

Convergence of Celebrity Culture and Citizen Journalism: Analysis of Journalism Practice in Nigeria

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Abstract:

The convergence of celebrity culture and citizen journalism has dramatically reshaped the landscape of journalism practice in Nigeria. This study explores how the fusion of these two influential forces has redefined traditional journalistic norms, altered content production, and challenged established media hierarchies. With celebrities increasingly acting as news sources and even content creators, and citizens leveraging digital platforms to disseminate information, often unfiltered and real-time, the boundaries between professional journalism, entertainment, and user-generated content have become increasingly blurred. Using constructivism philosophy of research design and in-depth interview method, this study examines celebrity culture and citizen journalism within the context of journalism practice in Nigeria. The study adopted The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press. The study adopted in-depth interview while 5 senior editors from each newspaper were selected for the in-depth interview. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews, Zoom, and email, with interviews lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The guide for in-depth interviews included open-ended questions that explored journalists' experiences with celebrity culture. NVivo was used to analyse the in-depth interview using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that while this intersection offers new opportunities for democratized storytelling and wider engagement, it also raises concerns about misinformation, credibility, and the dilution of journalistic integrity. The study concludes by calling for a reimagining of media ethics and professional training to adapt to a rapidly evolving digital media ecosystem shaped by the dual influence of celebrity culture and citizen participation.

Keywords:

Celebrity, Citizen, Convergence, Culture, and Journalisms.

I. Introduction

The convergence of celebrity culture and citizen journalism has significantly reshaped the landscape of journalism practice in Nigeria, blurring the boundaries between professional news reporting and popular culture. In the age of social media, celebrities have evolved into influential information brokers, often bypassing traditional media to shape public discourse and influence socio-political narratives (Chiluwa & Adebayo, 2023). Simultaneously, the rise of citizen journalism has challenged the monopoly of mainstream media by empowering ordinary individuals with digital tools to report, comment, and mobilize on critical issues in real time (Okoro & Ekwugha, 2022). This interplay has generated a complex media ecology where journalistic authority is increasingly contested, and where entertainment and activism intersect in novel ways (Asemah et al., 2023).

In the Nigerian context, where trust in legacy media is often undermined by perceptions of bias, celebrities and citizen journalists are emerging as alternative sources of credibility and engagement, particularly during political campaigns, social justice movements,

and crisis reporting. This study critically examines how these dynamics are reshaping journalism practice in Nigeria, interrogating their implications for media ethics, news credibility, and the future of democratic participation in a digitally mediated society. The intersection of celebrity culture and citizen journalism is redefining the contours of journalism practice in Nigeria, ushering in a new era where the lines between entertainment, activism, and news reporting are increasingly blurred. With the proliferation of digital platforms, celebrities now wield unprecedented influence, not only as entertainers but also as agenda-setters and informal news sources (Msughter et al., 2023; Maiwada et al., 2025).

This shift allows them to shape public opinion and drive political and social conversations, often outside the boundaries of traditional media structures (Chiluwa & Adebayo, 2023). At the same time, the rise of citizen journalism, fueled by widespread smartphone use and internet access, has democratized information flow, enabling ordinary citizens to document, report, and critique events in real time (Okoro & Ekwugha, 2022). In Nigeria, these developments have generated a hybrid media environment where authority over truth and narratives is constantly negotiated among journalists, celebrities, and the public. As traditional journalism grapples with questions of credibility, objectivity, and reach, this convergence presents both opportunities and challenges for the practice. This study explores how the fusion of celebrity influence and grassroots reporting is transforming journalism in Nigeria, and what it means for media professionalism, ethical standards, and democratic engagement in the digital age.

1.1 Research Objectives

1. To examine the historical development of celebrity journalism in Nigeria.
2. To ascertain how celebrity culture has influenced the nature of journalism practice in Nigeria.
3. To investigate the extent to which celebrity culture influences news content in *The Nation*, *The Punch*, and *Daily Trust* newspapers.
4. To assess the impact of celebrity-focused journalism on the quality and diversity of news coverage at the selected newspapers.
5. To evaluate the implications of celebrity culture for the ethical standards of journalism practice at the selected newspapers.
6. To explore perceptions of journalists and editors regarding the influence of celebrity culture on their professional practices.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press that emerged in the mid-20th century as a response to the shortcomings of both the Libertarian and Authoritarian theories of the press. The theory was articulated in the 1947 report by the Hutchins Commission, formally known as the Commission on Freedom of the Press, which was initiated by Henry Luce of *Time* magazine. The commission was formed in the United States to address concerns about the ethical standards of the press and its role in society. The theory developed as a means to ensure that the media serves the public good, balancing the freedom of the press with an obligation to society (Onyejelem et al., 2024).

