

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF CELEBRITIES ON FACEBOOK: A
STUDY OF SELECTED GHANAIAN ARTISTES.**

BISMARCK ODUM SACKEY

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**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

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

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DEDICATION

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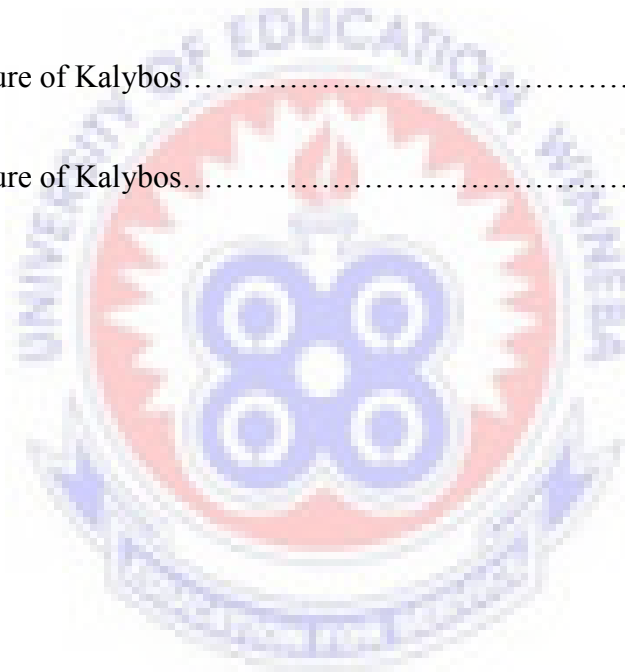
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ABSTRACT

The advent of internet and the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) is another significant phenomenon that is shaping social interaction. SNSs have opened the doors of communication, allowing people from around the world to engage in identity creation and relationship development. Several studies have sought to explain how identities are constructed online especially on the SNSs. Through qualitative textual analysis, interview and cyber ethnography viewed through the lens of symbolic interactionism and the identity theory, this study probes into how celebrities (musicians, actresses and actors) in Ghana construct their identities and further investigates into the kind of identities celebrities construct for themselves on Facebook. The study concludes that in order to meet the positive expectations of their followers, celebrities devise several schemes to construct favourable identities of themselves on Facebook.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In our world today, technology has taken over every aspect of our lives. We live in times where it is increasingly harder to separate our everyday practices from the influence of technological tools, which are constantly growing. This development has had a great impact on the social actions of people all around the world.

The advent of the internet and the Social Networking Sites is another significant aspect of technology which has helped develop the world. Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have opened the doors of communication allowing people from around the world to engage in identity creation and relationship development (Pugh, 2010). SNSs are some of the fastest growing arenas of the World Wide Web (Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009). This can be credited to the proliferation of SNSs on the internet for maintaining friends and colleagues. More than 700 million people worldwide now have profiles on online SNSs, such as MySpace and Facebook (Back, Stopfer, Vazire, Gaddis, Schmukle, Egloff, & Gosling, 2010).

There are many SNSs that are available for people to sign up to depending on the person's preference and the role the person wants to perform as well as their target. SNSs' mission is "giving people the power to share and make the world more open and connected" (Facebook.com, 2011). SNSs provide a medium for users to express themselves beyond physical features and labels, to share experiences, discuss interests, and influence one another in a selective network. In addition, Social Networking Sites are not limited by geographic boundaries as real life networks, they allow users to make and develop relationships with individuals of similar interests around the world.

When each of these sites is launched, it tailors its content and user experience to a particular audience for example towards teenagers on MySpace, college students on Facebook, and high-tech professionals on LinkedIn (Dimmico & Millen, 2007). Each of these sites has some unique features that make it appealing to its users. SNSs have become integrated into the milieu of modern-day social interactions and are widely used as a primary medium for communication and networking (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Valkenburg & Peter, 2009) and as a result, the types of social relationships managed on these sites are becoming more numerous and diverse. With the advent of the SNSs, communication and interaction has taken a new form. People are able to interact easily and freely.

On SNSs like Facebook, users use unique features like notes (blog), games, chat, joining fan pages, starting groups, posting statuses, and writing on other's walls to engage in interaction with other users. Through this interaction and the activities they perform online, users draw attention for themselves. The process through which users try to build and shape their self online in order to attract other users is what can be termed as identity construction.

1.1 Background of the Study

Online identity construction and management has become an area that has attracted lot of researchers more especially on Facebook, which is currently the leading and most popular SNSs (Pugh, 2010). While some are focusing on corporate identity construction of business organizations (Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000), others also delve into the identity construction of individuals and groups (Back et al, 2010; Bolander & Locher, 2010; Dimmicco & Millen, 2007; Farquhar, 2012; Grasmuch,

Martin & Zhao ,2009; Pugh,2010). The reason for this can be attributed to the enormity of the interaction and communication that happen online. Interpersonal interactions mould the construction and perceptions of one's offline and online identity (Pugh, 2010). Identity is intersubjectively rather than individually produced and interactionally emergent rather than assigned in a prior fashion (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005 cited in Bolander & Locher, 2010). This points to the importance of the intersubjectivity and the interactional aspects of identity construction, and the fact that we position ourselves and others through interactions. In other words, identity is constructed in and through interpersonal relationships and social practice, or through the performance of "acts of positioning (Bolander & Locker, 2010).

It is therefore understandable that a lot of studies on identity construction have focused more on online performance, specifically the SNSs. The interactive nature of the SNSs allows users to construct their identity either knowingly or unknowingly.

While not the only social networking site, Facebook has attracted a lot of users over the years and many scholars attribute this popularity to the new features. Facebook introduced graphics to users' personal pages, and pages dedicated to fun and business topics, privacy setting, advertisement among others and these have made the sites very interesting and interactive. The popularity of Facebook among the other SNSs has drawn the attention and interest of many scholars on a global level, with many of them researching into identity construction, advertisement, social interaction, organisational image construction, marketing among others on Facebook (Grasmuch, et al,2009). Many of the studies done on identity construction ground conclude that "users develop their self-concept and affiliative identities to create their image and to produce their own spotlight through a micro celebrity experience on Facebook" (Pugh, 2010).

Most of these studies are limited to mostly the west and there seems to be limited number of works on Facebook done in Africa, particularly in Ghana. This research then intends to probe into how celebrities, precisely Ghanaian Artistes, (Musicians, actress and actresses) construct their identity on Facebook.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Facebook is currently the most popular social networking site on the planet and it has dominated the social networking landscape since its public dissemination in 2006 (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs., 2006). Through Facebook, people tend to desire social acceptance. They seek this acceptance by presenting themselves in the best light possible (Farquhar, 2012). This development has attracted enormous research into how people construct their identities on social network especially Facebook.

Researchers have tried to explain how online identities are constructed. Smith and Kollok (1999) reveal that Facebookers tend to exaggerate their identities by creating an ideal identity rather than real identity. Despite potential exaggeration, research suggests that Facebookers are mostly influenced to be open and honest about their identities because of fear of embarrassment or shame that might come from online misrepresentation (Ellison et al., 2006; Rowatt et al., 1998 cited in Pugh, 2010). Through Goffman's performance of self and schema theory, Farquhar (2012) reveals that Facebookers sought for an acceptable identity and ideal identity through Facebook images. Based on the above assertions, there seems to be an inconclusive or contradictory finding about whether or not Facebookers create a real identity of themselves or not.

Pugh (2010) explains through the theory of situated cognition that is based on what people do and their level of popularity that individuals create a befitting identity for

themselves to suit people's perception. This is buttressed with Grasmuch, et al (2009) assertion that identity construction on the internet is influenced by not only the characteristics of the online environment but also the characteristics of users' social positions. This means that online identity construction of a person is also dependent on the person's social status and popularity. Schau and Gilly (2003) further concluded in their studies that identity is characterized by the tension between how people defines themselves as an individual and how they connect to others and social groups in affiliative relationships.

Similar to celebrities who become famous for a distinct attribute or situation, Facebook users exemplify this behaviour through the recognition they receive around their profile theme.

Studies have revealed that people's creation of ideal identity or real identity on Facebook depends on how they define themselves and their level of acceptance in the society. This calls for the need to extend the research on online identity construction by probing into how people of higher social status and position like celebrities construct their identity on SNSs, more precisely on Facebook.

Furthermore most studies that have been done earlier in the area of online identity construction, focused on the general Facebook users' attitude to bring out their findings, there has been minimal work done on special category of people like celebrities, particularly in Ghana.

This study therefore attempts to look into how celebrities (musicians, actresses and actors) in Ghana construct their identity on Facebook through the lens of symbolic interactionism and the identity construction theory.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research is guided by the following objectives:

- I. To investigate how celebrities construct their identity on Facebook.
- II. To investigate the kind of identity celebrities construct of themselves on Facebook.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research questions that this study is interested in exploring are:

RQ1. How do Celebrities construct their identity on Facebook?

RQ2. What kind of identities do celebrities construct of themselves on Facebook?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to discuss how celebrities as a social category construct their identities on Facebook and how these identities play a role in the shaping their personality. How individuals choose to portray themselves online can vary depending on the type of impression they seek to bestow onto others (Goffman, 1959). The management of this impression does not only affect those around us but it also affects the way that they view themselves (Goffman, 1959). The aim of the study is to understand how Facebook users particularly celebrities construct their online identities through their profiles and how these profiles conform to their sense of the self.

Although several works on identity construction on Facebook have been done they tend to focus mostly on the Facebook users in general. This study will then add up to the earlier works that have been done in this field by interrogating how some people

who are seen in the celebrity category in Africa precisely Ghana do construct their identity on Facebook. The finding of this study will be significant in a world increasingly influenced by social networks and also help future researchers who would like to research this field. As celebrities wish to advance in their various professions this research will also help them to assess the kind of impression they form in the minds of their fans and how best they can manage this impression.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is focused on interrogating how celebrities in Ghana construct their identity of SNSs, particularly Facebook . Although there are different categories of celebrities who are found in different professions, the study will limit its definition of celebrities to musicians, actors and actresses. Celebrities in Ghana are from different professions but, with the exception of sports, the ones found in these professions mentioned earlier (musician, actors and actresses) are the ones that can be said to normally gain more media attention (Turner, 2014).

Also celebrities from these professions are likely to be easily accessible in Ghana. Eight celebrities will be used for this studies, two males and two females each from the music and the movie industry. This study also limited to celebrities who have hit the 5000 maximum number of friends a person can have on Facebook.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is written in five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction chapter and it encompasses the background of the study which gives preamble of the various works on online identity construction specifically on Facebook. It also includes the research

questions which are situated in the research objectives. It also provides the scope within which the study operates.

Chapter two presents itself in a form of review of related literature and the theoretical framework that guides the study. The chapter focuses on the SNSs zooming in on Facebook and how online identities are constructed. The theoretical framework also brings to bare the ideas and concepts that guide this study. It provides how online identity construction can be viewed through the lens of the symbolic interactionism and the identity theory.

Chapter three contains the methods and procedures used for the collection of data for analysis. This chapter outlines the research approach and design as well as how the data was analysed.

Chapter four provides findings and analysis of the data gathered. With the theories outlined in the third chapter as the guide, it examines the various issues that came up.

Chapter five which is the last chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations for the study based on the analysis of the data in the chapter four

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Internet and Social Media

The Internet, also known as the “International Electronic Network,” began in 1968 by the Advanced Research Projects Agency of United States Government’s Department of Defense (Pallab, 1996). Since its invention, the Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world like nothing before. In the past, most computer applications ran on stand alone computer (computers that were not connected to one another). Today’s applications can be written to communicate among the world’s hundreds of millions of computers (Pallab, 1996). The Internet makes our work easier by mixing computing and communications technologies. It makes information immediately and conveniently accessible worldwide. It makes it possible for individuals and small businesses to get worldwide contact. The Internet and the World Wide Web will without doubt be listed among the most important and profound creations and inventions of humankind (Pallab, 2006).

Another magnificent innovation on the internet is social networking sites (SNSs). This innovation has taken over the internet. It was out of place when Trusov, et al 2009, described SNSs as one of the fastest growing arena in World Wide Web.

A social network is a set of people, organizations, or other social entities connected by a set of socially meaningful relationships. Boyd and Ellison (2007) also define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with

whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

The first recognizable social network site was launched in 1997. SixDegrees as it was called promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profiles and publicly articulated Friends. AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles which enable users to identify friends on their personal profiles without seeking any form of approval for those connections (Wasow, 2007 cited in Boyd & Ellison, 2009). Since that time, many SNSs have been created for different purposes targeting different audiences; among them include Ryze.com, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, Friendster, Visible Path, and Xing, Dogster, Care2, Couchsurfing, MyChurch, Flickr, Last.FM, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook and many others (Boyd & Ellison, 2009). In July 2007, social networking sites occupied five of the top fifteen visited websites according to Alexa.com (Joinson, 2009).

In the last few years Social Networking Sites such as MySpace, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook have become hugely popular. Given the growth of social networking sites, it is perhaps unsurprising that their use has garnered media attention. Zooming in on the functions of Social Networking Sites, Joinson (2009) asserts that SNSs typically offer “users with a profile space, facilities for uploading content (e.g. photos, music), messaging in various forms and the ability to make connections to

other people". These connections (or „friends“) are the core functionality of a social network site although most also provide opportunities for communication, the forming of groups, hosting of content and small applications.

SNSs are a part of a broader transformation of the Internet called Web 2.0. Compared to its predecessor, Web 2.0 is far more collaborative, creative and interactive. Social networking, blogging, microblogging, on-line video sites such as YouTube and social bookmarking sites like Diggare; Social Networking Sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter are all part of the Web 2.0 universe (Small, 2008). Web 2.0 usually includes the concepts of interactivity, collaboration between users and shared content. In other words, online users take an active role: they consume as well as create content and interact with each other. With this description, Social media in general can be classified as a key part of Web 2.0.

Scholarship concerning SNSs is emerging from diverse disciplinary and methodological traditions to address a range of topics, and build on a large body of Computer Mediated Communication"s (CMS) research (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social Networking Sites have been investigated and discussed by researchers, journalists and public commentators in the sphere of identity construction and management. This includes seeing online social networking as a site for the sharing of personal experiences among friends, whether known or strangers (Ellison et al., 2007); as a site for the articulation of one"s identity-based interests through the construction of taste statements which act as identifications with objects and with others (Liu, 2008); as a site for relationship maintenance and connecting unfamiliar people with one another. It is also regarded as a networked space for the expression or representation of pre-existing and salient aspects of users" identities for others to

view, interpret and engage with other younger persons outside of the physical world's constraints and parental surveillance (Boyd, 2008); as a site for the expression and self-regulation of narcissistic personalities; being friended and linking to friends, whether close friends, acquaintances or strangers as „one of the (if not the) main activities of Facebook (Tong et al, 2008).

Based on the above enumerated numerous functions of SNSs coupled with the finding of studies on identity construction and management on SNSs, this paper then seeks to probe into how celebrities in Ghana take advantage of the functions of SNSs to construct their identity, using Facebook as a specimen for the examination.

2.2 An Overview of Facebook

As one of the leading SNSs in the world, Facebook was developed in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, a former Harvard undergraduate. The site was originally designed for Harvard students. To join, a user had to have a 12ccurre.edu email address (Williams & Gulati, 2007). As Facebook began supporting other schools, those users were also required to have university email addresses associated with those institutions, a requirement that kept the site comparatively closed and contributed to users' perceptions of the site as an intimate, private community (Quan –Haase & Young, 2010).

From September 2005, Facebook stretched out to include high school students, professionals inside corporate networks, and ultimately, everyone. The change to open signup did not mean that new users could simply access users in closed networks. Gaining access to corporate networks still required the appropriate .com address, while gaining access to high school networks required administrator

approval. Facebook opened membership to people outside the .edu domain in September 2007 (Williams & Gulati, 2007).

Facebook is now the major player, a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with others. It connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. Facebook supports applications for uploading an unlimited number of photos, sharing links and videos, and learning more about the people they meet.

To open an account with Facebook, personal information such as name, gender, date of birth, educational information, phone number and email address are to be provided (Lewis & West, 2011, cited in Avorgah, 2013). Once someone is signed up to Facebook, he or she can search for other users and make friends by sending a friend request to them. Once a friend request is accepted the two users are listed as friends on each other's Facebook profiles by a hyperlink. Every contact a user adds as a "friend" then becomes a link in their profile, and therefore an association (Pugh 2010; Avorgah, 2013).

Not only is it the most popular social networking site, it is one of the world's most trafficked Web sites. Facebook is nearly a universal social networking site and it has the highest share of users' daily visit. More than 60% of members log in daily and many sign on multiple times a day while the average visitor spends over three hours of time on the site each month (Arrington 2005, Holahan, Hof, & Ante 2007).

