of place. Rockwell and Giles (2009), interviewed 15 American celebrities from entertainment, sports, film, music, television, as well as business law, government and publishing. Rockwell and Giles investigated fame and the temporal phases the celebrities encountered on their way to stardom. Driessens' (2013) empirical work on Flemish celebrities involved in-depth interviews with 29 interviews with famous television and radio presenters, musicians, movie directors, actors, sports people and artists who have been involved in political and/or social causes.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The recruitment period of the study almost ran concurrently with the period of the interviews. I began recruiting participants in January of 2020, with the first interview happening in that same month. The recruitment and interviews continued through to December 2020. I made initial contact with six post-prime celebrities who had made public appearances to discuss their issues, with some publicly offering to be interviewed in the media to help raise funds for their health and financial needs. I thought with their public appeals, it was easier to reach out to them to be considered as participants for the study. However, only one accepted to take part in the study,

with the other five declining. I initially contacted the participants and booked appointment. It was during these meetings that I proposed to use them as participants for my study after I had explained the rationale for the study and its implications for the arts industry and the society.

All six initial targets asked for some time to discuss with their family and/or caretakers first. Follow-ups for feedback were more difficult than I had anticipated. Of the six, only one accepted to be interviewed for the study in January 2020. Three declined with the excuse that would prefer a media interview rather to highlight their plight. Pursuit for the others was not feasible because of their state of health. Their families would also not risk exposing them to visitors because the period was the height of the first wave of the Covid-19.

With the help of some entertainment journalists, I was able to recruit and interview two more participants in September and November of 2020. Through referral of one of the participants, I contacted two more celebrities. All two accepted to be interviewed after initial face-to-face meetings. A week later, one of the participants withdrew on the day of the scheduled meeting. He was prepared to discuss issues of his life as a post-prime musician off the record because he was considering relaunching his career, and had been advised to stay off all interviews and engagements. Assuring him of absolute confidentiality was not enough to convince him. The other also later declined citing personal reasons. She however referred me to a former colleague of hers who agreed to be interviewed for this study. This last interview was on December 31, 2020.

All the interviews were done face-to-face after I had had initial meetings with the post-prime celebrities to establish rapport and trust, and explained the project and its



rationale to them. I also assured them of keeping their identities confidential. Although one participant would not mind revealing his identity, I had to explain how different this study was from a media interview. He understood and even assured of “going very personal” in sharing his experience. All the participants agreed for the interview to be audio recorded with a recorder. The participants were all male, two musicians and two actors who all have been in their various fields for over twenty years. Three live in Accra, and the other in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Interviews lasted between 1 hour and 1 hour 10 minutes. All the interviews were conducted by the researcher at a scheduled and convenient time of the participant. Two of the interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants; one at a media training school, where the participant is a part-time teacher, and the other at a car park of a restaurant behind the participant’s home.

It was important to establish a rapport with the participants because of the nature of the study. Thus, throughout the process, from recruitment to interviewing, I did not make data collection my ultimate goal. I had to meet them at least twice before scheduling the day and date for the interviews. As Smith et al. (2009) aver, people are more likely open up to you if they are familiar with you, and suggest that it is important, at the start of any research interview, for the researcher to establish rapport with their research participants in order to ease up any tension, and for them to feel comfortable about the process. “Unless you succeed in establishing this rapport, you are unlikely to obtain good data from your participant” (Smith et al., p. 64).

Applying the unstructured interviewing method to collect data, the dialogic and conversational, nature reinforced the flexibility and the need to establish rapport. In spite of this, the interviews were intentional and focused. As Vagle (2014) notes, in as

much as unstructured interviews are wide open, they should have boundaries. With this in mind, I had to focus on the research questions that guided the phenomenon under investigation. I had to use prompts in order to direct the focus in interviewing all the participants. In as much as I did not set any order to the questions, where there was a need for participants to elaborate on their ideas and meaning, I had to intervene and probe further. The prompting strategies helped shape the conversation on the phenomenon and helped participants to explore their lived experiences in an open, conversational and dialogic manner consistent with phenomenological research (Vagle, 2014). In a conversational tone, flowing along at the direction of interviewees, I asked participants to share their experiences as celebrities, beginning with how they started and the benefits they accrued as celebrities. I was also interested in how they transitioned to becoming inactive, and the factors that may have led to that. I was also interested in their current life and how they survived to keep up the tag of a celebrity. I asked participants to reflect on their lives, experiences they would love others learn from, their regrets and hopes, even in their post-prime.

As previously indicated, the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Three of the interviews were conducted in English, and one in Twi (a popular local language in Ghana). Although the participant could speak English, he was more comfortable expressing himself in the local dialect. As the researcher is also fluent in the language, it was no barrier to the data collection. The English interviews were transcribed by the researcher, but had to seek for professional help from a retired secondary school Akan teacher to help with the transcription of the interview in Twi. I did my best to ensure anonymity of the participants by assigning pseudonyms to them.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was done based on themes. As Braun and Clarke (2013) indicates, thematic analysis is relatively unique among qualitative analytic methods in that it does not only provide a method for data analysis but can be used to answer almost any type of research question, and almost any kind of data. Thematic analysis can therefore be applied to data in different ways, from experiential to critical, and can be used to develop and detail descriptive account of a phenomenon.

I relied on Creswell's (2013) data analysis steps originally proposed by Moustakas in analyzing the experiences of the participants with the phenomenon of living as post-prime celebrities. First, I organized and prepared the data for analysis by transcribing the interviews. After that, I read through the transcripts extensively. This step, according to Creswell (2013) is to have a sense of the data so as to reflect on its overall meaning. I then began the coding of the data. According to Bazeley (2013), codes are "a means of access to evidence" (p. 125). The initial codes that emerged from the data were somewhat vague, but it was a step to help me organize the data, which led to focused codes to help with concrete analysis. The codes were then graded, identifying main themes and sub themes. I then looked for clues that "provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 82).

Once that was done, I did a detailed description of the experiences of the participants. The description involved explaining the transition journey of each participant. In order to give context to the themes, I used significant phrases and statements from the interviews which were grouped into meaningful units. I was particularly interested in how the participants experienced the post-prime life in order to develop an essence of how it happened. These themes generated were later grouped under and analyzed

based on Ebaugh's (1988) stages of transition: *first doubts, seeking alternatives, making a decision/turning point, and creating the ex-role*. I also wanted to understand clearly the impact of the experience, and how they survive living with the phenomenon. This was done with the four stages of managing loss by Cummings (2010): *discovering, assessing, mourning and coping*. These stages were used as the overarching themes to describe the coping experiences of the participants. As I reviewed the data, I analyzed and interpreted the data. This provided a lens for making meaning from the post-prime experiences and drawing conclusions regarding the "essence" of the phenomenon of living as post-prime celebrity (Creswell, 2013, p. 82).

### **3.7 Ethical issues**

The stories of the participants of this study may not be new as the lives of celebrities are known to people close to them, and those shared in the media. Each of the participants of this study has suffered loss in one way or the other, and continue to suffer. Regardless, they continue to make some public appearances, though they are not in their prime. For them to share stories they are yet to share publicly to this researcher requires the need to maintain confidentiality and privacy, and extreme care in producing the research.

Apart from one participant who did not care about anonymity because he had told his story enough in public and was ready to share it for research purposes, researcher protected the anonymity of all participants to ensure uniformity and confidentiality. Pseudonyms were therefore assigned to the participants. The researcher considers that it is difficult to maintain complete anonymity because of the nature of the study, as some aspects of the stories of the participants may give clues of their identity, I tried

to lessen the risk by describing experiences in general terms, where possible and avoiding specific names and institutions mentioned by participants.

As a researcher for this study, I was committed to the highest ethical standards by showing honesty, responsibility, competence, and credibility (Yin, 2014). I was also committed to respect and show empathy toward the participants with whom I worked. Being an arts journalist and having had the opportunity to work with celebrities, I acknowledge that qualitative study is fundamentally a human endeavor, and as such I was subject to bias. I was obliged to disclose my background to them, which helped facilitate the conversational and dialogic nature of the interviews. However, I tried to bracket my emotions and prior knowledge of the phenomenon in collecting data.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness**

This study investigated the post-prime experiences of four Ghanaian entertainment celebrities. The data from the interviews was analyzed using qualitative research methods. In so doing, the researcher ensured the trustworthiness in a number of ways. According to Maxwell (2013), some qualitative researchers have replaced validity with other terms “such as trustworthiness, authenticity, and quality” (p. 122).

Trustworthiness of the study was done in several ways. The experiences of the researcher and understanding of previous experiences were bracketed, and possible biases explained. In doing this, it ensured that any predetermined ideas about the phenomenon under study did not influence the research in any way. Thus, in order to avoid problems of trustworthiness, one must explain potential biases, though it is practically impossible to eliminate bias in a research study, understanding the

experiences, values and background of a researcher may account for potential bias, and help to further validate the study (Maxwell, 2013).

The interviews conducted were all recorded and transcribed in order to ensure accuracy. This also helped guarantee that the analysis focused on the responses of the participants. The researcher also used member checking, throughout the interview process, to confirm interpretations by frequently checking for clarity and understanding and clarity.

Reactivity was also considered as a potential effect on the trustworthiness of the study. According to Merriam (1998), reactivity is how the researcher may influence the participants or on the setting. Reactivity also occurs when the subject of research is affected by the individual conducting the study. To avoid the possibility of reactivity, I made sure the interview setting was conducive and comfortable enough for the participants. Hence, I allowed the participants to decide where the interview occurred. Two of the participants were comfortable using their home as a setting for the interview. One participant chose a classroom in a media training school. The last interview was conducted in a car, behind a restaurant park behind the participant's house, because of possible distractions in the house. Aside the setting, the researcher did not interfere with the flow of the descriptions of the participants, though I encouraged them to share their stories.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter provided a detailed process and procedure for data collection and analysis. The qualitative research approach was described, and a justification for its choice was explained. The study adopted phenomenology as a research design, and an explanation for its suitability in exploring the lived experiences of the post-prime

celebrity. A detailed explanation of the research process, including recruitment and choice of participants for the study, data collection methods, and analysis were also explained. The ethical considerations that informed the study were also highlighted. The chapter that follows presents an analysis of the data gathered and discusses the findings.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This study sought to investigate the post-prime life experiences of entertainment celebrities in Ghana. In exploring their lived experiences, I traced the stages of the transition journey from active and adored celebrities into stars living in a near-life of seclusion. Of interest to this study also were the kind of identities they kept as post-prime celebrities, and how they managed their loss. To gain an understanding of the unique experiences of the post-prime celebrities, the phenomenological research design was used in answering the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of the celebrities as they transitioned from an active celebrity life into post-prime?
2. How do the celebrities' identities change as a result of being post-prime?
3. What coping strategies do post-prime celebrities adopt to match their new identity?

The research questions, as well as the review of literature served as guide in shaping the interview protocol that was used in gauging the experiences of the celebrities, which were later analyzed based on themes that emerged.

Using relevant theories and related literature, the study brought out the unique experiences of the four participants regarding how they live as post-prime celebrities. In ensuring participants' anonymity, the researcher used pseudonyms for the participants. In this study, "George" refers to Participant 1, who is an actor. Participant 2, an actor/ broadcaster is "Afrifa." Participants 3 and 4, both musicians, are "Benjamin" and "Paul" respectively.