The Social Responsibility Theory posits that while the press should be free from censorship, it must act in a manner that is responsible to society. This includes providing truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent accounts of events, offering a platform for the exchange of comments and criticism, and serving as a forum for the presentation of diverse viewpoints. The theory emphasizes the media's duty to inform, educate, and uplift the public

while avoiding sensationalism and protecting societal norms and values. The social responsibility theory of the press emerged as a critical response to the libertarian model, which emphasizes minimal restrictions on media freedom (McQuail, 2010). This theory posits that while media should be free from government interference, it carries a significant responsibility to serve the public good and promote democratic engagement. According to this perspective, media organizations are not merely conveyors of information but also bear a profound responsibility to act in ways that benefit the public and support democratic processes (Oreoluwa et al., 2024).

Central to the social responsibility theory is the idea that the press must fulfill its role in serving the public interest. This involves providing accurate, fair, and balanced information, thus ensuring that the audience remains well-informed. An informed citizenry is essential for the effective functioning of a democracy, as it allows individuals to make educated decisions on political and social issues (McChesney, 2008). The accuracy of information and its impartial presentation are crucial for shaping public perception and influencing decision-making processes across various domains.

Moreover, the social responsibility theory emphasizes the ethical dimensions of media operations. Media organizations are expected to adhere to high ethical standards, including honesty, fairness, and respect for privacy. This ethical commitment extends to avoiding sensationalism and biased reporting, which can distort reality and mislead the public (Vitalis et al., 2024). Sensationalism undermines trust in the media and detracts from meaningful public discourse. By upholding ethical principles, the press helps maintain the integrity of information and supports the public's right to reliable news.

The theory also highlights the importance of diversity in media representation. The media has a responsibility to offer a platform for a variety of voices and viewpoints, ensuring that marginalized and underrepresented groups are included in public discourse. This diversity enriches public debate and contributes to a more inclusive society. It prevents the dominance of a single narrative and supports democratic processes by reflecting a broader range of experiences and opinions. In addition, social responsibility theory underscores the role of the media in social criticism. The press is expected to act as a watchdog, scrutinizing and holding accountable those in positions of power, including government officials, corporate executives, and other influential figures. This role is vital for maintaining transparency and accountability in both public and private sectors. Investigative journalism and critical reporting enable the media to uncover injustices, expose corruption, and contribute to societal improvement.

Furthermore, the theory asserts that the media has a broader cultural and social responsibility. Media content should contribute positively to the cultural and social fabric of society, promoting values that support public welfare and social cohesion (McQuail, 2010). This responsibility involves not only the content of media output but also the way media organizations operate within the community. By reflecting and reinforcing societal values, the media can foster a sense of community and shared understanding. In essence, the social responsibility theory argues for a balance between media freedom and accountability. While the freedom to publish and disseminate information is fundamental, it must be exercised with a commitment to serving the public and contributing to the greater social good. This approach acknowledges that the media's role extends beyond mere reporting and includes a duty to support democratic and social processes (McChesney, 2008). By embracing these responsibilities, media organizations can better fulfill their role in a democratic society, ensuring their contributions enhance rather than undermine public trust and social progress.

The major assumption of Social Responsibility Theory is that the media should act in the public interest, providing accurate, balanced, and ethical reporting. This theory stresses the importance of media accountability and the need for self-regulation to ensure that the media serve as a watchdog and an informative resource for the public (Vitalis et al., 2023). Supporters including the Hutchins Commission, advocated for media accountability and ethical journalism as essential to democracy. Theodore Peterson, a member of the Hutchins Commission, further developed the theory and emphasised its relevance to democratic societies. Denis McQuail, a prominent communication scholar, also supported the theory for its emphasis on public service and ethical responsibility in media. And others such as Siebert et al. in 1956, argue that Social Responsibility Theory provides a normative framework for ethical journalism and media practices. It has been applied in discussions about media ethics, public broadcasting, and the role of journalism in democracy. Critics, including Christians and Nordenstreng (2004), argue that the theory can be idealistic and challenging to implement, especially in contexts where media independence is threatened by political and economic pressures. Social Responsibility Theory is pertinent to this study as it provides a benchmark for evaluating the ethical implications of prioritising celebrity news in Nigerian newspapers. The theory underscores the media's duty to balance commercial interests with the need to provide informative and socially relevant content. Given the ethical concerns surrounding the emphasis on celebrity news, Social Responsibility Theory will be used to assess whether Nigerian newspapers are fulfilling their social responsibilities or succumbing to commercial pressures at the expense of journalistic integrity.