Of those who use SNSs, almost all (92%) use Facebook (Pew Research Centre, 2011). Facebook has been localized to 43 languages, and profiles can be accessed from all over the world. As the most popular and widely used SNSs, Facebook boasts of over 1.23 billion active users worldwide engaging in the website on a daily basis to

facilitate an ongoing dialogue of their identity and generating influence amongst their networks (Pugh, 2010).

Globally, 556 million people now access the site every day on their smart phones, personal computers and tablets. By the end of 2013, Facebook added over 170 million users in just one year (Kiss, 2014).

According to Ginger (2008), the success and popularity of Facebook is premised on three factors, these are “(1) a modular network organization built on pre-existing communities, (2) a concise and constant but flexible and effective interface, and (3) a *“Permanently Beta structure”*. Facebook is built on separate but similar networks capable of limited interaction with one another. Facebook users are unable to make their full profiles public to all users. One distinguishing feature of Facebook is the ability for outside developers to build applications which allow users to personalize their profiles and perform other tasks, such as compare movie preferences and chart travel histories. Virtually every feature Facebook contains is intuitively interactive in some manner and customizable. New features are added frequently (almost every few months) and users who find themselves bored quickly can always find something new, be it a feature introduced by the Facebook team or just an update to a friend’s profile or a new event (Ginger,2008).

Facebook also caters for a more textbook graphic layout and information management structure which ought not to be judged as intrinsically superior but well positioned to serve the needs of its audience and thus successful (Boyd, 2007 cited in Ginger 2008). Facebook (and other online social networks) allows high levels of surveillance, as users can view and use it to track one another’s post, profile data and other personal

information. The numerous users of Facebook use the sites for different purposes. Being aware of the trafficked nature of Facebook, users have turned it into an identity construction mechanism (Pugh 2010; Farguhar, 2012)

2.3 The Concept of Identity Construction

The fluid nature of identity makes it difficult to put it under one simple definition or explanation. Identity evolves over time and it is unique to each individual that even though two people may be described to possess the same identities, they may differ in practice; in practice their identities can never be the same. According to Ginger (2008), the concept of identity is one of the most emergent and contentious areas in sociological research that sociologists have tackled over the years. Depending on which social science you consult, identity may relate to self-image and individuation or to ascribed and achieved social roles and the process of negotiating one's own place and meaning within a greater societal context.

This study will therefore not try to hypothesize an inclusive definition and explanation of identity but will try to synthesise ideas from different scholars like Erving Goffman, Judith Butler, among others to situate the understanding of the concept of identity in relation to how identity appears in cyberspace and consequently in the realms of Facebook.

Abelson and Lessig (1998) define identity, as “a unique piece of information associated with an entity... a collection of characteristics which are either inherent or assigned by another” (pg.3). Adam Smith, Mead, Freud, and Lacan also in their individual works assert that identity is anchored on two principal notions: an internal perception and an external social identity. This is what Mead described as self. How

knowledgeable an individual is of him or herself is what is termed a self concept. One's internal identity consists of physical, psychological, philosophical and moral aspects of self (Boyd 2002). Identity then is constructed based on how these things relate in an individual and how an individual makes these aspects evident through performance or actions.

The performance aspect of it brings to bare Butler's theory of performativity, which stipulates that "identity and subjectivity is an ongoing process of becoming, rather than an ontological state of being, whereby becoming is a sequence of acts, that retroactively constitute identity" (Butler, 1990). In other words, identity formation occurs „in accord“ with "culturally-given discourses, structures and practices which, once stabilized for the subject, comes to feel as common-sense, and by which any actions, performances or behaviors of the subject appear to be acts springing from that identity rather than constituting it" (Cover, 2012).

This performance nature of identity is also reinforced by Goffman's dramaturgical theory. Goffman's (1959) concept defines and describes identity from the symbolic interactionist perspective and it is premised on the notion that life is in some sense a performance, or rather a series of them. The audience of these performances comes in two forms. There are those watching and interacting with the actor, and at the same time the actor is herself/himself an audience and the various members of the audience constitute actors. They are all performing simultaneously. Everyone is in some sense an actor and an audience and there are potentially an infinite ways to envision the relationships. It is all about the outline of reference (Ginger, 2008). His work emphasizes the importance of social action, group relations, and context to explain the

process through which identity is performed and constructed in everyday life. This dramaturgy is a process that is dependent upon circumstantial social constituencies.

Farquhar (2012) also gives an insight into the Goffman's dramaturgy concept by also introducing what he termed as ideal and real identity. This concept of ideal and real identity can be situated in the idea of front stage and backstage in the dramaturgical concept. The ideal identity construction as described by Farquhar is the process where an individual being aware of the society and also mindful of the impression she/he creates in the mind of observers, tries to present her/himself in the best light possible. This is exactly what Goffman also refers to as front stage, where performance always happens before audience (observers). So in this instance identity is always mediated by the context in which performance takes. The real identity also can be described in the natural, uncontrolled, unrehearsed and unpredicted aspect of an individual place, including situation and audience (Farquhar 2012; Ginger, 2008).

This normally happens when the individual is by herself or himself in the absence of observers. Like the backstage, where performers are present but the audience is not. It is a place where straying from an idealized character is welcome, or at least safe. The backstage is defined by the lack of a certain audience; their mere presence would alter the condition.

Since both real and ideal identity construction is a performance, the purpose of this study is to know how some popular figures who are referred to as celebrities perform their activities in the cyberspace and whether these performances can be termed as a front stage performance or backstage performance.

2.3.1 Facebook and Identity Construction

In recent years, SNSs have popularized the construction and presentation of personal identity online. Social networks provide a platform for communication and the extension of consumer influence (Pugh, 2010). The Facebook user experiences such as joining groups, becoming a fan, updating a personal status, communicating with other users, uploading pictures, writing notes (blogs), sending event invitations; all of which contribute to a more interactive experience. Facebook experience helps people to construct their identity. The uniform format of all Facebook profiles challenges users to be more expressive and strategic to distinguish their identity. Personal profiles of users of Facebook are a reflection of the users' time, knowledge, and effort to enhance their profile and images through pictures, status, comments, video and various links. Facebook profile can be said to be the online embodiment of real person using the site (Boyd 2004; Boyd & Heer, 2006)

Engaging in online identity construction allows users to define themselves by more than just the actual identity schemas and labels they place on themselves (e.g. student, banker or musician). Facebook as an identity construction tool provides users with the opportunity to share interests, ideas (blog), appealing images, and their identity amongst a public network (Pugh, 2012). In this manner, users select the best representations of themselves to strengthen the link between their actual and their ideal (desired) identity (Schau and Gilly, 2003). Creating an online representation of oneself with linguistic content, imagery and brand associations, users consider their self-concept, "our mental conception of whom we are" (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007 cited in Pugh, 2010). The identity one constructs of herself or himself on Facebook can be interacted with when the person is signed in or signed off (online or offline).

Research has given indication of the type of identity constructed by users on Facebook. Pugh (2010), in her work revealed the dynamics involved in constructing an identity on Facebook. Specifically using Facebook as a specimen, she revealed how people contemporarily define themselves in their social online space. Drawing on the established theories of self-concept and social distance corollary, her research examined the routes users employ to identify themselves probing into why users are prone to emphasize particular aspects of their identity and “remove tags” from areas inconsistent with their constructed being. With this she concluded that, Facebookers tend to present themselves in the best light possible through their performance online.

Farquhar (2012), on the other hand in a study, also concluded that Facebookers employ impression management tactics through imagery (uploaded photos and images). He explained that Facebookers either create and reflect their actual identity or construct an ideal identity through the type of pictures, bumper stickers, and other imagery they upload on Facebook. Inferring from the studies of the above named researchers and other similar ones done on online identity construction (Cover,2012; Marwich,2005), one can conclude that Facebook as popular as it is, has become a lucrative platform where all kinds of identities are created.

2.4 Who is a Celebrity

Budhiraja (2012) defines celebrities as people who are successful in their own profession, who enjoy public recognition and have huge following and media attention. In simple words, Boorstin (1971) defines celebrities as people who are well known for their well-knownness. Drawing inference from the above definitions one may say celebrities are people who are celebrated in the society based on what they do. Unlike heroes, Celebrities develop their capacity for fame not mostly by

achieving great things, but by differentiating their own personality from those of the ordinary people in the public arena, which is mostly fabricated on purpose to satisfy peoples' exaggerated expectations of human greatness (Boorstin, 1971; Fraser & Brown, 2008; Turner, 2014).

Agarwal and Dubey (2012) also threw more light on characteristics of celebrities by describing them as people who relish unambiguous public recognition by large number of people and have charismatic attributes that are commonly observed to be: attractiveness, extra ordinary lifestyle and special skill. According to Boorstin (1971) as cited in Fraser and Brown (2009), celebrities are created by the media, they are distinguished by their image, big name and trademark. This means that a celebrity is created by media attention and must constantly maintain a certain image that is difficult to sustain in real life.

Because celebrities rely heavily on the media for sustainability, their status is marked by instability and ambiguity (Dyer, 1991; Gamson, 1994 cited in Fraser and Brown, 2009), although there are exceptions. Media contents mostly change with trend and as a result a celebrity may lose her/his status to new trends in the media as time goes by. The celebrity's status is dependent on public attention (Alberoni, 1972). They are propelled by what Boorstin (1961) described as the "pseudo event". This he described as an event that is "planned and staged purposefully for the media, which accrues significance through the scale of its media coverage rather than through any more disinterested assessment of its importance". The celebrity in this context is its human equivalent; the "human pseudo event" fabricated for the media and evaluated in terms of the scale and effectiveness of their media presence and visibility (Alberoni,

1972). This means that the sustainability of the celebrity status relies solely on how the celebrity keeps the public attention on him and what he does. They mostly achieve this by relying on the media. SNSs like Facebook which forms part of the social media gives celebrities the opportunity to keep people's attention. They do this by performing online activities that send traffic to their various walls and pages on Facebook.

The contemporary celebrity according to Turner (2014) will usually emerge from the sports or the entertainment industries because of the level of coverage they receive in the media. Initially the case was different, celebrities were synonymous to heroes like political, religious and military leaders (who sacrifice their lives to achieve great things for the people and the society), but in recent times celebrities, more specifically entertainers, have replaced them (Edelstein, 1996; Loftus, 1995 cited in Fraser and Brown, 2009).

By monitoring and following researches done by other scholars, Cowen (2000) concluded that 90% of the top 10 people teenagers identify with and as celebrities are entertainers. This clearly shows how entertainers are gradually monopolizing the term "celebrity". In this vein, this paper restricts the definition of celebrities to mean entertainers like actors, actresses and musicians, who are known and have huge following in Ghana. As a way of explaining their online activities, I will adopt Turner's definition of celebrity that says

Celebrity is a genre of representation and a discursive effect; it is commodity traded by the promotions, publicity and media industries that produce these representations and their effects, and it is a cultural formation that has a social function we can better understand (Turner, 2004, pg.4)

In this definition, Turner outlines three primary scholarly definitions. She described celebrity: (1) as a way that people are represented and talked about; (2) as a process by which a person is turned into a commodity; and (3) an aspect of culture which is constantly being carved and reformulated. These three definitions holistically describe the celebrities and their online activities. The comments celebrities attract on their online posts tell the enormity of traffic on their walls. The status updates reinforce how they are strategically selling themselves as commodities to their fans and followers. The online performance also tells how they have created a dynamic cyber environment and culture to live in with their followers.

2.4.1 *Celebrity and Facebook*

Andy Warhol predicted in 1960 that, in the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes (Warhol, 1979 cited in Pugh, 2010). Fortunately for Facebook users, that time has come where users can create a spotlight and a micro-celebrity status for themselves on Facebook. According to Turner's analysis of the spread of celebrity culture, as presented in the work of Pugh, (2010), the opportunity of becoming a celebrity has spread beyond the various elites and into the expectations of the population in general (Turner, 2006). In other words, the reality of becoming a celebrity is more attainable now than ever before. With the help of SNSs people have now become micro-celebrities. Micro-celebrities are unlike real celebrities who command attention quite naturally. Senft (2008) defines „micro-celebrity“ as a technique that „involves people „amping up“ their popularity over the Web using techniques like video, blogs, and social networking sites“. Online micro-celebrities create a niche for themselves by consistently performing a role that attracts attention

for them. In other words they are a creature of their own construction. In this vein, online micro-celebrities can be described as people who command a huge following online based on the activities they perform online. Unlike online celebrities whose fame are normally restricted to the online and are known for what they do online, actual celebrities are known for other things like their profession and their talent. They do not struggle to be famous online; their fame in the society has direct repercussion on their online popularity.

The scope of influence is a key differentiator between actual celebrities and any other ordinary or average person like the micro-celebrities on Facebook. Celebrities generally command much larger audiences than the average person. In the life of a celebrity, fame results from an individual exerting a substantial amount of influence or expertise in a specific area (sports, arts, academics, etc). Along with this audience comes the factor of appeal, in which celebrities must charm more than just an immediate network. When this happens, Pugh (2010) citing McNamara, (2009) revealed that “the private self of the celebrity is no longer the ultimate truth” to their networks. As people who have huge following and a high degree of visibility are subject to public/network opinion, and fans/Facebook “friends” become more interested in the intimate details of their lives (Pugh, 2010).

Celebrities in their quest to manage audience impression about them construct an identity that will benefit their status. This study explains how Ghanaian celebrities (actors, actress and musicians) construct their identity on Facebook to sync with the audience perception of them. Through this, it reveals the kind of identity (ideal or real) celebrities construct for themselves on Facebook.

2.4.2 *The Case of Ghana*

Ghana is a country in West Africa. According to the result of the 2010 population census, the estimated population of Ghana is 25,000,000 (female 51%, male 49%). Like most countries, there are people who are famous in their various professions and can be referred to as celebrities. They include actors, actresses, musicians, footballers, religious leaders and a host of others. These people are mostly known among majority of the population in Ghana. Although the number of celebrities in Ghana cannot be estimated, it is quite clear that there are a number of them.

The celebrity culture in Ghana is growing rapidly and this can be attributed to the saturation of the media in the country. Celebrities are created and produced by the media (Fraser & Brown, 2009). This means that a media saturated country like Ghana is likely to produce more celebrities

Social media use among celebrities is now a real phenomenon in Ghana. Celebrities are now creating accounts on various SNSs like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, among others.

According to an online social media monitoring site (socialbakers.com), there are a number of Ghanaian celebrities who own at least one SNSs account. Like most other celebrities in other countries, Ghana celebrities use their social media accounts to update their fans, keep in touch with friends and connections and publicise their works. As Levinson (2012) rightly states, social media users consume as well as produce social media content. Celebrities use the SNSs to produce information for the followers.

Although some Ghanaian celebrities are the creators and authors of the SNS accounts they have, other accounts are created and managed by other people who are

mostly not known to the celebrities themselves. This is what can be referred to as “fake celebrity account” or „celebrity impersonation“ on social media. In 2010, Jackie Appiah (a renowned Ghanaian actress and celebrity) in an interview with Metro TV (a Ghanaian TV Station) denied ownership of a Facebook account which was created with her picture and in her name (Sanpomaa, 2010). On March 14, 2014, this fake Facebook account of Jackie Appiah was verified by Facebook, which drove the celebrity to once again come out to deny ownership of that account. Several cases of such nature have occurred where a Ghanaian celebrity would come out to deny ownership of one SNS account or the other. On August 4, 2014, Nadia Buari’s (a celebrated Ghanaian actress) fake Instagram accounts were shut down by Instagram (Igere, 2014).

Facebook is one of the mostly used SNSs by Ghanaian celebrities (socialbakers.com). Ghanaian celebrities who have popular accounts and pages on Facebook are mostly entertainers. Out of the top 20 celebrities in Ghana on Facebook, 12 of them are entertainers (musicians, actress and actresses), 5 are sports men specifically football players, 4 are pastors (socialbakers.com, 2015).

This reinforces Turner’s assertion that contemporary celebrity will usually emerge from the sports or the entertainment industries (Turner, 2014). It also justifies why 90% of the top 10 people teenagers regard as celebrities and want to be like are entertainers (Cowen, 2000). It also explains why the definition of celebrities in this paper is restricted to entertainers, and more specifically musicians, actors and actresses.

2.5 Celebrities and Identity Construction

“Celebrity” and “success” have become virtually synonymous in media-saturated countries (Loftus, 1995 cited in Fraser and Brown, 2009). This can be attributed to the fact that, the media present celebrities as people who are successful.

One of the core assumptions of the mass society theory is that media are able to directly influence the minds of the average people, transforming their views in the social world (Baran & Davis, 2012). People form impression about the world based on what they see in the media.

Being aware of the exaggerated expectations of people, celebrities construct an identity to suit the expectations of people. Constructing this identity involves: viewing friends or followers as a fan base; acknowledging popularity as a goal; managing the fan base using a variety of affiliative techniques; and constructing an image of self that can be easily consumed by others. With this, the term “celebrity” then moves from being a noun that describes a person to being a practice or performance. Through these performances celebrities commodify themselves and trade this commodity to the public by way of promotions and publicity. This is what Marwich and Boyd (2011) refer to as the “celebrity practice”. The state of being a celebrity is achieved through the praxis of practicing it, in other words, it is “self produced”.