This chapter presents the common themes that emerged from the data. The research questions are answered, analyzed and discussed in relation to the themes, related literature and theories.

#### **4.1 RQ 1 - What are the experiences of the celebrities as they transitioned from an active celebrity life into post-prime?**

This research question explored the experiences of the celebrities as they transition from an active celebrity life into post-prime. Being a celebrity requires that they maintain and enhance their media visibility and relevance, with the understanding that fame is fleeting and it can be attached to, and detached from individuals relatively easily (Marshall 2004). In this digital era, where it is relatively easy to attain fame and celebrity status, “increasingly, the time span between the rise and evaporation of celebrity is getting shorter” in spite of the massive accumulation of celebrity capital and its spin off benefits (Currid-Halkett, 2010, p. 219).

Fame thus, goes through high mobility especially for those in entertainment and politics, when the celebrity capital and fame of celebrities decline, they look at avenues and opportunities to reinvent themselves (Rojek, 2001). The decline in fame and capital is always a process the celebrity goes through, of course, with signs and warnings based on events that prompt them of a likely decline. In answering the research question, the researcher, drew on Ebaugh’s (1988) role exit theory to trace the stages on the transition journey of the post-prime celebrity. Ebaugh describes role exit as “the process of disengagement from a role that is central to one’s self-identity and the reestablishment of an identity in a new role that takes into account one’s ex-role” (Ebaugh, 1988, p.1). In this transition journey, role exiters go through a series of stages: *first doubts, seeking alternatives, making a decision or turning point*, and

*creating the ex-role*. Responses from participants about their experiences with the phenomenon were categorized into themes and are presented through the four phases of the role exit theory.

#### **4.1.1 First doubts**

The first stage of becoming an ex is experiencing first doubts. At this stage the exiters doubt their current role and essentially reinterpret and redefine “a situation that was previously taken for granted” (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 41). The study revealed that the exiters started to reassess the benefits and costs of their current role at quite an early stage of their careers as achieved celebrities. While appreciating the transient nature of celebrity life, all the participants appreciated that there would be a time they would no more be relevant, and their celebrity capital will drop. They therefore made the best of the good that came with it. This is in tandem with Rojek’s (2001) assertion that fame goes through high mobility and celebrities must always prepare for the inevitable.

The participants’ stories of enjoying the perks that came with their status as celebrities aligns with the participants’ experiences. Benjamin, who had been in active music until he bowed out to seek other ventures acknowledged that things change almost every five years for artistes as new trends emerge. He however relished the attention he received when he was in his prime. He recounts with nostalgia:

Those days, when a community hears I am in town, even elderly women will spread their clothes for my car and entourage to tread on. I sometimes felt very guilty of that kind of elevation accorded me. The new school public are also enjoying the celebrities they relate to. (Benjamin)

Paul, who quit active music after four albums, recalled how he travelled at will at the expenses of his fans- a “feat” George, who had to quit acting because of health issues, associates with. George shares his experience below:

You know, so all these two times that I went to Germany, I never paid one single cedi. You see, Yahweh, I never paid one cedi. One cedi never went out of my pocket, and I went to London twice and came back, ...and somebody gave me a car. In fact, two people gave me cars...gifts. (George)

These experiences shared by the participants, however, did not prevent the participants from experiencing first doubts about their careers. Ebaugh (1988, p. 42) identifies four conditions that usually lead to the first doubts: organizational changes, job burnout, disappointments and drastic changes in relationships, and specific events.

#### **4.1.1.1 Disappointments**

Disappointments were the earliest first doubts experienced by the participants in their careers, as they shared their experiences. The findings of the study indicate that in as much as the celebrities relished the benefits or the “show” aspect of their respective careers, they were taken unawares by the reality that came along with it – one of disappointment. Their disappointments were varied. They ranged from singing bad deals due to their naivety, being underpaid for their services and their inability to adjust to changes in the industries they functioned. These factors led to their loss of interest in the profession, leading to early job burn out.

For instance, Paul’s experience with first doubts led to early job burnout and disappointment. He was lucky to have had an early breakthrough in his career as his public performances, even as an amateur musician then, made him a sought-after recording artiste. His major breakthrough came when he was signed unto an

international francophone record label in the early 1980s, recording his first studio album. He describes the album as highly successful, which was “a massive hit” because “it was all over.” In spite of the popularity of the songs, he said he made no money, as the record label had taken advantage of his naivety. He narrated:

I didn't get anything from it. You know that was the first opportunity and you know at that time, who was having a manager? 82, 83, 84 there, I mean. So I signed. Not knowing I had signed a ten-year contract and that was just too bad. And so when they started selling, the owner will send this Ghanaian and then one Beninois, they will come and collect the money [from distributors] then they go. When they are asked to give me some money, they will say they didn't make any money. I was totally ripped off. I was ignorant and didn't know anything. (Paul)

Paul gives details of the events that led to his being ripped off:

So one of these shows...a gentleman approached me. Wow you are a good singer. Will you want to go perform in Cotonou? ... And the time came and we went to Cotonou to perform. So after the performance, another man approached me and said wow, my brother, we want to record you because you are too good... And I said I am ready so we went and did the recording there. I signed. I didn't know what I was signing, the whole contract was in French. But unfortunately, the two Ghanaians who were there, the two keyboardists who played in my recording, they all spoke French. They should have enlightened me on the contract, or what it entailed. (Paul)

This experience made Paul have initial doubts about his music career. His subsequent quest to make money through performances was also one of disappointment. Paul shared how most of the time, he received no payments for his music performances.

George, who in the early 2000s was one of the leading actors in Ghana, shared a similar experience. George had to quit his teaching profession for acting because he made more money as an actor than as a teacher. George's passion for acting made him care less about the money so far as he was earning more than he did as a teacher. His

earliest disappointment that made him have initial doubts about his new career was when he discovered the producers of a TV series he was on, had paid him far less than the executive producers had budgeted:

I didn't know he had instructed that I should be paid 300,000 cedis per episode. That's Ghs30 today. But he didn't tell me...The 300,000 was budgeted alright. It will appear on paper, but somebody will collect 200,000 and put in his pocket and they will pay me 100,000. So me, the major character, I was being paid 100,000 cedis. (George)

And you know...they just come. Sign. Sign. Sign. And they will bring it when the money was ready. So you quickly sign without reading anything. That was it...So some of us have been cheated and cheated and cheated. We worked hard and others collect our money and pocket them. So I challenge any Ghanaian film maker to tell me he has paid me Ghs2,000 before. (George).

It is obvious the huge expectations of participants as they ventured into their respective careers were not met mainly due to disappointments leading to early job burn out. As Ebaugh (1988) notes, burnout is “a negative response on the part of individuals to role-related stress” (p. 53). She asserts that it is more specific compared to stress or frustration emanating from a role-play, as exiters interact continuously with customers or clients, which often leads to unfulfilled expectations about the career as what one is “taught to expect ... and what actually occurs in the course of practice” (p. 61) are unaligned. These findings concur with Ebaugh (1988) assertion that disappointments occur when “an idealized image of the role did not materialize into reality” (p. 62). The industrial issues identified in the findings align with Turner's (2004) belief that as a celebrity gains more prominence through a massive audience appeal, the celebrities are commoditized, and everything that positions them to be commercially successful is exploited by “internationalized conglomerates” (p 84).

#### 4.1.1.2 Adapting to industrial changes

The second theme deduced from the data in relation to first doubts relates to generational disconnect. The participants in the study all had to adjust to the changing phases of the entertainment industry at a point or the other. The study found that all the participants struggled to adjust to trends and connect.

Benjamin's music career was a hugely successful one. He had his goals as a musician and was lucky to get the right producers to work with. For Afrifa, he also realized the benefits of being in the entertainment space; thus he did an early transition as an arts and language teacher and fortified himself as an actor and broadcaster. However, their initial doubts as achieved celebrities were mainly a result of changes and specific events in the industry. Specific events leading to first doubts for the celebrities mainly related to changes in the entertainment space as a result of technology and new promotional strategies which disconnected them from the young promoters who had emerged.

Technology, and new media for that matter, plays a major role in keeping celebrities alive; after all, celebrity is a mass media construct (Giles, 2000; Marshall, 1997), and the internet, the major propeller of making legacy media still relevant, cannot be taken for granted. However, for Benjamin, whose four music albums were all sold using cassettes and later CDs, he is unequivocal in admitting that he did not know much about the internet age and its ways of life. Although he is not illiterate in internet usage, he does not consider himself "savvy" enough to "use it to get all the attention" he will need to promote himself into becoming relevant in the media space and be celebrated again, especially among the youth. He obviously could not compete with the new crop of musicians who "release music at will, caring less of its impact. They

have the time. We can't compete. I am always on the move looking for alternate sources of income.”

In spite of Afrifa's talent as actor, songwriter, script writer, he realized that he was being deselected as he failed to adapt to the changes in the industry; otherwise certain contracts that he deemed as right, were given to other people, and he did not even own the rights to most of his works. His works have been digitalized and monetized without his consent. He narrates:

Someone has put [my works] on YouTube. We don't know the person and the person is enjoying, taking money from it. I have some of my scripts, a lot. Even the ones I haven't even produced ... they are there which we have not tackled. I am now beginning to...trying to register it. (Afrifa)

Afrifa's disconnection with the system also extended to appreciation of works and award schemes. The 1979 Arts Critics and Reviewers Award of Ghana (ACRAG) Discovery of the Year winner was not enthused about the way creatives were recognized in the space- something that forced most of the old people to be tagged irrelevant. He recalled:

In our days, you don't submit your works [for awards]. They give the assignment to other people. If you listen to some good music and you think the music is good, if you come to the meeting you ask why this is good. It is because of the lyrics, this thing, music background. ...people text and somebody who doesn't know music will text somebody's music is the best. Meanwhile when we talk about music, it is the works. (Afrifa).

The participants' obvious disconnection with the current promoters and consumers in the entertainment space led to their first doubts. For Benjamin, having used radio and television as the main media tools in promoting his works in the past, he believed those manning the gates are generationally detached from them and “tilt towards the

songs of the young artistes; so for those of us who play typical highlife, we tend to struggle in the system” he noted.

From the findings, it is obvious the changes in the industry were an awakening for the participants. According to Ebaugh (1988), organizational changes leading to first doubts happens in two ways – either the change occurs quickly and the individual is not able to change to meet organization’s requirements, or there is a gradual change that leads to a situation that no longer brings into line to the needs of the individual. For Benjamin and Afrifa, their experiences align with both. The changes in the entertainment space were too drastic for them, and insisting on doing things their own ways, led to situations that no longer aligned to their needs. These events, Ebaugh notes, tend to trigger “initial doubts about one’s role commitment” (p. 65). This also affirms van Krieken’s (2012) view that celebrity is “primarily a matter of the accumulation and distribution of attention” (p. 55). Heinich (2012) also posits that through the accumulation of media visibility and media representation, the celebrity asserts their capital. She suggests that celebrity capital’s basis is recurrent media representations or accumulated media visibility, and therefore, having a specific kind of attention-generating capacity, especially by the new forms of media creates public figures whose visibility is conferred by the media.