II. Review of Literatures

The role of celebrity culture in journalism practices in Europe has been analysed by Blumell and Hellmueller (2019), who argue that the news industry panders to our celebrity addiction. Celebrity culture has so much currency, they say, and no one famous or infamous is immune from its influence. While acknowledging the 'tabloidisation' (or sensationalisation by consumerism) of news media, they also analyse the two look-alike processes of celebrification and celebification, which explain how individuals can converge from a grey Anna to a bold-face Anna; and from anonymous to Rosen, using a critical analysis of media practices to document the changing nature of celebrity journalism. According to them, the advent of social media allows media firms to create celebrities out of 'ordinary' people (e.g., Instagram and TikTok fame). From a broader cultural perspective, Blumell and Hellmueller note that ethics (invasive media practices, commercialising celebrities, celebrity ethics), ideology (politics and artistic production) and identity (public persona and private person) pose a paradox based on the tensions inherent in celebrity culture studies. Their paper thus deftly illustrates the schizophrenic nature of celebrity culture, which can mobilise support, whether political or philanthropic, to the cause de jour.

Disbanding an opaque financial rewards system driven by cash and clout with fierce market-based competition takes on a whole new meaning as celebrities gain increased media attention and yield ever greater levels of power, wielding both influence and social capital. Their work speaks to a larger point that, with the digital media revolution and advent of social networking, the European media is experiencing great growth in its celebrity output. This is in direct response to audience demand and unrelenting competition as the media scramble to capture and keep eyeballs focussed on their outlets and streams. Later scholarly works, like Driessens (2013), have focused more on the effects associated with the TV–film–celebrity nexus, how the role of the paparazzi and the 'fourth estate' has evolved in the media space across Europe, along with an examination of the ethical challenges and culturalesque impacts

of celebritisation throughout the continent. One thing appears clear, celebritisation of the media has forced socialisation at the journalistic level and polarised journalists into two main camps: advocates of celebritisation or critics of its societal impact.

Wishhart-Usher (2018) conducted a study on *Celebrity, Journalism, and Self-Identity* intricately explores the entangled nature of celebrity culture and journalism, challenging traditional dichotomies and offering a nuanced understanding of their mutual influence. Central to her analysis is the notion that celebrity and journalism are not merely concurrent phenomena but are historically intertwined, each shaping and reshaping the other in a dynamic interplay that molds self-identity and public discourse. This study employs a rich theoretical framework that draws on Jürgen Habermas's theories of print culture to analyze the evolution of celebrity journalism, particularly in the context of the digital age where audience engagement is increasingly measured by metrics such as clicks and shares.

The concept of the "double helix" is pivotal in Wishhart-Usher's exploration, serving as a metaphor for the reciprocal relationship between celebrity culture and journalism. This idea illustrates how these domains have historically influenced one another, creating a complex narrative that shapes public perception and individual identities. The metaphor underscores the notion that celebrity news is not just a reflection of public curiosity but a construct that has evolved through literary and journalistic traditions. By employing the example of Sally Salisbury, a prostitute from the 1720s whose story was extensively covered across various media forms, Wishhart-Usher demonstrates how early celebrity journalism laid the groundwork for contemporary practices, reflecting and reinforcing societal values and identity constructs.

The paper's methodological approach is equally significant. Wishhart-Usher utilizes Web Sphere Analysis (WSA) to map the intricate interactions within digital communications, highlighting how the web serves as a platform for self-presentation and identity construction. This method is particularly relevant in the digital age, where the boundaries between news and entertainment are increasingly blurred. By analyzing trends, language, and forms of celebrity journalism on social media platforms, the study emphasizes the role of digital media in shaping public perceptions of celebrity and identity. This approach also reveals how online interactions contribute to the formation of parasocial relationships, where the illusion of intimacy between celebrities and audiences creates new dimensions of self-identity and public engagement.