There is no singular formula for celebrity practice; it consists of a set of learned techniques that are leveraged differently by individuals. Depending on the type of identity a celebrity wants to construct her/his online performances and practices may differ from that of his colleagues. Performance is a critical component in any public figure’s identity (Marshall, 2010).

Celebrities are under constant and regular surveillance and thus their more mundane and sometimes more personal activities are the subject of a gaze. The gaze provided by media and on-line sites makes their often everyday activities a kind of performance to be read further. As a result of this, celebrities always perform their self, and by performing their self, they compose a version of themselves for the world. Performance of the self is a conscious act of the celebrity culture and requires a careful staging to maintain the self. In other words, the identity the celebrity seeks must be constructed and consistently performed (Littlejohn and Foss, 2004). Following Littlejohn and Foss, this study also state that identity construction of celebrities is a project rather than an event.

In performing identity, the celebrity tries to take the position of the other and guess how they will interpret her/his symbols. The identity conveyed must be consistent with the expectations of the audience and with the situation that frames the interaction between the celebrity and the followers (Robinson, 1996). This is challenging as the celebrity can control the signals he or she gives, but cannot insure that the signals given are received or interpreted in the intended way.

In performing the self, celebrities have the option to perform either of the two facets of the self (an internal perception or an external social identity). These two facets of the self are what Mead referred to as the “*I*” and the “*Me*” (Littlejohn and Foss, 2008:156). Performing the *I*, would mean the celebrity must be in her/his natural self without any alteration. This will include consistently reinforcing her/his beliefs, ideology, and internal perceptions without fear of being criticised. In doing this, the celebrity constructs a real identity that is the natural, unpredicted and uncontrolled aspect of the celebrity. Constructing and performing the “*Me*” would mean the

celebrity has to live up to the expectations of the people in the society and by doing this he behaves and acts in an organised way that is consistent with her/his status and also public guidance and directions.

Constructing a real identity does not require much effort and it is easy to sustain, unlike the ideal identity that is difficult to construct because it is subject to public expectations. Through cyber profile exploration of celebrity pages on Facebook and one on one interview, this study brings to bare the type of identity celebrities perform and construct and also explains the motivations behind the construction of those identities.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1 *Symbolic Interactionism*

The theory of “symbolic interactionism” is originally credited to George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). Although he never used the term symbolic interactionism, he aggregated and refined the antecedent foundational work into a unique approach to the understanding of human behavior (Blumer 1969; Meltzer et al, 1975; Charon , 1995 cited Benzies & Allen, 2001). A professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago, Mead, refined the concepts of the ‘mind’ and the ‘self’. The perspective was first given coherence by Mead’s students from Chicago who after his death compiled and in 1934, published their notes from his social psychology courses in the book titled *Mind, Self and Society*. In 1937, one of Mead’s student and apostle, Herbert Blumer coined the term Symbolic Interactionism (Benzies & Allies, 2001; Stryker, 2008).

The term symbolic interactionism comprises of two concepts: symbol and interaction. Symbol refers to any social object (physical object, a gesture, or a word) that stands in place or represents something. Symbols are uniquely human creation. Interaction highlights the importance of interpersonal communication in transmitting the meaning of symbols (Stryker, 2008). Fusing the two concepts together, Littlejohn and Foss (2008) say that *SI* is about encountering explanations of what gets made or constructed in conversation, how meaning arises in conversation, and how symbols come to be defined through interaction. Through interaction culture arises. Culture can then be described as the ideas, objects and practices that constitute everyday life (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic Interactionism (*SI*), a movement within sociology, is the study of how the self and the social environment shape each other through communication. In Mead's explanation, communication is fundamental to the development of the self. In his perspective, society as realms of group life is premised on cooperative interaction of the society members (Lindlorf and Taylor, 2002).

SI is anchored on three cardinal concepts: (1) human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that the thing has for them. (2) The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with ones fellow. (3) These meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the encounters (Blumer, 1969).

Meaning is constructed through language, interaction, and interpretation. *SI* teaches that as people interact verbally and nonverbally with one another over time, they come to share meanings for certain terms and actions. This shared or common meaning that is assigned to signs and gestures is referred to as "Significant Symbols" (Littlejohn and Foss , 2008); Lindlof and Taylor, 2002).

Symbolic interactionists claim that identity and self are constituted through constant interactions with others. Individuals work together to uphold preferred self-images of themselves and their conversation partners, through strategies like maintaining (or „saving“) face, collectively encouraging social norms, or negotiating power differentials and disagreements.

SI is premised on three concepts: *Society*, *Self* and *Mind*. These concepts although are of different aspects come together to make *SI* more meaningful. The self as explained by Mead has two components, that is the *I* and the *Me*. The “*I*” directs our creative expression, whereas the “*Me*” imagines the attitudes of the others in ways that adjust the *I* (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). He further explained that, society consists of group of social networks where the participants assign meaning to their own actions and that of others by the use of symbols. Through interaction people make meaning of themselves and that of others. The self then is defined through the social interaction with others (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). By this explanation we can conclude that we make meaning of our life based on the interaction we have with people. Also based on that we get to know who we are and what others expect of us. We create our identity based on the imagined expectations of the society (*Me*). This assumption mostly conceals our creative expression of the self (*I*).

One of the core assumptions of the *SI* theory is that “people make decisions and act in accordance with the subjective situation in which they find themselves” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2002. P. 96). This assumption buttresses Pugh’s (2010) assertion that, based on what people do and their level of popularity they create a befitting identity for themselves to suit people’s perception.

As celebrities who are found in the subjective situation where followers and fans are always curious to know what is happening in their life, they construct an identity that

will meet and satisfy expectations of people as well as shape people's impression about them. This supports, Schau and Gilly, (2003) findings that, identity is characterized by the tension between how a person defines her/himself as an individual and how she/he connects to others in social groups. Celebrities can be said to be people who influence and are influenced by the society. Their „self“ is inevitably shaped by the saturation of expectations of the society, but so too is society (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Facebook is a platform where people create actual and ideal identity of themselves (Pugh, 2010). They create these identities based on how they see themselves and how others see them. How we choose to portray ourselves online can vary depending on what type of impression we seek to bestow onto others. How we manage this impression does not only affect those around us, but it affects the way that we view ourselves (Goffman, 1969). Being aware of the impression they create in people mind, celebrities construct identity to benefit their status. But the question is, what kind of online identity do they create of themselves? Is it the ideal identity that they seek for or a reflection of their real identity?

SI has influenced often implicitly the study of topics such as socialization, social cognition, role and identity management, and relational negotiation (Gilly & Shau, 2003). The aim of the study is to understand how Facebook users particularly celebrities as a category do construct their online identities through their profiles and how these profiles interact with their sense of self.

2.6.2 Society.

We draw from theories of symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934) to propose that identity work is undertaken both by an individual projecting a particular

image and by others mirroring back and reinforcing (or not) that image as a legitimate identity . This presupposes that the self is not a distinct psychological entity, but as a social construct. Society is a realm of group life premised on interaction. In this interaction participants (members of the society) ascertain each other's interaction through the use of *significant symbols* (gesture with shared meaning). "Society then consists of network of interactions in which participants make meaning to their own and others" by the use of symbols."(Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). Society is made possible by these symbols. Because of the shared meanings we attach to symbols, we are able to vocalize them, and as such we literally can hear ourselves and can respond to the self as others respond to us (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008).

There is no self without a society. They both supplement or complement each other. Identity is created by an individual but for an identity to be reinforced, society must reflect that identity. Other than that, an identity is not created. Personal beings are two sided, consisting a social being (person) and the personal being (self) (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008).

We know who we are through the lens of the society. Identities are social products and they are created and named through interaction with others in the society. Identity is created based on the imagined expectation of the society. We make meaning of one's identity through interaction with the members of the society. The cooperative behaviours of society's members make up the society (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). The only way one comes to see her or his identity is through the perspective of others in the society. The self is known through the history of interaction with the other people. All our thoughts, intentions, and emotions are cast in terms and learned through social interaction. This is what Littlejohn & Foss refer to as role taking; assuming the

perspective of others. Society serves as the mirror through which one can see her or himself. In other words you are what others/ society say you are.

Society is created through social process; each is constitutive of the other in and neither has ontological priority. Society emerges out of interaction and shapes self, but self shapes interaction, playing back on society. Society is continuously created and recreated as humans inevitably meet new challenges.

3.6.3 *Self*

In general terms, self is now viewed as a set or series of identities that can be invoked individually or simultaneously in situations, but once evoked, individuals' actions are directed at having others verify an identity or identities.

Mead differentiated the 'self' into a spontaneous 'I' and a socially determined 'me'. The 'I' is the initial impulsive tendency in individuals, whereas the 'me' represents the expectations of others. The 'self' is seen as a process of interaction between the 'I' and the 'me'. "Every act begins with an impulse from the *I* and quickly becomes controlled by the *Me*. The *I* is the driving force in action whereas the *me* provides direction and action" (Littlejohn and Foss, 2008). In Mead's explanation, the *me* is the socially accepted and adaptive behavior whereas the *I* is the creative, unpredictable impulses. In other words the self embodies or encapsulates an expression component (*I*) and the impressive component (*me*). The *I* directs our creative expressions whereas the *me* imagines the attitude of others (either general or specific) in ways that adjust the *I* (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Based on this it can be concluded that the self is inevitably shaped by the saturation of expectations of the society. The complexity of socialization creates selves that are capable of both conformity and innovation.

In the online setting, the self is often expressed through customization. People creating blogs, homepages and online profiles can use a variety of digital tokens such as pictures, avatars, icons, nicknames, fonts, music, and video to represent themselves. In their presentation they can either present the real self that is the (*I*) or the ideal self that is the (*me*). Presenting the *I* will mean revealing the expressive component of the self. When that happens the society may see you as a deviant and vice versa.

2.6.4 Identity Theory

Avorgah (2013) citing Sterts and Burke (2000) explained that identity can be classified in three basic ways. That is, it can be used to refer to the culture of people, common identification with a collectivity or social category and the meaning that people ascribe the multiple roles they occupy. In identity theory, the self can take itself as an object and can categorise, classify or name itself in particular ways in relation to other classifications. This process is called identification (McCall & Simons, 1978 cited in Sterts & Burke, 2000). Through the process of identification, the self is formed.

Identity theory is premised in the work of George Herbert Mead. The basic axiom of Mead's concept of the self is formalised in identity theory. Like the symbolic interactionism, Mead posited that the self is shaped by the society; the self in turn shapes social behaviour. Like the symbolic interactionism, the identity theory looks at the ways in which persons in social interactions are controlled by the social structure (Cast, 2003 cited in Avorgah, 2013).

Identity theory can be grouped under two main categories with one focusing on the linkages between social structure and identity (structural strand) and the other

focusing on the internal process of self verification (cognitive strand), (Sterts & Burke, 2000) . The former approach is interested in probing into how the social structure affect the structure of the self and ultimately social behaviour and the latter is concerned about the internal dynamics of the self process and their effect on social behaviour. The two categories appear to be totally opposing each other.

There are three types of identities. These are social identity, person identity and role identity. Social identity is based on an individual's self- identification relative to the social group to which that person belongs. As an individual names or classify him or herself in relation to a particular group it is called self –categorisation. For instance in Ghana one can categorise him or herself to be a member of a particular political party (NPP, NDC, CPP, etc). Person identification which is the premise of this study, is derived when one view himself or herself as having a distinct characteristic. This makes person identity quite personal and mostly internal. The third identity which is the role theory is derived from occupying a specific role in the society (Merolla et al, 2012 cited in Avorgah, 2013).

Identities are social product formed and maintained through naming and interaction with others. An individual has an identity because society has collectively named that phenomenon. This identity is performed in relation to other members of the society with whom one interacts with (Sterts & Burke, 2000). In symbolic interactionism the collective impression or categorisation that society form of a person is referred to as “generalised other”. As indicated in the *SI*, identity is created and maintained by individuals based on the tag and the categorisation of the society. In this sense, Identity theory is therefore a categorisation of the self as an occupant of a role and incorporating into the self of the meaning and expectations associated with that role and its performance (Burke & Tully, 1977; Thoit, 1989 cited in Stets & Burke, 2000).

In identity theory, scholars have been concerned more about the effects of a person's position in the social structure on the likelihood of that person activating one identity other than another (Stets & Burke, 2000). In connection with this concern the idea of commitment to an identity was introduced into identity theory. Commitment has two facets, the quantitative and the qualitative (Stryker & Serpe, 1982, 1994 cited in Stets & Burke, 2000). The quantitative is the number of persons to whom one is tied to, through an identity. The more persons one is tied to by holding on an identity the greater the embeddedness of the identity in the social structure. In other words the stronger the commitment, the greater the salience. The qualitative is the relative strength or depth of the ties with other. Stronger ties with others through an identity lead to a more salient identity (Stets & Burke, 2000).

2.6.5 Performance of the Self as a Role

Performance is a critical component in any public figure's identity. Celebrities perform in their principal art form as actors, musicians, singers, athlete, as well as the extra-textual dimensions of interviews, advertisements/commercial endorsements, award nights premieres among others. These elements of performance are the professional elements that are closest to their status as, or at least as conveyors of cultural commodities.

As earlier indicated, the core of identity theory is the categorization of the self as an occupant of role and incorporating into the self, of the meaning and expectations associated with the role and its performance (Burke & Tully, 1977; Thoits 1986 cited Avorgah, 2013). These expectations and meanings form a set of standards that guide behaviour (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). Every role comes along with its own meaning and expectations. For instance, the meaning assigned to a pastor and the public

expectation associated with it is different from that of a teacher. By taking on an identity, persons adopt self –meanings and expectations to accompany the role as it relates to other roles in the group and then act to represent and preserve these meanings and expectations.

That is where the performance aspect of the role comes in. As you perform the role you either strengthen or weaken your identity. If you live up to the expectations of that role, the identity you seek to build is strengthened and vice versa.

If each of the roles is to function, it must be able to rely on the reciprocity and exchange relation with other roles. Individuals do not view themselves as similar to the others with whom they interact, but as different, with their own interest, duties and resources. Each role is related to, but set apart from, counter roles; often the interests compete, so that proper role performance can be achieved only through negotiation. This means that in as much as each other's role complements that of the other through interaction, it also differs in performance. The role of the teacher complements that of the student but in performance they differ.

The meaning and expectation that are associated with a role is mostly culturally rooted as such ones actions in the performance of her or his role are judged on the appropriate-inappropriate scale via the social-cultural and collective meaning and expectation assigned to that particular identity (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). This seems to suggest that the interpretive process of the self as an occupant of a role occurs within the cultural and the social context of the enactor. This altogether makes the self

individual and intrinsically social by nature , and this strengthens the performance aspect of the identity.

Because society is the judge of one's identity, one has to always perform to conform to public expectations so as to strengthen the identity. In other words an individual has an identity because the society has collectively named that phenomenon. However, such identity is performed in relation to other members of the society with whom one interacts (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). Identity is thus socially constructed in tandem with the people around us.

Being aware of this, one can perform either the real or the ideal identity, or better still perform the two interchangeably depending on the context and the situation in which the individual finds her/himself. People present themselves differently based on *context* (where they are) and *audience* (who they are with) (Goffman, 1959). Identity thus appears to be fluid. Identity is flexible and changeable, and people are highly skilled in varying their self-presentation appropriately. The concept of a multiple self explains why people vary identity performance based on context: multiplicity is an inherent property of identity.

This multiplicity of identity invokes Goffman's concept of the dramaturgy that is the front stage performance and the back stage performance. The society is the audience and like watching a theatre or a drama, it has an expectation and that is to watch a good production. The person performing the role of the actor must live up to the expectations that the public has assigned to that role. When this is done, the identity of the actor is strengthened. In the case of the celebrity, the fans and the society that make him a celebrity expect him to live up to some guidelines and directions that

define the role as a celebrity. In doing this the celebrity must perform on the front stage.

This means that behaviour must be consistent with the expectation of the audience or the society. It can be the other way round. The celebrity can decide to be in her/his natural element by performing the role based on her or his own interpretation of the role without subscribing to public expectation associated with the role. By doing this the celebrity performs the real identity. In other words the celebrity brings his backstage identity to the front stage. The process of performing an identity is referred to as “identity work”. That is people being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising their Identities (Gofman, 1959).

Celebrities engage in often sophisticated use of on-line and social media to produce a different presence and to meet the public expectations. The public self is constantly worked upon and updated in online forms to both maintain its currency and to acknowledge its centrality to the individual’s identity, which is dependent upon the network of connections to sustain the life of the online persona (Marshall, 2010).