#### **4.1.2 Seeking alternatives**

The celebrities, admitting to early disappointments, all consciously made attempts at seeking alternatives, knowing that the celebrity life was transient and it could not hold them forever because of its fluctuating capital. Some of their attempts were successful while others were not. Paul and Benjamin were largely successful with their exit plan working out perfectly; whereas Afrifa’s was one of a mix of success



and setback. George had to abandon his attempt at looking for alternatives. As Ebaugh (1988) states, the transitions become largely successful when alternatives are sought prior to exiting current role.

George's early disappointment of being cheated and underpaid was the catalyst to getting formal training in acting. As a trained teacher whose talent had made him a national idol overnight, he knew he could give more than just acting so he "realized the best way to live the acting skills was through further studies to understand the work I was doing." His real motivation? The economics and marketing that came with the profession:

One lady, when I needed some assistance and I called her, I approached her, she gave me a cheque for \$200 and not cedis. And she has made it big in acting because they charge a lot. (George).

He also relished the possibility of getting a job if he was not getting acting roles. George's quest for higher education had to end as he quit in his second year at School of Performing Arts, Legon, because of what he termed "at the expense of my health." He recalled this incident with regrets as he was constantly reminded of it when his career starting waning:

So there are certain actors in Ghana, my colleagues, when I ask them for financial assistance, they don't give me, especially those I attended university with. There was a time one other actor told me if I had managed and completed university, it would have helped because he was employing people. He was in a position where he could employ people. He said, if you had completed, you'd have a nice job. (George).

George now battling with a heart condition and living on the benevolence of others, transitioned into post-prime without any alternative means of survival. Unlike George, Benjamin's seeking alternative plans were largely successful. He always had "the

ultimate aim that he would marry, make family and make them comfortable. With thirteen children, he took the business aspect of his music career seriously and invested heavily in other ventures knowing that when the attention on him as a musician declined, his financial fortunes will also drop, and of course with the disappointment from young promoters. Benjamin who considers himself “half-educated” did not consider education as the best alternative for him:

Good education helps a lot, but I have seen a lot of educated fools around. So it doesn't matter. If you make your prime life all about alcoholism, womanizing and drug use, you will definitely struggle to have any meaningful future life. (Benjamin).

Benjamin invested heavily in real estate and in his family members. This, he said, was advice he got from his producer. The monies that accrued to him in his cassette sales, were invested for him in businesses. He would after his last major hit, set up his own music and movie production firm. It is obvious, with Benjamin's situation that, the seeking alternatives process, is not exclusively an individual affair; it is an interactional process that the actors pursue en route to becoming an ex. As Ebaugh (1988) notes, individuals seek response and feedback about the quest for alternative roles from key social supports.

The other participants did not follow this route, and it affected their plans for the future. Although Paul and Afrifa are on government pension, it is not enough to meet their status and old age demands. Paul and Afrifa signed up for permanent government jobs early in their careers as musician and actor respectively. Paul's decision to make arrangements for the future took effect immediately as he was “ripped off” his first major music contract, and subsequent performances were also not sustainable for his brand. While Afrifa's decision to get a job as broadcaster in

addition to his acting roles was not instigated by first doubt, his first doubts came when he entrenched himself and became a national star. There he realized if he was not making enough money as actor, he could not just rely on his monthly income as broadcaster till he retired.

Afrifa's first attempt at seeking alternatives was to align with a major private radio station in 1999 when private radio had started booming in Ghana. Having consulted for the owner for years as link between him and the DJs at his work place to promote musical works produced, Afrifa was brought on board, albeit part time, to help structure the programming and train their staff. This affiliation with the station, he considered as security to his future, when he retired from his permanent employment. His quest fell through immediately the radio station started full operations. He was sidelined, a decision he still does not understand:

That is why I started with them for the sake that I will get the opportunity...

... I believe something. I believe that anything that is for you will be for you. He has got his job and you are making an attempt and he says.... he didn't take you. I don't have to be grudging with these people. Nobody is God. He says I don't want you. I can't go and ask. (Afrifa).

Even now that he is on mandatory retirement, he sees so much potential in himself to help radio and television stations. But he says he is never given the chance, so he has looked at other options while relaxing.

For Paul, whose transition was successful, he looks back at his decision to get a permanent job and still do music, with so much pride:

In fact, I always thank God I didn't stop working. In fact, most musicians...some of them used to work and because of the music, they had to stop and pursue that line, but I didn't do that and I thank God because today, that's what I

am living on. You know the little pension. It's little, but at least it sustains you. (Paul).

Retiring as civil servant after almost thirty-seven years of service, Paul had earlier contemplated relocating abroad as form of security, in case his music career never worked as anticipated

You see, when you travel and see the situation with some of your colleagues, I'm telling you..... things aren't as rosy as we've been thinking. It is not as rosy as that. Maybe I could have made it, but charley to break through that place, it isn't easy o. I was comfortable traveling and coming back. That's all. (Paul).

Seeking alternatives is the second stage in role exit theory. Once first doubts are experienced, the tendency to weigh the costs and benefits of the current role is natural. The celebrities, whose first doubts were largely through disappointments resulting from unfulfilled expectations and disconnect from changing trends, had to seek for alternatives. Seeking alternatives, according to Ebaugh (1988), begins when a "person admits dissatisfaction in a current role" (p. 87). During this stage, as noted from the findings, the individual begins to consciously or subconsciously look for new roles.

Apart from Paul who sought alternatives outside his field, the other participants were all within the arts. This finding correlates with Carapinheira et al. (2018), where 97.8 per cent of the ninety elite footballers they sampled remained connected to the sport, even after retirement. As Ebaugh (1988, p. 92) posits, "in most instances, the vast array of role alternatives is limited by the degree of translatability of skills, personal interest, and experience that the individual perceives between his or her present role and an alternative one under consideration."

### 4.1.3 Turning point

The third stage of the role exit theory is the turning point. A turning point is an “event that mobilizes and focuses on awareness that old lines of action are complete, have failed, have been disrupted, or are no longer personally satisfying” (Ebaugh, p. 123). The turning point marks the end of the individuals’ career resulting from dissatisfaction and offering an opportunity to make changes to their lives. Fuchs Ebaugh (1988) identifies five types of turning points that herald the ultimate decision to exit a role: *specific events, the last straw, time-related factors, excuses and either/or choices*.

For the participants of the study, the turning points of their careers were a mixed of specific events, last straw and time related factors as the events that led to their decision not to actively pursue their careers were reinforced from their first doubts. In as much as some of the first doubts may not be significant enough to warrant an exit, once they reoccur, they exacerbate and turns to instigate the turning point.

Paul, whose first doubt of being entangled in a record deal that did not benefit him had his decision to reconsider his career as musician reinforced when he decided to self-produce his subsequent albums– a task that was quite difficult. He considered hiring a manager to manage his productions and business since he had already entrenched himself with his permanent job, which was funding his music productions. Paul’s “last straw” was a second wave of managerial disappointment, which made him to virtually quit active music and focus on his civil servant job. He has since developed a phobia for employing people to handle his music affairs. He narrated:

But I think I am not interested because you see I had a manager and what he did to me, I can’t.....I just don’t want to talk about it.

Oh no...I mean it's gone. He is even dead. It is not good to talk about the dead because someone will say, the person isn't around. But if I should get a manager now, that may be okay because I am sure I have had the experience to make things work. (Paul).

Even his decision to welcome a manager in his post-prime is one of hesitation. For George, his turning point also fits into the "last straw" moment. His decision to quit university because of health complications will later become the major hindrance to his acting career, forcing him to eventually quit.

Incidentally, after the first year, then the second year [in the university], we were dancing, from 5 to 7 pm and it got to a point my breathing ceased. I couldn't see. My eyes rolled and I couldn't move. Nobody cared because they were all busy dancing. I was there a couple of minutes and bit by bit, I managed to go and sit down on a platform outside. Then I told myself this is first serious warning. (George).

As Ebaugh (1988) notes, "last straw" quite similar to specific events, is a moment where the individual comes to the realization that the role they currently occupy must be exited, often as a result of "a long process of doubting and evaluating alternatives" (p 128). With this, the individual can finally "take a firm stand and announce an exit." (128). George's quitting, he blames on "untreated hypertension." When the signs started manifesting, he took it for granted and actively pursued his career until the unfortunate happened:

When the news went out and people heard that I am now sick and people were asking if I could still act, I said no. In fact, I didn't know the seriousness of the situation. But when that doctor at 37 explained things to me, then I understood. So I told myself, don't fool around. You know the heart is the major organ of the body. So that is the situation. (George).

George's health situation, though the last straw for him also falls within the "either/or" and "excuses" turning points. According to Ebaugh, an "excuses" turning

point occurs when “some event or authority figure made it clear that an exit was necessary for the well-being of the individual” (p. 130), and if the decision is not heeded, it could lead to an “either/or” turning point, where the individual is faced with either exiting a role or losing their physical and/or mental well-being. George had no choice, but to quit acting to save his life.

Time related factors like age and retirement also contributed to the turning points of most of the participants. Paul suffers acute spinal problems, a condition he has lived with almost all his life, but with his hitting almost seventy years, he found it prudent to relax. For Afrifa, his turning point is involuntary, he had placed premium on his broadcasting career, and at age sixty, he had to go on mandatory retirement. Being off air automatically reduced his relevance within the media and entertainment space. Benjamin who had the luxury of age and had attempted releasing records, suffered series of setbacks, forcing him to focus on other ventures.

The new age celebrity life precast on media stunts, and controversy is a cultural embargo for the participants. Coming from a generation where he believed one’s work ethic was paramount to societal acceptance, they will find it difficult to live a lifestyle to impress or just for the trends. Benjamin recounted how he was consistently admonished by radio and television promoters “to imitate what the young musicians are doing” in order to become relevant.” He laments:

You don’t expect me to live on media stunt and controversy in order to become relevant. It appears that is the norm. So for us the old folks, once we want to live by our principles and not rely on controversy, we are forced to lay low. The system forces us to be so. It is very difficult for us. Our molding and the apprenticeship we went through...we cherish our cultural background because we have a respectable constituency to serve. They know us for our good upbringing as well as quality music molded on the Amponsa rhythms, which are very Ghanaian. (Benjamin)

This finding, similar to the theme of “adaptation to industrial changes,” reveals the lack of collaboration between the ageing celebrities and the new promoters. The continuous reinforcement of their “first doubts” was a catalyst for the participant to reconsider their careers. As Driessens (2013a) and Rojek (2001) assert, celebrities should not only be understood as mere commodities within a cultural industry, but also an embodiment of a dominant cultural frame. Old age, a cultural frame was successfully explored by Marshall and Rahman (2014). They found celebrity and ageing as a point of expression to promote a particular vision of successful ageing. Cook (2018), on the other hand, revealed that old age was “as a time of continuity, discovery, possibility and change, where identity is multiple and fluid, and emerges through the links they make between the past, present and future” (p.178). Thus, in as much as adapting to the new dictates of the industry, the celebrities build on their past by actively exploring new experiences and possibilities.