Earlier studies by Marshall (1997) critiques American journalism's captivation by celebrity culture, arguing that media's engagement with celebrity news reflects societal values that prioritize entertainment over information. The development of round-the-clock news has created an environment ripe for rumor-baiting and sensation-hunting, challenging journalism to meet professional and ethical standards amid audience expectations for gossip and infotainment.

The evolution of parasocial relationships, as described by Horton and Wohl in 1956, is also evident in modern social media, where audiences feel a delusional personal connection with distant celebrities. This phenomenon illustrates the deepening impact of technology on celebrity culture and journalism practices. In his summary of the intersections of celebrity and journalism throughout the late 19th and early 20th century for instance, Marshall (2006) concludes that, "It is difficult to separate the histories of journalism and the emergence of the contemporary celebrity system." As newspapers evolved to become key locales of public

reflection and forums for political debate, they began to represent the interests of diverse sections of a nation's citizenry. Where journalism focused increasingly upon interviews with the famous or, more broadly, on celebrity's intersection with consumer capitalism, the ties between democracy and the type of contemporary individuality embodied in the celebrity strengthened, he argued.

Campbell (2001) in an extensive study, specifically designed to test whether, when, and to what extent, the principal typographic and content elements associated with celebrity journalism became embedded in American journalism during the 20th century. Campbell believed that there was no previous work that systematically tests whether or to what extent the salient features of yellow journalism have been incorporated into, and live on in, the content and appearance of contemporary American newspapers. Using content analysis, he examined the front pages of seven leading U.S. newspapers at 10-year intervals from 1899 to 1999. In the study, the newspapers: New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Raleigh News and Observer and Washington Post were all represented as non-yellow, conservative papers.

The Denver Post and San Francisco Examiner both displayed some aspects of yellow journalism at the end of the 19th century and were classified as such. Finally, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch exhibited characteristics of both yellow journalism and conservative newspaper, and was designated as a mixed format. To allow for benchmarks, the New York Journal and the New York World, two well-known yellow papers, were included for the year of 1899, a peak year in yellow journalism, and 1909, when the genre was declining in popularity. In all, Campbell analyzed more than 1,130 front pages.

Meng (2016) looks at the dominance of celebrity news in the Chinese media. By conducting an age-old content analysis of lead newspapers and websites in China, Meng demonstrates the dominance of celebrity news in these media, which she relates to broader changes in media commercialisation and social roles. Meng finds that the purpose of the media's emphasis on celebrity 'delivers both analytical comfort and explanation', yet the drawback of focusing on media content exclusively is that it leaves out reader and audience reception and interaction. Ju and Lee in Uzuegbunam (2017) present a behind-the-curtain analysis of the media situation in South Korea and Japan, illustrating the complementary relationships between the entertainment industry and press. Ingebrigtsen and Else (2015) hint at how these celebrities shape their audiences by leveraging publicity gained from the media. Ju and Lee's research is based on interviews with media personnel from South Korea and Japan, alongside analysis of media coverage patterns, revealing how celebrities' profiles are amplified by media coverage which stirs media ratings and readership. Ju and Lee's study focuses solely on South Korea and Japan, failing to draw on the experiences on the ground in Asia.

III. Research Methods

The study adopted in-depth interview while 5 senior editors from each newspaper were selected for the in-depth interview. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews, Zoom, and email, with interviews lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The guide for in-depth interviews included open-ended questions that explored journalists' experiences with celebrity culture. NVivo was used to analyse the in-depth interview using thematic analysis.