Summary

This chapter has focused on the fundamental premise of identity construction on social media: discussing how the advent of internet and social media has revolutionised the world to allow people construct and maintain their identities online. The chapter delved into discussing how celebrities use SNSs precisely Facebook to reach out to their fans and construct a befitting identity for their status. The study is premised on the symbolic interactionism and the identity theory to explain how celebrities construct their identities as well as investigating into the kind of identities they construct for themselves on Facebook.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Approach

To better assess the true motivations of Facebook users' behaviour, qualitative research proves to be one of the most suitable (Pugh, 2010). Based on this, the current study was qualitative oriented. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative approach to research also seeks to identify and explore in depth phenomena such as reasons, attitude, etc. It also preserves and analyses the situated form, content and experience of social action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations (Lindlorf & Taylor, 2002). The process of qualitative research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected from the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014).

Most of the studies that have been done in the online and computer mediated sphere use the qualitative research approach (Pugh 2012). Kozinet (2002) explains that, qualitative methods are particularly useful for revealing the rich symbolic world that underlies needs, desires, meanings and choice (Kozinets, 2002 cited in Pugh,2010). Kozinets explanation suitably puts the topic of this study more in the qualitative sphere. Qualitative research is not limited to rigidly pre-defined variables. Thus, qualitative research contributes inquiry research by enabling exploration of new areas of research and building new theories (Pugh, 2010). That is to say, qualitative

research helps us to discover new ideas in order to understand the world in which we live and how things are the way they are.

3.2 Research Design

The selection of a research design is mostly dependent on the nature of the research problem or the issue being addressed, the researcher's personal experiences, and the audience for the Study (Creswell, 2014). Research design can then be described as a strategy, plan, and a structure of conducting a research project (Creswell, 2014). It can also be described as the logical structure of the inquiry. The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer the initial question as decidedly as possible. That is to say, in research the issues of sampling, method of data collection (e.g. questionnaire, observation, document analysis among others), and design of questions are all subsidiary to the matter of „What evidence do I need to collect?“ (Cresswell, 2014).

The researcher in this vein employed the textual analysis method. Having in mind the objectives of the study and the questions that guide the study, it was just suitable to use textual analysis as a design for the study. This is because with textual analysis, we make an educated guess at some of the likely interpretations that might be made of a text (Mckee, 2003). With this we interpret text (Film, television program, magazine, advertisement, pictures, graffiti, and so on) in order to obtain sense from the way in which they are presented in particular cultures at particular times. This study also deals with analysing the activities of celebrities on Facebook which is mostly in text (pictures, audio, video and words).

3.3 Textual Analysis

Textual analysis comes out of the work of theorists known as Roland Barthes in the 1960s. Barthes believed that any kind of popular cultural product could be „decoded“ by reading the „signs“ within the text (Bainbridge, 2008). It is one of the primary tools media researchers use to understand how meaning is made from media texts. It is an effective way of assessing, comparing and understanding media texts. Textual analysis is a toolkit for examining the media, applicable to very simple media forms such as advertisements, phone messages, online messages and content up to more complex forms such as news narratives, television series and films (Bainbridge, 2008)

Textual analysis is the method communication researchers use to describe and interpret the characteristics of a recorded or visual message. The function of textual analysis is to describe the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). The important considerations in textual analysis include selecting the types of texts to be studied, acquiring appropriate texts, and determining which approach to employ in analyzing them.

Using textual analysis, this study was geared toward studying the online performance of Ghanaian celebrities to better appreciate how the celebrities make sense of their world through the online representations. This study focused on analysing the online performance of Ghanaian celebrities in relation to their post (messages, pictures, video, audio, among others). The aim was to gain insight into the motivations behind the posts of celebrities in the performance of their identities; the meaning embedded in the text and the reactions they elicit. These altogether was ultimately to find out how Ghanaian celebrities construct their identities on Facebook and the kind of identities they construct.

3.4 Population

Polit and Hungler (1999) refer to the population as “an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications”. This means that, a population is the total of all the individuals who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher (Burns & Grove, 2009). Dartey (2012) citing Zikmund (2003), distinguished between population and target population. He stressed that population is the entire group of homogenous entities from which the target population is drawn. This suggests that elements in a target population belong to the population and may be drawn for study because it possesses the characteristics of the population, members of the target population may possess other features relevant to the study objectives. According to Nworgu (2006) as cited by Donkor (2014), population of a research can be divided into two groups; the target population and the accessible population. The target population in his opinion includes all the members of a specific group to which the investigation is related to. The accessible population on the other hand is defined in terms of those members in the group within the reach of the researcher.

Based on the above, the population of this study comprised all celebrities in Ghana (Musicians, actors and actresses). The target population was made up of celebrities who own and operate an active Facebook account and page.

3.5 Sampling Method

This study is concerned about probing into the activities of a category of people in the society (Celebrities). Sampling technique directs researchers to know whom to observe or whom to interview (Lindlorf & Taylor, 2002). The sampling technique for a study is mostly dependent on the objectives of the study (Given, 2008). An

intelligent sampling strategy enables researchers to make systematic contact with communicative phenomena with a minimum of wasted effort (Given, 2008)

Based on this background, purposive sampling and snow ball sampling were used for this study. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research.

Snowball sampling on the other hand “yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest” (Lindlorf & Taylor, 2002)

The researcher initially selected some celebrities to be used for the study. Most of these celebrities who were initially selected for the study were not accessible but through referrals and recommendation from the few that were accessible, other celebrities were added to the respondents for the study. In all, all the celebrities who were used for the study fell into the criteria for the study.

3.6 Sampling Size

3.6.1 Interview

To be identified as a celebrity one must have a fan base that shows an interest in the celebrity (Pugh, 2010). This fan base must be huge and adequate to be seen as celebrities, hence for the purpose of this study, celebrities who have the maximum number of friends that Facebook allows (little over 5000) were used for the study.

Four (4) participants were used for the study. Two (2) were male and two were female. Among the four (4), two (2) were musicians, one (1) actor and one (1) actress. All the participants have over 5000 friends on Facebook (the maximum number of

friends that Facebook allows). The followers of these respondents on the Facebook page ranged from 8,000 to 300,000. In all Four participants were used for this study. Participants in this study refer to the celebrities who were used for this study.

3.6.2 *Cyber Ethnography*

The Facebook walls and pages of the four (4) celebrities that were interviewed for this study were observed. All their posts (status updates, pictures, videos, and audios) within the period of the study was closely observed and analysed.

3.7 Data Collection Strategy

Following the direction of other works done on online identity construction (Farquhar, 2012; Pugh, 2010); this study adopted two data collection methods to make the data more credible and reliable. This researcher used interview and Cyber ethnography in gathering the data for the study.

Interviews are particularly well suited in qualitative research; they help the researcher to understand people's perspectives and experiences (Lindlorf & Taylor, 2002) in order to obtain information to answer a particular research question. Interview also reduces the degree of prejudice and subjectivity on the part of the researcher which is prominent on sole reliance, inductive and interpretive analysis (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Bertrand & Hughes, 2005). Interviews allow the researcher to hear people's stories of their experiences.

The objectives of this study demanded an in-depth explanation, as such the researcher needed to speak to respondents to produce explanation of their online performances and behaviours, how they apply what they know in the online space, how they

negotiate certain issues, how they move from one stage of their live to another, how they interpret certain text and so on.

The use of interview in this study was also to validate, verify and comment on the information obtained from the cyber ethnography. This is to say, the interview and the cyber ethnographic studies complemented each other in the study. Face to face interviews which ranged between 30-45 minutes were done with the participants. The interview was semi structured and the intention behind was basically, to allow the respondents the space and comfort to give a detailed description of their performances on Facebook.

Cyber ethnography involves describing and interpreting observed relationships between social practice and the system of meaning in the online space. The commitment is encoded in the terms roots, Cyber (internet), ethno (people) and graphy (describing). It is basically the holistic description of the online environment's cultural membership. It is holistic because it tries to describe all (at least most) relevant aspects of the online culture material existence and meaning systems. In other words, „thick“ description specifically, of the contextual significance of online performers is a key attribute of cyber ethnography (Geertz, 1983; Lindlorf & Taylor, 2002).

Eight months cyber ethnographic study (October, 2014 to May, 2015) was done on the Facebook profile wall of the participants. All the activities of the participants in addition to that of their fans were observed and analysed. Activities are the doing of individuals or group as extended by social performances, often ritualistic, enacted in specific setting and time period (Lindlorf & Taylor, 2002).

Like the geographical sites, the online sites are also a good place to gather data for a study like this especially when one wants to study how people interact with natural or

built environments (social ecology of communication) or how acts of communication exhibits regularity or variation in terms of where they occur (Lindlorf & Taylor,2002).So this cyber ethnography was done to be in the same environment with participants of the study inorder to understand their actions and make meaning of them.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

3.8.1 *Cyber Ethnography Studies*

This study mainly sought to probe into the performances and activities of celebrities on Facebook, as such the cyber ethnographic study was mainly done on Facebook. A typical research day involved 3–5 hours of researcher activity on Facebook. This included reading and documenting wall posts from the participants, their friends and followers.

Ethnography itself offers a handful of advantages, with the bedrock assumption being that experience leads to understanding (Machin, 2002; Maanan, 1988 cited in Farquhar, 2013). First, when studying an online group, it is only logical for the researcher to use online methods that put her/him in that environment (Lindlof & Taylor, 2012)

Facebook wall posts with “comments” from participants were closely observed and copied. These posts were mostly personal, religious, social, entertaining and motivational in nature.

The researcher accessed Facebook post of the celebrities through his own account. This was done using the names of the celebrities: The names of the candidates, either in full – “Ama K. Abebrese”, or their showbiz names – “Kalybos”, “Raquel” and “Atumpan.” These names were used to also pull relevant information from their

respective walls and pages of these celebrities. Some of the celebrities had multiple accounts on Facebook and pages. These were either accounts they used to manage and have stopped or fake accounts that people have created. Through the interview with them the researcher was able to confirm from them their authentic accounts and pages that were to be used for the study. Within the eight (8) months period of the cyber-ethnographic study the researcher spent a minimum of 960 hours observing activities on the Facebook walls of the celebrities.

3.8.2 Interview

Interview Protocol

Interviews concerning the identity construction of celebrities on facebook were conducted in person. All the interviews took place over a two month time frame at different locations depending on the convenience of the interviewee. While the length of the interview was specific to user interpretations, they all ranged between 45 to 90 minutes.

To elicit in-depth discussion on the reasoning behind identity construction through Facebook, the researcher adopted Pugh (2010) interview technique. Similar to this study, Pugh did a qualitative study on how Facebook users desire to influence, associate and construct an ideal identity. She made the interviewees to personally navigate their profiles, during interviews. In her opinion, allowing participants to navigate their user profile is a technique related to autodiving. Autodiving requires participants to navigate through their profile page during the interview and then explain the reasoning behind some of the post and performances. Creating a more interactive interview (by navigating user profiles) eases the participants' ability to

recall their experiences and engages them more deeply in the conversation with the research (Pugh, 2010).

The interview was conducted with the help of a semi-structure interview guide. Because interviewees had their individual ways of talking about activities that were of essence to them there was the need to mediate between the interview guide. The researcher then tried to keep the interviewees on track within the cause of the interview to avoid deviation.

3.8.3 Informant Questions

All the participants were asked a standardized set of questions, and the interactions resulted in probing and further questioning. Interviews began with questions on online identity construction and then moved to their network and lastly influence. Informants were asked 5-8 questions on each subject in a discussion-like manner. Through that, participants provided detailed narratives of their Facebook experiences, which was compiled and analyzed to develop the themes. Questions ranged from surface level information, such as how they use their Facebook account, to more intuitive questions, such as, ways that users feel that they personally impact their fans through their identities.

3.9 Data Analysis Method

3.9.1 *Cyber Ethnography*

Facebook activities of the participants which were mainly postings were closely monitored in relation to how often the respondent post, what he post, the comments the post attract, the motivation behind the post, his target audience for a particular post, the post from people that appear on the respondent's wall among others. All

these activities were observed, collated and analysed based on the objectives of the study. The guide to the analysis of the text that was employed by the researcher in this study was adopted from Pugh (2009), who in her studies conducted an analysis on how people desire to influence, associate, and construct a representative and ideal identity on Facebook. Following her direction, the researcher did a thorough and multiple reading of the text gathered from the walls of the participants. This was done to gain insights into the varied ways through which the various participants perform their activities on Facebook in the construction of their identities. It was also done to see the similarities and differences in their activities. Ultimately this was done to gain a deeper understanding of the various patterns that are followed by celebrities in the construction of their identities.

The researcher further did a close reading on the text to identify categories in the activities of the celebrities on Facebook. The categorization was done following Marshall (2010) description of the different ways in which the self is presented by celebrities in an online culture. According to Marshall (2010) celebrities can present themselves online in three dimensions: the public self, the public private self and the transgressive intimate self.

The Public Self

The public self is the official version or the professional aspect of the celebrity. This is what in celebrity parlance would be the industrial model of the celebrity. Activities in this presentation line would identify release dates of recordings and films, premieres and appearances, performance videoclips, the path to get tickets for specific appearances and events and biographical profiles of the most fawning nature.

Mostly for some celebrities their official websites produce this effect, but because social networking sites define the way users often find information there is a tendency to use Facebook as a quasi-official version of the public self. Celebrities work to maintain the public persona as a valued cultural commodity.

The Private Public Self

It is in this version of the self that the celebrity engages, or at least appears to engage, in the world of social networking. It is a recognition of the new notion of a public that implies some sort of further exposure of the individual's life. Its affordances limit the compulsion to respond and the possibility of short textual bursts that identify thought or location of a particular celebrity. The value of the public private self is still being determined, as individuals construct their versions of what parts of their lives they are willing to convey to an on-line public. Activities in this line would be the celebrity expressing her/his thoughts on a social issue and also revealing his stands and belief on issues. As well as revealing some bits of her/his private self to the public.

The Transgressive Intimate Self

The transgressive intimate on-line version of the self is the one motivated by temporary emotion; but it is also the kind of information/image that passes virally throughout the internet because of its visceral quality of being closer to the core of the being. Transgression remains a beacon in on-line or off-line form for fans and audiences to see a persona's true nature exposed and the event/moment for intercommunicative sharing, comment and discussion. It is thus an accelerated pathway to notoriety and attention both in the wider world of on-line culture for all

users and very visibly for celebrities whose behavioral transgressions expressed in interpersonal registers move swiftly into the powerful viral on-line juggernaut.

3.9.2 Interview

The face-face interview with the respondents was recorded using the voice recorder application on the researchers Samsung Galaxy S2 phone. The interview was later played over and over and transcribed. A close and a detailed reading was done paying attention to repetitions in the interview. This was done to break down the information into manageable pieces that could best answer the questions that guided the studies. After that the various ideas that came up in the data were captured under various themes. Based on the research objectives and the questions the themes were then discussed. The themes that were discussed included the following:

Facebook and Celebrities: This discussed how celebrities perceive Facebook as an arena to reach out to their fans.

Concealment: This discussed the information celebrities give out about themselves to the public and what they choose to hide from the public on Facebook.

Filter: Discussed how the celebrities censor their posts on their wall particularly in relation to how they use the privacy settings.

Performativities: This discussed the various activities that the celebrities perform on Facebook in the construction of their identities.

Creating ideal and favourable identity: This discussed how celebrities try to manage audience impression about them by creating an identity that befits the expectations of their fans on Facebook.

Summary

This chapter revealed the methods used to gather data for the study. The motivation behind the choice of the research designed used for the study. It also explained how the data gathered was analysed in answering the research questions posed by the study.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter captures the findings of the study as well as the analysis of the data collected from interviews conducted with the celebrities herein referred to as celebrities; and the textual analysis of the information gathered from the walls and pages of the celebrities during the cyber ethnographic study. After conducting a textual analysis on the findings, some themes emerged: Concealment, Filtering, affiliations, performativities and Facebook and Celebrities. Through the lens of the theories used in this study (symbolic interactionism and the identity theory), the researcher analysed and interpreted the data to answer the questions posed by this study.

The analysis was done using the research questions as subheads. The questions that guided the study were as follows:

RQ1. How do Celebrities construct their identities on Facebook?

RQ2. What kind of identities do Celebrities construct for themselves on Facebook?

RQ1: How do celebrities construct their identity on Facebook?

4.2 Concealment

Facebook profiles can be thought of as an online embodiment (individual representation) of real persons using the site (Boyd, 2004; Boyd & Heer, 2006). Before one opens a Facebook account, personal information such as name, gender, date of birth, educational information, phone number and email address are to be provided (Lewis & West, 2011, cited in Avorgah 2013). Facebook provides a profile template which prompts for different kinds of personal information, and users have

considerable freedom to provide some of the information or not and to post any other information or pictures of their choice (Peluchette & Karl, 2010).