#### **4.1.4 Creating the ex-role**

The final stage of the role exit is creating the ex-role, where the exiters come to terms with their inability to continue a previous role as expected. Ebaugh (1988) describes this stage as “a tension between one’s past, present, and future” (p. 149). According to Ebaugh, it is important to consider the existence of one’s past role in creating the ex-role as it is impossible to ignore it. Ebaugh avers that role exiters carry with them the “hangover identity” of a previous role, therefore they face “the challenge of incorporating a previous role identity into a current self-concept” (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 149).

The participants discussed various attempts at reinventing themselves in spite of the challenges. Paul, who detests being referred to as former musician, calls it “passion:”



[It is] the passion... You see, in music, and when you are a musician, until you die, oh merhn, when you are even eighty and ninety and you can perform why not. It is not like being an athlete, a footballer, you know...when you get to thirty...thirty-five, you are gone. (Paul).

Afrifa's over thirty years' experience as broadcaster was not enough to secure him a job with any private radio station. He is disappointed the many radio stations in Accra do not see his worth for him to impact and train the young ones. He thus has settled with a media school where he is helping with the training.

And I think it is working for them because a lot of these children are scattered and they feel good with me, what I have taught them, how to present the program, how to present news. And in the language, it is very different from English. (Afrifa).

Paul shares in Afrifa's disappointment as he recalls with bitterness. Having retired as civil servant, with a lot of time on his hands, he decided to seek help to release an album, by reaching out to a major record label that had a colleague veteran as head of music:

You see, I was even contemplating ....I was telling [him]. He will say go and make the songs ten. I will say, but six is okay? You know... I mean we are all veteran musicians and you know how much I have suffered in the business, then charley...stories. (Paul).

Benjamin, who is in his mid-50s confirms he still has the passion for music and does occasional releases as the inspiration comes.

So I haven't stopped music. I am young. I am in my 50s. I just happen to have hit the limelight that early. So I am not that old. The media and public spotlight being off us makes us to be tagged old. (Benjamin).

Benjamin's attention since moving into post-prime has been actively engaging in politics, using his influence as musician to help campaign. Having created a movie production company as a "seeking alternative" avenue, he admits that that venture has stalled with the decline of Kumawood productions.

George's situation is quite dire and he has battled with a heart condition for some time, his "turning point." With two of his children living with him, with none working, he principally relies on benevolence for survival. In as much as he has been advised to stay home, the passion to use his talent to make a living drives him:

In fact, recently... I was so broke. So broke and I called a friend. He works with Peace FM and I said don't you have a job? An advert I can do? He said, oh boss, what we have, is far below you. The money is too small. I said, forget about it. How much? He said Ghs300, an advert. I said I will do it. He said, are you sure? I said, don't worry because even when I wanted 200 Ghana, I couldn't get, and so if for a few minutes, I will get 300, at least, it will take me a week or two to help me take care of the family. And so they eventually gave me 500. I said Hallelujah! (George).

The above shared experiences reveal a state of ambivalence for the participants. As Ebaugh espouses, the "ex-role" stage brings about tension between the past, present and future roles. The participants, being achieved celebrities in the field of broadcasting, acting, and music, the study revealed that it was difficult for them to retire completely per se, since even in their frail moments, they could play roles that may not be physically exhausting. This is in tandem with the Deller (2016) and Carrilat and Ilicic (2019) fame and celebrity capital cycles where celebrities could reinvent themselves after decline. Going by Deller (2016), celebrities at the ex-role stage fall within the Post celebrity category of the fame cycle, where they may still be famous or enjoy some appreciable level of recognition, but are no longer as successful

as they used to be. Using the route analyzed by Carrilat and Ilicic (2019), the post-prime celebrity could redeem or resurge after decline.

In as much the celebrities are still driven by passion, they do admit their careers have dipped; the will is there, but how to drive their will is nonexistent. Age, ill health and nonexistent better alternatives are some of the factors deduced from the data (already discussed in the previous stages of the transition journey). Thus, in as much as the research participants conceded that ageing always came with its own difficulties, they challenged the negative stereotypes of old age by constructing an identity, building on their past by actively exploring new experiences and possibilities, as concluded in the study by Cook (2018).

It is evident that the celebrities are hanging on their past roles to create their post-prime situation. This comes with role residual challenges as they are required to make certain social changes (Ebaugh, 1988). The participants have determined ways to merge their former roles with their new roles, reinforcing what Ebaugh (1988) calls the “hangover identity” (p. 149). This new identity, Ebaugh asserts, comes with it, social changes, often as a result of feedback from society. The next section, which focuses on the identity change of the post-prime celebrities, will explore these social changes and reactions as the celebrities create their ex role as post-prime celebrities, coming to terms with the fact that fame goes through high mobility especially for those in entertainment and politics, where when the celebrity capital and fame of celebrities decline, they look at avenues and opportunities to reinvent themselves (Rojek, 2001).

## **4.2 RQ 2 - How do the celebrities' identities change as a result of being post-prime?**

Transitioning through the process of role exit from acclaimed celebrity into post-prime comes with changes in identity. The changes, Burke and Stets (2009) identified, could be as a result of situational change, identity conflict, conflict between identity and behaviors, and negotiation and the presence of others. The study revealed that the changes in the identities of the post-prime celebrities were mainly because of situational changes and identity conflict, as a result of their social interactions. The changes that occurred in the identities of the participants were either related to their profession or family – leading to sub themes like *renewed family orientation* and *public reactions*.

### **4.2.1 Career identity conflict**

In situational changes, there is conflict between the identity standard and the situational meaning when the meaning of the situation changes (Burke & Stets, 2009). Change therefore ensues when there is difficulty in changing the situation to align with the identity standard, which is the celebrity identity. From the data gathered, all the participants had attempted to maintain their identity standard by trying to restore their celebrity identity at one point or the other. The situational changes resulting in change of identity for Afrifa and Benjamin, for example, are somehow aligned with their careers. For instance, Afrifa's teaching role confines him to the classroom instead of being in the mainstream media where he had operated for decades, while Paul and Benjamin are still conflicted in either going back to music or not.

Afrifa sees his new identity as language and media teacher as humbling after having left his first teaching job in the 1970s. He now places premium on being a teacher, as that is his source of income and does not want his celebrity status interfering with it, although he leverages his celebrity status:

Some people will come, they are coming to me. They will go round round. We want to meet the man, but we are shy. I tell them I am a human being. I play with children, I do everything. You saw this gentleman. He was my student. But when you come, he is now a colleague. This is where I tell people, look if you want to bluff, you won't get anything. (Afrifa).

Afrifa does not want to leverage his status in his new environment. He, however, revealed the pressure from his children to stay home and live a stress-free life in his old. He noted:

But sometimes I ask them [children], if I sit down, if I want kelewele, will you buy it for me? Because may be you give me 100 cedis a month? (Afrifa).

The quote above reveals the pressure on Afrifa to make money and live the life he had previously lived. He recounted how he had made fruitless attempts to go back into the media although he was happy teaching. He recalled how he was sidelined after he had helped set up a radio station and had trained a number of their staff with the hope that when he retired, he could get the opportunity to serve there. He narrated:

That is why I started with them for the sake that I will get the opportunity...

He has got his job and you are making an attempt and he says.... he didn't take you. I don't have to be grudging with these people. Nobody is God. He says I don't want you. I can't go and ask. (Afrifa).

As indicated in the “creating the ex- role” section, Paul and Benjamin are still conflicted in going back to music or giving up. For Paul, in as much as his health

issues weigh him, he still carries himself as a musician. He maintains his music identity, and prefers to be seen as such, and not as former. Benjamin has positioned himself as a political musician, maintaining vestiges of his former self as musician, having gone into full time politics when the movie production business he was in, took a recession. Although he has other businesses he run, he sees his role in politics as fulfilling, as he still is able to identify as a public figure and maintain his celebrity capital.

#### **4.2.2 Social identity tensions**

The second source of identity changed identified from the study is the tensions that ensue between the former selves of the participants and their new identity, as well as their relationship with others. As established, celebrities have a very public social identity which becomes quite demanding shedding them off (Cook, 2018). For the post-prime celebrities, managing the social expectations that are associated with who they once were, even if they are not playing those roles was a challenge for them. For the participants, in as much as they miss their former selves, they acknowledge being off the spotlight had taken some pressure off them.

Benjamin, who is active in politics which requires constant meeting with people, is happy about the lessened pressure:

There used to be so much pressure on me a celebrity - from friends, family members, colleague celebrities, a lot, but it is not as intense today as it was in my heydays. Though people recognize me in public, and talk about me, they hardly approach me; may be they do not see me worthy of being celebrated today. (Benjamin).

Afrifa, who in his prime struggled with pressure from the public, now sees himself as liberated – a man who is free to do whatever he wants without the cameras or eyes

being on him. Clearly, the reactions they receive from the public delights them to enjoy their new identity.

According to Burke and Stets (2009), one way people view their identities is through the feedback they receive from others. Feedback for the celebrities were a mixed of positive and negative, but the negative feedback forced them to have a reflected appraisal of themselves, which affected their identities. These identity changes were largely based on their interactions with their fans or perceived fans and even colleagues. Although Afrifa sees himself as accessible and does not have a problem, he subtly acknowledges the tension between himself and his colleagues, some former work mates. He shares how he is forced to relate with some of his colleagues:

So it is what.... how you are, that is how people will approach you. I don't want to behave like I know more than them.... I know more than some people, but when you meet them they behave like they know better than you do. (Afrifa).

He also recounts how he was denied access to appear on certain program at his former workplace. According to him,

Some people didn't even want to see you in their program. There are people who feel you are coming to blow your horn on their program. They won't allow you to come. I remember there was a program I was supposed to be on. The lady. I don't know what I did wrong. (Afrifa).

George also cites several instances people have failed to respond to his calls, even friends he had once helped. He recalled:

Sometimes I will call them and when they see my number, they won't pick. So I called one with a different number. I had already put some money on his phone. Then I said charley look on your phone, I just sent Ghs100 to you. He said that's Papa. He said, you have rescued me ooo, (George)

In what appears an anecdote in George's account, was betrayal, as he claims to have better understood life and who to call his friends.

Benjamin commiserates with the identity change of his colleagues to withdraw from public engagements, but partly blames them for their past identities:

I agree in a way. A celebrity showing up in public in a trotro or taxi may be a put off. But these are all our making. That is what I am talking about. The way we carried ourselves in the past. (Benjamin).

Afrifa recalls with anger, how he was denied a parking space at a high profile event he had been invited because he drove an old Opel Astra car. Since that event, Afrifa says he is "totally out of that. I'm lost in the system," and prefers to be on the quiet.

According to van de Rijt et al. (2013), there is a close relationship between how famous an individual is and how often they are regularly referenced, adding that fame indeed exhibits extreme inequality, with nearly all public attention allocated to a highly select group of individuals. Thus, when one's capital attention dims, social tensions rise, leading to a change in identity.

The other participants, apart from Benjamin, though on their pension allowances, have had their financial status hugely dimmed. Benjamin, who is full aware of this, described how he pushes some of his colleagues to shelve those social tensions and reinvent themselves. He lamented:

I am always on their heels, trying to ginger some of them to make use of their name to make some money once the strength is there. The villages are there to welcome us. Our music is alive there. Funerals are also good avenues to make money. These avenues do not consider whether you are in your prime or not. We should not be sleeping. (Benjamin).