IV. Results and Discussion

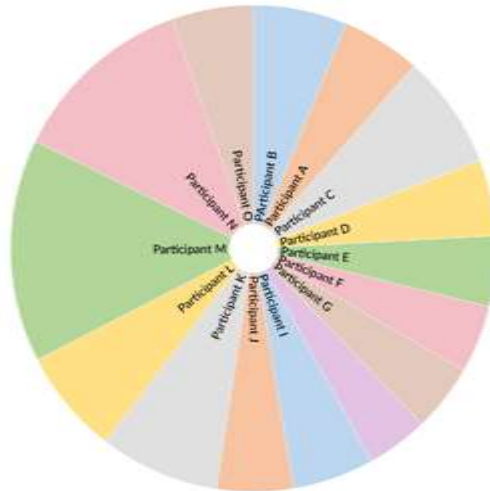
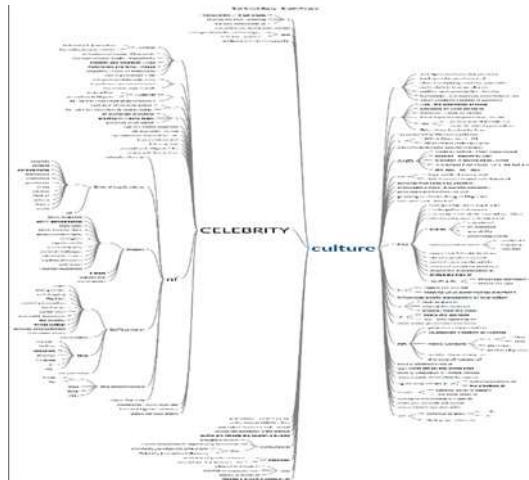


Figure 1. List of the Interviewees
Source: Nvivo 15, Field Survey 2024

The figure above contains the names of the participants who were selected by the researcher in those newspaper organisations. Code was developed to replace the names of the interviewee like A, B, C, D, E, F, etc.

Table 2. Text tree



The data were further queried using ‘Text search’ command to create text tree of concepts with the highest frequency, it also helped the researcher in identifying how words and phrases are use contextually in the interviews. This shows common words and phrases in the data and show the usage interim of content and context. It explores the use, context and meaning of words and some expressions used more widely in a specific demographic.

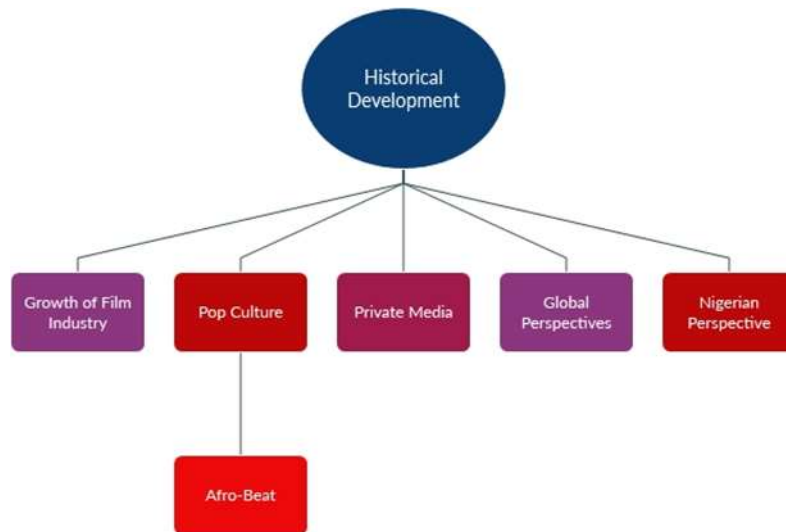


Figure 2. Historical Development
Source: Nvivo 15, Field Survey 2024

Figures above shows the main themes that emerged from historical development of celebrity-focused journalism where the dominant themes identified are global perspective, Nigerian Perspective, growth of film industry, pop culture (afro beat) and the advent of private media. This suggest that various factor play role in the development of celebrity culture across the globe as well as in Nigeria. In Nigeria the growth of Nollywood and Kannywood (in the north), liberalisation of electronic media in the early 1990s and the rise of pop culture that change the lifestyle of many segments of the society, especially the youth contributed significantly to the development of entertainment industry as well as celebrity-focused journalism in Nigeria.