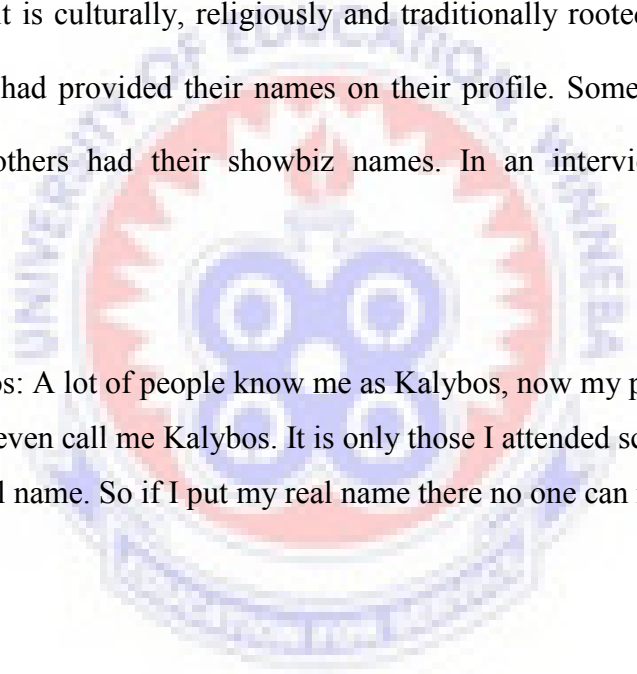
All this information is grouped in various headings. This is the standard format of creating an account on Facebook. It is through a handful of these pieces of information that the digital embodiment of the self becomes realized. This information that the person provides is what constitutes the profile of the person. The profiles (information provided) have conversations with each other; when we talk to someone online, we are talking to his or her profile (Boyd & Heer, 2006). We get to know someone on Facebook through her/ his profile.

“Many Facebookers believe that they can get a good understanding of another person, even complete strangers, simply through admittedly exaggerated Facebook profiles” (Farquhar, 2012, p.452). On Facebook all these information about the person is captioned under the heading, „About Me“. This is supposed to inform other users about the person.

In constructing their identities, the first thing celebrities do is to choose what information is suitable for the public and what is not. From the interview, with support from the cyber ethnographic observation on the participants“ personal Facebook accounts and pages, it was revealed that, celebrities normally screen their identities on Facebook. Unlike any other user who may not be so particularly concerned about concealing certain information from the public, celebrities on the other hand are concerned about what goes into the public domain especially via social media sites like Facebook. They put in place “filtering mechanism” as one participant described to check what goes into the public domain.

4.2.1 Name

Name can be said to be a word or words that a particular person is known by. Provision of name is one of the requirements for creating an account on SNSs including Facebook. This is a very important component or significant part of the identity of an individual. All the other aspect of one's identity comes together under one rubric, which is the name of the person. This is to say that the identity of every person is attributed to his or her name. Name is the key identity peg and it distinguishes people from one another. It is a crucial factor in developing a sense of self because it is culturally, religiously and traditionally rooted. All the participants for this study had provided their names on their profile. Some had their real names there whilst others had their showbiz names. In an interview with Klaybos he indicates.



Kalybos: A lot of people know me as Kalybos, now my parents and close friend even call me Kalybos. It is only those I attended school with that know my real name. So if I put my real name there no one can recognise me.

The names they had on the profile whether real or showbiz were the names that their fans could identify them with. The participants who had their showbiz names prefer to keep it like that because their fans are not familiar with their real names. According to them it is convenient to keep their account in names that their fans can recognise. This means that to celebrities, name is a matter of attachment and identification and it is integral to the conception of who they are and how people accept them. It doesn't matter if the name of identification is real or not, what matters is if that name is ideal and accepted by the celebrity and his fans.

4.2.3 Date of Birth

This is simply the day, month and year that a person is born. The age of an individual is also part of the person's identity. How young or old one is forms part of the person's identity. Most of the SNSs sites like Facebook allow only people who are above 13 years to open an account. Although opening a Facebook account demands that you provide your date of birth, you can also choose to either hide the entire date of birth or the year of birth from the general public. All the participants for the interview had their year of birth missing from their profile. They only had the day and month of birth on their profile. This is one of the aspects of their identity that they concealed.

Atumpan: One thing that you need to know about fans is that they love you for who you are and how you are. They hardly accept changes especially in how you look and what you do. They always want to see you as you are. Left to them alone you should not grow. They want you to have the same energy, vibe and charisma. The youth especially wants to see you dress like them and behave like them. So if you really want to be loved by them, you have to keep certain information like your age and other stuffs from them and also work on how you will remain relevant to them even as you grow.

This information from the above participants explicitly states why the celebrities hide their age from the public or their fans. Like he stated "you have to work on how you remain relevant to them". In trying to do that the celebrities conceal any flaws or degenerative that may not be consistent with the expectations of their fans.

Also because most fans mostly have wishful identification for celebrities (desire to be like celebrities), they prefer to see that as they are (Feilitzen & Linne, 1975). This is what this study refers to as *immortalization of the celebrity*. That is the expectation of fans to see celebrities forever remain as they are. In an attempt to meet this expectation, celebrities constantly and consciously conceal some real and personal information from their fans.

In this vein, what becomes conspicuous, open, and acceptable on the page is the perspective of the ideal in the consciousness of celebrity fanatics.

This indicates that in the construction of their identities, the celebrities always have their fans at the back of their minds. They don't necessarily show their real identity but they construct an ideal identity that conforms to their fans or audience expectations.

4.2.3 Educational Background

This aspect of the profile gives room for information pertaining to one's educational history, which is the schools the person has attended throughout his life (Basic, High and tertiary). All the participants had provided some information about their educational background. Some had provided only that of their high school, others that of their tertiary among others. According to one participant (Kalybos), he joined Facebook before he became a celebrity. His initial idea of joining Facebook was to get in touch with old friends from school.

Kalybos: oh initially you know fresh out from school, eh... you know senior high school. You have to link up with your friends. From senior high you don't really have a personal number. You have to start working before you can buy yourself a phone. So it was, I think the only medium or the only channel I

could reach out to my friends way back in school and then primary as well. So me personally I went there because of my friends so I can get in touch with my friends.

To him, giving information about his school is actually to feel a sense of belonging to the school he attended and his school mates. He believes that people who attended the same school that he attended will identify with him. So providing information about his educational background is a strategy to allure more loyal fans. This affirms what Cochran et al (1988) said that, in the desire for social acceptance people tend to align themselves with groups.

4.2.4 Phone number

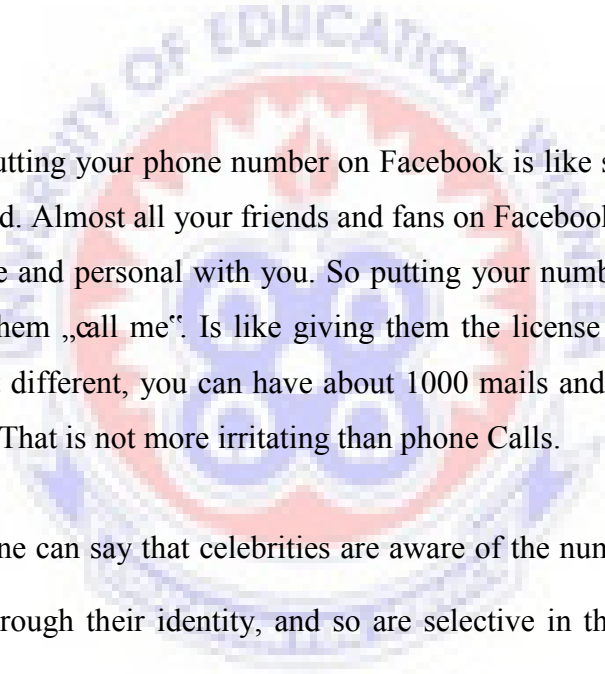
Most SNSs give space for its users to provide their phone numbers. To Some SNSs sites it is a requirement, to others like Facebook it is an option. Phone number doesn't really form part of one's identity. It is an auxiliary information about the user. Out of the four (4) participants for the study, only one (Raquel) had her phone numbers on her profile. Through the interview she disclosed that the phone number on her profile is not her own but rather that of her manager and it is there because some people would want to contact her for some events and business.

4.2.5 Email Address

Provision of email address is actually a requirement for almost all the SNSs in the world. Before one opens an account the person must have an email address. Email address like the phone number is also an auxiliary information of the user that doesn't form part of the person's identity. With Facebook after opening an account, one can decide to either make his email address visible or hidden. All the participants, with the

exception of one (Kalybos), had their email address on their profile. Another interesting phenomenon is that they all had their website information there.

On Facebook, information like phone number, postal address, email address and website are all grouped under the caption „Contact Information“. Why have the celebrities concealed their phone numbers on Facebook but rather have their email address and website information there? The answer to this can be that, there is a sense of urgency in phone calls as compared to the email and website comments. Overloads in phone calls can be more frustrating than that of emails.



Ama: Putting your phone number on Facebook is like selling your freedom to the world. Almost all your friends and fans on Facebook ideally would want to get close and personal with you. So putting your number on Facebook is like telling them „call me“. Is like giving them the license to disturb you. Emails are a bit different, you can have about 1000 mails and you can just decide to reply 2. That is not more irritating than phone Calls.

By inference, one can say that celebrities are aware of the number of friends they are connected to through their identity, and so are selective in the information they put about themselves on their profile so as to stay away from public disturbances. Celebrities acknowledge the limiting boundaries of the celebrity status. The celebrities are in bound in their online performance, and all the activities performed in the bounds are set unconsciously by the fans and activated by the celebrities. There is lose of liberty, thus restriction of what celebrities can do on Facebook. This restriction puts celebrities in the position that prevents them from revealing full information about themselves. This is mainly because of the social control epitomised in the concept of the „me“. Based on this, celebrities therefore subvert the limiting process

on their liberty by being conscious of what to post on their pages in order to claim a common identity with their fans.

4.2.6 Relationship Status

One can decide to give information of her/his relation status on Facebook. It forms part of the optional profile information. Relationship status is a very sensitive information that forms part of one's identity. This kind of information can be termed as personal or private information to many people. Two (2) out of the four participants for the study had provided their relationship status. Interestingly the two participants who had provided their relationship status are the males among them. The females among them had concealed their relationship status.

Like one participant (Raquel) indicated,

“I don't share my whole world including my private life with people on Facebook. I just provide what I want people to know and leave those that I don't want people to know. So I share public stuff, and keep private stuff”.

To her some information are supposed to be kept private and personal. This emphasises the fact that celebrities do not give full information of themselves on Facebook. They believe that there are certain things that are better kept away from the public and their fans.

In the nutshell, the concealment aspect of the identity construction of celebrities brings to play the identity salience. Under identity theory, identity salience refers to

the probability that an identity or an aspect of an identity would be activated in a situation.

The identity salience has two facets, that is (1) the number of people one is tied or committed to through an identity (quantity) and (2) the relative depth of the strength or depth of the ties to others because of an identity (Sterts and Burke, 2000).

Celebrities because of their social status and position are connected to a lot of people. This affects how they activate their identity or any aspect of it. Another reason why celebrities concealed their identity can also be attributed to the depth of the relationship with their followers. Goffman (1959) concludes that people present themselves differently based on context (where they are) and audience (who they are with). Symbolic Interaction explains that we present ourselves slightly differently to different people. Identity expression is influenced by perception of audience. Posting to a community of close friends is different from the sprawling mass of contacts most people amass on Facebook, and will affect how people present themselves (Marwich, 2013).

Identity is flexible and changeable, and people are highly skilled in varying their self-presentation appropriately. Identity is thus socially constructed in tandem with the people around us.

In as much as they would want to get interactive with their fans through their Facebook accounts and pages, celebrities because of their status are also at the forefront along with their fans in terms of etiquette of engagement. According to Sterts and Burke (2000), the effect of a persons' position in the social structure impacts the likelihood that those persons will activate an identity rather than another. This speaks volumes on why the celebrities concealed some aspects of their identity. From

inference, celebrities provide the embellished part of their identities to their fans, concealing what they think is private and personal.

4.3 Performativities (posting, joining groups and liking pages)

The value of being able to continuously update one's profile is highly impacted by the identity theory of being committed to an identity and consistently performing role to reinforce that identity. Butler (1990), rightly says that "identity and subjectivity is an ongoing process of becoming, rather than an ontological state of being, whereby becoming is a sequence of acts, that retroactively constitute identity" (pg 52). Some of the main activities that users of Facebook perform are posting, joining groups, liking a page, chatting, adding friends and exploring other user's wall. In reference to the cyber exploration and interview conducted for this study, it became known that in construction of an identity, the activities celebrities mostly do is posting (messages, picture, music and videos), joining group and liking pages. The remaining activities like chatting and exploring others user's sites are rarely done. Through the performance of these activities they construct their identity.

4.3.1 Posting

This study defines posting as the act of updating your Facebook wall or page with a message, picture, music or video. The participants of this study had a personal facebook account and an official facebook fan page. On the personal profile they accept people as friends and unless the celebrity adjusts the settings on the personal account, anyone can post on her/his wall. With the Fan page, people like the page and become followers. On the Fan page with the exception of an authorised administrator no one can post on the page.

The tables below give details of the various posts on the participants' walls throughout the period of the cyber ethnographic studies.

Table 1. Cumulative Frequency Distribution of Ama. K. Abebrese's Posts on Facebook

Type of Post	Music	Picture	Video	Message	Total
Post of Official Page	0	29(34.9%)	12 (14.4%)	42 (50.6%)	83
Post on personal page	0	9 (33.3%)	5 (18.5%)	13 (48.1%)	27
Post from Ama	0	9 (33.3%)	5 (18.5%)	13 (48.1%)	27
Posts from others	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2. Cumulative Frequency Distribution of Atumpan's Posts on Facebooks.

Type of Post	Music	Picture	Video	Message	Total
Post on Official Page	8 (10.4%)	40 (52%)	19 (24.6%)	10 (13%)	77
Posts on Personal wall	18 (10.7%)	66 (40%)	48 (29%)	33 (20%)	165
Post from Atumpan	4(16.7%)	7 (29.20%)	8 (33.3%)	5(20.8%)	24
Posts from others	46(32.6%)	33(23.4%)	41(29.2%)	21(14.8%)	141

Table 3. Cumulative Frequency Distribution of Raquel's Posts on Facebook.

Type of Post	Music	Picture	Video	Message	Total
Post on Official Page	73 (23.8%)	84(27.4%)	5 (1.6%)	145 (47.2%)	307
Posts on personal wall	4(16.6%)	20 (83.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	24
Post from Raquel	4(40%)	3(30%)	2 (20%)	1(10%)	10
Posts from others	6 (42.8%)	4 (28.5%)	3(21.5%)	1(7.2%)	14

Table 4. Cumulative Frequency Distribution of Kalybos Posts on Facebook.

Type of Post	Music	Picture	Video	Message	Total
Post on Official Page	0 (0%)	5 (45.4%)	4 (36.3%)	2 (18.2%)	11
Posts on personal wall	0 (0%)	27(50.9)	20(37.7)	6(11.4%)	53
Post from Kalybos	0(0%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)	1 (40%)	5
Posts from others	5 (10.5%)	19(39.5%)	11(22.9%)	13(27.1%)	48

Each table gives information on the total number of posts on the participants' personal Facebook account and pages. It also provides information of the number of the various posts (music, message, video and picture) and their respective percentages. The tables provide information on the number of posts posted by the participants themselves on their personal wall and that of the ones that were posted by other people. On the participants' official page, the Facebook default setting is such that no one else can post on the pages of the participants other than them. That means all the posts on their pages were posted by participants or posted in their name.

From the tables above, one can clearly state that Ghanaian celebrities in the construction of their identity use their official Facebook pages more than their personal pages. One participant indicates,

Kalybos: My personal Facebook wall has now become the market place for all fans. They post there as often as they want and whenever they like. So sometimes I don't feel comfortable posting there again. I post on my page instead.

Although the other participants did not explicitly give reasons for posting mostly on their pages but across the board they all agreed that they use their Facebook pages

than their personal account. One reason can be attributed to the exclusive nature of the Facebook page. The tables above show that with the exception of one participant (Ama. K . Abeebrese), who in the interview revealed that she has set her privacy setting to restrict people from posting on her wall, majority of the posts on the participants' walls were done by other people (friends and audience). With personal Facebook account, the respondents are friends and unless the users deliberately customise the settings to restrict them, they can post on the wall as often as they want. Facebook page on the other hand allows only authorised administrators to post on the page. The people who have access to the sites are not friends but followers and the only thing one can do is to comment on the post on the pages. This means that on the pages, the owners are the main producers of content. From the narration of the participant above, one can infer that celebrities want space and privacy in the construction of their identity. They don't want other users to dilute their conversation with their fans with their posts.

Raquel: I always try to post on my page to keep my fans updated. I post to let people know what I am doing, so I post about my music, interviews, studio sessions, shows and other things that people like to see me do. And I think the best place to do that is on my page because my personal wall is always overcrowded.