This confirm the studies of Brew (2019) and Khalid (2018) who studied how Ghanaian music acts could capitalize on their brand equity for them to remain visible



and viable as their decline creates tensions for them, which affects their identities. The revised identity of most of the participants was largely financial, forcing those social tensions. For celebrities, financial success is an integral aspect of their social identity (Carrillat and Ilicic, 2019). As indicated, many people expected that the post-prime celebrities would be rich because of their national appeal and prominence over the years. However, this unfulfilled expectation comes with it, stigmatization and disrespect, forcing them to be less visible in public, or their being sidelined from public industry engagements. As Cook (2018) notes, old age is a time of disengagement and withdrawal from social integration. The finding also confirms the study of Rockwell & Giles (2009) where the American celebrities, in as much as they yearned for fame, rather chose a secluded lifestyle to match their new status and identity.

#### **4.2.3 Renewed family awareness**

Family awareness was a theme deduced as a result of situational changes. As Ebaugh (1988) notes, when such ambivalence of maintaining an identity develops, people's behavior patterns are altered and their identities change, sometimes in unanticipated ways. For most of the participants, their post-prime state was a reflective exercise for them to be close to their families and make up for the past.

George and Paul tout themselves as being committed to their families and want to be seen as family men in their post-prime. George never anticipated ever getting close to his children after he abandoned them, when he was in his prime, for a new marriage that never worked. He sees his current state of being virtually bed-ridden as divine. He believes his situation has given him the opportunity to be close to his children, and make up for the inadequacies as a father. He articulated:

You can't imagine an elderly man being alone. So I believe it's the almighty who did things that way that they should be with me. And trust me, they have been very very supportive. Very very supportive. Trust me. They run the errands. The first boy you saw. He goes to the market. He cooks. The sister, they wash my things...the other brother. In fact, they do everything. And I'm so so grateful to them. (George).

It was also established that George's main aim is to be a father figure to his children. He stated that "...right now, if I have anything, it's to give my children a base to start life with."

George's stance on marriage has also changed after getting close to his children and seeing the sacrifices his children are making.

At first I said no, but I have been talking to the father about it because eventually, when the children have their apartments, I will be left alone, and with my situation, definitely, I will need somebody. I have been talking to the father that I wouldn't need one of those satanic women to come and bother me. (George).

His bitter relationship, which he attributes as the cause of his dwindling financial fortunes, made his wife leave the marriage with the children. He recounted how the "girlfriend" he had virtually eloped with, abandoned him when he ran out of money, and his health started failing. He is thankful his children were there for him.

In the case of Paul, his fatherly bond with his only child is strengthened as he describes how close they have become to the extent that "she said if she should die, she would love to come back to me as a father," he recounts with pride.

Paul, who describes his post-prime life now as "lonely," sees his married daughter as his main companion although he is forced to have people around him all the time to help him out because of his challenges. He shared his experience:

If I needed to go out, I get someone to put me in the car, I am good to go. If I go anywhere and there is somebody who can help me ... you see my wheel chair behind me? (Paul).

The findings reveal that change ensues when there is difficulty in changing the situation to align with the identity standards opined by Burke and Stets (2009). The experiences of the participants indicate the altering of their behavior patterns, resulting in unanticipated identity changes. This finding contradicts Rockwell and Giles (2009) which identified mistrust and isolation as major regrets that affected the celebrities forcing them to live secluded lifestyles, although unwilling to give up on their celebrity status. Rens' (2017) study of retired professional athletes who had struggled to find time to prepare for retirement, noted that the circumstances concerning the end of their career influenced the transition to a new life causing changes in their situation and their relationships with others.

#### **4.3 RQ 3 - What coping strategies do post-prime celebrities adopt?**

Celebrities' loss of public recognition and adoration, coupled with the feedback they received force them to change their identities, virtually going into seclusion, and coming to terms with the fact that they are not the 'public idols' they once were. In such situation, the celebrities adopt coping mechanisms that help them live with the phenomenon, having now assessed and accepted their condition. In answering this research question, I use Kate Cummings' (2010) Coming to grips with loss theory to discuss the findings from the field.

Coming to Grips with Loss theory which describes how people heal from significant losses, is grounded on a four-stage loss cycle - *discovering the loss*, *assessing it*, *mourning the loss*, and *coping*. Having used the stages of the role exit to assess the

transition journey of the celebrities into post-prime, the celebrities already admit their fate and are living their “ex role.” That stage required that the celebrities have discovered their situation, assessed it and have moved into post-prime.

Consequently, in examining their coping strategies, the discussion will be limited to the mourning and coping stages of the loss theory. The mourning stage because, it is at this stage that loss victims, having come to terms with their situation, go through various emotions attached to the loss – ranging from anger to sadness at their situation (Cummings, 2010).

#### **4.3.1 Mourning**

Mourning loss, according to Cummings (2010), comes with it varied degrees of emotions, and the extent of the mourning is hinged on the victim’s mental health, the people directly associated to them, often family and friends, and the resources available to them. The post-prime celebrities, as part of the mourning process expressed deep emotions of anger at being less appreciated, and regrets at decisions they took in their prime.

The participants, in expressing anger at their situation, shared varied experiences of their encounters with people, mostly career related, that they look back and wished it never happened, or if they had been treated fairly, their circumstances would have been better. The disappointments the participants encountered in the early stages of their careers, and in their quest to seek for alternatives still lingered on the mind of some of the participants. According to Paul, his ‘last straw’ moment was instigated by his manager, whom he had trusted after he was short-chained in his first and only record deal. He always recalls with anger at the mention of a manager. Benjamin had

also battled with the young promoters who killed his motivation to continue producing records. According to him, their insisting his music was not trendy enough to be promoted was a low for him. He asked:

Can you believe we are always told to imitate what the young musicians are doing, for us to also become relevant? We do well to spend so much money to produce quality music, only for the DJs to shelve it. (Benjamin).

According to Afrifa, "...anytime I do things for people, they seem to forget me. They don't come back." A situation Afrifa would love to have answers to. However, that has been his reward, having devoted over four decades to helping people in the show business industry. He tells of how he helped start a foremost movie award scheme in Ghana, only to be sidelined when the scheme gained national recognition. In spite of this, Afrifa sees the need not to begrudge people. Afrifa's expression of anger and pent up emotions puts him in a situation to let go of the past. He notes:

But I don't want to keep that spirit within me. That hatred and ingratitude attitude within me. I don't want to keep it. If I did, I will have died. So what I do is that I forget about it and move away. I will not come to you because there is a saying in Ghana that literally means one cannot avoid the sand once you live by the shore. (Afrifa).

Aside these personal experiences, the post-prime celebrities all believe they have been hugely unappreciated, especially by the state considering their level of contributions over the years. All the participants acknowledged though that they had won national recognitions; such awards came with nothing appreciable. Paul understands the situation as being peculiar to Ghana, and believes that "if you are no more relevant, you are not," and preferred to forge ahead and make the best of his situation. Afrifa was upset how celebrities are given state burial and the necessary recognition when they are dead, but virtually ignored when alive. "I know creative arts people celebrate people when they are dead," he echoed!

These expressions of anger, after loss is assessed, emits emotions, often anger and sadness. According to Cummings (2010), the level of importance of the loss experienced determines the emotions associated with the grief. Within the mourning phase, people experience an “ongoing response” (Cummings, 2010, p. 118). Cummings clarifies that an ongoing response as a period of time when the level of emotions may vary in intensity as they process the loss. Cummings (2010) describes one of the ongoing responses as “going through the motions” (p. 37).

Regrets as form of mourning was another theme deduced from the data. Expressing regrets and anger allows the post-prime celebrities to mourn the loss and create an avenue to move to the next stage. The findings from the data reveal the participants had regrets. These regrets were mainly decisions they took or failed to take when they were in their prime. The major regrets expressed by the participants were mainly on their inability to pursue further education, lack of family bond when they were in their prime, and issues of bad business and industrial decisions. Recalling such experiences and recognizing the significance of expressing such feelings help the post-prime celebrities to manage the loss.

George and Afrifa shared regrets of having not pursued further education, a decision they believe, if they had made, would have placed them in better positions, even in their post-prime. George, in “seeking alternative” as part of his exit plan, had enrolled in the School of Performing Arts, Legon to get formal training in acting. He sees this as one of his major regrets, as it denied him several opportunities at getting alternative jobs when his acting career was waning. On Afrifa’s part, his Middle School Leaving Certificate was his entry level certification for the over three decades he served as translator and broadcaster. Although he took some correspondent courses, and wrote

the Ordinary Level as private candidate, he regrets not having pursued higher education. He narrates:

I made up my mind the school I won't go. I didn't have the money.....so [I said] now let me find my life. So I wish I would go to the university. You know in the Akan language; I tell people I can be a professor. It is something I wish I could have done. The chance was not there it doesn't mean I should go and die. (Afrifa).

This decision of his, he looks back and blames himself as it affected his pension benefits because he retired as a middle level staff.

Aside personal development, George's decision to abandon his wife and children still haunts him, although he has reconciled with his children. He believes he could have given his children a good footing to start life, especially when he had all the connections when he was in his prime. As he battles with severe heart condition, none of his children are employed, and living together in a rented apartment at the benevolence of donors. He shared this concern:

Now the more reason I am praying the Father to grant me somebody who will help me put some structures on our land so that everyone will have his own room, his own apartment to himself so they can start life, because the first [child] will be thirty years... You know....some people by twenty-five they have already started. And thirty? So I am praying the Father raises some people, touches the heart of people to help me.... because this is a rented place, and just next month, I have to find about 6,000 cedis to pay for another one year to enable me stay here. I am praying within this one year, nothing happens to me. I mean there shouldn't be any grave situation so that we could put up structure on the land so that we move to our own home. (George).

In spite of the regrets, he sees the positives in having his children around him. This gives George some sense of comfort, which assuages his grief.

The other form of regret experienced by the participants relates to industrial decisions. None of the participants, in spite of the many contracts and engagements they had while in their prime, ever had a manager who managed their affairs. Although Paul had attempted to work with a manager, he, like the others, ran their own affairs. As Benjamin puts it,

In our time, we never capitalized on that. I do everything myself even now. Regardless, I am still planning. There is so much I have to do whether I am in the limelight or not. (Benjamin).

Benjamin was lucky to have had mentors to help him with his “exit” decisions; however, the others were not so lucky. Afrifa, who has written over 70 per cent of the of a popular local language drama series on television, says he has never received any royalty for the past thirty years for his works. This, he blames on poor negotiations:

There was no good planning from both GBC and ourselves... we loved to see ourselves on TV so that was the passion. It was the mistake we made that I was saying, but today when somebody picks you to come and do something, there must be an agreement for it. (Afrifa).

Paul wished he had known more about intellectual property earlier than in his post-prime where even with a collective management organization in place, he describes the amount of money he receives in royalties for his four music albums as “shameful.” He added:

So you won’t even think of copyright until recently, may be about ten years ago that man realized. No knowing, we were missing something. (Afrifa).

George also regrets not having benefitted from performance rights in the many movies and adverts he featured in. However, he looks back at the missed opportunities to collaborate with Nigerian movie producers with more regrets. He shares how he rejected roles because he considered Nollywood below his standard then:



I met a Nigerian director in Ghana and he was so impressed with me. He was going to pay me 100,000 naira and I said ah? 100,000 naira, which amounted to 10 million old cedis at that time. Why should I leave Ghana for Nigeria because of 10 million? So I didn't go. Later, someone told me I should have accepted it because in Nigeria, the moment you get there, I will have so many roles later. (George).