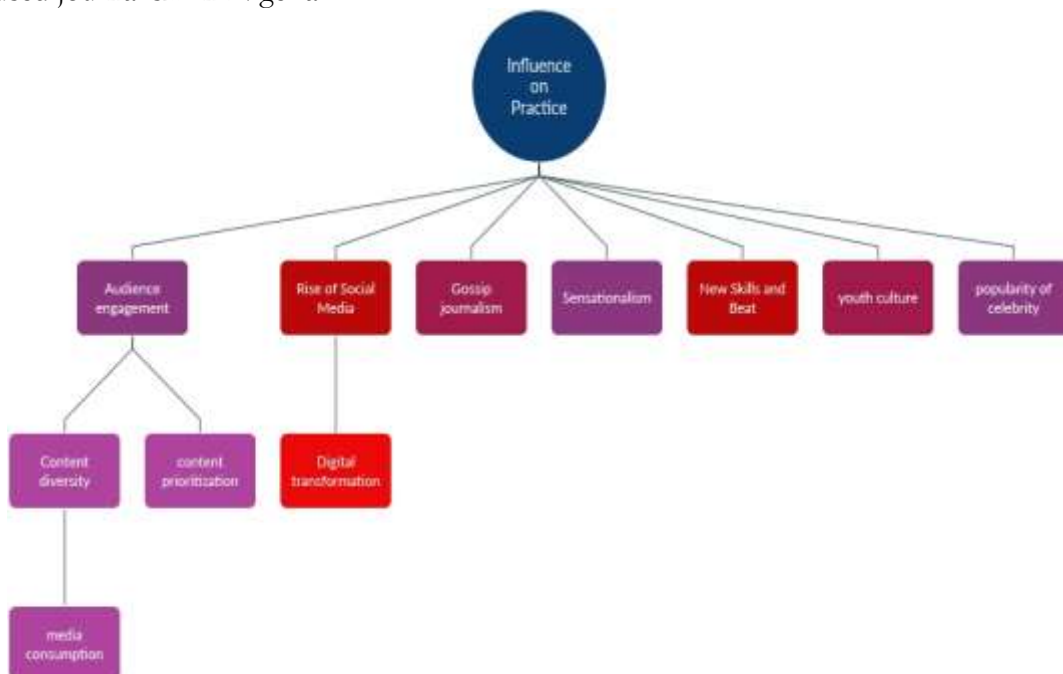


Figure 3. Influence of Celebrity-Culture on Journalism Practice
Source: Nvivo 15, Field Survey 2024

Figures above shows the themes that emerged from the influence of celebrity culture on journalism practice, where the themes identified are audience engagement, content diversity,

new pattern of media consumption, content prioritisation, rise of social media, digital transformation, gossip journalism, sensationalism, new journalism skills and beat, youth culture and popularity of celebrity

This suggest that celebrity culture has both positive and negative influence on journalism practice in Nigeria, aside from expanding the boundaries of journalism, it also creates new skills for journalist covering the celebrity-focused beat creating a new form of professionalism in reporting soft news amid many national issues. it also gave rise to new brand of journalism practice such as gossip journalism and sensational contents. Similarly, the influence of celebrity culture has shaped the way news is packaged and consumed by audience. This has improved the media organisations’ audience engagement with diverse contents about celebrities. It also gave rise to new pattern of social media engagement and reporting.

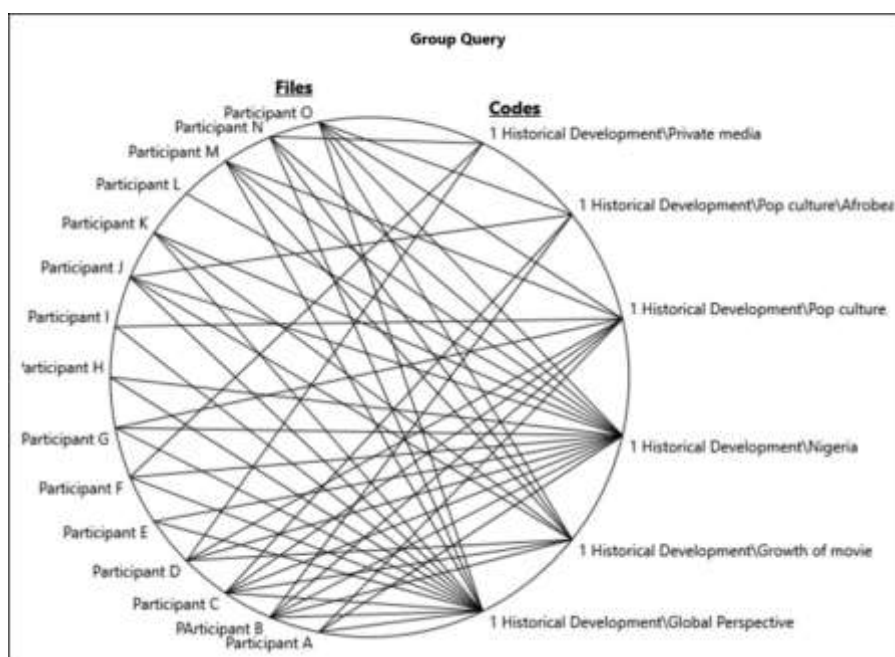


Figure 4. Group query by categories
Source: Nvivo 15, Field Survey 2024

This figures above shows how items related to historical development of celebrity culture are associated in a particular way with other items in the study. The items were associated by coding, attribute value. This suggest that the celebrity culture followed a certain agreeable stage before it developed to its present stage.