This tells the importance of post to celebrities and also affirms Marshall's (2010) assertion that "Conversation is at the epicentre of postings and is the fiber that holds social networks together over time" (Marshall, 2010, p 42). It is obvious in the above statement that through post the public self of the celebrities are constantly worked upon and updated in its on-line form to both maintain its currency and to acknowledge

its centrality to the individual's identity, and in this case the celebrities depend upon its network of connections on Facebook to sustain the life of the on-line persona.

The pattern of posting varied from one participant to the other. Each of the four (4) participants in the construction of their identity performed different activities. This is quite understandable because identity is unique to each individual so that even though two people may be described to possess the similar identity marks or may be constructing the similar identity, they may differ in practice; and in practice identities construction can never be the same (Butler, 1990).

4.3.2 Affiliations (to groups and pages)

Another activity through which celebrities construct their identity is the joining of groups and liking of pages. The study revealed this activity as a way of validating the celebrity status and seeking for endorsement. Through this performance, celebrities join groups that relate to their profession. Also they like the pages of people that are in the same profession or industry (Showbiz) with them.

All the participants, depending on their profession and their interest, join groups and like quite a considerable number of pages on Facebook. The pages and groups that the participants like and join respectively are that of musicians, actors, bloggers, Disc Jockers, sound engineers, among others. This shows the kind of people the participants want to associate themselves with as part of the identity construction on Facebook. This supports the fact that in the desire for social acceptance, people tend to align themselves with particular groups while trying to avoid identification with other groups. People also choose groups on the basis of a need or ontological security, or what explains as people's desire to wake up in the morning knowing who they are and how they should act (Cochran et al., 1988; Laing 1969 cited in Farquhar 2012). As a

way of categorising and validating the self, celebrities affiliate themselves with pages and groups. This is another way through which their identities are again constructed.

4.3.3 Chatting

Chatting is a very crucial aspect of the construction of an identity in the online environment. The interactive nature of SNSs is an advantage to its users. Its allow users to interact with each other especially through the messaging. Users can send direct messages to other users through their inbox. The case of celebrities is somehow different because of their popularity and influence. Fans and followers who identify with them would naturally want to capitalise on SNSs to bridge the gap. This may come in a form of messages. As one participant revealed:

Kalybos: I will be there and I just log on even for a minute and you can get over like 5000 people sending message and stuff. So I try my best to reply some of them. Some normally want to say hi and then go. Some will just keep on and keep on and keep on.

In the construction of an identity, there is the need for the celebrity to stay connected to their fans or audience (Marshall, 2010). This demand and engagement as it were, was originally, at least partially handled by the traditional media of the celebrity industry, but now the advent of SNSs include the celebrities themselves in the interpersonal flow of communication. Nonetheless, celebrities are at the forefront along with their fans in terms of an etiquette of engagement. This is very challenging to the celebrities.

Ama: Not everyone, I mean I can't chat everyone. So if I am busy, I just tell them that I am busy doing this so you can chat back later and they will go like "oh okay, God bless you, all the best". So most of the time, when I am busy and I can't chat I just copy and paste. Maybe "soo sorry I am busy at the moment, maybe filming or something so if we can chat back" and then copy and paste to them.

The parasocial self is a practical understanding that it is impossible to communicate individually with all the thousands and millions of fans who send messages; and yet in this shifted on-line culture some efforts have to be made. Although the celebrities are not fully fledged friends with all the people that may follow them, superficially, at least, they are. It is a kind of moral code for celebrities to try and interact with their fans as the fans try to interact with them (Marshall, 2010). Through the interview the participants reinforced this assertion by Marshall and also admitted that interactivity in other words, chatting is a significant component of the identity construction.

4.3.4 Filtering

Another way through which celebrities construct their identity on Facebook is by filtering posts on their wall. This is in a relation with what they post and what others post. Because social media sites like Facebook encourage people to share a great deal of social information, they bring up several issues around data privacy. Not only do people have to monitor the information they consciously and directly give to others, but the information that other people "give off" about them (Nissenbaum, 2010).

Throughout the period of the observation as indicated in the tables above, 871 posts were posted on the personal walls of the participants. Out of them 269 representing 31% were regular post whiles 602 representing 69% were comments from people. Out

of the regular 269 post, 66 representing 24.5% of the post were from the participants while 203 representing 75.5% were from other people. These findings give a clear indication of how people would want to interfere in the online activities of celebrities. People see the walls of celebrities as a suitable site for advertisement and promotion, as an avenue to get close with the celebrity and as a means to draw more attention for themselves.

Celebrities being aware of this try to control the activities of others on their site. Some of them like Ama K Abebrese and Raquel had totally restricted people from posting on their walls. The tables of these two participants above overtly show this. On Ama's table, all the posts were done by her. Raquel also had only the post of her manager aside her own.

In the interview, one of the participants (Atumpan) revealed that he has a privacy setting that allows him to censor posts that appear on their wall. According to him he cannot allow all manner of posts on his wall. He indicated that, the post on his wall should be consistent with, and a reflection of, what he represents (music).

Atumpan: Facebook is a medium of advertisement and people go there to seek information about you. So the post should satisfy people's expectations of you.

This revelation strengthens the very premise of identity theory which is "the categorisation of the self as an occupant of a role and incorporating into the self of the meaning and expectations associated with that role and its performance (Stets & Burke, 2000).

The meanings and expectations aspect represents the imagined attitude of the society (generalised other) and it forms the standard that guide their behaviour and performance (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). This reinforces the fact that celebrities construct their identity on Facebook having in mind the expectations of people, hence the filters. Celebrities construct their identity to be in line with the socially accepted and adaptive behavior.

Studies show that in online environment, people tend to seek information that is not directly from the presenter, but is, rather, controlled by others with whom the presenter interacts (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman & Tong, 2008). Being judged by the company we keep is certainly not new to the social world. Walther et al. (2008), for example, examined the role friends (on Facebook) play in judging a person's profile. The post of friend's can be used in judging the person or can be the base for impression formation. To the celebrities (as people who occupy a role), it is then very critical for them to manage the post on their walls so as to live up to the expectation of their role and status.

This filter mechanism employed by celebrities also gives an indication to the kind of identity they want to create for themselves on Facebook. In the researchers endeavour to answer the second research question for this study, the study will delve into how the construction of an identity leads to the construction of a kind of identity.

RQ2. What kind of Identity do celebrities construct for themselves on Facebook?

4.4 Facebook and Celebrities

Celebrity is a production of the self which is explicitly dependent upon a very elaborate and powerful media culture. They are elemental components of representational culture (Marshall 2006). This means that celebrities rely mainly on the media to present themselves to their audience. Although they depend upon television, film, radio and the press for their influence, it appears that the dispersal quality of on-line culture as against the traditional media in use for the production of the celebrity „self“ cannot be underestimated.

What makes Facebook and other SNSs very much connected to celebrity is that much as they are about exchange and dissemination of thoughts and links to other media and on-line sources, they are also a constitutive and organic production of the self, what Marshall (2010) termed as the presentational media. On-line social network sites like Facebook, are interesting for what they allow the user to do, what are often called a technology“s „affordances“. One of the research participants, Atumpan had this to share:

I think Facebook actually gives we the artistes the opportunity to tell our own stories and create our own image. You know before some of us became popular, I remember that the only places you could read and hear about celebrities were on the internet, in the papers, on television and radio. But now our fans have the chance to go on our social media handles and read about us. We use our Facebook and other social media sites to correct what is not right about us. As for me Facebook is a very important tool for me in every aspect of my career.

Across all the participants, it was clear that celebrities have identified the intercommunicative dimension of Facebook to stay connected in some way to this shifted relationship to an audience and a public. The above stated narration from one of the participants indicates that there are actually two dimensions of Facebook. That is Facebook as a form of cultural production and a form of public engagement and exchange. Cultural production in the sense that it is the media that reinforce the celebrity status and public engagement and exchange in the sense that allows them to interact directly with their audience without mediation.

The narration also reinforces the fact that self-production is the very core of celebrity activity and Facebook serves as a rubric and template for the organisation and production of the on-line self of celebrities which has become at the very least an important component of the presentation of themselves to the world.

In order to unpack how the celebrity culture inform the production of the on-line self of celebrities, the study brings to play the ways that particular celebrities are presenting themselves in this era of *presentational culture* to, in a very real sense, explore the kind of self the celebrity culture articulates, and how it leads to the emergence of their on-line culture and identity.

Online performances in general are geared towards the construction of an identity. This identity can either be the real/actual identity or the ideal/to be identity. Real identities are those attributes possessed by an individual. The ideal identities are those attributes the individual wishes to possess, or attributes the individual believes she/he is expected to possess.

Various studies have gone back and forth explaining the kind of identity people wish to construct on Facebook . Some have concluded that Facebookers seek to create an

ideal identity (Farquhar 2012; Smith & Kollok, 1999), contrary to this others say Facebooker construct their real identity (Ellison, et al., 2006; Rowat, et al, 1998).

In bridging this gap, this study seeks to add another dimension to this discourse by finding out the kind of identities celebrities construct on Facebook. How a person constructs her/his identity is mostly dependent on the kind of identity the person wishes to construct. Identity is nothing but “the social positioning of the self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Against this premise, this study used the pointers of how celebrities construct their identities (concealment, performativities, affiliations and filtering) as a base to analyze and find out the kind of identity celebrities construct of themselves on Facebook.

4.5 Concealment

Boyd and Heer (2006) describes Facebook profiles as an online embodiment of real persons using the account. In other words, it means that profile gives a holistic and real description of the owner of the account. To be real on Facebook is to provide real and detail information without any concealment or embellishment. Altering or concealing any aspect of the profile pose a huge question to the authenticity of the user or the account. Presenting a real identity means presenting a natural, uncontrolled, unrehearsed and unpredicted aspect of the self that is void of any alteration and concealment.

Celebrities presentation of the self on Facebook is somehow different, they provide some information of themselves and conceal other information. Each celebrity for different reasons conceals aspects of her/his identity. This stretches from name to relationship status.

Starting from names, they as it has already been discussed, find it convenient to keep their account in names that their fans can recognise. It doesn't matter if the name of identification is real or not, what matters is if that name is ideal and accepted by the celebrity and his fans.

They also hide their age from their fans and this, as explained by one participant, is a strategy to always remain young and relevant to their fans. They also hide their relationship status with the reason of keeping some information private.

All these can be said to be indicators of ideal identity construction on Facebook. Creating ideal identity means refining and cleansing information about you to suit people's expectation of you or how you want others to perceive you. From all indications, this is exactly what the celebrities are doing by way of concealing aspects of their identity. This conforms to Pugh's (2010) assertion that "users select the best representations of themselves to strengthen the link between their actual and their ideal (desired) identity" (p. 6).

4.6 Performativites

Performance is a critical constituent in any public figure's identity. Celebrities perform in their primary art form as actors, musicians, singers, athletes as well as the extra-textual dimensions of interviews, advertisements or commercial endorsements, award nights and premieres (Marshall, 2010). They also perform in the cyber space in order to maintain their online persona. These elements of performance are the professional or „producerly“ elements that are closest to their status, or at least as conveyors of cultural commodities.

One major area that cannot be underestimated in the studies of online identity construction is the post of the people under the study. It is the core of the performance

online. It is a major way of analyzing the kind of identity people produce on Facebook. The accessibility of users' posts (photos, comment histories, videos, messages) provide a substantial amount of material to make judgments about the users' identity (Ginger, 2008). Since there are fewer identity cues available online than face-to-face, every piece of digital information a person provides, from typing speed to nickname and email address, can and is used to make inferences about them (Marwich, 2013). Analyzing the post means taking critical look at what the person's post is about, frequency of the post, reason behind the post, and the kind of post (message, picture, music, and video). All these come together to tell the kind of identity the person is constructing online.

4.6.1 What do they Post About?

Posting is the string that holds the various activities on a social network (Marshall, 2010). Posting tells the dimension of how a person wants to present self. In the same vein it tells which aspect of the self the person wants to project. As explained in the previous chapter, through post people present themselves in the online space in three dimensions: the public self, the public private self and the transgressive self. As indicated earlier the public self is the official version or the professional aspect of the celebrity. This is what in celebrity parlance would be the industrial model of the celebrity. The private public self is the version of the self that the celebrity engages, or at least appears to engage, in the world of social networking. It is a recognition of the new notion of a public that implies some sort of further exposure of the individual's life. As well as revealing some bits of her/his private self to the public. The transgressive intimate on-line version of the self is the one motivated by temporary emotion; but it is also the kind of information/image that passes virally

throughout the internet because of its visceral quality of being closer to the core of the being. Activating any of these selves gives an indication of the kind of identity one wish to project or construct.

It was observed that celebrities post mainly about themselves and their profession. Most of their posts overtly and covertly are related to their profession. Almost all the posts on Raquel's wall and page were about herself. She posted mainly about her music, her videos and performances. The rest of the participants were not an exception although theirs were not as intense as that of Raquel. This puts them more in trying to present a public self. Thus presenting their official aspect to their public (Marshall, 2010). They sell out their profession to the public via their post on their walls and pages. They use their walls and pages as suitable sites to market their professional self. Through this the celebrity self is seen as a commodity that is being sold to the public.

In the very natural sense, no one would send a „rotten“ product to the market; they would definitely send the embellished part that would be appealing and alluring. In this vein celebrities can be said to be constructing an ideal identity by posting about their profession.

Intermittently, they give further exposure of their life or they come out of their professional self to their natural self. This mostly comes in a form of commenting on some social and national issues. For instance in the heat of the 2014 African Cup of Nations, all the participants individually posted something about the Black Stars. They shared their opinion and sent well wishes via their Facebook walls. They projected their patriotic values through Facebook. In Marwich (2010) words, “Social media can be a powerful tool for expressing solidarity, talking with like-minded people and engaging in activism” (Marwich, 2010,p 8). That assertion suitably

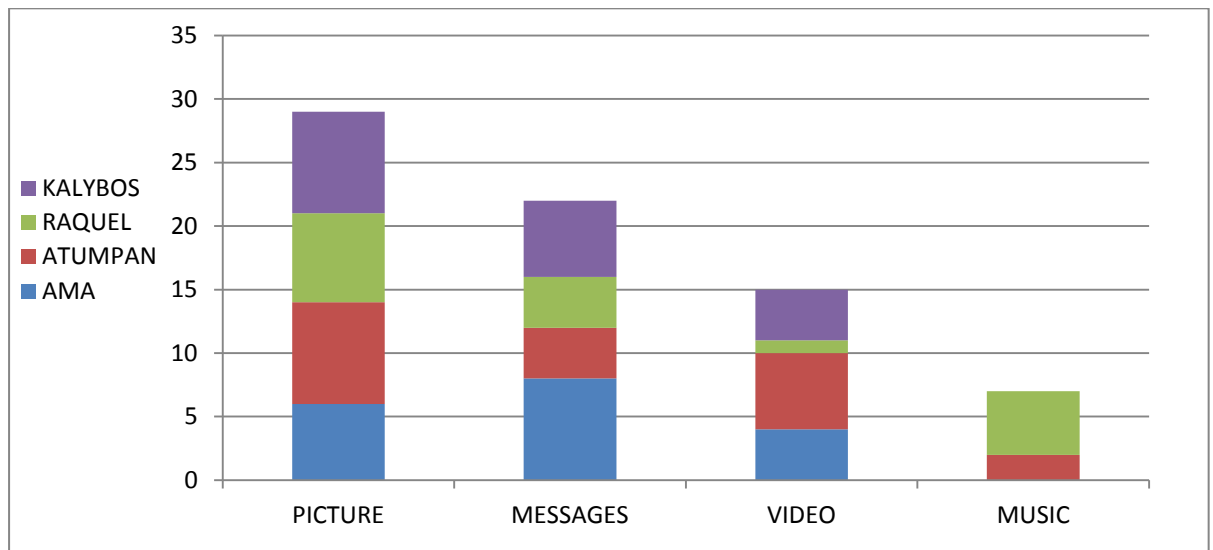
describes what the celebrities try to do in this form of presentation. This form of presenting can be classified as the private public self. That is the self that appears to engage and gives further exposure of the individual's life and interest.

Out of the three dimensions of online presentation, this study found out that the celebrities subscribed to two that is mainly the public self and subtly the private public self. On the whole, it can be concluded that they geared more towards the presentation of the public self (the professional self) and hence sought to construct an ideal identity through their post.

4.6.2 What Kind of Post do they Engage in?

A Facebook user can update her/his wall or page with a picture, message, video and an audio. Depending on the message the person wants to send and how she/he wants to send it, the person can choose the medium that best suits her/him. The posting pattern of the participants for the study were different but for the purpose of knowing the kind of post the participants subscribe to, the study cumulatively ranked the kinds of post to aid in the analyses in finding out the kind of identity they construct. Details of the kind of post of the participants are represented in the chart below.

Figure 1: Bar Graph of the Cumulative Frequency Distribution of the Type of Posts of the Participants on Facebook.