George admits if he had a manager then, his career decisions would have been better than they were. So also do all the participants openly admitting to their mistakes and venting out their anger at those decisions, makes them better understand and manage their current situations.

As Cummings (2010, p. 42) notes, the mourning stage of the coping process gives the celebrities a “sense of hope” to take decisions about their current state. The ability of the loss victims, in this case the post-prime celebrity, to process mourning led to developing strategies to manage their loss better.



#### **4.3.2 Resolving**

After the mourning stage, the post-prime celebrities move to the final stage of coming to grips with loss, where they use various strategies to manage their loss. Cummings (2010) outlines two basic means of coping with the loss – the delaying and resolving routes. The delaying process involves keeping what she calls “façade maintenance,” where loss victims continue with their normal routines as they were previously known for (p.50). The resolving technique allows the person to use the available resources to plan through the loss. According to Cummings (2010) the resolving technique helps people to develop “increased resilience, positive perspectives on the loss, and hope for the future” (p. 57). The findings reveal that the participants in this study all applied

the resolving track showing resilience, positive mentality and hope, having come to terms with their situation as a coping technique.

The celebrities, through the interviews, showed the capacity to recover from the difficulties they faced. They showed resilience in different ways. Benjamin, who appears content with life in his post-prime came to terms quite early in his career as he understood that celebrity life has its downsides. The post-prime challenges did not prevent Benjamin from participating in industry activities. As he describes,

One thing that keeps me going is being open and participating in activities of the industry. Solitude kills. For example, a brother like Nsiah Piesie, you mention his name anywhere and you are asked who he is? If you don't mention his hit single 'Police Abaa,' nobody connects. (Benjamin).

Paul, on the other hand, who says "I think I am ok. I am coping with life very much..." would rather engage less in industry activities. This strategy, he says, makes him live a better life in his post-prime. This finding ties into Driessens' (2013) assertion that celebrity capital is more able to cut across different social fields. Thus, the media is a form of meta-capital that applies influence in several social fields, giving celebrities (those made famous through media exposure) a wide range of locations where they can exercise their capital. This celebrity capital can be traded in for economic capital and social capital acquired through interrelating with other celebrities.

In as much as the celebrities openly exhibited their disappointments with events in their careers, coupled with the neglect from industry gatekeepers, Paul acknowledges that all the disappointments he faced, have helped to shape him. "Right now as I sit down, I am so thankful to my maker," he noted.

Paul is not the only one who has developed resilience in his faith and sees the God factor as critical to helping him survive. George's faith in God is strengthened and he sees life and material possession as vanity. For him, "...there are ways that seemeth right unto man, but thereof is destruction. Sometimes you will see something like a package coming but you don't know what is behind it. So long ago, I learnt not to clamor for things."

Besides his faith in God, his self-introspection also gives him that strength to cope, as he relates a principle that has helped him:

Gently withdraw from life. Leave the things of the youth as you grow, you let go off the things of the youth. Trust me, when you hit 50, you realize you sit down and your life is played to you. Your life from when you were a child is all played to you and you see things, where you went wrong; the mistakes you made. Certain choices you made which didn't help you. That's where you acquire wisdom and when you sit, your child down, you are able to talk to the child, don't walk this way...I walked it and it didn't help me. Those things. (George).

As Cummings (2010) notes, the coping stage is not static. This stage occurs almost at the same time with mourning a loss. How the celebrities move through the coping cycle, or otherwise, is premised on the effectiveness of the strategies adopted. The study also reveals the celebrities showing positive perspectives towards their situation, primarily expressing hope for life. As George puts it, "I am not in the public eye, but I will say, it will be ingratitude to my Maker to say that I am not in the hearts of people." The reputational capital the participants still enjoy gives them hope. George recounts how sometimes people call him just to hear his voice anytime he puts his number out for public support.

There was this person... I saw the number and I saw the person had called back. The moment I said hello, then he said...That's the voice I want to hear." Such incidents

make them know they are still in the hearts of people, as he puts it. (George)

The celebrities acknowledge the role of the fans in their lives and making them what they were. Creatives rely on numbers to make money. As Benjamin succinctly puts it: “Everything I own today is a result of my music life and the public recognition I got.” Afrifa and George, who are not fortunate to have made fortune from their fame believe their names will keep them alive, and what they aspire in their post-prime life, is legacy:

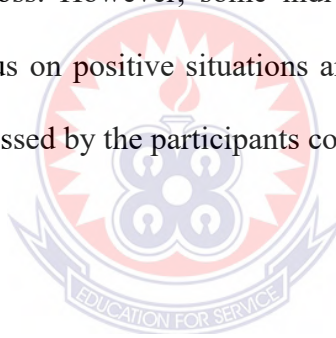
The whole issue now is, a good name is better than riches. Some time when I am dead and gone, someone I had taught how to recite poems will come out with something. Who gave you this? My name is not lost. Who taught you this? My name is not lost. (Afrifa)

I want to give them something worth asking God for. I have come to realize that the only thing worth asking the Almighty God for is the gift of the holy spirit.... It's not talking about getting a wife or husband or getting children or getting money or getting houses, what is upon the father's heart to give people is the gift of the holy spirit because the holy spirit is the seal of eternal life and the Father wants to give eternal life to his children. (George).

For the post-prime celebrities, the expression of hope as a coping strategy relieves them from the pressures that come with reputational and financial loss. At this stage of their lives, their capital may have dropped, but the next phase for them, in the capital life cycle will be redemption or resurgence, where they may seek a return as ‘proper celebrities’ (Deller, 2016) once again, by increasing their media visibility and recognizability as celebrities (Carrillat and Ilicic, 2019).

Cummings's (2010) coming to grips with loss theory is applicable to the lived experiences of the post-prime celebrities. It provided a framework for discussing how the participants experienced the emotions attributed to the loss of their careers. The celebrities, however, were aware of the ephemeral nature of celebrity life, their exits

were largely involuntary, thus determined how they experienced the stages of the loss. The realization of participants to their loss and sharing their lived experiences is a form of healing for them. As Yancey (2013) notes, life experiences can shape the methods used to cope with the stress of loss. The admission of mistakes in their careers and lives, as shared by the participants can facilitate the healing process. The findings also reveal participants developing a positive mentality towards their experiences, and a renewed faith in God, confirming Yancey's (2013) assertion that spirituality can enhance the ability of the individual to cope with loss, after expressing 'anger' at their situation, a route prescribed by Cummings (2010) as part of the coping mechanism. Yasemin and Ozkan (2020) also affirm that emotional expression can be a way of dealing with loss. However, some individuals can better deal with loss situations when they focus on positive situations and optimistic emotions. Thus, the optimistic emotions expressed by the participants confirm their healing.



#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter looked at the findings and discussions of the research questions which sought to understand the lived experiences of the post-prime celebrity, focusing on their transition journey, how their identities change, and how they cope with the phenomenon. Role exit theory (Ebaugh, 1988), identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009), and Cummings' (2010) Coming to Grips with Loss helped with the analyses of the study. Role exit theory served as a framework for understanding how the participants saw their journey from active celebrities into post-prime, and how they managed with their new roles as "ex" celebrities. With the creation of the ex-role, which comes with new identities, the significance of the identity the celebrities held and the reasons for the change were analyzed using identity theory. Coming to grips with loss theory

provided a context for analyzing how the participants coped with the phenomenon of being post-prime. The analysis centered on how the participants experienced the emotions that come with the loss of their celebrity status and how they managed it.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This study set out to investigate the post-prime life experiences of selected Ghanaian celebrities. This chapter summarizes the significant findings from the study. Conclusions from the findings, and recommendations are also made in this chapter. Highlighting the study's limitations, this section also outlines possible suggestions for future research.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study sought to investigate the post-prime life experiences of entertainment celebrities in Ghana. In exploring their lived experiences, I traced the stages of their transition journey from active and adored celebrities into stars living in a near-life of seclusion, forcing them to change their identities. The study also explored the kind of identity the celebrities kept as post-prime celebrities, and how they managed their loss.

The study adopted phenomenology as a research design in exploring the lived experiences of the post-prime celebrity. In-person interviews were conducted with four participants. This was done using an unstructured interview guide which directed the conversation making the interview less rigid, with participants to freely express themselves. The interviews were transcribed and coded into themes which were then analyzed thematically, using the Role exit theory (Ebaugh, 1988), identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009) and Coming to grips with loss theory (Cummings, 2010) as theoretical foundation. The theories set the tone of the study and particularly helped to properly contextualize the research. Summary of the findings would be addressed

based on the three research questions which were asked prior to this study. The findings of the study are summed up below.

## 5.2 Main findings

The first research question of the study - What are the experiences of the celebrities as they transitioned from an active celebrity life into post-prime? - was analyzed using the four stages of Role Exit theory by Ebaugh (1988), which are first doubts, seeking alternatives, turning point and creating the ex-role.

In analyzing the celebrities' experience with the first stage of the transition, the study revealed that the participants experienced first doubts about their celebrity status and career quite early. This was premised on the fact that they already had foreknowledge of the transient nature of celebrity life, so they enjoyed the trappings that came with their new status. They appreciated that their celebrity capital when it drops, came with changes of status and fortune. However, the major focus of the participants was more on the attention capital, with the hope it would yield fortunes for them. This relates to van Krieken's (2012) description of the celebrity status as the embodiment of a more abstract kind of capital – attention. The celebrity participants' experience with first doubts were mainly due to disappointments in the profession as a result of their naivety and unfulfilled expectations leading to their signing of deals they had no knowledge, being underpaid for professional services they rendered, and their inability to adjust to organizational changes in the industry with respect to promotion of their works. The participants could not adjust to the changes in the industry as they insisted on using the old strategies that had previously worked for them. These disappointments occurred because the idealized image of the role they expected did not materialize into reality (Ebaugh, 1988). These developments made the participants



doubt their role as new achieved celebrities and essentially reinterpreted and redefined “a situation that was previously taken for granted” (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 41). The exiters, in this instance, started to reassess the costs and benefits of maintaining their status as achieved celebrities.

The celebrities, whose first doubts were largely through disappointments from unfulfilled expectations and inability to adjust to changing trends, had to seek for alternatives. The study revealed that the celebrities all made attempts consciously at seeking alternatives, because of their first doubt experiences, coming to the realization that planning an alternative route alongside their careers was an exercise for the future. However, while some of their attempts at seeking for alternatives were successful, others were not. Almost all the participants sought alternatives within the arts/entertainment space. The alternatives included higher education in the arts, securing media jobs, and establishing audio/visual production house. As Ebaugh (1988) notes, the majority of role alternatives was limited by the degree of translatability of skills, personal interest, and experience that the individual perceives between his or her present role and an alternative one under consideration. It thus tends to be difficult for achieved celebrities to look for alternatives from a wide purview, as their options tend to be limited. Another finding from the data relates to the support systems that were unavailable to the participants in seeking alternatives. The study revealed that all the participants, save one, had the needed guidance in settling on alternatives ahead of his exit. It thus, remains that he is the most successful of all the post-prime celebrities.