4.1 Discussion

a. Objective 1: Examine the historical development of celebrity journalism in Nigeria

The historical development of celebrity journalism in Nigeria has evolved significantly, influenced by global media trends, technological advancements, and shifting cultural preferences. Empirical evidence from the study suggests that the historical development of celebrity journalism in Nigeria has been shaped by a confluence of internal and external factors. On the one hand, the commodification of media content and the market-driven nature of Nigerian journalism have incentivized media outlets to prioritize entertainment and celebrity news to sustain profitability. The influence of global celebrity culture has introduced

new norms and practices into the Nigerian media landscape. For instance, the increasing emphasis on visual storytelling, evident in the proliferation of photo spreads and video interviews featuring celebrities, can be traced to the influence of international media practices. Interview respondents noted that Nigerian media houses often emulate Western media outlets in their coverage strategies, citing examples such as the adoption of paparazzi-style reporting and the focus on celebrity endorsements and brand collaborations. These observations align with studies by Samadoni et al., (2022), which emphasize the global impact of Western celebrity culture on local media practices.

b. Objective 2: Ascertain how celebrity culture has influenced the nature of journalism practice in Nigeria

The findings indicate that celebrity culture has profoundly reshaped journalism practices in Nigeria. This transformation is characterized by a marked departure from traditional journalistic values, with a significant shift towards entertainment-driven narratives. The influence of celebrity culture extends beyond content selection to redefine newsworthiness itself. Interviewees consistently highlighted that celebrity stories are often given precedence over more critical societal issues due to their perceived ability to generate revenue and readership. Participant D observed that stories involving celebrity scandals or endorsements are prioritized in newsrooms, as they drive traffic and advertising revenue, reflecting the commercialization of journalism.

c. Objective 3: Investigate the extent to which celebrity culture influences news content in *The Nation*, *The Punch*, and *Daily Trust* newspapers.

The current study's interviews reinforced this observation, as Participant A from *The Nation* noted that "readers are more interested in the personalities behind the news, which shifts our focus from hard news to stories that highlight the glamorous or controversial aspects of celebrities' lives." Additionally, the use of sensational headlines and clickbait strategies to promote celebrity stories was a recurrent theme in both content analysis and interviews. Such practices reflect global trends, as discussed by scholars like Johansson (2007), who identified a growing tabloidization of mainstream media worldwide.

The findings further suggest that while celebrity culture contributes to audience engagement and revenue generation, it raises ethical concerns related to sensationalism and content reliability. Interview participants highlighted challenges such as the invasion of celebrity privacy, inaccuracies in reporting, and a decline in journalistic integrity. For example, Participant C from *Daily Trust* expressed concern over "the pressure to prioritize stories that sell over those that are accurate or socially impactful," a sentiment that reflects broader criticisms of the celebrity journalism phenomenon. Despite these concerns, the study findings indicate that the media's reliance on celebrity-driven content is unlikely to diminish, given its profitability and popularity among readers. This conclusion is supported by Nwabueze and Ekwughe (2014), who identified a symbiotic relationship between media outlets and celebrities, wherein both parties benefit from the increased visibility and marketability of celebrity-driven narratives.

d. Objective 4: Assess the impact of celebrity-focused journalism on the quality and diversity of news coverage at the selected newspapers

The discussion of findings for objective four examines the impact of celebrity-focused journalism on the quality and diversity of news coverage in *The Nation*, *The Punch*, and *Daily Trust*. The impact of celebrity-focused journalism extends beyond the narrowing of topic diversity to influence the overall quality of news reporting. Interview participants emphasized

that the prioritization of entertainment and sensationalism compromises investigative depth and journalistic rigor. Participant Q from *The Punch* noted that “celebrity stories rarely require the level of investigative work that political or economic issues demand, which has led to a general decline in the quality of news content.” This observation aligns with the findings of Samadoni et al., (2022), who noted that the commodification of news, particularly through celebrity endorsements or coverage, often oversimplifies complex social and political issues. The sensational framing of celebrity stories, often characterized by shallow reporting and a lack of critical analysis, further detracts from the journalistic quality of the newspapers.