The figure 1 above clearly shows the kinds of post the participants use in constructing their identity. They normally construct their identities through pictures, messages, videos and music respectively. As indicated in the graph above the posting pattern differ from one celebrity to the other. It is an exhibition of how the celebrities stage themselves as both character and performance in on-line settings. The props and accoutrements of the stage can now be translated to the various pictures, videos, music and messages that are part of a Facebook site. The celebrities subscribe mainly to pictures, messages, videos and music respectively. This study is interested in the kind of identity they construct with this post.

4.6.3 Constructing an Identity Through Picture

Pictures are often one of the driving features behind the whole economy of profile exchange (Ginger, 2008). Pictures are a dynamic element that drives a lot of activity on Facebook. As with other Facebook elements, the amount of time and energy spent

on pictures vary greatly from one participant to another. Some have uploaded myriad of pictures, while others have only a few. Uploading pictures is just the first step. After that, the person goes into a process of labeling, posting initial comments, tagging others who are involved (a process of linking names and other profiles to an image) grouping pictures into an album, and selecting one as the featured profile picture (Faquhar, 2012). Uploading a picture on Facebook can be done in different forms. It can be in a form of profile picture. It can also be in a form of updating your status with a picture, updating your timeline picture or uploading different pictures in an album.

4.6.4 Profile Picture

The profile picture is located in the top, left corner of the Facebook profile, so everyone's eye is naturally drawn to it. It enables the user to reinstate their identities by producing them in a highly visible online space. Additionally, it can be said to be the most prominent image on the profile page since it is included alongside every message sent by the user. As a result, this picture is viewed much more frequently than other uploaded pictures and is considered a first impression (Farquhar, 2013). While Facebook provides a standard format for the creation of profiles, photos help users differentiate themselves, often by picturing their real interests and tastes. Facebook users being aware of this are mostly selective in the kind of pictures they put on their profile.

Ginger (2010) in a study concluded that Facebook users present themselves in the best form in the profile pictures. The story was not different in this study. Participants are very much cautious and discerning when it comes to Facebook profile picture.

Ama: I hardly change my profile picture. But pictures that I use as my profile picture are pictures that I personally like and are nice to me. Sometimes too they are pictures that close friends have commented on to be nice. But it is not always that I use my picture as my profile picture. I sometimes use the posters of movies that I am in as my profile pics just to advertise it.

In her statement, she tells the kind of identity celebrities construct with the profile picture on Facebook. From the data gathered for this study, it was quite clear that Ama's assertion indicates exactly how the participants choose their profile picture. Ama and Atumpan had their own pictures on their personal walls and pages respectively. Raquel on the other hand had an artwork of her song with her picture. Kalybos had his own picture on his profile page but had the artwork of the series he features in on his page profile.

Celebrities post profile pictures that are unique and special to them specifically. They create an ideal and preferred image of themselves; images they aspire for and this desired image is always to satisfy their fans. This means, celebrities always aspire to please the socially accepted norms and behaviours (of their fans). In symbolic interactionism, one would say that their performance on social media is mostly controlled by the *Me* which is the rehearsed, expected, controlled aspect of the self. This also supports the assertion that, they assess the effectiveness of their actions, conducts and future actions based on the responses or cues they get from others (Goffman, 1969; Mead, 1932, 1936).

There was something unique about the profile pictures that is also worth analyzing. All the profile pictures were passport size pictures which showed more area of the participants face. The rest of the pictures that were uploaded on the walls were different. All the profiles picture also looked very attractive. This reinforces Ginger's

(2010) assertion that Facebookers present themselves in their best form through their profile pictures.

4.6.5 Timeline Picture

Timeline picture is somehow new on Facebook as compared to profile picture. This picture is positioned on the top of the wall or page and it spreads to both sides of the wall and extends downwards to where the profile picture is positioned. It is the main picture of attraction when one visits a Facebook user's wall or page. It was observed that the participants use the space for the timeline picture as a space for adverts and promotions. They all had the artworks and posters of various things on their timeline. Ama variously had an artwork of a movie, Raquel had a promo design of her music, Atumpan had artwork of his record label and Kalybos had the artwork of "airtel talk chaw promotions". This gives an indication of how celebrities have commercialized their Facebook walls and pages. Why do they use the space for their timeline picture for advertisement? Obviously they do this having in mind their followers and audience. The main target for that sort of advertisement is their audience. They evidently have them in mind. They are aware of the rate at which people frequent the walls and pages because of their status. They have taken Facebook as a site not only to represent an identity but also as a medium to express themselves beyond their physical features and labels, to share experiences, discuss interests, and influence one another in a selective network (Pugh, 2010).

Celebrities are people who are committed to their identity both online and offline. This commitment increases frequently because of the number of people who follow them on daily basis. Their commitment is shown in how they maintain and reinforce

their identity. This is done through identification, verification, and self efficacy, (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Supporting Hoyer and MacInnis (2007), this study reaffirms that celebrities do this because of their self conception of their status and influence. Creating an online representation of oneself with linguistic content, imagery and brand associations, they consider their self-concept, “their mental conception of who they are” as a result of how others see them (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2007, p.54). Based on what people do and their level of popularity they create a befitting identity for themselves to suit peoples’ perception (Pugh, 2013).

With their self-concept schema or their awareness of whom they are; celebrities are prone to activate the ideal identity schema. This schema describes “how the identity we seek would be realized in its ideal form” (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2007, p.55). For celebrities, these cognitive processes underlying self-concept schemas lay the foundation for the way they construct their identity on Facebook through linguistic contents like artworks, imagery like pictures and brand associations like posters of promotions. By this context, this study broadens Hoyer and MacInnis’ theory to incorporate the behavior and status associations associated to the brands, which consumers appeal to. This is to say, while users may not make direct brand associations, their behaviors operate in a manner consistent with brands, labels and behaviors presented on their profiles. This behavior further substantiates their identity and facilitates social acceptance in their (desired) network.

4.6.6 Wall Pictures

This study defines wall pictures as pictures that users post on their walls and pages with captions as part of updating their status on Facebook. In reference to the above

chart it can be concluded that celebrities update their walls and pages with pictures as compared to the others like message, music and video. The question this study wants to pose at this level is, why do they post more pictures on their walls and pages and what kind of identity do they seek to construct through the pictures they post?

According to Marshall (2010), online communication of the self "...allows photos to be the starting-point for reactions and discussions..." (p.42). Like the saying goes "picture is worth a thousand words". This can explain why celebrities construct their identity by uploading pictures.

While most interactions on Facebook are informal, users remain conscientious about the visual images representing their online identities. Atumpan talks about what makes a picture worthy of being uploaded on his wall or page.

Atumpan: Pictures that I think are cool are what I put there because I am an urban artiste. So I like to put pictures that have swag, that's what my fans like about me.

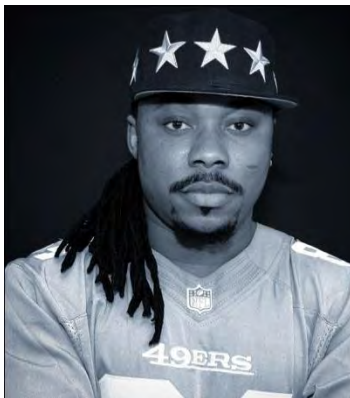
The celebrities are selective in the pictures they upload. Based on the quote above and other surmises gathered from the other interview, it was obvious that the celebrities present their favorable self in the pictures they post. Identity theory makes this act quite understandable in the sense that persons adopt self meaning and expectations to accompany the role as it relates with others in the group, and then to represent and preserve these meanings and expectations. Being nice is supposed to be one of the attributes of the celebrity and as a result they upload pictures that would meet this expectation. They exhibit this through the caption they give to the pictures that they post on their walls and pages. Commenting on an image is similar to adding a caption.

Initial comments are usually descriptive, meaning that the caption is supposed to describe the picture. It also tells the intention behind posting that particular picture.

Below are examples of pictures with captions on the walls of some participants.

Figure 2

(ATUMPAN)



I feel blessed.
Instagram
@officialatumpan

Figure 3 (AMA)



Lovely meeting and hanging out with one of my fans Daniel Chris Adams in the Oil City. Congrats hope you enjoy Dark and Lovely Goodies.

Figure 4 (KALYBOS)



check my blue eyes...
#BAM

Their comments or their captions clearly give a clue of the type of identity they want to construct through their pictures. Through their pictures and captions they communicate their desired impression. The celebrities sought for an acceptable identity and ideal identity through facebook images (Farquhar 2012). The deployment of the ideal identity schema causes users to select which consumption behaviors or labels best describe who they are, or desire to be. The social identity theory proposed

by Hoyer and MacInnis offers that individuals evaluate brands in terms of its consistency with their individual identities (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2007). Some pictures are also posted as provocation for responses. This is a deliberate way of seeking for cues to shape and affirm their identity and status.

Kalybos: if I have a funny picture that I can share for everyone to see and comment about I post it there.

The figures below are examples of pictures that some of the participants post to seek for comment from their fans on Facebook.

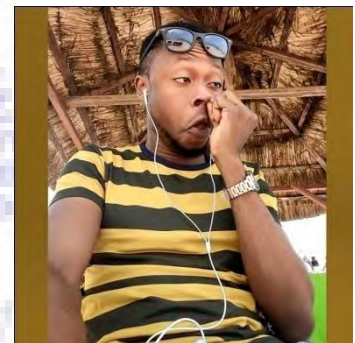
Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



**On my grind: no pain,
no gain.**

Black
Kat selfie@hard boy things
Black Kat i go burst ur man oooo
February 12 at 11:35am · Like

Black
Kat hehehehehehe
February 12 at 11:35am · Like
Atumpan
Ghana Hahaha Mr. BOOM Black Kat

Michael Tooloyal
Nanayawdrinchi #ALL_BECAUSE_OF_NYASH grin emoticon tongue emoticon
Derrick
Sefa machoman

VanNickles

Aimmusic

Nickles More vim
bro

PM Starr Eiii! Dat
be why you dog me
so!

Maxwell

Asirifi Good leaving
bro halla me for
business
0061470142995

Mark Davies Big up
yourself my bidggest
boss,I like your
arms,is growing too
big now,No pain No
Gai

Nana Odisikka
Alebey)fa can u
chop all dis

Caldwin

Clements Eeiii!

Kalybos smh
...Lmao oohhh dabi

Mansur Yussif fly n

liv it

Margaret

Attah What are u
waiting for my dear
or u won't Joy Daddy

George

Neequaye Bro, what
are you thinking
about?

Eugene Amomesi he can eat
rough

Adu Elisha ooooooo
Kali via

Bernard Abakah
Kwame Hahaha,,
where is ah)fe Patri??

Lesley Newman
Jnr Kweeeerrrrhhhh.
..u alone

Zak Jacob Boso
baak) p333 bam!

Frank Lartey eei
Kali! uy alone?

Samuel

Arhinful Please call
me to help u

Hanna Asemeni U
like food waaaa

Godfred

Kwame ooh bra
paaa, why ahuof3 go
dey inside ur nose

Bernard K.
Ayimah i se u
chaaaaaarrrrr

Drspy Dee Fine boy
paaa n u dey fool like
that. Smh..

Okere Alexander
Yaw Eiiiiiiiiiii
Kalybos, lol. I dey
feel you die.

Pepsy Özil
Ghansah see

The pictures above are classic examples of pictures that are posted to elicit comments. As shown above many pictures receive responses from other Facebookers, who comment most frequently on pictures involving humor, events, or in the celebrities' profession. The pictures above are examples of Facebook performances. Kalybos has indicated (on his pages) that he is a comedian and he tries to activate that identity through his post more especially his pictures. This is what people expect of him as an actor and comedian and he has to live up to the expectation of the people. Celebrities do this to seek verification for the role they are playing and also to strengthen the identity they seek to construct of themselves (Macall & Simmons 1978; Stets & Burke, 2000). They are prone to using others as a yardstick to determine their social position, construct self-concepts, and acquire self-esteem, all the while making sense of themselves and their surroundings (Pugh, 2012). Based on the comments they receive on these pictures they post, they are able to better access and verify their identity.

Furthermore, not all pictures on the personal pages of celebrities are uploaded by them. Some are uploaded by their fans. Some also are pictures that people tag them in. The tagging of others to a picture at times causes conflict on Facebook, and in line with Goffman, this study considers a tagged image to be an example of uncontrolled identity cues (Goffman's 1967, 1969 cited in Farquhar, 2013).

The participants revealed that they untag themselves from any picture that does not best reflect the identity they seek to construct.

Atumpan: If someone has tagged pictures of me I go through them and untag any pictures that I am looking bad in. This is very important to me. I do this because I don't want that to create other people's perception of me.

Celebrities typically suggest that they feel completely inhibited in what image they post and what others post or tag them in. They usually refrain from certain images and frequently untag themselves from „unflattering“ or less glamorous photos to allude to a flawless image. The participants do this by adjusting their settings or controlling the pictures. Such social circles (celebrities) have adopted unwritten standards of conduct. Ideal identity construction became evident in the interviews, especially when discussions focused on pictures. This according to them is required for their sorority as a celebrity. The researcher observed in this study that by taking on an identity, celebrities adopt self meanings and expectations to accompany their role as celebrities and also take cognisance of how their role relates to other roles in the online space and then act to represent and preserve these meanings and expectations of their role (Sterts and Burke, 2000).

4.6.7 Constructing an identity through message and video (on walls and pages)

Aside posting of pictures, posting of messages and videos are part of the activities that celebrities normally perform on Facebook. They post mainly about their various professions. Generally, all the messages and video posts were either about what they are doing individually as celebrities or trends in the entertainment industry. Rarely do they post about issues outside their profession. This manifested itself in the form of jokes, motivational message and social activism. They hardly went into areas of contention like politics.

Kalybos: I try as much as possible not to get into political issues. So normally I seek out for what my fans wants. That"s mainly entertainment. So its everyday jokes that goes around. Normally I will be on twitter and I will, you know, come across a tweet like a joke or something and I will just post it on

Facebook. So normally that's what I do and day in and day out motivational messages. So if even I come across a political issue on Facebook, I try to read and just move on. I don't comment or whatsoever.

It can be said that through their post celebrities give information about themselves to their fans and audience. They seek for identification through their message post. They seek to express their conception of who they are. They err on the side of caution so as not to categorise themselves as a member of an emotionally attached social group with rival groups. Doing this can affect the identity they seek to construct. Some people who don't identify with that particular social group may not like the celebrity. So even if they belong to a social group they try to conceal and not to make it evident through their post. As it has been explained earlier in this study, concealment is a maker of ideal identity construction. That is hiding an aspect of your identity so as to remain favourable in the sight of your audience.

4.6.8 Constructing an Identity through Music

The celebrities who were interviewed for this study, were only musicians who subscribed to posting of music on their walls and pages. Of course it is understandable because that is the product of the role they perform. An identity cannot be better verified without performing the role you are designated to perform and showing evidence of it. This means an identity can never be defined unless it is performed. Through performance the identity is assessed and verified. No aspect of one's persona is self evident, however they are demonstrated relative to other actors who serve as the basis of reflexive measurement (Butler, 1990). What this means is that as celebrities they cannot really define their identity without relating themselves to others through performance. In this context they are reinforcing and verifying their

identity through the posting of their music. That is what their audience know them for and expects them to do. They are celebrities because they perform a role and that role is being musicians. Identities are self-cognitions tied to roles and through roles (Sterts and Burke, 2000). This activity of posting music can be classified as a marker of real identity creation. In this context they are being real to their identity as musicians.

4.6.9 Constructing an Identity through Affiliations

Joining of groups and liking of pages are some of the key activities that celebrities embark on in the construction of their identity. This study refers to this as affiliation, that is to associate oneself to a group or page on Facebook. This is what Farquhar (2013) refer to as *identity pegs*. Identity is characterized by the tension between how a person defines her/himself as an individual and how she/he connect to others and social groups, in affiliative relationships (Schau and Gilly, 2003).

In everyday social life, humans must pick the groups with which they choose to align, know what those groups value, and present identity pegs accordingly (Cooley, 1964 cited in Farquhar, 2013). Facebookers are no different. Especially in the world of celebrity it is not just what you know, but who you know (Pugh, 2012). They too must choose between groups and present valued identity pegs accordingly. In this respect, adding the right group can increase social prestige. On the other end of the scale, adding an obnoxious or offensive group would lower one's prestige. Some of the most common identity pegs include general sports, specific teams, university and high school affiliation, family, politics, interest, professional groups, scholarship among others.

It was observed through the cyber ethnographic study that celebrities join some groups on Facebook. The pages and groups that the participants like and join respectively are that of musicians, actors, bloggers, Disc Jokers, sound engineers, among others. Even though they join Facebook groups in practise, as it has been earlier discussed, they stay away from affiliating themselves to offline social groups. This poses the question of why celebrities openly declare their affiliation to some groups but desist from others? This identity peg is especially tricky. Membership in a specific group certainly draw friends from within the group, but rival groups may be present. Furthermore, many people are opposed to celebrities who categorized themselves as members of groups that have rival groups with huge emotional attachments like political groups, sports teams, ethnic groups, among others. However, defining successful identity is up to each Facebooker which in this context is the celebrity.