The third stage of the role exit process for the participants - the turning point- marked the beginning of the end of their career resulting from dissatisfaction and offering an

opportunity to make changes to their lives. For the participants of the study, the turning points of their career were a mixed of specific events, last straw and time related factors - three of the five factors that lead to turning points as espoused by Ebaugh (1988). At this stage, the events that led to their decision not to actively pursue their careers were reinforced from their first doubts experiences. The turning points in the careers of the participants were largely due to managerial conflicts and industrial disconnect (off shoots of the disappointments from the first doubts), ill-health and retirement. In as much as some of the first doubts may not have been significant enough to warrant an exit, once they reoccurred, they exacerbated and then instigated the turning point in the careers of the celebrities. These events served as the “last straw” - a moment where the individual comes to the realization that the role they currently occupy must be exited, often as a result of “a long process of doubting and evaluating alternatives” (Ebaugh, 1988, p 128).

The study notes that in creating the ex-role, the participants considered the existence of their past roles, as it was impossible to ignore it. Ebaugh avers that role exiters carry with them the “hangover identity” of a previous role, therefore the participants in the study faced challenges incorporating a previous role identity into their current, once they moved into the ex-role stage (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 149). For the achieved celebrities, who were in the fields of acting, music and broadcasting, it was difficult for them to retire completely per se, since even in their frail moments, they still played roles associated with their previous careers. These roles, from the study were in teaching, movie production and politics. The participants generally used their reputational capital in their new roles.

The second research question for the study was - How do the celebrities' identities change as a result of being post-prime? The study revealed that the changes in the identities of the post-prime celebrities were largely due to situational changes and identity conflict, as a result of their social interactions. The changes that occurred in the identities of the participants were either industrial or family related. All the participants, at the industrial level, tried to maintain their identity standard as achieved celebrities by attempting to restore their celebrity identities at one point or the other. These new identities were somehow aligned with their careers, although they were not their preferred choice. The conflict of maintaining an identity, coupled with the changes in their situation, where the celebrities were not as mobile and active as they were in their prime, altered their behavior patterns. Some of the participants found renewed bond with their children. They offered to give their children, what they failed to offer them while in their prime, learning from the past with a transformed mentality.

The second major source of identity change for the post-prime celebrities from the study was the social identity tensions they faced as a result of feedback from society. As Burke and Stets (2009) notes, people view their identities through the feedback they receive from others. Feedback from the public were both positive and negative, but the negative feedback forced them to reassess their relationship with people, which affected their identities. These identity changes were largely based on their interactions with their fans or perceived fans and even colleagues. The participants revealed that managing the social expectations was a challenge for them; thus being off the spotlight had taken some pressure off them in terms of social demands. This, however, came with it stigmatization and disrespect because of their financial and reputational status. The celebrities were confined to their space, using their old

identities to make ends meet, instead of enhancing their recognizability or accumulation of media visibility. For celebrities, financial success is an integral aspect of their social identity, hence many people expected that the post-prime celebrities would be rich because of their national appeal and prominence over the years. This failed expectation forced most of them to limit their public appearances.

The third research question sought to find out the coping strategies the post-prime celebrities adopted to match their new identities. In answering this research question, two of Kate Cummings' (2010) Coming to grips with loss four-stage approach - mourning the loss and coping - were used as major themes discuss the findings. The celebrities, having discovered their situation, assessed it and moved into post-prime, the data showed that the participants healed from their significant losses first by mourning, which meant expressing anger at their situation and decisions they made while in their prime. These include the professional naivety they exhibited in entering into contracts, to how their inability to conform to the changing industry trends. The participants also expressed their anger at how the state has neglected them in their post-prime after years of sacrifice. Expression of regrets was another coping strategy the participants adopted. The regrets were mainly the failure of some of them to pursue higher education, which would have made them more employable as they wound up their careers, and those who opted for formal employment, would have retired with better pensions. Issues of copyright and royalties, and their failure to register or document most of their works, was a major regret they expressed. The neglect of family during their successful years, and how family has held them in their days of distress also came up strongly as a mourning strategy.

Resolving as coping strategy also helped the participants to manage their loss. The Participants in this study showed resilience, positive mentality and hope, having come to terms with their situation. The celebrities showed the capacity to recover from the difficulties they faced. They showed resilience in different ways. They looked at the disappointments and mistakes in their careers as a learning curve for them, by maintaining a strong faith in God with positive mentality for the future.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The objectives of the study were to investigate the experiences of celebrities as they transitioned from an active celebrity life into post-prime as well as examine how the celebrities' identities change as a result of being post-prime. The study also assessed the coping strategies the celebrities in their post-prime adopted to manage their situation. The following conclusions are drawn based on the outcome of the study.

The absence of business managers to direct the careers of the celebrities affected the transition the celebrities faced. Their decision to manage their own affairs business-wise was a major reason for the many disappointments, poor career decisions and contractual issues they reported.

The participants' inability to adjust to the changes in the industry as they insisted on using the old strategies resulting in demotivation to pursue their career, is a fall off from their sole personalization of their affairs as achieved celebrities.

The celebrities' foreknowledge of the transient nature of celebrity life, and their inability to consult in seeking for alternatives for the future was a major blight in their transition journey. With the study showing that the only participant who sought counsel in settling on alternatives ahead of his exit, still fetes off his celebrity status.

The nonexistence of proper royalty and support systems for their intellectual works has also contributed significantly to the plight of the post-prime celebrities. The participants' knowledge on issues of intellectual property is limited, as a large body of the work of the actors are either unregistered or not registered in their names. It is interesting to note that none of the participants makes anything significant from their published works.

The study also concludes that the disconnection of the celebrities from current trends, coupled with the decline in their reputation because of changes in their situation affected their identities. The participants led a near life of seclusion, with minimal public engagements. Such identity was a catalyst for some of the participants to have a reflected appraisal of themselves and correct the family mistakes they made.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

A major limitation to this study was the number of participants. The number of participants was limited to four because of the challenges in gaining access to, and the willingness of the celebrities to participate in the research. A larger number of participants would have provided additional data to understanding the post-prime experiences of the entertainment celebrity.

The focus of the study was on entertainment celebrities, and limited to achieved celebrities because those celebrities' life is tied to a recognizable career. The participants were all male celebrities whose careers spanned over thirty years. This puts the participants within a particular generational group, thus limiting their scope to what they experienced and not what exists today. Using a mix of cross generational

and mixed gender participants for the study would probably have given diverse experiences about the post-prime phenomenon.

It needs to be mentioned that the difficulty in getting literature on the celebrity transition process and post-prime life of celebrities was a major limitation as most of the literature reviewed were situated within the Western context. This is as a result of the minimal studies done on celebrity transitions within the African context. Thus, the analyses were situated within the framework of literature from the West. This study therefore hopefully adds to the literature, giving it a Ghanaian and African context.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further studies**

Future studies into the post-prime experiences should enlarge the participant group to help better understand the post-prime experiences of the celebrities. In so doing, such study could also consider looking beyond entertainment celebrities to celebrities in other fields. This will help compare their unique experiences.

Future research may consider cross generational participants who have experienced the same phenomenon. This is important because, over time, society's perspectives about celebrities change, so also are industrial changes like technology, tools for promotion and even performance charges. Celebrities who hit their prime in this digital age are likely to have a better significance of the change in fame in their post-prime.

Additionally, studying the post-prime experiences of Ghanaian celebrities from the gender perspective will be worth it. This study was forced to limit the participants to only male entertainment celebrities. The industrial challenges of male and female entertainment celebrities differ, so also are their motivations. Conducting a parallel

study focusing on female celebrities would provide information on their post-prime experiences and identify similarities and differences between the genders.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

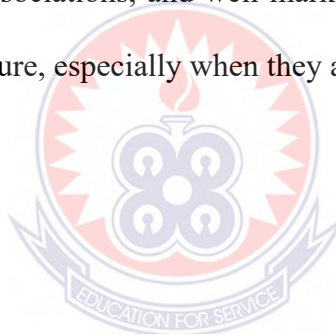
A close interaction with these celebrities-in-decline reveals issues, both personal and industrial, that could be tapped to shape public policy. The following recommendations are therefore made based on the research questions and objectives, findings, discussions and conclusions of the research:

1. The issue of professional guidance for celebrities was a major issue that underlay the challenges the celebrities faced throughout their career. Without professional handlers, the life of the celebrity is in the hands of exploiters. It is non-negotiable to be in the entertainment space as an achieved celebrity without a team that handles one's business. It is therefore prudent, even if the celebrities cannot afford hiring permanent team members to outsource aspects of their business to professionals.
2. Financial and investment education is critical for the Ghanaian celebrity. The challenges of the participants in the study are not isolated cases, as young entertainment celebrities are experiencing same, even those in their prime, because of their lifestyle and poor planning. If the celebrities cannot invest in themselves by acquiring financial literacy, they should take advantage of industry seminars and workshops on such themes. The welfare bodies within the entertainment industry in Ghana should make this a priority as the success of their members makes the associations attractive.
3. Royalties and support system for their intellectual property should be well managed and strengthened. In as much as there are Collective Management



Organizations (CMOs) for the music and audio visual right owners in Ghana, investment into technology to track usage of the right owners' works are non-existent. This makes it impossible for radio and television stations to pay the right fees for the usage of audio visual works. Hence, no Ghanaian musician earns royalties on their works in Ghana, save the levies the CMOs distribute to their members.

4. For institutions like the investment, social security and insurance companies, tailor-made packages for the players in the entertainment industry in Ghana should be rolled out for them. This is critical as the celebrities are mostly informal workers or non-salary earners. These packages, if liaised through their respective associations, and well marketed, should be a good grounding for them in the future, especially when they are off their prime.