e. Objective 5: Evaluate the implications of celebrity culture for the ethical standards of journalism practice at the selected newspapers

The evaluation of the implications of celebrity culture for ethical standards in journalism at *The Nation*, *The Punch*, and *Daily Trust* demonstrates significant challenges and shifts in journalistic practices due to the pervasive influence of celebrity-driven reporting. The interviews highlighted that the pursuit of exclusivity in celebrity reporting frequently results in ethical compromises. For instance, Participant R from *The Punch* noted that “journalists often feel pressured to invade the privacy of celebrities in order to provide content that resonates with readers,” illustrating how the demand for high-impact stories can blur ethical boundaries.

This trend aligns with the findings of Obalanlege and Adesina (2016), who argue that the rise of celebrity journalism in Nigeria has led to a recalibration of newsworthiness, with editorial priorities increasingly shaped by the entertainment value of stories rather than their societal importance. This shift has contributed to the dilution of ethical standards, as journalists prioritize audience engagement and marketability over principles such as objectivity, accuracy, and respect for privacy.

Moreover, gender biases in the portrayal of celebrities further illustrate the ethical challenges in celebrity journalism. Interview findings revealed that coverage of female celebrities often emphasizes physical appearance, relationships, or scandals, while downplaying their professional achievements. Participant T from *The Nation* noted that “female celebrities are frequently judged based on societal stereotypes, which perpetuates a narrative that is both unfair and ethically questionable.”

f. Objective 6: Explore perceptions of journalists and editors regarding the influence of celebrity culture on their professional practices

The exploration of journalists’ and editors’ perceptions regarding the influence of celebrity culture on professional practices reveals a substantial impact on editorial decision-making processes, newsroom operations, and overall journalistic priorities. The role of audience demand in driving the integration of celebrity culture into professional journalism was another significant finding. Interview participants consistently highlighted that reader interest in celebrity content has grown substantially, influenced by the rise of social media and the digitalization of news consumption. Participant T from *The Punch* observed, “Social media trends heavily influence newsroom priorities, as celebrity stories shared online generate significant clicks and shares.” This observation mirrors Uzuegbunam’s (2017) assertion that celebrity culture has become deeply embedded in the media landscape, reshaping audience expectations and, consequently, journalistic practices. The alignment of celebrity journalism with audience preferences also reflects broader societal trends, as celebrity figures increasingly dominate public discourse and cultural narratives, further entrenching their influence within media organizations.

Additionally, findings reveal that journalists and editors recognize the dual-edged nature of celebrity culture's impact. While it drives readership and revenue, it also raises concerns about the dilution of professional standards and the marginalization of socially significant topics. Participant K from Daily Trust emphasized, "There is a growing fear that the increasing focus on celebrities may overshadow critical issues, such as governance, education, and health, which are essential to public interest reporting." This concern echoes the findings of Obalanlege and Adesina (2016), which highlighted the risk of celebrity-driven journalism sidelining investigative and civic journalism.

V. Conclusion

The convergence of celebrity culture and citizen journalism has significantly reshaped journalism practice in Nigeria. This dynamic intersection has blurred traditional boundaries between professional journalism and public participation, resulting in a more democratized media landscape. Celebrities now play an influential role as informal newsmakers and opinion leaders, while citizen journalists, empowered by digital tools and social media platforms, actively report, amplify, and sometimes challenge mainstream narratives. While this convergence has expanded the reach and immediacy of news dissemination, it has also raised critical concerns about accuracy, credibility, and ethical standards. The Nigerian media environment, therefore, faces the dual challenge of leveraging the strengths of this convergence, such as enhanced engagement and real-time reporting, while addressing its pitfalls, including misinformation and sensationalism. The findings reveal that while this intersection offers new opportunities for democratized storytelling and wider engagement, it also raises concerns about misinformation, credibility, and the dilution of journalistic integrity. The study concludes by calling for a reimagining of media ethics and professional training to adapt to a rapidly evolving digital media ecosystem shaped by the dual influence of celebrity culture and citizen participation.

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