Based on the above explained reason, this study observed that celebrities in the construction of their identity subscribed to identity pegs such as university and high school affiliation, professional groups and interest. They refrained from categorizing themselves in groups with emotional attached rival groups. This tells the type of the self celebrities activate in the construction of their identity. From the symbolic interactionism perspective this study concludes that their affiliations are controlled by the *Me*. In plain words, they hide their attachment to groups that are contentious and open to groups that are less contentious because of what others may perceive them. In this context, being controlled by the *Me* is conforming to the societal standard and expectations so as to avoid being at the displeasure of the society, which is a maker of an ideal identity construction.

4.7 Filtering

Anything posted to a user's wall or page is somehow related to them. Either the profile owner posted it, or enabled someone in their network to post it. Celebrities are extremely mindful of the image they project on Facebook, and are careful in their selection of post on their walls and pages. Participants in the study displayed two behaviors in constructing their identity: (1) being more cautious about what they post of themselves on Facebook (2) and being more vigilant and sensitive about what others post on their walls and pages. As people begin publishing their identity through their post they are more careful now than ever before.

With celebrity experience, judgment is prone to occur. Once information is published on Facebook or the internet in general, it becomes public property and no longer something solely obtained by the original owner. This can serve as the bases for judgments to be made about the individual (Pugh, 2013). In other words Facebook can serve as a site for brand or identity audit. Against this background celebrities are more cautious about the impression they form on Facebook.

Atumpan: Facebook has had positive impact on my brand. Through Facebook I am not just a Ghanaian artiste, you get what I mean? Whatever I do, I put it on Facebook and people from all over the world see it. So I have got bookings to different part of the world. I get bookings, I get calls, I get interview and they all tell you that they saw your stuff on Facebook. So I am very particular about what I put on Facebook. I carefully and consciously select what I put on Facebook.

Unlike the other traditional media, Facebook as a social network attracts immediate feedback and comments. This helps celebrities shape their brand and live up to the

expectation of their fans. From the above assertion one can say that for celebrities, good brand and ideal identity attracts good business. This is to say, celebrities work cautiously and consciously to have an attractive and favourable brand so as to attract good business opportunities and leverage.

Aside being cautious about their post and that of others on their wall and pages, they are also sensitive about the kind of friends or fans they have. This means that they are also vigilant about their network and the people they associate with. This study observed that clearly, celebrities are careful about the people with whom they choose to connect and share profiles.

They prefer to keep a favourable identity that keeps more friends. Atumpan revealed “I delete people who don’t share the same ideology or people whom I think have different agenda on Facebook”.

Thus in their quest to construct an identity, celebrities do not mind trading a fan for a good and ideal identity.

Celebrities are aware of the surveillance they attract and therefore act with regards to making their status appealing and at par with their identity. In this vein, celebrities under the spotlight in their Facebook profiles are apt to hide or delete the negative and defamatory posts linked or posted on their Facebook page. At the other side of the coin, they also believe that having the right associations on Facebook improves their prestige. Summing up under this caption, this study wants to state that celebrities are aware of the meanings and expectations associated with their role and therefore act in conformity to it. This explains one of the core assumptions of the symbolic interactionism theory that states that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that the thing has for them (Blumer, 1989).

Summary

What this researcher has described above is the ideal self that celebrities were able to proffer and ultimately led to their capacity to effectively sell a wide variety of products. So in answering the second research question, the study states that although there are some activities that are markers of real identity in the online performance of the celebrities, more of the activities are geared towards the construction of an ideal identity and hence celebrities can be said to construct ideal identity of themselves on Facebook. This contradicts with findings of some studies (Back et al., 2010; Ellison et al., 2006; Rowatt et al., 1998) that states that Facebook users construct a real or actual identity of themselves on Facebook.

What the researcher has done in this chapter is to present the findings and a textual analysis of how celebrities construct their identities on Facebook. Through the how, the study has revealed the kind of identities celebrities construct of themselves on Facebook. The studies revealed that celebrities construct their ideal identity on Facebook through online activities such as concealment, posting, affiliation and filtering.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECCOMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter captures the summary of the findings, analysis and the conclusions drawn from the study. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the study, and offers recommendations for researchers and users with an interest in celebrity culture and the phenomenon of Facebook and identity construction.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The following key findings came to light in an attempt to find answers to the proposed research questions guiding the study:

With research question one which sought to describe how celebrities construct their identities on Facebook, the study established that celebrities use Facebook to communicate with their fans, construct and manage their identities. Celebrities have identified the intercommunicative dimension of Facebook and are capitalising on its advantageous features to interact directly with their fans without any form of mediation.

In the construction of these varied identities, the celebrities conceal „private“ and sensitive information such as their date of birth, relationship status and personal phone numbers but willingly reveals less sensitive public information like their names, sex, educational background and interests.

Through constructions, celebrities also perform other activities like, posting, filtering post on their walls and pages, chatting and affiliating with groups. This confirms one of the premise of identity theory which states that identity is an ongoing process of

becoming, rather than an ontological state of being, whereby becoming is a sequence of acts, that retroactively constitute identity (Butler, 1990).

The study established that celebrities practice their identity through their online activities. This is what Marwich and Boyd (2011) refer to as the “celebrity practice”. The state of being a celebrity is achieved through the praxis of practicing it, in other words, it is “self produced”.

The study also established that there is no singular formula for celebrity practice; it consists of a set of learned techniques that are leveraged differently by individuals. Depending on the type of identity a celebrity wants to construct, her/his online performances and practices may differ from that of his colleagues. Performance is a critical component in any public figure’s identity (Marshall, 2010).

The second research question sought to find out the kind of identities celebrities construct, the study also discovered that celebrities construct ideal identities on Facebook and they do this by presenting mostly their *public self*, that is, the official version or the professional aspect of the celebrity. They do this presentation through status update, wall pictures, profile picture and the groups they join. In their quest for an ideal identity, they censor their profile information and post, they filter post on their profile pages and they align themselves to groups while avoiding to affiliate themselves with groups that have rival groups with huge emotional attachments (political parties, ethnic groups, among others). All these are done towards creating an ideal identity which is mostly the expectation of the fans and followers.

The study also discovered that celebrities are aware that the identities conveyed must be consistent with the expectations of the audience. As a result of that, in the construction of their identities they perform the “Me”; the celebrities live up to the

expectations of the people in the society and by doing this behave and act in an organised way that is consistent with their status, as public guidance and directions.

5.2 Conclusion

In summary, the results of this study indicate that through the social context of Facebook, celebrities construct their identities through their posts and this is informed by the expectations of their followers. Celebrities construct ideal and favourable identities of themselves on Facebook by presenting themselves in the most favourable light through their posts mostly in a form of admirable pictures. Also as part of creating an ideal and favourable identity, celebrities filter their posts and conceal some information from their followers on Facebook.

Also as a way of endorsing and validating their status as celebrities they join and like pages of other people and organisations on Facebook. Groups and pages that celebrities join, „like“ and would usually comment on their posts are the ones that are in line with their profession and also have some members or followers of their industry.

5.3 Recommendation

The celebrity discourse of the self both presages and works as a vital pedagogical tool worth studying in the burgeoning world of presentational media. Social media has obviously metamorphosed into a presentational media. People are taking advantage of the presentational media to shape and maintain their self. A detail understanding and insight into the presentation of the self of people we identify with in the media (celebrities) is required. Undoubtedly the celebrity culture continues to hold its fascination. The reason being that, “celebrity has been and is increasingly a

pedagogical tool and specifically a pedagogical aid in the discourse of the self” (Marshall 2010, p 36).

Celebrities serve as the beacon of the public world and hence their representations have moved into the cultural world. Through the media they have taught generations how to use and engage consumer culture to shape oneself (Marshall, 2010). Without research into the celebrity culture and how they present themselves to us through the presentational media, we can only speculate about the dynamics of their identity without adding onto literature and ultimately how it relates to our lives.

Against this background this study therefore recommends that studies be done to understand the dynamics in the online presentation of the self which is due to the impact of social media and its direct impact on the celebrity discourse. Also since the celebrities are under constant and regular surveillance and thus their more mundane activities are overly copied by the public. The gaze provided by media and on-line sites makes their often everyday activities a kind of performance to be read further. This study therefore recommends that record labels and celebrity managements take cognizance of how they manage the identities of their artistes since their identities are consciously or unconsciously being consumed by the public.

5.4 Limitation

Due to time constraint, only four respondents were used for this study, that is two musicians and two actors. The cyber ethnographic study was done within Eight (8) months. Data collected also posed a limitation because of the busy schedule of the celebrities. This posed a difficulty in achieving the initial sampling size proposed for this study.

Arranging interview for the celebrities was very difficult because of the complex protocol the researcher had to go through.

5.5 Future Research

This study focused on investigating how celebrities like musicians and actors and actress construct their identities on Facebook and also the kind of identities the celebrities seek to construct.

In the conducting of this study it was realised that, the endless stream of raw data, the nature of digital data, and the enthusiasm of the users, make Facebook a researcher-friendly arena. Hence this study suggests that future researchers will probe into how the identities constructed by celebrities on Facebook impact on their personality and also how the identities are sustained. A research in this direction will add up to the body of knowledge revealed in the current study.

Also future research using the social identity theory and the role theory can also go into how celebrities construct their identity within the groups they join on Facebook. This research, I believe will also be another strand of research in the celebrity identity construction field and will add up to literature.

This study further suggests that other studies will extend this study by probing into how celebrities like footballers, media personnel and religious leaders construct their identities on Facebook.

Due to continuous platform updates, the framework (developed) for this study can be applied to a variety of upgraded Facebook formats. This study therefore proposes that future research should focus on applying the methodology to the future updates of Facebook formats.

Also there is also further opportunity to research a larger sample size to determine other typologies and their impacts on identity construction of celebrities.

Finally, the online world is also changing to accommodate new types of social media. In this study it was discovered that celebrities use other social media platforms like twitter, Instagram, among others. It will then be suitable and literature worthy if future researchers are directed towards probing into the identity construction of celebrities on these platforms.



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APPENDNDIX 1: ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

4.1 About the participants

4.1.1 Ama K. Abebrese

Ama Konadu Abebrese is an award winning actress, television presenter and a movie producer. She was born on 3rd May 1980 in Kumasi in Ghana but was raised in West London in the United Kingdom. She started hosting TV shows in her teens on YCTV in London. In Ghana, She has presented on Viasat 1 TV, TV3 and several others.

As an actress, she won the 2011 Best Actress in Leading roles at the African Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) for her performance in the movie, Sinking Sands. She won the Best Media Personality of the year at the Ghana Uk Based Achievement (GUBA) Awards in 2010. She was named among C Hub magazine's most influential „African Women Influencers“ of the era 2014/2015.

She is currently a brand ambassador to “Dark and Lovely Cosmetics” and the founder of Ama K. Abebrese Foundation.

Atumpan

Atumpan is the showbiz name of the Ghanaian musician who is originally called Frank Elinam Cobbinah. He was born on the 24th of December, 1983 in Takoradi but was raised in Kumasi in Ghana. Atumpan is also a trained teacher who taught for years before his music career took the best part of him.

He is one of the few Ghanaian Musicians to be nominated for the Music of Black Origin Awards (MOBO). He won the award for the best African act at the 2013 Urban Music Awards in the United Kingdom.

In 2013, his hit single, „The Thing“ was signed by Ministry of Sounds, an international record label in the United Kingdom. He is one of the few Ghanaian Musicians whose song has been signed to an international record label.

Raquel


Raquel Ammah was born in London to Mark and Dinah Asabea Ammah. She was raised in London but she mostly spent her vacation in Ghana. She attended the West Themes College where she obtained diploma in performing arts. She continued her education at the University of Surrey, Roehampton. She graduated in 2008 with a degree in Performing Arts. she has received several nominations as a musician including the female vocalist of the year in the Ghana Music Awards. She is noted for her periodic live band shows, Raquel Cupid Party.

Kalybos

The real name of the popular Ghanaian actor Kalybos is Richard Asante. He did his secondary education at the Suhum Secondary Technical School. He is currently a student at the National Academy of Film and Television (NAFTI) where he is studying cinematography. Before he enrolled in the tertiary institution he had worked as a camera man with some movie production houses including Sparrow Movie Production. He is the major actor in the popular local series „BOYS ABRE“. This series shot him to fame in 2013. He has stayed relevant in the showbiz industry since then featuring in many TV adverts and Movies.

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1) Facebook Usability

- a. When did you join Facebook?
 - b. Why did you join?
 - c. How often are you on Facebook?
 - d. How long do you spend on Facebook per session?
 - e. What do you mainly use Facebook for?
 - f. How active of a Facebook user do you think you are? Why?
 - g. What do you see the purpose of Facebook as being?
- 
- A large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Education, Winneba logo is centered on the page. The logo is circular with a red border and contains a blue and white emblem with a central sun-like symbol. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA' is written around the perimeter of the circle.

2) Profile Organization

- a. What features do you choose to show everyone?
- b. Which features do you only show to select friends?
- c. How do you decide which friends see certain aspects of your profile?

3) Privacy

- a. What are your current privacy settings? Why?
- b. Do you have privacy issues with Facebook? With certain friends?
- c. How do the privacy settings on Facebook play a role in how you choose and select friends?
- d. How do the privacy settings play a role in how you choose to portray yourself as a celebrity?
- e. On what occasions do you take away access?
- f. Why do you choose to use your real name? What about privacy? Would you use a fake name?
- g. How much did you filter on your Facebook wall? What are your friends not allowed to see?

4) Your Image on Facebook

- a. How do you think others interpret/perceive your profile on Facebook?

- b. What kind of a person do you think you are portraying to others on Facebook?
- c. Do you feel your image on Facebook accurately reflects who you are offline?
- d. What elements of your Facebook profile most clearly define who you are as a person?
- e. Do you think you send multiple „images“ of who you are to people viewing your profile, or is only one aspect of your personality represented through this medium?
- f. Would you ever discuss negative experiences on Facebook?

5) Your Everyday Life

- a. Describe the way you conduct yourself online and in person? Is there a difference between the two? Why or why not?
- b. Does Facebook in any way enhance or frustrate your interaction with others offline?

- c. How does Facebook play a role in your everyday life?
- d. During your day, when do you make posts or communicate on Facebook?

6) On The Go (Mobile)

- a. Do you have Facebook on your cell phone? Why/why not?
- b. Why do you use it?
- c. What features do you use the most on your mobile?
- d. Do you use Facebook Chat? Why or why not? What is the purpose of it?

7) The Role of 'Friends'

- a. What is your criterion for adding someone as a „friend“ on Facebook?
- b. Who are your friends (co-workers, friends from high school and university, people you meet when you go out, family, etc.)?
- c. Who do you communicate with on a regular basis on Facebook? Why?
- d. What is the purpose of this communication?

- e. What do the people you are friends with say about you? The people that you are in pictures with, what do they represent about you?
- f. How do your „friends“ on Facebook influence you?
- g. Do you stay in touch with all your friends?

8) Wall Posting Purpose

- a. Do you have a wall posting feature? Why or why not?
- b. What do you use your wall postings for?
- c. How does the „wall“ feature enhance your Facebook experience?
- d. Do you expect, enjoy, control delete wall responses?
- e. Do you post status updates? Why or why not?
- f. What is the purpose of your status updates?

9) Photos and identity Construction

- a. What do you try to project with your profile pictures?

- b. What do you try to portray with your photo albums?
- c. Do you provide information where an event took place and what it is? Do you give descriptions on photos, when they were taken, uploaded etc.? Why or why not? What purpose do you think it serves?
- d. In terms of the photos you post, what kind of impression do you think you give off to other who don't know you? What about those who do know you personally? Does it make a difference to you?
- e. Do you find yourself filtering what types of pictures you post? For example, never showing yourself in an „ugly“ situation, or being fearful a potential employer may see something inappropriate?
- f. Do photo albums reflect how „active“ a social life you have? Why or why not?
- g. Is there reasoning behind how many pictures you post in an album?
- h. How do you use photos to tell a story?

10) 'Information' Sharing

(This can encompass „info“ tab, links, videos, articles, notes, graffiti, timeline, games, etc.)

- a. What networks (groups, page) do you belong to on Facebook? Why?
- b. How does being part of a network enhance your Facebook experience?
- c. What is the significance of the „bio“ section to you?
- d. Do you provide all the information Facebook require from you in your profile?
Why?

11) Tagging of Content

- a. Do you tag photos or videos of yourself? Why or why not?
- b. Do you allow others to tag to you? Why or why not?

12) Commentary on Photos, Wall Posts or Videos

- a. What role does outside and personal commentary play a role in your Facebook experience?
- b. What is your opinion on posting commentaries? Does it further conversation, stall
it or make no difference.