## REFERENCES

- Adom FM (2019, April 10). Ageing musicians welfare fund is my legacy. Retrieved April 30, 2020 from <https://www.adomonline.com/ageing-musicians-welfare-fund-is-my-legacy-obour/>
- Adorno, T & Horkheimer, M. (1997). *Dialectic of enlightenment*.. J. Cumming, Trans. London: Verso
- Alexander, J. C. (2010) The celebrity-icon, *Cultural Sociology*, Volume 4(3): 323–336
- Annang, P. (2020, February, 3) About 7 Producers owe me. Graphic Showbiz. Retrieved on March 13, 2020 from <https://www.graphic.com.gh/entertainment/showbiz-news/about-7-producers-owe-me-why-kofi-adjorlolo.html>
- Bauger, L. & Rob Bongaardt, R. (2016) The lived experience of well-being in retirement: A phenomenological study, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 11:1, 33110, DOI: 10.3402/qhw.v11.33110
- Bazeley, P (2013) *Qualitative data analysis: practical strategies*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE
- Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Boorstin, D. J. (1961). *The image: A guide to pseudo-events in America*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications
- Brew, J.O (2019) Career sustainability in the Ghanaian music industry: the case of Okyeame Kwame. Assessed on January 10, 2021 from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344899641\\_Music\\_Career\\_Sustainability\\_in\\_the\\_Ghanaian\\_Music\\_Industry](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344899641_Music_Career_Sustainability_in_the_Ghanaian_Music_Industry)
- Carapinha, A., Torregrossa, M., Mendes, P. et al., (2018) A retrospective analysis of career termination of football players in Portugal. *Motricidade*. 14, (n. 4), 74-85.
- Carrillat, F.A and Ilicic, J. (2019) The celebrity capital life cycle: A framework for future research directions on celebrity endorsement, *Journal of Advertising*, American Academy of Advertising, 48(1), 61-71
- Cashmore, E. (2006). *Celebrity culture*. Routledge
- Cohen, L., Manion L. & Morrison K. (2000). *Research methods in education*. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. London: Routledge Falmer

- Collins, S. (2007) Traversing authenticities: The West Wing president and the activist Sheen. In: Riegert K (ed.) *Politicotainment: Television's Take on the Real*. New York: Palgrave, pp. 181–211
- Comedians and artistes give so much and get very little in return (2016, March 14). Retrieved from <http://ghanagist.com/comedians-and-artist-give-so-much-and-get-very-little-in-return-lydia-forson-eulogizes-bob-okala/>
- Cook, PS. (2018) Continuity, change and possibility in older age: Identity and ageing-as discovery. *Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 54(2) 178–190. Sage
- Corbin, J., & Morse, J. M. (2003). The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9, 335-354. doi: 10.1177/1077800403009003001
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th Ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Cummings, K. (2010). Coming to grips with loss: A grounded theory (Doctoral Dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database (UMI No. 3398009)
- Currid-Halkett, E. (2010) *Starstruck: The business of celebrity*. New York, NY: Faber & Faber
- Daily Graphic (2019, October 30). D.K. Poison grateful to Prez Akufo-Addo. Retrieved on April 30, from <https://www.graphic.com.gh/sports/sports-news/d-k-poison-grateful-to-prez-akufo-addo.html>
- Deller, Ruth (2016). Star image, celebrity reality television and the fame cycle. *Celebrity Studies*, 7 (3).
- Drahota, J.T. & Eitzen, D.S. (1998). The Role Exit of professional athletes, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 15, 263-278
- Driessens, O. (2014). Theorizing celebrity cultures: Thickenings of media cultures and the role of cultural (working) memory. *Communications-The European Journal of Communication Research*, 39 (No. 2) 109-127
- Driessens, O. (2014) Expanding celebrity studies' research agenda: theoretical opportunities and methodological challenges in interviewing celebrities. *Celebrity Studies*.

- Driessens, O. (2013). Being a celebrity in times of its democratisation: a case study from the Flemish region. *Celebrity Studies*, 4(2), 249-253
- Driessens, O. (2013) *The celebritization of society and culture: understanding the structural dynamics of celebrity culture*. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16 (6).
- Driessens, O. (2013), Celebrity capital: Redefining celebrity using field theory, *Theory and Society*, 2 (5), 543–60.
- Driessens, O. (2013). Being a celebrity in times of its democratisation: A case-study from the Flemish region. *Celebrity Studies*, 4 (No.2) 249–253
- Driessens, O., Joye, S., and Biltreyst, D. (2012). The X-factor of charity: a critical analysis of celebrities' involvement in the 2010 Flemish and Dutch Haiti relief shows. *Media, Culture & Society*, 34 (6), s709–725.
- Dyer, R. (2007[1979]). *Stars* (2nd ed.). London: BFI
- Ebaugh, F. (1988). *Becoming an ex: The process of role exit*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Gabler, N. (not dated). Towards a new definition of celebrity. Normal Lear Center. Available on <https://learcenter.org/pdf/Gabler.pdf>
- Gamson, J. (1994). *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gamson, J. (1992). The assembly line of greatness: Celebrity in twentieth-century America. In: *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 9(1), 1-24.
- Ghanaian actors form new guild (2019, March 12). Retrieved March 13, 2020 from <https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/showbiz/news/201903/377525.php>
- Giles, D. (2000). *Illusions of Immortality: A Psychology of Fame and Celebrity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Graphic Showbiz (2019, August 1). No accountability at MUSIGA. Retrieved April 30, 2020 From <https://www.graphic.com.gh/showbiz/news/no-accountability-at-musiga-trigmatic.html#&ts=undefined>
- Hamad, H. (2018) Celebrity in the contemporary era. *Routledge Handbook of Celebrity Studies*, Routledge
- Holmes, S. & Redmond, S. (eds) (2006) *Framing celebrity: New directions in celebrity culture*. London: Routledge.

- Hunter, E. J., Burgers, J. H., & Davidsson, P. (2009). Celebrity capital as a strategic asset: Implications for new venture strategies. In G. T. Lumpkin & J. A. Katz (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial Strategic Content (Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence and Growth*, 11, 137–160). Bingley: Emerald.
- Inglis, F (2010) *A short history of celebrity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jerslev, A. & Petersen, L (2018) Introduction: ageing celebrities, ageing fans, and ageing narratives in popular media culture, *Celebrity Studies*, 9:2, 157-165
- Kachgal, T. M. (2014), From James Frey to Greg Mortenson: ‘Fake’ memoirs and the redemption narrative in contemporary U.S. culture, *Celebrity Studies*, 5 (3), 356-59
- Khalid, LS (2018). The growth of personal branding in Ghana. Motivations and practices. Retrieved on December 20, 2020 from <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/handle/123456789/27369>
- Kubler-Ross, E. (1969) *On Death and Dying*. Macmillan, New York
- Kurzman, C., Key, C., Lee, Y., et al. (2007) Celebrity status. *Sociological Theory*, 25:4
- Marshall , B. L and Rahman, M (2014) Celebrity, ageing and the construction of ‘third age’ identities. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. Sage Publications.
- Marshall, P. (2010). The promotion and presentation of the self: Celebrity as marker of presentational media. *Celebrity Studies*, 1(1), 35–48.
- Marshall, P. (1997) *Celebrity and Power*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Marwick, A. E. & Boyd, D. (2011a). To see and be seen: Celebrity practice on Twitter. In: *Convergence: the international journal of research into new media technologies*, 17(2), 139-158
- Maxwell, J. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Mensa, E. (2021, September 12) 5 Ghanaian celebrities who have become broke and desperately begging for support Retrieved November 12, 2021 from <https://www.ghanacebrities.com/2021/09/12/5-ghanaian-celebrities-have-become-broke-and-desperately-begging-for-support-videos/>
- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from case study research in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Moloney, M, et al. (2007). Celebrity status. In: *Sociological theory*, 25(4), 347-367
- Monyatsi, K.N. (2018), Survey on the status of Collective Management Organizations in ARIPO Member States. Retrieved January 2, 2020 from <https://www.aripo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ARIPO-CMO-Survey-Mag.pdf>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Murray, J. (2001) Loss as a universal concept, *Journal of loss and trauma*,6: Brunner-Routledge 219-241
- Myjoyonline (2020, June 8). I regret being a sound engineer. Retrieved June 8, 2020 From <https://www.myjoyonline.com/entertainment/music/i-regret-being-a-sound-engineer-in-ghana-zapp-mallet/>
- Nketsiah, B. (2020, March 31). Stabbed by patriotism. The D.K. Poison story. Retrieved on April 30, 2020 from <https://citisportsonline.com/2020/03/31/stabbed-by-patriotism-the-d-k-poison-story/>
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Prince, R. (2014, September 23) Why star athletes lose their fortunes. Retrieved May 30, 2020 from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/russalanprince/2014/09/23/why-star-athletes-lose-their-fortunes/#2d76bd93208e>.
- Redmond, S. and Holmes, S. (2007) Introduction: What's in a reader? In S. Redmond and S. Holmes (eds), *Stardom and Celebrity: A reader* (pp. 1–12). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rens, Nichole M. (2017). Changes in fame and fortune: A phenomenological study of professional athletes entering retirement, Education Doctoral Dissertations in Leadership. [https://ir.stthomas.edu/caps\\_ed\\_lead\\_docdiss/88](https://ir.stthomas.edu/caps_ed_lead_docdiss/88)Burke and Stets, 2009.
- Rockwell, D. and Giles, D. (2009) Being a celebrity: A phenomenology of fame. *Journal of phenomenological psychology* 40(2):178-210.
- Rodgers, K. (2012) Leaving the Game: Status and Identity in the Role Exit of Professional Football Players. Retrieved December 10,2019 from <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/18539>.

- Rojek, C. (2015). Celebrity. *The Wiley Blackwell encyclopedia of consumption and consumer studies*. Daniel T. Cook and J. Michale Ryan, Eds. First edition. John Wiley & Sons
- Rojek, C. (2012) *Fame attack: The inflation of celebrity and its consequences*. London: Bloomsbury
- Rojek, C. (2001). *Celebrity*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Seifert, A. (2010), 'Das Model(l) Heidi Klum. Celebrities als kulturelles Phänomen' [*The Model Heidi Klum. Celebrities as Cultural Phenomenon*] (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft).
- Senft, T. M. (2008). *Camgirls: Celebrity and community in the age of social networks*
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE
- Smith, J., & Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In J. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 53-80). Los, Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Stier, J. (2007). Game, name and fame –afterwards will I still be the same? A social psychological study of career, role exit and identity. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 42(1), 99-111.
- Sternheimer, K. (2011), Enduring dilemmas of female celebrity, *Contexts*, 10 (3), 44–49.
- Thomson, M. (2006). Human brands: Investigating antecedents to consumers' strong attachments to celebrities. *Journal of Marketing*, 104-119
- Turner, G. (2004). *Understanding Celebrity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Vagle, M. D. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- van de R., Arnout, E.S., Ward, C. and Skiena, S. (2013), Only 15Minutes? The social stratification of fame in printed media, *American Sociological Review*, 78 (2)
- van Krieken, R. (2012). *Celebrity Society*. London: Routledge.
- White, T. (2018, August 30). The surprising post-fame lives of celebrities You've long forgotten about. Retrieved May 30, 2020 from [https://www. Distractify .com/entertainment/2018/08/30/6xFuy/celebrities-after-fame](https://www.Distractify.com/entertainment/2018/08/30/6xFuy/celebrities-after-fame)
- Yancey, V. (2013) The experience of loss, death and grief. In *Fundamentals of Nursing*, 8th edition (Eds PA Potter, AG Perry, PA Stockert, AM Hall):708-730. Missouri, Elsevier Mosby

Yasemin, O. and Ozkan, B. (2020) Psychosocial approach to loss and mourning.  
*Current Approaches in Psychiatry*; 12(3):352-367 doi: 10.18863/pgy.652126

Yin, R.K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage





## APPENDIX

### Interview schedule: Post-prime experience

1. Can you share your experiences as a celebrity in Ghana?  
Prompts: Beginnings; challenges
2. How did you turn the benefits of celebrity life around?  
Prompt: spin off benefits
3. What plans did you make early in your career towards the future?  
Prompts: Investments, future
4. What was your transition journey like?
5. How do people relate to you now that you are in your post-prime?  
*Prompts: family, colleagues, neighbors*
6. What about the way other people see you?  
*Prompts: family, colleagues, neighbors*
7. How would you say you have changed?  
*Prompts: identity changes*
8. *Do you miss your former self?*
9. *How do you survive as a post-prime celebrity?*  
*Prompts: investments, pensions, royalties*
10. Do you have particular strategies for helping you?  
Prompt: Ways of coping, practical, mental.
11. Do you think about the future much?
12. Reflecting on your life, are there things you would have done differently if you had the opportunity?